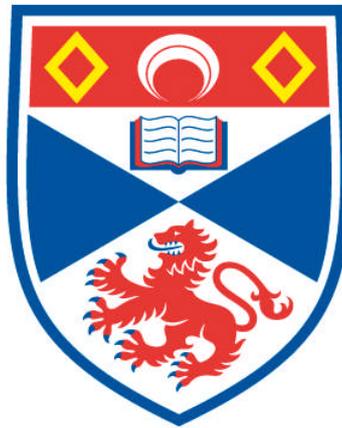


**JONATHAN EDWARDS'S SCOTTISH CONNECTION  
AND THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTTISH  
EVANGELICAL REVIVAL, 1735-1750**

**Christopher Wayne Mitchell**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



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**Jonathan Edwards's Scottish Connection and the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Evangelical Revival, 1735 - 1750**

**Christopher Wayne Mitchell**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Divinity  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews**

**January 1997**



I certify that Christopher Wayne Mitchell has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended), and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Signature of Supervisor



Signature of Supervisor

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No. 12) on 1st October 1988 and as a candidate for the Degree of Ph.D under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended) on 1st October 1988.

The following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been submitted for a higher degree. The research was carried out in the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of Dr. D.W. Lovegrove and Professor James K. Cameron.



Signature of Candidate

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## ABSTRACT

In the second half of the twentieth century, the life and work of Jonathan Edwards, the eighteenth-century New England minister of Northampton, Massachusetts, has received increased scholarly attention. Questions of the nature and extent of his influence have informed much of this revival of interest. For two centuries theologians, philosophers and historians have claimed that Jonathan Edwards significantly influenced eighteenth-century Scottish religious thought, and yet little scholarly attention has been invested in this area of Edwards's studies. The central focus of this thesis has been to shed additional light on this neglected but celebrated side of Edwards's life and ministry.

This study is an investigation of the formative period of Edwards's Scottish connection. It began with the publication of his *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* in Scotland in 1737 and his subsequent connection with the Scottish revival of 1742. The relationship was then further developed through the publication of five other major works of Edwards in Scotland during the years 1742 to 1749, and his correspondence with a coterie of evangelical ministers from the Church of Scotland. At the heart of this connection was the pursuit of true religion that undergird the ministries of Edwards and his Scottish counterparts. More specifically, the influence Edwards exercised on Scottish evangelicalism during this formative period was the result, first, of his articulation of a Reformed, evangelical and enlightened conception of true piety which he used to promote and defend the revivals and, second, the cooperation and support he received from the Scottish ministers he corresponded with.

What this study shows is that the cooperative relationship between Edwards and his Scottish counterparts helped usher in a new era of Scottish Calvinism. With their combined abilities, creative vision and enterprising spirit they forged a new evangelical paradigm for Scottish Calvinism. The revival was the catalyst for this new movement and Edwards was its theological architect. Scottish revivalists used Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* to inspire and promote the revival and his *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* to defend and manage it. Edwards's conception of true piety together with the revival helped redefine Scottish evangelical Calvinism by adapting it from its old didactic role within a godly commonwealth to a mission oriented role where the faith of the individual became prominent and the pursuit of sanctification, not salvation, defined the Christian's life. These emphases were further developed among Scottish evangelicals following the revival by the continuing efforts of Edwards and his Scottish friends. Prominent among these efforts were three additional works of Edwards and the international enterprise known as the United Concert for Prayer that was organized and orchestrated by Scottish evangelicals. One of the most far-reaching results was the growth of Scottish overseas missions.

Finally, this study indicates that Edwards's revival writings provide an important starting point for understanding the theological and spiritual preoccupations of Scottish evangelicalism in the second half of the eighteenth century; and that Edwards's contribution to Scottish evangelicalism and modern evangelicalism generally cannot be properly understood without an understanding of his relationship to his Scottish correspondents.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

At every stage of this work I received valuable help, and I am happy to be able to finally properly acknowledge the assistance I received along the way. First I want to thank Robert A. Krupp who introduced me to the study of ecclesiastical history. Little did he know at the time where it would lead. I am deeply indebted to Mark A Noll who first recommended the study of Jonathan Edwards and who has been a constant companion and encouragement over the years. I owe the idea behind the thesis to Professor Thomas A. Schafer, who during several early conversations stimulated my thinking and instilled a vision for the work that sustained me throughout the long process of research and writing. I am grateful to Jack Levison who suggested Deryck W. Lovegrove, of the University of St. Andrews, as a possible supervisor. He could not have chosen better. J.D. Douglas further encouraged me in the direction of St. Andrews, graciously received me and my family to the neighbourhood on Doocot Road, and offered welcome friendship and counsel. I am especially grateful for the constant flow of intellectual stimulation, humour, and good company that was given to me by my postgraduate colleagues David Currie and Maxie Burch. In addition, David and his wife Sue Currie, on more than one occasion went far beyond the call of duty to insure that the Mitchell family was well cared for. I should also like to acknowledge David W. Bebbington and David F. Wright who on several occasions offered assistance and encouragement.

Thanks too must go to the following Libraries and their staffs without whose assistance the thesis would never have been completed: in Scotland the National Library of Scotland, the Scottish Records Office, New College Library, Edinburgh, Mitchell Library of Glasgow, and the Library of the University of St. Andrews; in the U.S. the Congregational Library and the Massachusetts Historical Society of Boston, Massachusetts, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Divinity School Library, and staff of the Jonathan Edwards Archive at Yale University, the Newberry Library, Chicago, and the Buswell Library and the Billy Graham Center Library of Wheaton College.

Financial support came from a variety of sources not the least from friends and family scattered throughout the U.S. I owe to them more than I can say. Additional funding was received from grants from the Stewards Foundation and the Overseas Research Award of Great Britain.

Special thanks must go first to my supervisors James K. Cameron and Deryck W. Lovegrove. I want to thank James Cameron for assistance and insights especially during the early stages of the work, and his for willingness to remain on as my supervisor after his retirement. I am particularly indebted to Deryck Lovegrove whose oversight was indispensable, and whose unfailing patience, encouragement and friendship will not be forgotten. Finally, I want to thank my wife Julie and my children Nisha, Joshua, Lukas and Jeremy who kept me sane and who always helped me keep things in proper perspective by reminding me that life was bigger than the dissertation.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AGA</i>	Acts of the General Assembly
<i>CH</i>	Christian History
<i>CL</i>	Congregational Library
<i>CMH</i>	Christian Monthly History
<i>FASTI</i>	Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae
<i>GWH</i>	Glasgow Weekly History
<i>JEWorks</i>	Works of President Edwards
<i>JE(Yale)</i>	Yale, Works of Jonathan Edwards
<i>MHS</i>	Massachusetts Historical Society
<i>Works</i>	Dwight, The Works of Jonathan Edwards

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	p. 1
Chapter 1 The Quest for True Religion: New England and Scotland	p. 9
Chapter 2 The Quest for True Religion: Edwards and Scottish Evangelicals	p. 45
Chapter 3 Catalyst: <i>A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God</i>	p. 87
Chapter 4 Critique of True Religion: <i>The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God</i>	p. 140
Chapter 5 The Epistolary Connection: 1743-1758	p. 212
Conclusion	p. 274
<u>Appendices</u>	
A. Jonathan Edwards's Scottish Publications	p. 281
B. Subscriber's List: occupations	p. 290
Bibliography	p. 292

## Introduction

Since the publication of Ola Winslow's landmark biography of Jonathan Edwards in 1940, the number of dissertations written on Jonathan Edwards has almost doubled over each succeeding decade.<sup>1</sup> The number of published works on Edwards since the middle of the century has also reflected this trend. With the increased scholarly attention to the many facets of Edwards's life and work, have come questions of the nature and extent of his influence. One area that stands out for the lack of scholarly attention it has received has been Edwards's association with Scotland. This is surprising given the more than two centuries of tributes to Edwards's international reputation which have featured Scotland most prominently.

Edwards's first biographer, Samuel Hopkins, stated that Edwards had the "applause and admiration of America, Britain, Holland and Germany,...., and has been honored above most others in the Christian world" in the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Sereno E. Dwight, Edwards's great grandson, wrote in 1830, that Edwards's works "had gained him a reputation for powerful talents, both in Europe and America, which left him without a competitor, either in the colonies or the mother country."<sup>3</sup> Of Edwards's transatlantic importance, both Hopkins and Dwight make the point that Edwards's ties with Scotland were by far the most significant. A.V.G. Allen, one of Edwards's nineteenth-century biographers, echoed this sentiment when he claimed that Scotland felt the influence of

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<sup>1</sup> M.X. Lesser, *Jonathan Edwards: A Reference Guide* (Boston: Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co., 1981), p. xli.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards* (Boston, 1765), in David Levin, *Jonathan Edwards: A Profile* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), pp. 22f.

<sup>3</sup> Sereno E. Dwight, ed., "Memoirs," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976 reprint of the 1832 2 volume London edition), p. cxiv. Hereafter cited as *Works*.

Edwards more than any other country.<sup>4</sup> Yet from the time of Hopkins until more recently little has been done to substantiate the claims that Scotland significantly appropriated Edwards's thinking. Of the few recent studies that have treated aspects of Edwards's Scottish connection, only three are entirely devoted to Edwards and Scotland and two of these are articles.<sup>5</sup> There yet remains no published book length study of any aspect of Edwards's Scottish connection.

Still those who claim that Edwards's influence on Scotland was considerable are not easily dismissed. In 1903, for the bi-centennial celebration of Edwards's birth, the renowned Scottish theologian James Orr spoke of Edwards's influence on Scotland as penetrating and "readily traceable" on a number of fronts.<sup>6</sup> Still, like Hopkins, Dwight and Allen, Orr failed to adequately demonstrate what he claimed. Only with regard to Edwards's influence on Scotland's John MacLeod Campbell did Orr go beyond generalities to particular examples of Campbell's appropriation of Edwards.<sup>7</sup> Beyond this exception he offered little in the way of evidence for his claim other than simply noting connections. Similarly, the Scottish historian, G.D. Henderson, stated that "there can be no doubt as to the importance of the influence he himself [i.e. Edwards] has exerted upon

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<sup>4</sup> A.V.G. Allen, *Life and Writing of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1889), p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> The two very fine articles are Michael J. Crawford, "New England and the Scottish Revivals of 1742," *American Presbyterian* 69:1 (Spring, 1991): 23-32; and Harold P. Simonson, "Jonathan Edwards and his Scottish Connection," *Journal of American Studies* 21 (1987): 353-76. In addition, Crawford has gone far in assessing aspects of Edwards importance for the eighteenth-century Scottish revival in *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). David Bebbington has also taken account of Edwards's influence on the rise of modern evangelicalism in Britain, in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History From the 1730's to the 1980's* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989). The third study devoted to Edwards's and Scotland will be touched on below.

<sup>6</sup> James Orr, "Jonathan Edwards: His Influence in Scotland," *The Congregational and Christian World* 88 (1903): 467.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 468. See also James Orr, *Exercises Commemorating the Two-hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Jonathan Edwards*, (Andover, Massachusetts: The Andover Press, 1904), pp. 121-23.

Scotland,” and that “he undoubtedly left a permanent impression upon Scotland.”<sup>8</sup> But, like Orr, Henderson relied upon the numerous connections and associations Edwards made in Scotland during his lifetime and on the many references to him in Scotland’s religious literature in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries to support his assumption. More recently, American scholars of Edwards have initiated claims for Edwards’s influence on Scotland, but like those before them they fail to do more than to suggest that his influence was significant. John E. Smith, in his assessment of the correspondence that passed between Edwards and the Scottish minister Thomas Gillespie, was led to remark that the “extent of Edwards’s influence upon the religious situation in Scotland was considerable and it seems not to be generally known.”<sup>9</sup>

When it comes to honoring Edwards, Scotsmen have not been wanting in their praise of his intellectual achievement. In addition to the comments of Orr and Henderson, Sir James Mackintosh claimed that Edwards “power of subtile argument was perhaps unmatched, certainly unsurpassed among men.”<sup>10</sup> Similar tributes can be found in the writings of such prominent Scots as John Erskine, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Chalmers, and John MacLeod Campbell, to name a few. But such accolades alone, although they suggest a high respect for Edwards’s life and abilities, cannot in themselves be construed as demonstrating spiritual and intellectual influence.

Even so, there are a few isolated studies that indicate that Edwards accomplished more than merely establishing a high reputation in Scotland. Paul Ramsey, commenting

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<sup>8</sup> G.D. Henderson, *The Burning Bush: Studies in Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrews Press, 1957), pp. 159, 162.

<sup>9</sup> John S. Smith, “Editor’s Introduction to Related Correspondence,” *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 467. Hereafter cited *JE(Yale)*. Cf. Stephen J. Stein, “Editor’s Introduction,” *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, p. 31, n. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in John Brown, ed., *Theological Tracts, Selected and Original*, vol. 2 (London: A Fullerton & Co., 1853), pp. 293-4.

on Edwards's influence on Lord Kames's revisions to his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1751), documented the manner in which Kames appropriated Edwards and concluded that "these revisions clearly reflect the influence of Jonathan Edwards's ideas, and show, in one instance, what a force the theologian from the wilderness of America was in determining the currents of intellectual life in Scotland in the mid-eighteenth century."<sup>11</sup> John K. La Shell's unpublished dissertation, *Imaginary Ideas of Christ: A Scottish-American Debate*, is the only in-depth study of the Edwards-Scotland connection.<sup>12</sup> LaShell has documented and analysed the eighteenth-century debate between certain evangelical ministers of the Church of Scotland and ministers from the Associate Presbytery over Edwards's assertion that mental imagery is a valid aspect of religious experience. Both Ramsey's documentation of Kames's revisions and La Shell's analysis of the controversy over the use of mental imagery strongly suggest Edwardian influence.

There are additional articles which provide further evidence for this connection. Harold Simonson's excellent essay, "Jonathan Edwards and his Scottish Connection," shows how similar the patterns of revivalism and controversy were in New England and Scotland, and disclose a side of Edwards that is not seen elsewhere. Michael Crawford's study, "New England and the Scottish Revivals of 1742," is a brief but penetrating look at the influence of Edwards's early revivals works on the Scottish revival. These articles clearly indicate that Edwards's association with his evangelical correspondents and the Scottish revival were highly significant.

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Ramsey, "Editor's Introduction to Related Correspondence," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 1, p. 444.

<sup>12</sup> John K. LaShell, "Imaginary Ideas of Christ: A Scottish-American Debate" (Westminster Theological Seminary, PhD dissertation, 1985).

The origins of modern evangelicalism are routinely identified by historians with the revivalism of the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup> In terms of their theological influence, John Leith has placed the revivals which took place on both sides of the Atlantic, along with Newton's and Locke's ideas, as among the most important movements of the eighteenth century for shaping Reformed theology.<sup>14</sup> More importantly, T.C. Smout has gone so far as to say that the effect of the Scottish revival of the 1740's on the Church of Scotland was profound and long-lasting.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, there is also a near consensus among historians concerning the formative role Edwards exercised theologically over the transatlantic Awakening.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, his closest relationship, ideologically and personally, was shared with the evangelicals of the Scottish Kirk.

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<sup>13</sup> See Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*; Susan O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755," *The American Historical Review* 4 (October, 1986): 811-32; Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991); W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Marilyn Wester Kemp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625-1760* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988)

<sup>14</sup> John Leith, *Introduction to the Reformed Tradition* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981) p.119f. Leith states that the revivals served to increase the existing theological tension within the Reformed community by accentuating the distinction between new and old, law and grace, freewill and sovereignty.

<sup>15</sup> T.C. Smout, "Born Again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-century Scotland," *Past and Present*, 97 (1982): 114. Leith and Smout are not alone in their understanding. Since Arthur Fawcett's influential study, *The Cambuslang Revival* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971), historians have with regularity suggested the importance of the revivals on Scottish religious history. For example see: Susan Durden, "A Study of the First Evangelical Magazines, 1740-1748," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27 (July, 1976): 255-75, and, "Transatlantic Communications and Literature in the Religious Revivals, 1735-1745" (PhD. Thesis, University of Hull, April, 1978); O'Brien "A Transatlantic Community of Saints"; Ian A. Muirhead, "The Revival as a Dimension of Scottish Church History," *Record of the Scottish Church History Society*, 20 (Edinburgh, 1980): 179-96; Ned Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colony, 1683-1765* (Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 227-55, and "Evangelists and Their Hearers: Popular Interpretation of Revivalist Preaching in Eighteenth-Century Scotland," *Journal of British Studies* 28 (April 1989): 120-49; Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), and "Sacramental Occasions and the Scottish Context of Presbyterian Revivalism in America," in *Scotland and America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.65-80; Crawford, "New England and the Scottish Religious Revivals of 1742," and *Seasons of Grace*.

<sup>16</sup> See note 13 above.

The flow of influence between Scotland and America during the eighteenth century was predominately one-sided in favour of Scotland, and the Edwards-Scotland connection is unique for being perhaps the only significant example of a reversal of the flow of religious influence between the two societies.<sup>17</sup> Given the great quantity of analytical writing on the impact of Scottish ideas in America, the subject of the influence of Jonathan Edwards in Scotland becomes just that much more important and historically intriguing.<sup>18</sup>

It is with these things in mind that I have undertaken this study which has as its focus Edwards's influence on Scottish evangelicalism during the period of the Scottish revival of 1742. My line of investigation starts with the formative stage of this influence, beginning with the Northampton revival right through to the first signs of revivalist activity in Cambuslang and Kilsyth. I then explore Edwards's involvement in the Scottish revivals themselves, and conclude by examining the epistolary relationships between Edwards and the Scottish revivalists that emerged soon after the revival peaked.

My central focus throughout has been to bring to light a neglected but celebrated side of Jonathan Edwards's life and ministry. In other words, I have viewed Scottish evangelicalism and the revival primarily through the lenses that an analysis of Edwards's

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<sup>17</sup> "The Great Awakening served notice that the settlement of North America was no longer simply a transit of civilization from the Old World to the New. To be sure, the revival and its opposite but parallel movement, the Enlightenment, drew heavily on European influences. But the American experience also fed ideas and attitudes back to Europe, where, for example, the writings of the Congregational clergyman Jonathan Edwards received serious attention...." *The Columbia History of the World*, eds., John A. Garraty and Peter Gay (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), p.678.

<sup>18</sup> See William Brock, *Scotus Americanus: A Survey of the Sources for links between Scotland and America in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982); Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations, 1750-1835* (Glasgow & London: Blackie, 1975); and most recently Mark A. Noll, *Princeton and the Republic, 1768-1822: The Search for a Christian Enlightenment in the Era of Samuel Stanhope Smith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) and Richard B. Sher & Jeffrey R. Smitten, eds., *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

influence on Scotland provide. This approach has revealed that the over-arching dynamic that fed the Scottish revival, the evangelical Calvinism that emerged from it and Edwards's connection with six evangelical ministers from the Kirk was the "pursuit of true religion." The meaning and importance of the concept of "true religion" will be examined in the thesis. I will simply state here that the heart of Edwards's influence revolved around his monumental effort to articulate and defend a true, that is, a Reformed, evangelical and enlightened conception of the nature of religion. While his Scottish counterparts did not exert the same degree of theological influence on the revival, they matched him step for step in their pursuit of genuine piety. Their relationship with Edwards formed the creative and defining centre of the Scottish revival and the evangelical Calvinism that issued from it in the eighteenth century.

The thesis is organized around three interrelated connections between Scotland and New England, and Edwards and Scottish evangelicals. The first is the ideological connection which is explored in the first two chapters. Chapter one sets the broad context by defining and tracing the search for true religion in Scotland and New England caused by the challenge the Enlightenment brought to the intellectual foundations of Christianity and to Calvinism in particular. At this time Scotland and New England were led to form closer links with each other. Chapter two then examines the particular theological resonance that existed between Edwards and certain Scottish evangelical ministers that formed the ideological bridge for the transit of Edwards's concerns to Scotland. At the heart of this relationship was a shared conception of the nature of true religion.

Chapters three and four develop and analyse Edwards's connection to the Scottish revival. Chapter three provides an account of the establishment of Edwards's Scottish

link and analyses the influence of the Northampton revival of 1735 (and Edwards's narrative account of it) on the rise of the Scottish revival of 1742. The effect of Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks of the Work of the Spirit of God* on the way in which the Scottish revivalists defended and managed the revival is explored in chapter four. The theme of "true religion" runs throughout the revival and is further developed by Edwards in his revival works and by the Scottish revivalists in their responses to the revival's critics.

The last chapter takes up Edwards's epistolary relationship with six Scottish evangelicals, all of whom supported the revival. After showing how each link in the epistolary chain was formed, the chapter examines first, the effect of the relationship on Edwards, and second, that of Edwards on his correspondents and on Scottish evangelicalism more generally. During this period, as this study shows, the evangelical conception of true religion comes into its own in Scotland under the creative energies of Edwards and his friends.

## Chapter One

### The Quest for True Religion: New England and Scotland

Jonathan Edwards's initial Scottish connection began in 1737 with the publication of his account of a local revival of religion experienced by his own and neighbouring parishes located on the edge of the New England wilderness. It was a beginning hardly calculated to exert wide influence. There was much about Scottish religious life in the eighteenth-century to preclude an American figure of his type gaining influence in Scotland. First, Calvinism was in eclipse in England and the larger Puritan ideology was waning in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> Edwards was committed to both. Second, a flowering of unprecedented intellectual achievements began in Scotland around 1740, most of which took place outside the bounds of a strictly Puritan form of Calvinism. Moreover, the creative theological thinking that did occur in Scotland at this time was often overshadowed by this wider cultural and intellectual effulgence.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there was

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<sup>1</sup> See Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason, 1648-1789* (Penguin Books Ltd., 1970), p. 66; and T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830* (Glasgow: Fontana Press, 1985), p. 479.

<sup>2</sup> Smout, *History of the Scottish People*, pp. 451, 470; and Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John MacLeod Cambell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), pp. 223f. In this context it is worth noting that John R. McIntosh has challenged the assumption, routinely accepted by earlier historians of Scottish religious history, that little creative theological thinking took place in the eighteenth, by demonstrating that the theological works of certain evangelicals within the Popular Party reflect an awareness of and highly fruitful and creative interaction with the thinking of their day. He attributes the longevity of the prevailing assumption to the lack of serious attention by previous historians to traditional ecclesiastical history. See, "The Popular Party in the Church of Scotland, 1740-1800" (Glasgow PhD, 1989), pp. 9, 24, 45-48, 63-64, 458-469. Whether the achievements of the Scottish Enlightenment did in fact overshadow the theological contribution made in Scotland during the same period is perhaps also debatable.

the factor of Edwards's isolation. Even in New England terms the Connecticut River valley was on the edge of the wilderness.

Yet, by the time of his death on March 22, 1758, twenty-two years after the Scottish publication of his revival account,<sup>3</sup> tributes to Jonathan Edwards's importance were being sounded within Scotland by both evangelical and moderate clergy alike. John Erskine (1720-1803), one of the most influential ministers in the Church of Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century and a friend and correspondent of Edwards, writing to William McCulloch (1691-1771) on August 8, 1758 lamented the untimely death of Edwards: "The loss sustained by his death, not only by the College of New Jersey, but the church in general is irreparable. I do not think our age has produced a divine of equal genius or judgment."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore in an attempt to secure a more favourable reading of Lord Kames's *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, Hugh Blair (1718-1800), the celebrated minister and preacher of the moderate party, cited the works of Calvin, Turretin and Pictet in support of Kames. Not content with these, Blair looked to the most recent word on the subject as the "best suited" to silence the critics and hunters of heresy. Speaking of Edwards's work, *Freedom of the Will*, Blair confidently asserted, "It is certain that nothing can be better calculated than this book to answer all the objections against our author's doctrine of moral necessity, to shew its consistency with reason and scripture, and the injustice of ascribing to it any bad tendency."<sup>5</sup> By the beginning of the next century, Dugald Stewart (1753-1828), a noted

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<sup>3</sup> The account was published in Edinburgh in 1737, and represents the first work of Edwards published in Scotland.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, *Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine* (Edinburgh, 1818), p. 224. For an estimate of Erskine's importance and influence, see in addition to Wellwood, McIntosh, "The Popular Party".

<sup>5</sup> *Objections against the Essays on Morality and Natural Religion Examined*, with the help of Robert Wallace, George Wishart and Robert Hamilton (Edinburgh, 1756), p. 21.

philosopher and one of Scotland's most influential teachers of the period, indicated that Edwards's reputation, at least in Scotland, had achieved a consensus: "There is one metaphysician, of whom America can boast, who, in logical acuteness and subtlety, does not yield to any disputant bred in the universities of Europe. I need not say that I allude to Jonathan Edwards."<sup>6</sup>

These tributes raise the question of why this seemingly humble connection grew to command such acclaim. Certainly there were other American figures from New England who enjoyed a close connection with Scotland. Why among all of the ministers of the American colonies, therefore, did Edwards alone attain such an elevated theological status among some of the leading lights of eighteenth-century Scotland? To begin to answer this question, we must start by looking at the dynamically shifting intellectual climate of the eighteenth century and its effect on the historical and theological situations of New England and Scotland.

The Church of Scotland entered into the eighteenth century with an alarming awareness of a new attitude towards religion. New liberalizing ideas of what religion was were making their way into Scotland from south of the border, threatening her doctrinal standards and creating a theologically charged atmosphere that helped to give rise to a series of theological controversies during the first third of the century. These controversies, which would later introduce obvious divisions into Scotland's religious landscape, reflected fundamental differences in what was considered to be the essential nature of religion, and they became the battlefields upon which the struggle for true

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<sup>6</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Dissertations, Exhibiting a General View of the Progress of...Philosophy...*(Cambridge, 1829), p. 384. On the importance of Dugald Stewart for Scotland see T.C. Smout, *Scottish People, 1560-1830*, pp. 353, 453. Dwight, in his "Memoirs" of the life of Edwards, states that even David Hume "appears to have read several of the works of Edwards," *Works*, vol. 1, p. clxiv.

religion was played out in the eighteenth century. The same forces that were at work in Britain and which threatened Scotland's theological standards were also making their presence felt in New England. Like Scotland, the New England colonies held to a hereditary Calvinism as their governing theological outlook, faced the challenge the Enlightenment posed to traditional Christianity, experienced theological controversy, and confronted ecclesiastical division in the light of a growing diversity of religious belief.<sup>7</sup> Sensing contemporary need and recognizing the affinities that existed between them, Scotland and New England moved at the beginning of the eighteenth century to form an alliance in their common quest for the preservation of Calvinism as a true expression of their religious understanding. From this union would develop a powerful transatlantic evangelical alliance that gave shape to modern evangelical Calvinism; and out of this alliance Edwards would emerge as their most competent spokesman.

The rise of fundamentally different views of the nature of true religion are rooted in the seventeenth century. Seventeenth century Europe was a ferment of new ideas. The discoveries of Copernicus a century earlier, and later Galileo and Newton, and the rise of the new science helped to create an atmosphere for liberal ideas to flourish in the 17th century, at the same time creating intellectual currents hostile to traditional Christianity. Equally important as the new science was the thinking of Descartes, which saw the principle of doubt as fundamental to the quest for faith. The years following the Restoration of 1660, through to the middle of the eighteenth century, witnessed an intellectual revolution that reshaped thinking on almost every level. While many of the

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<sup>7</sup> Mark Noll, "Development of Dogma: Scotland and America," *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989): 50.

accepted norms of thought were jettisoned, new apprehensions of what religion really was were fostered. The new thinking in particular would prove most hostile to the Calvinist doctrine that defined the religious cultures of New England and the Church of Scotland.

As these new ideas developed England, along with the rest of Europe, experienced a growing sense that man's potential for progress in all areas was limitless. Building on the laws of Newton and Locke, the thinkers of the Enlightenment believed they had discovered the true scientific method which could unlock, in time, the mysteries of the universe. What was obscure would now yield to the effective application of man's reason. An understanding of the real nature of things was now possible and old superstitions could in time be swept away. D'Alembert, writing in the eighteenth century at the height of this intellectual revolution, gave classical expression to this new way of thinking.

If one examines carefully the midpoint of the century in which we live, the events which excite us or at any rate occupy our minds, our customs, our achievements, and even our diversions, it is difficult not to see that in some respects a very remarkable change in our ideas is taking place, a change whose rapidity seems to promise an even greater transformation to come. Natural science from day to day accumulates new riches. Geometry, by extending its limits, has borne its torch into the regions of physical science which lay nearest at hand. The true system of the world has been recognized, developed, and perfected....In short, from the earth to Saturn, from the history of the heavens to that of insects, natural philosophy has been revolutionized; and nearly all other fields of knowledge have assumed new forms....The discovery and application of a new method of philosophizing, the kind of enthusiasm which accompanies discoveries, a certain exaltation of ideas which the spectacle of the universe produces in us -- all these causes have brought about a lively fermentation of minds. Spreading through nature in all directions like a river which has burst its dam, this fermentation has swept with a sort of violence everything along with it which stood in its way.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> D'Alembert, *Elements de Philosophie* (1759), quoted in Leslie Newbiggin, *The other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983), pp. 7-9.

One of the things perceived to stand in the way of the progress of this new and radical movement known as the Enlightenment, at least for some, was traditional religion.<sup>9</sup> Various sects and confessions had emerged following the Reformation, each one proclaiming itself the one true faith necessary for salvation and as a result more than a century of religious controversy, persecution and war had ensued.<sup>10</sup> Such sectarian conflict had helped to bring into question the validity of past religious conceptions, and encouraged the certainty of the new science to be set over-against the 'dead' weight of tradition. In its place the critics put reason as the surest way to truth. Although Locke did not directly challenge the authority of revelation, his thinking led others to assign to it a place of secondary importance.<sup>11</sup> Following Locke, reason began to be hailed as the "last judge and guide in everything."<sup>12</sup> While the Bible retained a unique place, its authority was subtly eroded by the ever increasing place given to reason. Like all other sources of authority it was subjected to intense scrutiny, reason being the hermeneutical interrogator. Gerald Cragg notes that "the Bible was no longer the final and absolute standard. However, it might stand the test" as a source of the truth, "it had to be brought to the bar of reason."<sup>13</sup> Reason was clearly the guiding light of this new intellectual movement.

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<sup>9</sup> Bebbington, in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 50-69, has argued that the general assumption that the Enlightenment was universally antagonistic to religious belief is an oversimplification of its intent and influence. While many of its manifestations were hostile to religion, significant aspects of it were enlisted on the side of religion. Robert W. Jensen not only agrees with Bebbington here, but claims that the Enlightenment was a thoroughly religious enterprise, one that involved a revolutionary critique of religion, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 63. Richard Sher has made out a similar case for the Enlightenment in Scotland in his *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 151-74. My interest here, however, is in those elements of the Enlightenment that nurtured an intellectual vision that came to view religion either indifferently or adversarially.

<sup>10</sup> Basil Willey, *Christianity Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. 85.

<sup>11</sup> Cragg, *Church and the Age of Reason*, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> John Locke, *Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A.S. Pringle-Pattison (Oxford, 1924), quoted in G.R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 228.

<sup>13</sup> Cragg, *Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, pp. 8-9, 228. See also Robert M. Grant and David Tracy, eds., *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged (Philadelphia: Fortress

As long as it was not sullied with the imposition of dogma, it was thought capable of discovering 'Nature's Laws'.

Nature and the idea of progress along with reason also loomed large and helped foster a climate of change.<sup>14</sup> Speaking of the elevated place the concept of nature held, Gladys Bryson observes, " 'Having denatured God, they deified nature,' and to nature, then they turned...for standards in right thought and conduct."<sup>15</sup> Natural religion was the result of this rationalistic temper. God had made the universe based on perfectly ordered natural laws. Newton's works brought mathematical symmetry and harmony to the world without and Locke's within. Man's understanding of the nature of true religion no longer depended entirely upon revelation, but also upon God's wondrous created order of which man and his God-given reason were an essential part. God's existence could now be demonstrated and his attributes discovered by examining the universe; the role and destiny of man could be deduced from a study of his nature; and the certainty of man's moral freedom and future life be confirmed by reason.<sup>16</sup> In nature the goodness, wisdom and power of God could be seen and understood. In the beginning both reason and revelation were viewed as complementary, but increasingly revelation was made to give way to nature and a belief in the comprehension of man's reason. The result was a perceptible shift on the part of the critics of traditional religion in their method of doing theology; dependence on revelation gave way to a growing trust in reason and nature as pathways to truth.

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Press, 1985), p. 104, "the rise of philosophy as an autonomous science and its gradual divorce from theology made possible and indeed made necessary a fresh evaluation of the meaning and interpretation of the Bible."

<sup>14</sup> See Crane Brinton's discussion of the "Enlightenment" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., repr., 1972), pp. 520-21.

<sup>15</sup> Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1945), p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Cragg, *Church and the Age of Reason*, p. 71.

In addition, the seventeenth century gave rise to the modern notion of progress. Prior to this time the leaders of the Renaissance and Reformation believed that the past was far superior to the present and tried to recover it. Man's increasing optimism in his ability to know the true nature of things challenged this notion, causing it to be abandoned for the idea that the future increasingly held for mankind better things than the past.<sup>17</sup> Such optimism also served to ameliorate man's moral estimate of his own position. Although the problem of moral evil continued to be given great attention, the manner in which it was approached changed. The right exercise of reason, rather than tradition or dogma, would lead humankind out of darkness into a new and better moral and social existence.

As the second half of the seventeenth century closed, a perceptible shift that altered the "whole approach to religious knowledge" took place.<sup>18</sup> Philosophy, which had served as the handmaid to theology, had broken loose and now challenged the traditional assumptions of religion and ethics.<sup>19</sup> Thinking about the world, as one historian has summarized it, was now assumed to begin with the world; thinking about God was to begin with the study of man; and the study of revelation was to rest upon the foundation of nature.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 2, p. 521; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 50. Not all shared this optimism; for e.g. see R.M. Wiles, "Felix qui...: standards of happiness in eighteenth-century England," *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. LVIII (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire les Delices, 1967), pp. 1857-67.

<sup>18</sup> Cragg, *Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, p. 227.

<sup>19</sup> Willey, *Christianity Past and Present*, p. 94f. In summarising the new role reason assumed during this period, Robert M. Grant and David Tracy concluded that by insisting on the rationality of faith, the church had encouraged the development of rational opposition: "Now human reason turned to attack authority and to insist on its own freedom", *Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 100.

<sup>20</sup> Mark A. Noll, "Jonathan Edwards, Moral philosophy, and the secularization of American Christian Thought: Two Important Books," *Reformed Journal* (February, 1983): 26.

The dawning of the "Age of Reason" brought with it a movement away from dogmatism towards moralism. Religion began to be reduced to a rational assent to a standard of doctrine and morals. A Christianity that was first peaceable rather than turbulent was desired. To be truly Christian meant to be virtuous. Religion was quickly reduced to ethics, while God, according to Gerald Cragg, "remained discreetly in the background as a kind of honorary president of the universe that he had made."<sup>21</sup> Although a belief in God was maintained, by the end of the seventeenth century, he was the "product of rational proof," distant and impersonal.<sup>22</sup> What was left was a bald theism. This extreme position was not, however, widely accepted at first. Between the old orthodoxy and this bald new theism lay many other positions which to a greater or lesser degree indicated a dramatic change in the apprehension of what religion truly was. If Christianity was to survive at all, some thought, it would have to undergo certain essential changes, an adaptation which could only come about as religion passed through the purifying flames of reason and free rational enquiry. For others, the survival of religion would be sought in the preservation of Scriptural authority and the defence of creed and confession.

Summing up his study of England during this period, Gerald Cragg concludes, that the altered character of religious thought and the ascendancy of reason in the affairs of religion was the single most striking feature in England of the period from 1660 to the middle of the eighteenth century, and of the many changes this involved none was more "striking than the overthrow of Calvinism."<sup>23</sup> The rise in confidence in man's own

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<sup>21</sup> Cragg, *Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, p. 230.

<sup>22</sup> Cragg, *Church in the Age of Reason*, p. 76.

<sup>23</sup> Cragg, *Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, pp. 13, 225.

powers of will and reason that had advanced the idea of human autonomy beyond previous traditional limits, effectively aided in driving the once dominant Calvinism into eclipse. For Scotland and New England with their continuing Calvinistic emphasis, this was one of the most alarming features of the new thinking.<sup>24</sup> One of the long-term effects of the Enlightenment's impact on Scottish religion was the gradual secularisation of its culture reflected in a de-emphasis on the corporate vision of a godly commonwealth fed by National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant to a conception in which the individual would play a larger role.

A new and intensified critique of true religion that would irrevocably change the religious contours of Europe and America had begun.<sup>25</sup> For all the attempts of conservative elements to insulate themselves from the new liberal ideas, eighteenth

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<sup>24</sup> John Leith suggests that the failure of Puritanism to establish a new church order also contributed to the fading influence of Reformed theology in England. Calvinism continued to survive, however, in the dissenting Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches. See, *Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> The idea of "true religion" can be traced to the reformers of the 16th century, particularly Luther and Calvin. For them "true religion" referred to personal piety in terms of an individual relationship with God. However, by the seventeenth century the idea began to be applied more broadly to indicate a system of doctrine. See Christopher B. Kaiser, *The Doctrine of God, An Historical Survey* (Westchester, Illinois: Cross Way Books, 1982), p. 102f. By the beginning of the eighteenth century it had evolved into a quest that was picked up and pursued most seriously by the evangelical community that was just emerging in Britain and the American colonies. Other terms such as "vital," "real," and "serious" were also used to convey the idea of true religion. The only treatment of the subject that I have been able to discover is found in Jaroslav Pelikan's *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (since 1700)*, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol.5 (Chicago: University of Chicago Pr., 1991), pp. 101-17. However, the following studies have been helpful in tracing the idea, especially within the eighteenth century. For Scotland: see, J.K. Cameron, "The Church of Scotland in the Age of Reason," in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol.LVIII (Geneva: Institut et Musee Voltaire Les Delices, 1967), pp. 1939-51, and "Theological Controversy: A Factor in the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment," in *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, eds. R.H. Campbell and Andrew S. Skinner (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982) pp. 116-30; Stewart Mechie, "The Theological Climate in Early Eighteenth Century Scotland," in *Reformation and Revolution*, ed. Duncan Shaw (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Pr., 1967), pp. 258-72; W.R. Ward, "Orthodoxy, Enlightenment and Religious Revival," in *Faith and Faction* (London: Epworth Press, 1993), pp. 16-37. For America: see, Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds. James W. Smith and A Leland Jamison (Princeton: P.U.P., 1961), pp. 232-66; and Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 5-111.

century Scotland and New England would be marked by the same intense enquiry and quest for a true understanding of the nature of religious faith.

Following the Revolutionary settlement in 1690 the new ideas that had already replaced Calvinism south of the border and raised reason to a place that pushed God and the Bible to the background, began to penetrate and spread their rationalistic, moralistic, and in some cases anti-religious sentiments within Scotland.<sup>26</sup> To begin with religious toleration was not only to be encouraged but was now expected.<sup>27</sup> “A calm and peaceable procedure” was anticipated by the King to characterize the Church’s affairs. “We never could be of the mind,” said William in his message to the General Assembly in October 1690, “that violence was suited to the advancing of true religion;...Moderation is what religion enjoins, neighbouring churches expect from, and we recommend to you.”<sup>28</sup> These were foreign words to the religious ears of late seventeenth-century Scotland, and though they were not immediately heeded, certain pressures would soon be brought to bear that would turn a prevailing attitude of intolerance to one of toleration.<sup>29</sup> For

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<sup>26</sup> Cameron, “Church of Scotland in the Age of Reason,” p. 1940; John Clive, “The Social Background of the Scottish Renaissance,” in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century*, eds., N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), p. 226; H.F. Henderson, *The Religious Controversies of Scotland* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), p. 2. Because the focus of this study is the role Jonathan Edwards played in Scotland and not New England, greater attention has been given to developing the Scottish context.

<sup>27</sup> The emphasis on toleration was in part due to the rise of natural religion, which tended to reduce the essence of religious faith to its bare essentials; for e.g. see Cragg’s summary of Lord Herbert of Cherbury’s fundamental religious truths, in, *Church in the Age of Reason*, p. 77.

<sup>28</sup> *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842*, repr. from the Original edition (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Co., 1843), p. 222. Hereafter cited as *AGA*. In part what was being advanced was the idea that true religion can only be properly propagated by moderate means. The notion of toleration was furthered fostered during the reign of George I, when Sir Robert Walpole’s principle of *quieta non movere* began to dominate Church and State; see A Skevington Wood, *The Extinguishable Blaze: Spiritual Renewal and Advance in the Eighteenth Century* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1960), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> James K. Cameron claimed that “In the last decade of the 17th century, Church and State in Scotland, in their exercise of their co-ordinate powers, were seeking to effect a policy of intolerance unknown in its severity in the second half of the 16th century, in their efforts to establish what they both regarded as a

example the Toleration Act of 1712 would encourage a more broad-minded and liberal religious outlook.<sup>30</sup>

More than simply a change of religious attitude, however, was in the making. As we have seen, England had more ideas than religious toleration to export, and these other ideas were in time to make a more significant impact on the thinking of the Scottish Kirk. Accompanying the rise of reason was the spirit of free rational inquiry. The spirit of free enquiry which would distinguish Scotland in the eighteenth century marked a dramatic shift in attitude from that which punctuated much of the seventeenth century. Intolerance of deviant beliefs then characterized the attitude of the church. Speculative thinking was not encouraged, and beyond the rudiments of Aristotelianism there was little philosophy taught. The university curriculum was narrowly, rather than broadly defined.<sup>31</sup>

However, by the end of the seventeenth century the intellectual currents that were gripping Europe were beginning to make their presence felt in Scotland. Up to 1660 Scotland was universally resistant to the new thinking which had introduced a new conception of religious thinking and authority. The following four decades, however,

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'Christian society"', in "Scottish Calvinism and the Principle of Intolerance," in *Reformation Perennis: Essays on Calvin and the Reformation*, eds. B.A. Gerrish and Roberto Benedetto (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1981), p. 125; see as well, Michael Hunter, "'Aikenhead the Atheist': The Context and Consequences of Articulate Irreligion in the Late Seventeenth Century," in *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, Michael Hunter and David Wootton, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 221-54.

<sup>30</sup> Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, p. 233. It is worth noting that Torrance suggests that the Westminster tradition served to blunt the more tolerant spirit of the Scots Confession (1560) that informed the pre-Westminster Church of Scotland, *Ibid.*, p. 127. Moreover, "...the product of a formidable Protestant scholasticism, the *Westminster Confession* was," according to Torrance, "also a socio-political instrument designed to give rational doctrinal cohesion to the participating Churches of the Commonwealth, both in order to strengthen their Protestant stance against the Church of Rome, and to bring about a rather Rome-like uniformity of religion in the British Isles--there must be only 'one face of the Kirk,'" *Ibid.*, p. 126. John Leith, *Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, p. 136, echoes this judgement: "In places it knows too much about God and God's will, and lacks both the generosity of the Second Helvetic and the personal and experiential warmth of the Scots and Second Helvetic confessions." Not all, however, hold to this interpretation. For e.g. see Sinclair B. Ferguson, "Westminster Assembly and Documents,"

<sup>31</sup> Smout, *History of the Scottish People*, p. 451-53, 479; Cameron, "Church of Scotland in the Age of Reason," p. 1940.

witnessed a gradual shift. Descartes's mechanism and Hobbes's physical theories at first were generally rejected as harbingers of atheism. Within two decades such resistance gave way to acceptance, opening the way for Newton. From 1660 to 1690 and through to the first decade of the eighteenth century Scotland moved from Aristotle to Cartesianism to Newtonianism.<sup>32</sup> What is important to notice here, is that the main reason advanced for resisting these ideas was the perceived threat to Christianity.<sup>33</sup> In fact, Newtonianism found acceptance because it did not carry with it the "atheistic implications of mechanism" that were identified with Cartesianism.<sup>34</sup> With the gradual acceptance of these new ideas came a change not only in the perception of the nature of the ideas but also of the nature of religion itself.

In the wake of the acceptance of free rational enquiry came a distrust of religious 'enthusiasm'. Extravagance or excess in any area had now become suspect, but especially that of a religious nature. Unregulated emotions were feared as a force "unpredictable and beyond control," and were looked upon as responsible for much of the horror of the Restoration. Enthusiasm was viewed as the archenemy of an orderly and peaceful life, calculated to lead persons away from an "intelligent comprehension of truth."<sup>35</sup> Enthusiasts were generally religiously devout, claiming a close, warm and

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<sup>32</sup> Christine M. Shepherd, "Newtonianism in Scottish Universities in the Seventeenth Century," *Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, R.H. Campbell and Andrew S. Skinner, eds. (Edinburgh: John MacDonald, 1982), pp. 65-85.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp. 66, 71, 76, 78, 79, 82.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 82. The Cambridge Platonists, Ralph Cudworth (1617-88) and Henry More (1614-87), were central figures in exposing the atheistic assumptions underlying the mechanism of Descartes. See Ralph Cudworth, *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London, 1678), and Henry More, *Enchiridion Ethicum* (London, 1667; English translation, *An Account of Virtue: or Dr. Henry More's Abridgement of Morals*, London 1690), and *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (London, 1671).

<sup>35</sup> Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, p. 31, 64-65; R.A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), pp.1-8; for Edwards's side of the Atlantic see David S. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World, Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985).

highly experiential brand of religion whose zeal often took them beyond the accepted lines of religious convention. Distrust of enthusiasm ran high in Scotland by the 1730's and reached a high point during the revivals of the early 1740's. Informed by the Scottish Enlightenment, anti-revivalists of the Church of Scotland routinely dismissed the transatlantic revivals of the 1740's as blatantly enthusiastic.<sup>36</sup>

One of the results of the intellectual revolution known as the Enlightenment was the rise of a wide spectrum of theological positions. To begin with the Cambridge Platonists, who flourished in England during the middle of the seventeenth century, offered a restatement of Christianity in which reason was the judge of both natural and revealed religion, God was understood as the 'Idea of the Good,' and salvation was defined in terms of being morally correct.<sup>37</sup> It was not their intent to destroy the Christian faith but to give it an interpretation intellectually consistent with reason and possessing spiritual integrity. Their desire was to protect the faith from the ravages of atheism and superstition.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless their emphasis effectively undercut the prevailing theology of the day, notably Calvinism. The successors of the Cambridge Platonists were the Latitudinarians. While they lacked the genius of their predecessors, they followed them in championing reason and emphasising morality. Tired and fearful of all forms of fanaticism and enthusiasm, they advocated a religion of common sense

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<sup>36</sup> See *The Scots Magazine*, 1740-1743, et. al.; and "Preface," *The Christian Monthly History: or an Account of the Revival and Progress of Religion, Abroad and at Home* (Edinburgh: R. Fleming and A. Alison, 1743): 3-5, hereafter cited as *CMH*; and Ian D.L. Clark, "Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1805 (PhD. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1963), pp. 190-95. Cf. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, p. 8, and J.H.S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 291, 295.

<sup>37</sup> Cragg, *Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, pp. 37-60. While this definition serves in a general way to define those known as the Cambridge Platonists, it must be kept in mind that among themselves they represented a broad spectrum of opinion; for e.g. see the very fine anthology edited by Gerald Cragg, *The Cambridge Platonists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>38</sup> Cragg, *Church and the Age of Reason*, pp. 69-70.

whose sympathies steered away from Calvinism and leaned toward Arminianism.<sup>39</sup>

Unlike the Cambridge Platonists who were university teachers, the Latitudinarians were highly influential churchmen. Although their intention was to provide a more enlightened and practically useful kind of Christianity, the vagueness of their doctrinal position contributed to the increasingly unstable theological environment.

The eclipse of Calvinism in England created an atmosphere where Arminianism could develop relatively unhindered. In contrast to its predecessor Calvinism, Arminian theology sat easier on enlightened sensibilities. The Calvinist interpretation of the fall, original sin and the atonement appeared harsh and unreasonable. Arminianism, for many, successfully mitigated these doctrines. By the early seventeenth century the theological tenets of Arminianism had made their way to England from the Continent, but it was not until the latter half of the century that the influence of the new theological position increased significantly.<sup>40</sup> Scotland was also aware of its influence at an early stage. One historian is of the opinion that several of the Aberdeen Doctors were either clearly Arminian in their views or at least sympathetic to the new ideas.<sup>41</sup> An Act of the General Assembly in 1690 reflected alarm at the spread of Arminianism in England and its

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<sup>39</sup> Cragg, *Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, pp. 61-86.

<sup>40</sup> David L. Edwards, *Christian England: From the Reformation to the 18th Century*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 188-89; 267. Arminianism takes its name from the theological system of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). After his death his followers issued in 1610 a Remonstrance, outlining the theological system of Arminianism. The Remonstrance contravened Calvinism on five central points. This led to the Synod of Dort (1618-19) which condemned the five points of the Remonstrance with a five point refutation of their own. Although condemned, by the second quarter of the sixteenth century a measure of toleration had been achieved.

<sup>41</sup> John MacLeod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), pp. 63-65. The Aberdeen Doctors were a group of early seventeenth century Scottish divines who took their degrees from Kings College, Aberdeen. They opposed the National Covenant (1638) and actively supported episcopacy. See Donald Macmillan, *The Aberdeen Doctors* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909); G.D Henderson, *The Burning Bush*, pp. 75-93; David Stevenson, *Kings College Aberdeen, 1560-1641: From Protestant Reformation to Covenanting Revolution* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990).

entrance into Scotland.<sup>42</sup> Not only was Arminianism viewed as a threat to Scotland's Calvinist position, but also to the Presbyterian form of government.<sup>43</sup>

Further along the theological spectrum following the Enlightenment emphasis on the natural or rational religion came Deism, Unitarianism, and ultimately Atheism. At the turn of the eighteenth century Deism posed the greatest threat and received most attention.<sup>44</sup> Although it was the intention of both the Cambridge Platonists and the Latitudinarians to protect the Christian faith from the destructive tendencies of Deism, to some they appeared to encourage its development by their own emphasis on the role of reason in religion. The most effective response to the threat posed by Deism was Joseph Butler's (1692-1752), *The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, published in 1736 at the height of the movement's influence.<sup>45</sup> Scotland also responded to the Deist influence, but not with the confrontational force of Butler's *Analogy*, but by the use of ecclesiastical legislation.<sup>46</sup>

The rise of these new intellectual currents and the concurrent eclipse of Calvinism south of the border, received a mixed response in Scotland during the first part of the eighteenth century. Tired of the incessant religious controversies that had dominated the previous century, and faced with new opportunities of trade and commerce and increased

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<sup>42</sup> *AGA 1638-1842* (Edinburgh: Church Law Society, 1843), p. 225.

<sup>43</sup> Cameron, "Theological Controversy," p. 117. In England, the Reformed faith lived with Episcopal polity until 1640, when the Puritans sought but failed to establish the Presbyterian church order. Their failure led both to the re-establishment of Episcopal polity and to the waning influence of Calvinism. The overthrow of Calvinism, linked as it was to the establishment of the episcopacy, encouraged the identification of Arminianism with Episcopal polity in the minds of many in Scotland; see Leith, *Introduction to Reformed Theology*, p. 42.

<sup>44</sup> Mechie, "Theological Climate," p. 258f.

<sup>45</sup> The most influential expressions of the Deistic idea of religion are found in John Toland's, *Christianity not Mysterious* (London, 1695), and Matthew Tindall's, *Christianity as old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1730).

<sup>46</sup> One notable exception was Thomas Halyburton's, *Natural Religion Insufficient, and Revealed Religion Necessary... or, A Rational Enquiry into the Principles of modern Deists* (Edinburgh, 1714).

material prosperity, religious interest for many in Scotland was on the wane.<sup>47</sup> Within the church, however, and especially within the Universities, new interest was stirred by the southern ideas and new questions began to be asked by some that challenged certain aspects of Scotland's religious tradition. For others these developments struck a sombre note. Alerted to the spread and influence of the new ideas and alarmed by their hostility to the accepted doctrinal tenets of the Church as expressed in the Westminster Confession, the Assembly set out to redirect Scotland back to the path of 'pure' and 'undefiled' religion. In 1696 the Assembly passed an "Act against Atheistical Opinions of the Deists: and for establishing the Confession of Faith," as a warning to the church of the spread of Deistic and atheistic teachings and their destructive nature, calling ministers to deal with those who countenanced such unorthodox opinions.<sup>48</sup> The Act was not in response to any particular theological controversy, but rather to an awareness that new and different views of religion were being promoted, especially by the Deists, who "make it their business to overturn and ridicule true and pure religion," and assert "that natural light is sufficient to religion."<sup>49</sup> It was an attempt to insulate the Church from the spreading heresy, by closing the holes through which it was finding access.

For all the Church's efforts the advance of the new religious ideas could not be stopped. Breaches in the Church's defences soon appeared, increasing the tension already

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<sup>47</sup> Smout, *History of the Scottish People*, p. 481; Andrew L. Drummond and James Bullock, *Scottish Church, 1688-1843: The Age of the Moderates* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1973), p. 12; Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> AGA, p. 253; William L. Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union: A History of Scotland from 1695 to 1747* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1905), pp. 218-20. On the spread of Unitarianism in Scotland see, Archibald MacWhirter, "Unitarianism in Scotland," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol. XIII (1959), pp. 101-43; on Atheism, see Hunter and Wootton, eds., *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, pp. 221-54.

<sup>49</sup> AGA, p. 253.

present within the church and issuing in theological controversy.<sup>50</sup> While nothing like the theological upheaval that took place in England existed in Scotland, still the threat was real and set many on edge. In time it caused some to see heresy where there was none, and led them to take refuge in secession.<sup>51</sup> Such tension first manifested itself at the end of the year 1696. Thomas Aikenhead, a student at the University of Edinburgh, was tried and later executed on charges of denying certain fundamental tenets of the faith.<sup>52</sup> The fact that Aikenhead was executed in spite of a full recantation shows just how far some Scots were willing to go at the time to preserve their religion. Several incidences of deposition took place following the execution of Aikenhead, and in 1710 the General Assembly intensified its attempts to protect the church from these liberalizing ideas by passing an “Act for the Preserving and Purity of Doctrine.”<sup>53</sup> Further measures were taken the following year with the adoption of a stricter formula of subscription relative to the Westminster Confession of faith.<sup>54</sup> Notwithstanding these responses, further challenges to the Church’s standards of pure religion were yet to come.

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<sup>50</sup> The key means of infiltration were the Episcopal clergy who remained within the Church following the Settlement, as well as the influx of English officials which followed the Union. See John Tulloch, *The Church of the Eighteenth Century, 1707 to 1800 A.D., St. Giles' Lectures*, first series, *The Scottish Church* (Edinburgh, 1881), p. 259. At this point, I am well aware that the discussion that follows is far from original; for e.g., John Cunningham, *The Church History of Scotland*, vol.2 (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1859), pp. 373-456; Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union*, pp. 220-49; Drummond and Bullock, *Scottish Church*, pp. 25-44; Cameron, “Theological Controversy,” passim, all chart the same territory. However, my purpose in following this well worn path is to place in context the parallels that existed between Edwards’s world and that of Scotland.

<sup>51</sup> Burleigh, *Church History of Scotland*; see his chart at the end of the book entitled, “Divisions and Reunions of the Scottish Church, 1690-1929.”

<sup>52</sup> Michael Hunter, “‘Aikenhead the Atheist’”, *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, pp. 221-54; John Cunningham, *Church History of Scotland*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1859), pp. 313f; Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union*, pp. 220ff.

<sup>53</sup> Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union*, pp. 222-223; Cameron, “Theological Controversy,” p. 118.

<sup>54</sup> With the advent of William the Orange to throne and the re-establishment of Presbyterian Church government, the Westminster Confession of Faith, first ratified by the General Assembly in 1648, was again recognised in 1690 as “the public and avowed confession” of the Church of Scotland. The formula of subscription of 1711 was a revision of the one enacted in 1694. At their ordination ministers were required to sign the formula: “I do hereby declare, that I do sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of faith...to be the truths of God; and I do own the same as the confession of my faith.”

In 1717, John Simson, professor of Divinity at Glasgow, was accused of teaching Arminian tenets in his lectures to students, calling into question man's total dependence on grace, attributing too much to man's corrupt nature, declaring that man's happiness here and in the life to come was the chief end of the Gospel, and holding to an unduly optimistic view of salvation for the heathen by asserting that more of mankind would be saved than lost.<sup>55</sup> Such teaching was antithetical to the Kirk's Calvinist standards. An investigation into the charges led, in 1717, to his being acquitted. He was warned, however, to avoid expressions that assigned too much to natural reason and to man's corrupt nature, which served to undercut the essential role of revelation and the Calvinist doctrine of free grace.<sup>56</sup>

The following year James Hog, minister of Carnock, reprinted the English work *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*,<sup>57</sup> in an attempt to call attention to the need to steer a middle course between Antinomianism and Legalism, and to aid in showing the way of obtaining "gospel holiness" by properly distinguishing between law and grace. Its printing and promotion by a number of evangelical minded ministers came as a result of the Assembly condemning the proposition, that "It is not sound and orthodox to teach that

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<sup>55</sup> Henderson, *The Religious Controversies of Scotland*, p. 5; Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union*, p. 225f.

<sup>56</sup> Burleigh, *Church History of Scotland*, pp. 287-88. The concern that the "doctrines of grace" were at risk of being neglected by the church was soon to be taken up by the Scottish revivalists. See for example, Preface, *CMH*, pp. 28-31. Eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicals routinely made mention of the "Reformed doctrines of grace," or the "doctrines of grace." In the context of this study "Reformed doctrines of grace" refers to a Calvinist, as opposed to an Arminian, understanding of soteriology. As used by the Scottish revivalists it involves man's guilt and corruption and impotence and resultant complete dependence upon the electing grace of God for salvation, which is imparted through the regenerating work of the Spirit of God and free justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ. Moreover, this gospel is to be freely offered to all. See for e.g. chapter 3, p. 128.

<sup>57</sup> Written by Edward Fisher and first published in England in 1645 under the title, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity; first part touching the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace with their use and end, both in the time of the Old Testament and in the time of the New, clearly describing the way of eternal life by Jesus Christ*. For the edition used in this study, see, *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, ed. C.G. M'Crie (Glasgow, 1902).

we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ and instating us in covenant with God," which had been written up by the Presbytery of Auchterarder for subscription by those seeking to be licensed.<sup>58</sup> The Marrowmen, as the promoters of the book were called, believed that this seventeenth century Puritan work commended true heart religion and proved an excellent antidote to the legalistic tendencies that had crept into the Church and were making their way into the pulpit. In contrast, the Assembly viewed the book as a danger to true religion, and in 1720 passed an Act prohibiting ministers to have anything to do with the book, condemning its theology as Antinomian and contrary to the Scriptures and the Confession. The Marrow controversy occupied the attention of the Assembly for more than a decade, during which additional issues were raised by members of the Marrow party, the most prominent of which was that of patronage. This last point eventually led in 1733 to the secession of a number of prominent ministers from the Established Kirk who soon after formed the Associate Presbytery.<sup>59</sup>

In 1726, John Simson was again charged with heresy, this time for promoting Arianism. Investigations into the charges continued to the year 1729, when the Assembly resolved to suspend him and recommended that he no longer be employed as a theological teacher.<sup>60</sup> It must be admitted that Simson was something of a theological anomaly, yet he is significant in showing how far, in this case, unorthodox notions had penetrated into Scotland by the first few decades of the eighteenth-century.

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<sup>58</sup> Burleigh, *Church History of Scotland*, p. 288.

<sup>59</sup> AGA, p. 536. The most comprehensive study of the Marrow Controversy to date is, David C. Lachman, *The Marrow Controversy* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1988); see also Donald Beaton, "The 'Marrow of Modern Divinity' and the Marrow Controversy," in, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1926), pp. 112-34; Thomas M' Crie, "Account of the Controversy respecting the Marrow of Modern Divinity," *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, 30 (Edinburgh, 1831): 539-51, 687-99, 811-26; and n.s. 1 (Edinburgh, 1832): 73-94.

<sup>60</sup> Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union*, pp. 232-35.

Finally the series of controversies terminated with the Assembly's investigation of charges against Archibald Campbell, professor of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History at St. Andrews. The accusations revolved around several of Campbell's writings in which he argued against the Deists for the necessary role of revelation in arriving at a sufficient knowledge of the Christian faith. Exception was taken to several of his positions which the Committee for the Purity of Doctrine reduced to four. The first, that man was unable to "find out the being of God" by his own natural powers, was thought to question the truth of natural religion. Secondly, Campbell had proposed that the law of nature was sufficient to lead "rational minds to happiness." This appeared to imply that a revelation of the person and work of Christ, and faith in him, was unnecessary for fallen man's happiness. Furthermore, self-love was claimed to be the "sole principle and motive of all virtuous and religious actions," placing the 'glory of God' as merely a subordinate end. And finally, during the period between Christ's death and resurrection, Campbell stated that the Apostles believed Jesus was a "cheat and imposter." After hearing Campbell's own explanation of his meaning, the Assembly was satisfied that Campbell had no intention of bringing into question the concerns raised by the Assembly. No formal judgment was made, only a warning to Campbell and to all ministers and teachers of divinity to guard against ambiguous expressions or propositions which may be used to lead others into error.<sup>61</sup>

The importance of Campbell in Scotland's quest for true religion lies in the fact that, rather than taking refuge in conventional apologetics, he sought to confront the rising tide of heretical religious understanding by attacking them on their own ground. In

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<sup>61</sup> AGA, pp. 638-39. See also Cunningham, *Church History of Scotland*, pp. 446-48.

coming to terms with these critical issues, he marks a significant shift in Scotland's quest for preserving true religion by endeavoring to do so on the basis of a more "Enlightened" Christianity.<sup>62</sup>

In his article entitled "Theological Controversy: A Factor in the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment," James Cameron concludes, that not only were the religious controversies of the early eighteenth century a fundamental factor in helping shape the religious history of Scotland, they were also an important factor in "helping to create a liberalizing atmosphere in which the spirit of enlightenment could thrive."<sup>63</sup> He charts the relentless march of reason and free rational inquiry into the halls of theology and the Church through these controversies, and concludes that they helped "the Church to reconsider its attitude to the theological formulation of its doctrine in its subordinate standards, to reassess the place of creeds and confessions, and to consider at the deepest level its attitude to contemporary philosophy."<sup>64</sup> Such a reassessment resulted in a growing doctrinal complexity within the Church of Scotland, one in which doctrinal orthodoxy began to be combined with enlightened learning. In the concern to preserve its doctrinal standards, however, the Church of Scotland failed to maintain its unity.

The infusion of a highly rational element into the religious equation in Scotland that created controversy and encouraged the growth of liberal ideas, also helped to foster division. Different theological subgroups emerged from the controversies, each one representing a different understanding of what was needed to preserve 'pure' and

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<sup>62</sup> Campbell is an early example of what Clark has described as the moderate spirit, in "Moderatism and the Moderate Party," pp. viii-ix. Cameron states that the Church of Scotland was unprepared at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century to encourage a spirit of free inquiry; yet by the end of the eighteenth century much of the unwillingness and unpreparedness was overcome, "The Church of Scotland in the age of Reason," pp. 1939-51.

<sup>63</sup> Cameron, "Theological Controversy," p. 128.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

‘undefiled’ religion.<sup>65</sup> The dominant position at the beginning of the eighteenth century was made up of those who tended to insulate themselves from the influence of the new ideas altogether. For my purposes I have chosen to call them Old School Calvinists.<sup>66</sup> Rather than confront the new ideas on their own ground, they emphasised, instead, the Church’s standards as expressed in the seventeenth century and required their rigid observance. This siege-like mentality in time only helped to encourage a legalistic understanding of the faith.<sup>67</sup> They were opposed both to Simson and the Marrowmen. In their reaction to what they considered the Antinomianism of the Marrowmen, they tended to stress obligatory adherence to the external duties of religion to the neglect of the role of ‘grace’. While they saw themselves as fighting for the preservation of true religion, others believed their actions effectively undercut the essentials of the faith. Their influence can be seen waning as early as the third decade of the eighteenth-century.<sup>68</sup>

Another group appeared about this time, which the contemporary historian Robert Wodrow identified as Arminian and called ‘Neu-lights and Preachers Legall.’<sup>69</sup> These were the rationalist avant garde of the early eighteenth century and represented the New School Calvinists in contrast with the Old School.<sup>70</sup> They had imbibed the spirit of

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<sup>65</sup> The following ecclesiastical groupings follow the basic pattern set forth by Stewart Mechie in his article, “Theological Climate,” pp. 258-72.

<sup>66</sup> Mechie identifies them as “Scholastic Calvinists,” in “Theological Climate,” p. 267f; however, I have chosen to use ‘Old School’ because of their lineal connection with the seventeenth-century covenanting tradition, and to distinguish them from the emerging “New school” that seriously engaged the new thinking of the Enlightenment.

<sup>67</sup> See Mechie, *Ibid.*, pp. 267-68; Cameron, “Theological Controversies,” p. 118;

<sup>68</sup> The Old School Calvinists’ concern and fear of the suspected antinomianism of the Marrowmen on the one hand, and Arminian and Arian tendencies of Simson on the other, helped foster a legal attitude that served to blunt their Puritan heritage of heart religion so evident in their predecessors.

<sup>69</sup> Henry Sefton, “‘Neu-lights and Preachers Legall’: some observations on the beginnings of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland,” *Church, Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929*, ed. Norman McDougall (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983), p. 190.

<sup>70</sup> I have chosen to call this group ‘New School Calvinists’ as opposed to either Sefton’s ‘early Moderates’ (see “‘Neu-lights and Preachers Legall’”), or Mechie’s ‘Liberal Calvinists’ (see “Theological Climate,” p. 271), because to begin with, their particular theological agenda was not only a response to the challenge

the age more than most and sought to introduce into the discipline of theology the same sense of free rational enquiry that was being applied to philosophy and the sciences.<sup>71</sup> They held to the confessional standards of the Church of Scotland, but insisted on the necessity of “impartial enquiry in matters of religion.” “Only an impartial inquiry,” said Robert Wallace, “can preserve Religion in any measure of purity.”<sup>72</sup> Wallace, like Archibald Campbell, was convinced that what was needed was not a retreat into the seventeenth century, but an effort to meet the contemporary challenges to Scotland’s standards of faith on their own ground. Like the Cambridge Platonists in earlier times, they were convinced that reason and religion were compatible. To resist reason’s role in religion was to weaken the faith. Reason, if rightly applied would prove them correct. The burden of their apologetic was to make Christianity intellectually respectable. They were well aware of the growth of unbelief in their time and sought through their sermons and essays to show the truth and excellence of the Christian faith.<sup>73</sup> Broad minded and more often than not big hearted, they retained a deep pastoral concern.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, in their attempt to make clear the reasonableness of Scotland’s faith, they tended to place more emphasis on reason than revelation and (for reasons different from the Old School Calvinists) to reduce religion to morality.<sup>75</sup>

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presented by Enlightenment thinking, but also a reaction to the Old School Calvinists’s unwillingness to take up that challenge, and secondly, while they may be considered moderate in their theological views, they remained distinct from those Moderates who came to power in the middle of the eighteenth-century. Finally, I am hesitant to label them ‘liberal’ because of their allegiance to the confessional standards of the Church, with the possible exception of William Wishart. Sher makes a similar observation in *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, p. 153.

<sup>71</sup> Sefton, “Neu-lights and Preachers Legall,” pp. 190-93.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191,192f.

<sup>73</sup> Henry R. Sefton, “The Early Development of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland,” (PhD Thesis, University. Glasgow, 1962), pp. 204-13.

<sup>74</sup> Sefton, “*Ibid.*”, pp. 196-203.

<sup>75</sup> Henderson, *The Burning Bush*, p. 139; and Mechie, “Theological Climate,” p. 271. It is likely that the moralistic element in the ministries of these men was viewed by Wodrow as betraying Arminian tendencies.

James Hog's republication of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* was, in part, an attempt at reintroducing the Reformation notion of grace that he and other evangelical minded churchmen believed was being jeopardized by the Old School Calvinists who controlled the Assembly. Their concern was increased when the Assembly, in 1720, condemned the book. In this act their worst fears were realised; the covenants of law and grace were being confused, and the emphasis on the former was encouraging an 'Old Testament' spirit to the loss of a deep sense of the inwardness of religion.<sup>76</sup> They also questioned the New School Calvinists' emphasis on reason in religion, sensing that for them it was more a matter of the head than the heart and, therefore, something which encouraged the tendency to set external adherence above an inward assent of the heart to God. These supporters of the Marrow position represented the emergence of a fresh evangelical ethos in Scotland whose primary concern was to re-establish the evangelical preaching of the Reformed doctrines of grace.<sup>77</sup> They understood religion fundamentally to consist in a change of heart brought about by the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit in response to personal faith. Over against the Old and New School Calvinists, these evangelicals believed that the mere preaching of moral duty was not enough to make men holy; union with Christ was the source and fountain of the believer's sanctification, and preaching that revealed Christ to this end and which exposed the 'root' and 'spring' of sin, was indispensable.

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<sup>76</sup> "Representation and Petition," in *Gospel Truth Accurately Stated and Illustrated, ..., Occasioned by the Republication of the Marrow of Modern Divinity*, Collected by John Brown (Glasgow: Blackie Fullerton, & Co., 1831), pp. 176-89. See also, Mechie, "Theological Climate," p. 260f; and Beaton, "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," pp. 112-34.

<sup>77</sup> David Bebbington has demonstrated the emergence of a new evangelicalism generally in Britain at this time, in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 20-74; for Scotland see, McIntosh, "The Popular Party in the Church of Scotland," pp. 63f, 458-59, 469; and Philip Graham Ryken, "Thomas Boston (1676-1732) as Preacher of the Fourfold State" (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford, 1995), pp. 45-46, 237-241.

In addition, these evangelicals were active promoters of revival piety, and unlike the Old School Calvinists, combined adherence to doctrinal orthodoxy with Enlightened learning. Rather than hiding their head in the sand, they responded to the contemporary thinking of their day and utilized it to express their theological positions.<sup>78</sup> Reason and religion were indeed compatible. But however useful the role of reason was in coming to understand the truth, it could not make one holy, that was to say, morally right before God. To put the head before the heart was to undermine the true nature of the Christian faith.

The Marrow controversy which helped to identify and to a certain extent consolidate the evangelical front, later played the part of an Achilles heel. For the most outspoken of the Marrowmen, the issues at hand were of the essence of true religion, and the opinions handed down to them from the Assembly, they believed, placed them in jeopardy. As the controversy dragged on the increasing insistence on the part of patrons to exercise their rights further aggravated the situation. From the marrowmen's perspective, the rights of patron's interfered with the Kirk's independent jurisdiction and potentially threatened the preservation of true religion of vacant parishes by the imposition of unorthodox ministers.<sup>79</sup> Both the Marrowmen and the Assembly proved intractable in their opinions, and in 1733, a small but significant group of ministers

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<sup>78</sup> Ned C. Landsman, "Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity in Scottish Evangelical Culture," *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment*, p. 30f; McIntosh, "The Popular Party in the Church of Scotland," pp. iv, 458, 465, 469; James Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1560-1750* (Edinburgh: John Knox Pr., 1982), pp. 33-34.

<sup>79</sup> The point I am suggesting here is that there is perhaps a more direct connection between the originally theological issues that gave rise to the Marrow controversy and the ecclesiastical issue of patronage that finally led the marrowmen to secede in 1733. What ultimately was perceived to be at stake in both cases was the preservation of true religion.

seceded from the Established Kirk, and set themselves up as the Associate Presbytery.<sup>80</sup>

While a significant number of other ministers shared the concerns of the Marrowmen, they did not agree that separation was the answer. Attempts made to bring the Secession body back into the fold proved unsuccessful, leaving the evangelical wing of the Church of Scotland divided and its position suspect, effectively weakening its position for the next several decades.<sup>81</sup>

By the middle of the eighteenth century things had changed dramatically. The Old Calvinist front had been effectively silenced. The Evangelicals, while having regained some momentum and increased their confidence at the popular level, still labored under the shadow of the Marrow and Secession image. The New School Calvinists, on the other hand, failed to consolidate their position into a viable party, but helped to prepare the way for the rise of the Moderate party which came to assume a controlling position in the Assembly for most of the second half of the century.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> See, John McKerrow, *The History of the Secession Church* (Glasgow: A. Fullarton & Co., 1841); and David Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church* (Edinburgh, 1886).

<sup>81</sup> Cunningham, *Church History of Scotland*, pp. 434-44.

<sup>82</sup> John McIntosh has shown that those individuals whom I have identified as New School Calvinists, Mechie as Liberal Calvinists, and Sefton, early Moderates, found themselves predominately on the side of the Popular party over the issue of patronage. Theologically they were much more active than the Moderates, and shared many of the same theological concerns as the Evangelicals, though their positions often reflected a more liberal bent. They were a unique grouping of men of an independent turn of mind and disposition, whose thinking failed to fit into a neat ecclesiastical division. I believe that Henry Sefton has confused the issue by treating them as proto-moderates. My reading of Sefton, Mechie, Clark, Sher, and most recently McIntosh suggests that the Moderate party that took control of the General Assembly in the middle of the eighteenth-century was a very different group of men than those I have called New School Calvinists. The latter, I would suggest, while never attaining any cohesive ecclesiastical impact, still exercised a considerable measure of influence over both Moderates and Evangelicals. McIntosh, "Popular Party in the Church of Scotland," pp. 35-55. Richard Sher makes a similar observation when speaking of Robert Wallace and Patrick Cuming: they "never fit comfortably into the new ecclesiastical party structure," *Church and University*, p. 56.

The formation of these different parties represents the keen awareness of Scottish Churchmen concerning the changing religious and theological climate around them and its threat to the very nature of religious truth. Robert Wallace (1697-1771), a prominent minister of the New School party, for example, believed the controversies of the day were not simply about “Rites and Ceremonies, or the Constitution and Model of the Church,” but “about the foundation of Christianity.”<sup>83</sup> Although each party believed that the pure faith was being seriously threatened by this dramatic shift in the religious situation of their day, they differed in what they thought needed to be done and in what they considered to be at stake.<sup>84</sup> The intensity of theological controversy declined during the remaining years of the century, but divergent views continued to prevail, contributing to the changing face of the Scottish Kirk. Two particular views came to the fore during the second half of the century: those of the Moderates, and the New Evangelicals whose roots lay with the Marrowmen. This state of affairs reflects Scotland’s quest for true religion. Their attempt at preserving a proper understanding of true religion found striking parallels in America, and in New England in particular.

Frank Foster begins his history of the New England theology by noting the fundamental connection of New England with the great intellectual ferment and development in Europe. It is remarkable, he says, that “in spite of its apparent and real isolation, the same great periods of theological history are repeated” in New England.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Sefton, “Neu-lights and Preachers Legall,” p. 192

<sup>84</sup> Stewart Mechie draws the same conclusion in relation to the effects of the Marrow controversy. He states that behind it was “considerable divergence in religious apprehension, despite the fact that all professed acceptance of the same theological standards”: see “Theological Climate in Early Eighteenth Century Scotland,” p. 266.

<sup>85</sup> Frank H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), p. 7.

More important for us are the striking parallels that existed between New England and Scotland. As noted above, both Scotland and New England shared a hereditary Calvinism that provided their theological standards. Similarly, the New England colonies, like Scotland, were aware that its doctrinal position was rapidly placing it on the theological periphery;<sup>86</sup> and both struggled to come to grips with the challenges the Enlightenment was placing on their doctrinal perspective.<sup>87</sup> And like Scotland, New England suffered from theological controversy which left several distinct ecclesiastical parties.<sup>88</sup>

Puritan New England shared with Scotland an adherence to the Reformed system of theology contained in the Westminster Confession. Massachusetts adopted the Westminster standards in 1648, just two years after they were issued. Connecticut followed in 1708. Of direct Puritan extraction, New England was thoroughly Calvinistic, committed to the covenantal understanding of the Reformed faith and the thorough reform of Church and State, believed that Scripture should regulate both ecclesiastical structures and personal behaviour, and was dedicated to the practice of piety.<sup>89</sup> Although Scotland developed more or less independently from English Puritanism, it also possessed the same indelible marks of Puritan influence. The Puritan form of Calvinist thought and worship was effectively imported through the ratification of the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643, which united Scotland and England in religious and civil

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<sup>86</sup> Noll, "The Development of Dogma: Scotland and America," p. 51f.

<sup>87</sup> Ahlstrom, "Theology in America," pp. 243-51; Cameron, "Theological Controversy."

<sup>88</sup> Noll, "Development of Dogma," p. 53; Winthrop Hudson, *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life*, Second Edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), pp. 67-82.

<sup>89</sup> See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press., 1972), chapters 6-10, pp. 84-165; Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959); Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

affairs, and through the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. The approval of the Westminster Standards by Parliament on the 20th of June 1648 and their ratification by the General Assembly on August 27, 1647, and again in 1690, formally established the puritan form of Calvinism as the principal doctrinal standard of the Kirk.<sup>90</sup> The strong theological parallels that existed between New England and the Church of Scotland were rooted in a common heritage that was both Reformed and Puritan.

The international movement in religious thought initiated by the Enlightenment had its equivalent in America. Newton's orderly world, where the relation between human knowledge and the external world was regularized, successfully made its way to America and especially to the Colleges of New England, namely, Harvard and Yale. Locke's translation of these scientific ideas into the language of philosophy, psychology, morality, religion, and government also found its way into the halls of the New England colleges. New England's response, like that of Scotland, was at first sceptical. By 1714, news of the new philosophy had come to Yale. But the students were warned that the thinking of such men as Descartes, Boyle, Locke and Newton would corrupt pure religion.<sup>91</sup> Their influence on American religious thinking did in fact contribute to the reassessment of received theological standards, and much of that reassessment originated, as in the case of Scotland, through the influence of Episcopal clergy who brought with

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<sup>90</sup> Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 127, 150f. See also Burleigh, *Church History of Scotland*, pp. 214-25, 304-05; Cunningham, *Church History of Scotland*, vol.2, pp. 80-85; Ian B. Doyle, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Late Covenanting Period," in *Reformation and Revolution*, ed. Duncan Shaw (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1967), pp. 212-36; G.D. Henderson, *The Burning Bush*, pp. 139-50; MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 6-12.

<sup>91</sup> Samuel Johnson (1696-1772), who was engaged in undergraduate studies at Yale in 1714, commented at the time that the students were warned "against thinking anything of them because the new philosophy it was said would soon bring in a new divinity and corrupt the pure religion of the country." Quoted in Wallace Anderson, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 6, p. 13.

them Arminian principles.<sup>92</sup> New England's response was varied. Some took refuge in traditional formulations of Reformed orthodoxy. From others, the new philosophy called forth an "Enlightened" Christianity in an attempt to meet the challenge head on. Still others moved in the direction of assimilation and accommodation.<sup>93</sup>

The revivals that broke out during the 1730s and 1740s in America proved to be the fountainhead of ecclesiastical and theological changes that left the churches of New England both renewed and divided.<sup>94</sup> The revival of the early 1730s faded quickly, but successfully laid the ground work for the more significant revival known as the Great Awakening that burst upon the scene in 1740 under the guidance of Jonathan Edwards and the itinerant preaching ministry of George Whitefield. The particular issues raised in New England and the various positions taken were not dissimilar to those generated by the controversies that Scotland experienced during the same period.

On the positive side the Revival encouraged amongst other things, individual conversion, the resurgence of Calvinism, and a renewed emphasis on experimental piety. Negatively, the Great Awakening sounded the 'death knell' of the ecclesiastical solidarity of New England. Four relatively distinct groups emerged within the New England churches during this period.<sup>95</sup> Two of the groups fall under what American historians have designated the New Lights. These were the proponents of revival. The moderate

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<sup>92</sup> Gerald J. Goodwin, "The Myth of 'Arminian-Calvinism' in Eighteenth-century New England," *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 41 (Mar., 1968), no.1, p. 219f; Foster, *Genetic History*, p. 7f. For Scotland, see above p. 20, n. 51.

<sup>93</sup> Ahlstrom, "Theology in America," pp. 243-45. In addition see Norman Fiering's two very fine books, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-Century Harvard* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), and *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought And Its British Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

<sup>94</sup> *Eerdmans' Handbook to Christianity in America*, eds. Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, etc. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 101.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 115-16.

New Lights were non-separating Congregationalists, who defended the Revival, strove for a renewed Calvinism through a vigorous restatement of its doctrines, insisted on pure churches, and promoted an evangelical impulse. Edwards gave shape to the particular ethos of this group and championed its position. To the left of this group were the radical New Lights who tended to distrust church organization, often viewing it as a hindrance to pure and undefiled religion. Members of this persuasion often formed separatist churches. The more extreme and disruptive manifestations of the Awakening were typically perpetrated by this group.<sup>96</sup>

A third group was constituted by the Old Lights. Clustered mostly around the cultured environment of Boston, the Old Lights, unlike the radical New Lights, regarded ecclesiastical institutions as essential and depended upon them to maintain the social and doctrinal order of their followers. Their uneasiness with the Awakening's emphasis on supernaturalism, and the excessive emotionalism and other extremes that accompanied it, placed them in conflict with the moderate New Lights.<sup>97</sup> Theologically orthodox at the beginning of the Awakening, this group progressively turned in a liberal direction, taking much of New England with it by the end of the eighteenth-century.<sup>98</sup> Charles Chauncey (1705-1787), of the First Church of Boston, embodied the Old Light impulse. His published attacks against the New Lights in general and Jonathan Edwards in particular, sum up the position taken by this third group against the Revival.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> For a reliable account of separatism in New England during and subsequent to the Great Awakening see, C.C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

<sup>97</sup> *Eerdmans Christianity in America*, pp. 116-117, 120; Hudson, *Religion in America*, p. 79; Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers*, p. 80.

<sup>98</sup> Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers*, p. 80f.

<sup>99</sup> The most important were Charles Chauncey, *The Late Religious Commotions in New England Considered* (Boston, 1743) and *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion* (Boston, 1743).

Finally, there were the Old Calvinists who found themselves somewhere in the middle. They, like the Old Lights, feared the socially disruptive effects of the Awakening, but held to a doctrinal position more in line with the moderate New Lights. They did not, however, share the New Light taste for theological wrangling and hair splitting, but rather emphasized the fundamental principles of religion. As the century wore on the Old Calvinists saw their ranks depleted by attrition to either the consistent Calvinism of the New Lights or the modified Calvinism of the Old Lights who were moving towards an “Enlightened” Arminianism.<sup>100</sup>

In comparing Scotland and New England several similarities are apparent. In addition to their shared theological perspective and the common threat to it, they also experienced controversy that produced new and diverse theological and ecclesiastical contours. Both areas saw the rise of new ecclesiastical parties, and while direct parallels in each case cannot be made, there are important similarities between the two. The Old Calvinists of New England played a similar role to that of the Old School Calvinists of Scotland (although theologically the Old Calvinists of New England shared many of the same sentiments as the New School Calvinists of Scotland). New England’s radical New Lights, while quite different from the Seceders of Scotland in regard to their attitude toward ecclesiastical structures, still represented in both areas a radical dissenting group. Also for a time, New England’s Old Lights resembled in many ways the emerging Moderates of Scotland. Both placed much stock in established structures and actively

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<sup>100</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, “The Decline of Calvinism: An Approach to Its Study,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History: An International Quarterly*, vol. 14 (June, 1992): 314; see also Hudson, *Religion in America*, p. 79-80.

legislated against those elements that proved disruptive of right order and stability. On the whole, the Old Lights were theologically more active than Scotland's Moderates, and unlike the Moderates who retained a theologically orthodox exterior, the Reformed orthodoxy of the Old Lights began to wane as early as the 1760s.<sup>101</sup> Most important to this study are the parallels that existed between the Evangelicals of the Church of Scotland and the evangelical New Lights of New England. Both experienced the renewing effects of revival as well as great censorship from the other ecclesiastical parties because of their support for that phenomenon. Both actively used the new patterns of intellectual thought to offer an enlightened defense of orthodox Calvinism. They also stressed and promoted the experimental side of religion. Finally, and of great significance, the two groups conducted an active epistolary relationship between themselves. Most notable were the many letters that passed between Edwards and a number of prominent ministers of his persuasion. These letters would serve as one of several conduits for the transfer of Edwards's ideas to Scotland.

In view of the historical parallels and theological affinities that existed between Scotland and New England, it is not surprising to find that they formally recognized that they shared a common quest. As early as 1700 active steps were taken to forge closer links with each other. In that year the Synod of Glasgow invited the ministers of New England to enter into an active dialogue with them because, as they put it, "you and we

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<sup>101</sup> By the time of his death, Jonathan Mayhew (1720-1766), a Congregationalist pastor of Boston's West Church, had voiced his disbelief in the divinity of Christ, shared an optimistic view of the human condition, and stressed the benign nature of God the Father. Charles Chauncey did not publically make his break with orthodoxy until the 1780s, however, his liberal leanings were evident long before. While there were others who shared the religious liberalism of Mayhew and Chauncey, these two were the most influential and may be considered forerunners of American Unitarianism. See Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers*, p. 80f; and Smith, Handy and Loetscher, *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, vol.1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), pp. 376-83.

are so much united together.”<sup>102</sup> This feeling of accord was strongly reciprocated by New England not long afterwards. In the spring of 1715, the Congregational ministers of Connecticut and Massachusetts, following the pattern of their Scottish and English dissenting brethren, drafted a letter to King George requesting the continuance of their religious liberties, adding that they desired to be viewed as “United Brethren” with the Church of Scotland.<sup>103</sup> What this spirit of cooperation encouraged was a supportive network for their mutual pursuit of true religion.<sup>104</sup>

In summary, the dramatically shifting intellectual atmosphere of Europe that encouraged the role of reason, the belief in a law-governed universe, and which increased man’s own sense of potential for moral and social good, seriously threatened the doctrinal standards of Scotland and New England. Controversy and division increasingly punctuated their once formidable and united ecclesiastical fronts. A new quest for religious understanding had been thrust upon them. The theological battles of the sixteenth century for the Reformed doctrines of grace were once again to be played out in their midst, only this time not against Rome, but against the intoxicating ideas of liberty, progress, and free rational inquiry.

The heart of the Edwards-Scotland Connection was a religious quest which produced striking parallels between the religious communities of Scotland and New England. At its core was an effort on both sides of the Atlantic to re-establish the intellectual and theological integrity of Calvinism within their respective communities

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<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 124.

<sup>103</sup> *MHS*, Collections, 7th series, VIII, pp. 300-303, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>104</sup> See Ned Landsman, “Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity in Scottish Evangelical Culture,” in *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment*, eds. Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey R. Smitten (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 29-45.

and abroad. This quest forged the strong ideological bridge that developed between the evangelical communities of New England and the Church of Scotland in the early part of the eighteenth century and allowed Edwards's concerns to be heard in Scotland and to emerge as something of consequence.

## Chapter Two

### The Quest for True Religion: Edwards and Scottish Evangelicals

The volatile intellectual atmosphere of the seventeenth century produced for many a crisis of faith that set in motion a quest for true religion. As noted in chapter one, many in Scotland and New England viewed these new currents of thought as ominous. While all Christendom was made to bend under the critical eye of free rational inquiry, no Protestant theological tradition suffered more under its judgmental gaze than Calvinism. By the dawn of the eighteenth century Calvinism was increasingly being pushed onto the theological periphery in Europe, leaving the Church of Scotland with the need to clarify and strengthen its theological position before the onslaught of anti-Calvinist forces. Unfortunately, the controversies that plagued the Kirk during the first part of the century did not allow them to do so successfully. In other words, no theological elucidation comparable to the challenges was forthcoming. Even though the Westminster Confession continued to set the doctrinal standards for the Kirk, the need to re-establish Calvinism as a viable expression of the Christian faith in the face of an increasingly skeptical world persisted.

However independent Scottish church leaders perceived themselves to be, under the circumstances they were not averse to seeking help from their New England counterparts. Yet, if Calvinism was to avoid the fate it suffered in England and successfully re-establish itself as a viable expression of the Christian faith, they knew that

more than simply a united front was required. Individuals who could champion the Calvinist cause were needed; theologians who could articulate their position in terms that would successfully take into account the predominant currents of contemporary thought.

Edwards's importance for Scotland comes in at just this point. As we have seen, Edwards laboured within an historical context similar to Scotland's and under comparable theological burdens. More importantly he shared with the defenders of Calvinist orthodoxy a common theological heritage, held to the same Reformed doctrinal standards and used the same religious nomenclature. What set him apart from his contemporaries, however, was that he understood that heritage better than most and perhaps articulated it better in the context of the eighteenth century than anyone else.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, many of the concerns that informed Edwards's own theological agenda were equally important to Scotland, and Edwards's answers to those questions struck a resonant chord, particularly with those ministers of the Church of Scotland that were of an evangelical persuasion. What commended him to them in particular, was his understanding and clear insight into the prevailing intellectual currents of his day, his ability to dismantle the objections of the Deists and their fellow-travellers to the sovereign God of Calvinism, and his understanding of the evangelical ideas of conversion and experimental religion. Furthermore, they identified with his concern for true religion. Few personally internalised the quest for true religion at this time to the extent that Edwards did, and no one wrote more definitively on the subject from a Reformed and evangelical point of view in the eighteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 65; Jenson, *America's Theologian*, p. 3f.

The point to be made in this chapter is that Edwards's connection with Scotland grew up around a set of theological premises which he shared with a prominent group of evangelical ministers from the Church of Scotland. These premises in turn created an ideological bridge that allowed him to write convincingly on the things that were strongly affecting the religious life of the Church of Scotland and to influence in important ways the development of eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicalism. The intent of this chapter, therefore, is to set forth the specifics of the ideological resonance that existed between Edwards and Scotland generally, and Edwards and Scottish evangelicals in particular. To do this I will first develop the specific theological contours that characterized Edwards's religious quest, and conclude by relating them to the theological enterprise of eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicals.

In the "Preface" of his *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Edwards*, Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), one of the few intimate New England friends Edwards claimed, commented that the longer Edwards lived the more convinced he was that much of the world was in the dark about the nature of true religion, and that perhaps no one took "more pains, or labored more successfully" than Edwards to distinguish it from the false religion of his day.<sup>2</sup> John Smith, in his introduction to Edwards's *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, has argued for the same conclusion. Remarking on Hopkins's summary of Edwards's religious bent, he says, "It points to an interest so basic for Edwards that the whole of his thought might be viewed as one magnificent answer to

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Edwards* (Boston, 1765), in David Levin, *Jonathan Edwards: A Profile* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), pp. 2-3.

the question, *What is true religion?*<sup>3</sup> Even the most cursory examination of Edwards's life confirms these judgments, and sets in its broadest context his life and connection with Scotland. Edwards pursued the quest for true religion with four settled convictions. To begin with, true religion was essentially experimental. That is to say, it ultimately consisted in the direct experience of an individual with God that was subject to Scriptural and rational examination aimed at distinguishing true from false piety.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, that it was absolutely dependent upon a sovereign work of divine grace. Thirdly, that rightly understood, modern thinking was not averse to a Calvinist reading of religion. And finally, true religion was inherently evangelistic and missionary: the gospel message was to be freely and aggressively offered to all peoples throughout all the world. Long before Edwards settled in Northampton, these four convictions had become fixed centres of thinking for him.

Some ten years after Edwards had settled in Northampton, he set down his own account of his early religious experiences. The "Personal Narrative",<sup>5</sup> as it has come to be known, contains the principal source of Edwards's thinking about himself. M.X. Lesser has observed that it calls attention to "points of his own choosing," and therefore, "it is there that for him his life begins,"<sup>6</sup> It is here that we also must begin our investigation of Edwards's theological understanding and its ultimate connection with Scotland.

I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change, by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The

<sup>3</sup> John Smith, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> The account was first published in 1765 by Samuel Hopkins, in *Life and Character*, reprinted in Levin, *Jonathan Edwards: Profile*, pp. 24-39. The original manuscript has been lost.

<sup>6</sup> Lesser, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 1.

first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I use [*sic*] to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys; and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I, with some of my school-mates joined together, and built a booth in a swamp, in a very secret and retired place, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and used to be from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element, when engaged in religious duties.<sup>7</sup>

From the time he was a small child his parents had schooled him in the rudiments of the Christian faith and the conception of salvation. To say that his life was conceived in the womb of New England religion and that throughout his boyhood years he drank deeply from its spiritual breast, is to capture the sense of Edwards's own estimation of his years in the parish of East Windsor.

Edwards was born on October 5, 1703 in East Windsor, Connecticut. He was the only son of Timothy Edwards and his wife, who in addition to Jonathan had ten daughters. Jonathan was a third generation New Englander; his greatgrandfather, William, was a tradesman who came to New England from London with his mother and stepfather in 1640, settling in Hartford, Connecticut. William's son Richard, a wealthy merchant, had six children, the oldest of which was Timothy, Jonathan's father. Timothy, an influential Connecticut minister, married Esther Stoddard, the second daughter of the prominent New England minister Solomon Stoddard of Northampton.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Hopkins, *Life and Character*, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> For a much fuller account of Edwards's family background and early years see Ola E. Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940), pp. 5-52.

Solomon Stoddard had graduated from Harvard in 1662 and accepted a call to the parish of Northampton in Massachusetts soon after. From 1669 to his death in 1729, he dominated the religious life of the Connecticut river valley and contested the ecclesiastical leadership of both Increase and Cotton Mather in New England, causing a rift between the valley and Boston.<sup>9</sup> The influence that Stoddard exerted over New England and Northampton in particular played no small role in the subsequent career of his grandson Jonathan.

Edwards received his elementary education from his father who like most New England ministers of the time was the schoolmaster of East Windsor as well as the parish minister. The evidence suggests that Edwards received a first rate education under his father's tutelage. Timothy had graduated from Harvard in 1691 with the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts where also he had distinguished himself in Greek and the Roman classics.<sup>10</sup> He worked hard as a teacher and gave meticulous attention to the prosecution of his son's education. While away serving as a chaplain, he wrote to his wife Esther encouraging her to see that young Jonathan, then only eight years old, diligently pursued his studies, bidding her take "care yt Jonathan dont Loose wt he hath Learned but yt as he hath got ye accidence, & above two sides of 'propria Quae moribus' by heart so yt he keep what he hath got, I would therefore have him Say pretty often to ye Girls."<sup>11</sup> In general the education system in all the colonies, including those of New England, was weaker than the contemporary Scottish equivalent and less integrated into

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<sup>9</sup> Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 36f.

<sup>10</sup> Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), p. 5; and Thomas H. Johnson, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 28 (Dec., 1931): 194.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 40.

the life of the church.<sup>12</sup> But this does not seem to have been the experience of the young Edwards. Not only did Timothy successfully organize his son's studies, he also succeeded in integrating them into the religious life of the community.<sup>13</sup> Although it was not unusual at the time to begin schooling children in the teachings of Scripture at an early age, especially within the Puritan community of New England, still the young Edwards took to it with an uncommon intensity.

The opening paragraph of his "Personal Narrative" above, describes a vivification of religious experience that accompanied a time of religious awakening in his father's parish. During this period, when Edwards was probably eight years old, religious duties came naturally and he seems to have been happiest when involved in spiritual exercises. Although Edwards did not experience any further 'remarkable' period of spiritual awakening until the end of his undergraduate studies at Yale, his religious interests and spiritual sensitivity continued strong through the intervening years prior to his matriculating at Yale. In the oldest extant manuscript in his hand, a letter written at the age of twelve to his sister Mary, he reveals a keen awareness of and interest in the religious activities and spiritual state of his father's parish.

Been a verry Remarkable stirring and pouring out of the Spirrit of God,  
And Likewise now is But I think i have Reason to think it is in Some  
Mesure Through the Wonderfull Mercy and Good[ne]ss of God there  
hath in this Place Diminished but I hope not much. About thirteen  
Have been joyned to the Church in an estate of full Comunion....And  
their are five that are Propounded which Are not added to the  
Church....I think there Comes Commonly a Mondays above thirty  
Persons to Speak with Father about the Condition of their Souls.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Noll, "Development of Dogma: Scotland and America, 1735-1843," p. 3. For a reliable description and assessment of New England education in the seventeenth century, see Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 87-108.

<sup>13</sup> Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 14; Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 43-49.

<sup>14</sup> Written May 10, 1716, reprinted in Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 49-50.

Church and the duties of religion formed the focus of Edwards's boyhood years, and religious conversation and experience became a natural pattern of every day life. His pre-collegiate days were spent cloistered within parish activities, far from the centre of world affairs. What little he knew of the outside world came chiefly through those who not infrequently visited his father's home.<sup>15</sup> His was a provincial upbringing where opportunities for exposure to cosmopolitan interests and cultivated minds was rare indeed.<sup>16</sup> His provinciality, in fact, points to one of the most remarkable aspects of his career. Although he was to depart the parish confines of East Windsor at the age of thirteen, he would never leave rural New England. Nor would he ever enjoy, for any significant length of time, the pleasure of association with the learned and noted of his time. When viewed from the vantage point of access to the centres of learning, Edwards's isolation was real. The apparent disadvantages to the cultivation of the mind did not, however, prove insurmountable. He overcame them at a critical time in his ministry with particular help received from Scotland.

During his years in the religious womb of East Windsor he was greatly affected by the reality of the religious experiences of those within his father's church, and sought himself to enter into those same realities through adherence to religious duty. But Edwards noted later that such strong religious feelings as he experienced during his boyhood days, could prove deceptive. Writing in his "Personal Narrative," Edwards observed that although real in their own way, they did not possess saving grace.<sup>17</sup> The

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<sup>15</sup> Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading," p. 195.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

experience of what he came to describe as true converting grace was still some years off. Yet a pattern had been established. Life and religion had become inseparably intertwined. Edwards's early religious heritage had produced an unquenchable thirst for true spiritual reality.<sup>18</sup> College would effectively bring an end to his boyhood seclusion, but it would not alter his bent toward spiritual truth and his quest for religious reality.

In September, 1716, a month before his thirteenth birthday, and just four months after writing the letter noted above, Edwards entered Yale. His first three years of study were not undertaken in New Haven, but in Wethersfield under the instruction of his cousin Elisha Williams. Dissatisfaction with the situation at New Haven had led a small group of students, of which Edwards was a part, to separate to Wethersfield. Not until June 1719 were the two factions permanently reunited, a process which enabled Edwards and the rest of the Wethersfield contingent to spend their senior year at New Haven under the direction of Timothy Cutler.<sup>19</sup> In September, 1720, Edwards graduated at the top of his class and then remained another two years for graduate study in divinity. In August, 1722, he left to take up his first pastorate in New York.

Edwards's father had prepared him well, and he prosecuted his studies with an uncommon diligence. He was not interested in the social life of the college, tending instead to occupy himself with school obligations, private study and religious duties. He possessed a solitary nature which, observes Winslow, did not fit him well for the "intimately shared life of a small college." Consequently he developed no intimate

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<sup>18</sup> On this point see the very fine article by Wilson H. Kimnach, "Jonathan Edwards's Pursuit of Reality," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience* (New York: O.U.P., 1988), pp. 102-17. What Kimnach calls Edwards's pursuit of reality is in Edwards's terms the pursuit of true religion.

<sup>19</sup> For Edwards's opinion on the matter see his letter dated March 26, 1719 to his sister in Dwight, *Memoirs, Works*, vol. 1, p.xvii.

friendships during his days under Yale's tutelage.<sup>20</sup> While a liability socially, Edwards's disposition was well suited to the long hours of disciplined study that filled his days and nights. His habit of thinking with pen in hand, which had been acquired under his father's instruction, proved an indispensable asset and was put to great use as can be seen in the many private notebooks he kept. Wallace Anderson has suggested that taken together, Edwards's "Miscellanies" alone (which comprise nine manuscript volumes), probably provide one of the most complete and continuous records in existence of the intellectual history of a single person.<sup>21</sup> From this and other private notebooks, Edwards drew material for sermons, lectures and his many published works. When we consider that he never crossed the Atlantic, his early penchant for recording his own thoughts becomes highly significant to the topic of Edwards and Scotland. What influence he exercised outside his parish boundaries and the service he rendered to Scotland came exclusively from his own pen.

The three years spent away from New Haven in Wethersfield did not prove to be a limitation. In fact, it appears that the education the Wethersfield faction received during this period was probably superior to what was available in New Haven.<sup>22</sup> While severe staffing problems plagued New Haven until the fall of 1718 when Daniel Browne was appointed as junior tutor, Wethersfield, on the other hand, was well staffed by tutors whose curriculum followed closely that of Harvard. Edwards evidently thrived under the Wethersfield regime. Towards the end of his undergraduate studies and not long after he had moved to New Haven, Timothy Cutler, rector of the college, wrote to Edwards's

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<sup>20</sup> Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 66, 67. Johnson suggests that Edwards's social temper simply mirrored the reality of his provincial temper, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading," pp. 195-96.

<sup>21</sup> Anderson, "Editor's Introduction" *JE (Yale)*, vol. 6, p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, p. 14.

father praising his son's "promising Abilitys and Advances in Learning."<sup>23</sup> Such abilities as Edwards showed extended beyond Divinity to embrace the fields of Natural Philosophy and even the Arts.

During the early part of the eighteenth century New England, like Scotland, viewed the works of Descartes, Boyle, Locke and Newton skeptically, thinking that with the new philosophy would come a new divinity and the corruption of "pure religion."<sup>24</sup> Consequently Locke and Newton were not taught in any American college before 1718. This picture changed dramatically, however, by the time of Edwards's senior year in 1719. In the fall of 1718, with the opening of the new library in New Haven, the large collection of books sent from England by Jeremiah Drummer became available. In addition to the volumes of Locke and Newton, the Drummer collection contained a wide variety of other recent works of significance in the fields of science, philosophy and rational theology, making it the best library the colonies could offer.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time as the Drummer collection became available, efforts were also being made to modernize the curriculum at New Haven. The Drummer collection together with the new curriculum introduced Edwards to the world of modern thinking on a number of intellectual fronts, and he seized the opportunity with characteristic enthusiasm and diligence.<sup>26</sup> During the next three years he made the best use of what the New Haven educational experience had to offer. He quickly developed an enthusiastic interest in natural philosophy and went far beyond the requirements of the curriculum in

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<sup>23</sup> Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 60.

<sup>24</sup> Anderson, "Introduction," *JE (Yale)*, vol.6, pp. 13, 15.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>26</sup> For the following account of Edwards's educational experience at Yale, I gratefully express my debt to Wallace Anderson's reliable, up to date and prodigious statement of Edwards's collegiate education in his introductory essay to Edwards's *Scientific and Philosophical Writings, JE (Yale)*, vol. 6, pp. 10-27. For an older but helpful account, see Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 53-73.

his reading and questions. He also excelled in the arts and philosophy, areas which gripped his attention and in which many hours of private study were invested, especially during his last three years at New Haven.<sup>27</sup> His private notebooks of this period reveal a mind caught up in a complex network of theological, philosophical and scientific thought. By 1719 Edwards was engaged in writing a short essay entitled, "Of Insects," of which the more well known "Spider Letter" was the finished product.<sup>28</sup> In the fall of 1720 he began his notes on "Natural Philosophy," which contain his thinking on a number of topics related to the structure of the natural world.<sup>29</sup> His exposure to and exploration of this rich body of "enlightened" thought created what Wallace Anderson has described as a "major intellectual awakening."<sup>30</sup> In the midst of this intellectual awakening, however, came an equally revolutionary spiritual awakening, one that would overshadow the former by opening a new direction in his thinking. The remarkable powers of observation he developed and applied in the areas of science and philosophy during this period, he would later utilise in his observation and analysis of religious experience.

During his tenure at Yale, Edwards had brought a religious bent to all of his intellectual pursuits. These religious inclinations, Edwards tells us, were transformed and deepened by a religious conversion he experienced about the time of his first year of graduate studies. Although he had maintained his commitment to religious duties (both public and private) during his college residency, there were times of great uneasiness about his spiritual condition which increased as he neared the end of his undergraduate course.<sup>31</sup> His preoccupation with his spiritual state continued to grow until, as he put it,

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 21ff.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 147-69.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 173-295.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> "Personal Narrative," p. 24f.

“I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life.”<sup>32</sup> The assurance of possessing a saving relationship with Christ which he longed for came in a manner that was altogether unlooked for. Its importance for the life of his mind cannot be underestimated, and therefore requires to be set out in some detail.

“From my childhood up,” Edwards began, “my mind had been wont to be full of objections against the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased.” For some time the doctrine appeared to him as something horrible which he was unable to reconcile himself to. “But I remember the time very well,” he went on, “when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God,..., my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it” and “put an end to all those cavils and objections...; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against God’s sovereignty.”<sup>33</sup>

Although closely tied to it, Edwards did not equate the birth of this “conviction” of the truthfulness of the absolute sovereignty of God with conversion. Following that initial understanding, Edwards went on to say, there came a new apprehension of the sovereignty God, one that he described as a “delightful” conviction in which God’s sovereignty moved from simply a notional apprehension to a “new sense” of its reality, and with it a sense of his own salvation too.

The first that I remember that ever I found any thing of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, I Tim.i.17. "Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused thro' it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before....I thought with myself, how excellent a being that was; and

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapt up to God in Heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in Him.<sup>34</sup>

From that time on his apprehensions and ideas of Christ, the meaning of redemption and the process of salvation took on a new quality. He now possessed “an inward, sweet sense” of the “beauty” and “excellency” of them, especially of Christ and the way of his salvation through “free grace.”<sup>35</sup> Soon after he shared with his father what had transpired.

I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together. And when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father’s pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looked up on the sky and clouds; there came into my mind, a sweet conjunction: majesty and meekness join’d together: it was a sweet and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness.<sup>36</sup>

From this time on, said Edwards, everything changed. “The appearance of every thing was altered; there seem’d to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God’s excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in every thing.”<sup>37</sup> His “Personal Narrative” indicates that he traced his conversion to this point. Speaking of his spiritual status at the time, he exclaimed “I felt then a great satisfaction as to my good estate.”<sup>38</sup> A couple of years later, while pastoring

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> “Personal Narrative,” p. 28. Patricia Tracy has brought unnecessary confusion, I believe, to the dating of Edwards’s conversion in *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor: Religion and Society in Eighteenth-Century Northampton* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), pp. 58-64: First, she acknowledges that Edwards himself indicates that his conversion accompanied his entering into this new sense of God’s excellence and sovereign grace, yet she goes on to challenge Edwards’s own conclusions. Second, she claims that Edwards’s “Resolutions,” begun after his conversion, “imply no feeling of being saved.” This, however, is difficult to understand, since they contain nothing contrary to such a feeling. Third, she states that Edwards’s “Diary” indicates a level of anxiety “inappropriate” for one who had experienced conversion. In response, I would first note that she has failed to place the “Diary” in its proper context, which is supplied by Edwards himself.

in New York, he experienced regret when considering how long it had taken him before he had begun “to be truly religious.”<sup>39</sup> Such was the desire of his heart.

The influence of Edwards’s conversion experience for his thinking proved comprehensive. First, coinciding as it did with the intellectual awakening chronicled by Anderson, it in turn shaped and informed the metaphysical foundations of his thinking. By the time Edwards had finished his second year of graduate study, he had formulated his main conclusions to the metaphysical questions concerning the structure and reality of the physical universe. Under the influence of the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More (1614-87), Edwards concluded that matter did not exist nor did it act by itself, but was dependent solely upon the immediate exercise of divine power. In the end matter is nothing but “the stated methods of God’s acting with respect to bodies,” he declared, so that “speaking most strictly, there is no proper substance but God himself.”<sup>40</sup> Behind these conclusions stood the unshakable conviction of God’s absolute sovereignty, both in the physical and moral order of the world. This apprehension of God’s absolute

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Immediately following his affirmation and satisfaction as to his spiritual ‘estate’, he notes, “But that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness” *PN*, p. 28. What Edwards was saying is that with the advent of his conversion came an increased desire to experience more of Christ and his holiness, and with it a correspondingly increased loathing of all that was in opposition to them. Edwards’s “Diary” is simply a record of his intensified pursuit of a holy life following his conversion together with the successes and failures that necessarily accompany such an experience. Edwards describes this very post-conversion experience in *A Faithful Narrative*: “they have a watchful eye upon their hearts, that they don’t use to have: they take more notice what sin is there, and sin is now more burdensome to ‘em, they strive more against it, and feel more of the strength of it,” *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 187. Further, in support of her contentions, Tracy missreads a key “Diary” entry that rightly understood works against her argument. Of the May 28, 1725 entry, she cites only the following extract, “whether I am now converted or not,” and concludes from it that even at this late date Edwards was unsure of his ultimate spiritual state. Yet Edwards finished the above statement by saying that whatever conclusion was drawn, “I am so settled in the state I am in, that I shall go on in it all my life,” Ola Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards: Basic Writings* (New York: Meridian Books, 1966), p. 78. What Edwards was saying, and the rest of the entry affirms, is that true to his understanding of the mystery of election, this side of the heavenly state he did not know with absolute assurance whether he was one of the elect, and while he would continue to make every effort to avoid being deceived about his spiritual condition, he was still confident enough in the direction of his spiritual ‘state’ not to deviate from it for the remaining years of his life. Contrary to Tracy, I find no evidence to justify her contention.

<sup>39</sup> “Personal Narrative,” p. 31.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, “Of Atoms,” pp. 215-216; see also Anderson. “Editors Introduction,” *JE (Yale)*, vol. 6, p. 26.

sovereignty and its administration toward the affairs of men was anything but cold and calculating. Though he was to use the framework of the new science to explain its operations, still for him, the sovereignty of God would never lose the quality of warmth and beauty that his conversion brought to it.

Secondly, his conversion convinced him that real religion consisted in more than simply a rational understanding of religious truth. True religion existed not in the mere comprehension and acceptance of the truth of God's sovereignty, grace, mercy and justice, and the work of redemption, however essential they might have been to it, but in an experiential apprehension of and delight in the beauty and majesty of their reality, an experience which surpassed all notional understanding. Although Edwards later would work out and refine this idea in much greater detail, his immediate apprehension of this fundamental distinction at the time of his conversion convinced him of the indispensable part played by experience in authentic Christianity.

What was true of his collegiate days was even more true of the five year period between his first pastorate and his move to Northampton. Near the end of August, 1722, Edwards accepted a call to a small Scottish Presbyterian church near New York city where for the next eight months he preached with considerable success. His removal from New York in the spring of 1723 back to East Windsor appears to have been precipitated by the church's inability financially to maintain him.<sup>41</sup> Upon leaving he had intended to settle in the Congregational church of Bolton, Connecticut, and even formally accepted the call in November that year. He was released from the commitment very

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<sup>41</sup> Hopkins, *Life of Edwards*, p. 6.

soon after, however, choosing to accept a position as tutor at Yale instead.<sup>42</sup> He was officially appointed May 24, 1724 and remained in that post until his removal to Northampton in the fall of 1726.

During his residence in New York, Edwards's devoted his time primarily to moral and spiritual exercises rather than those of a philosophic and scientific nature. The "new sense" of divine things which he received at the time of his conversion only increased during his sojourn in New York. What becomes clear from this period is that what Edwards understood this "new sense" to mean involved a highly sensible and aesthetic apprehension of divine realities.

My longings after God and holiness, were much increased....I felt in me a burning desire to be in every thing a complete Christian;...and that I might live in all things, according to the pure, sweet and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things....It was my continual strife day and night, and constant inquiry, How I should be more holy, and live more holily, and more becoming a child of God....The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ....I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness....It appeared to me, there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely. It appeared to me, to be the highest beauty and amiableness, above all other beauties: that it was a *divine* beauty; far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else, was like mire, filth and defilement, in comparison of it.<sup>43</sup>

True religion necessarily consisted in the Christian's understanding and experience of the beauty of God's holiness, and true holiness above all things was what Edwards desired. For this purpose he began to draw up a series of resolutions as a means of disciplining his thoughts and conduct, and to keep a diary as a record of his progress in

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<sup>42</sup> Just why Edwards decided against the Bolton settlement is unclear. See Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 89f, who explores a number of possibilities.

<sup>43</sup> "Personal Narrative," Hopkins, *Life of Edwards*, pp. 29-30.

their observance.<sup>44</sup> Taken together, Edwards's "Resolutions" and "Diary" offer a clear indication that the intensity of his quest for true religion continued unabated. "Resolved," he wrote on January 12, 1723, "That no other end but religion shall have any influence at all on any of my actions; and that no action shall be, in the least circumstance, any otherwise than the religious end will carry it."<sup>45</sup> At the centre of this spiritual pursuit was the Bible. "I had then,...the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Often-times in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt an harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet powerful words."<sup>46</sup> At this time he resolved "To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same."<sup>47</sup> Hopkins claimed that Edwards "studied the Bible more than all other books, and more than most other divines."<sup>48</sup> This habit of spending much time in close examination of the Scriptures began in earnest during his sojourn in New York.

When he returned to East Windsor in April 1723, he entered into a period of intense study. During the summer he began work on his M.A. thesis and started adding once again to his notes on "Natural Philosophy."<sup>49</sup> It was at this time as well that he started to keep a record of his many intellectual ruminations to which he continued to add to throughout his entire life. Known today as the "Miscellanies," many of the entries

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<sup>44</sup> I owe the insight to the relationship between Edwards's "Diary" and "Resolutions" to Wallace Anderson, *JE* (Yale), vol. 6, p. 27. The original manuscripts of both are missing. For Edwards's "Resolutions" I have used Hopkins, *Life of Edwards*, pp. 7-11, and Ola Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards: Basic Writings*, pp. 68-75; and Edwards's "Diary" from Hopkins, *Life of Edwards*, pp. 11-22, and Dwight's *Memoirs*, pp. xxiv-xxxi, xxxiii-xxxvi.

<sup>45</sup> Dwight, *Memoirs*, p. xxi.

<sup>46</sup> "Personal Narrative," p. 32.

<sup>47</sup> "Resolution" 28; Hopkins, *Life of Edwards*, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40

<sup>49</sup> The title of the thesis was "A Sinner is not justified before God except through the Righteousness of Christ acquired by Faith." The manuscript is in Latin and is kept with the Yale Collection.

were no more than a paragraph in length, and some were simply a sentence or two.<sup>50</sup>

Others, however, involved lengthy discourses on a variety of topics which often involved responses to and arguments against positions he deemed to be wrong. Before the end of the year he had also started three other series of notebooks, "Notes on Revelation," "Notes on Scripture" and "The Mind."<sup>51</sup>

His career as a tutor was two-edged. From a purely professional point of view Edwards was a celebrated success. Under his supervision and that of two other young tutors the College prospered. However, Edwards personally found the duties to be difficult and spiritually distracting. In September, 1725 he was forced to suspend his tutorial responsibilities due to a severe illness which kept him in convalescence until the following summer. By the fall he was led to resign altogether and accept a call to assist his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, at Northampton.<sup>52</sup>

The entire period, from his move to New York to the eve of his settlement at Northampton, was characterised by intense spiritual and intellectual ability. The years away from East Windsor had to a certain extent freed Edwards from the provincialism of New England parish life. While in his personal habits and lifestyle he retained a parochial outlook, by the end of this period his spiritual interests and intellectual horizons extended well beyond the confines of New England and the religious precisianism of his Puritan upbringing.<sup>53</sup> "I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in

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<sup>50</sup> The "Miscellanies," are part of the Yale Collection. The publication of the entire collection is presently being undertaken by Yale University Press. A select number may be found in, Harvey G. Townsend, ed., *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards from His Private Notebooks* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972).

<sup>51</sup> Anderson, "Editor's Introduction," *JE (Yale)*, vol. 6. p. 29.

<sup>52</sup> Dwight, "Memoirs," pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

<sup>53</sup> Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 86f. On the idea of Puritan precisionism, see Jack Mitchell, "Error in the Wilderness: Puritan Precisionism in New England, 1630-1662" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Wheaton College, 1988).

the world," he said of this period, reporting that he used to spend much of his time praying for that end. "If I heard the least hint of anything that happened in any part of the world" that appeared favorable to Christ's kingdom in the world, he went on to say, "my soul eagerly catch'd at it;....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."<sup>54</sup> He actively pursued both scientific and religious subjects and found no conflict between them. He supported the new science and its methods and did not share the opinion of some of his contemporaries that the new philosophy was inherently antagonistic to and destructive of true religion.<sup>55</sup> His investigations into natural philosophy were done predominantly for theological reasons, seeking with its help to discover the power and wisdom of God in the ordering of nature.<sup>56</sup> "The very thing I now want," he wrote, "to give me a clearer and more immediate view of the perfections and glory of God, is as clear a knowledge of the manner of God's exerting himself, with respect to spirits and mind, as I have of his operations concerning matter and bodies."<sup>57</sup> Edwards possessed a strong confidence in man's ability to know, and was open to be taught by well reasoned arguments. Writing in September, 1723, he comments, "I observe that old men seldom have any advantage of new discoveries, because they are beside the way of thinking to which they have been so long used." He resolved, therefore, that "if ever I live to years, that I will be impartial to hear the reasons of all

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<sup>54</sup> "Personal Narrative," *Hopkins Life*, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> Edwards's resistance to the separation between philosophy and theology, religion and science was due to his unified conception of truth, "all truth one": see William Sparkes Morris, *The Young Jonathan Edwards: A Reconstruction*, vol. 14, *Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion* (Brooklyn, New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991), p. 611, n. 85.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson, "Editor's Introduction," *JE (Yale)*, vol. 6, pp. 37,49.

<sup>57</sup> "Diary," Feb. 12, 1725, in Dwight, "Memoirs," pp. xxxv-xxxvi. In a similar vein and written near the same time, see "Beauty of the World": "As to the corporeal world,....the sweetest and most charming beauty of it is its resemblance of spiritual beauties. The reason is that spiritual beauties are infinitely the greatest, and bodies

pretended discoveries, and receive them if rational, how long soever I have been used to another way of thinking."<sup>58</sup> Winslow captures well this striking, almost modern spirit of Edwards mind at this stage. Speaking of the direction of his studies apparent from his private notebooks she concludes:

These show him to have been first and last a religionist, singleminded in his allegiance and yet within the limits of his special interest, surprisingly catholic in his choices. Considered as a lifelong panorama of private study, the hundreds of jottings concerning books to be read, inquired after, subjects to be investigated, together with his ponderous collections of "Instances", his outlines, and thousands of notes, show that in the search for his particular kind of truth his mind went everywhere. There is hardly a page of his now famous *Catalogue* which does not represent some ranging from the beaten track of pulpit interest; but always he ranged as the scholar in religion, never as the layman adventuring among ideas.<sup>59</sup>

However, he did share with Christian thinkers like Henry More before him, the conviction that the materialistic conclusions many were drawing from the new philosophy were damaging to an orthodox Christian understanding of both the natural and spiritual realm.<sup>60</sup> By this time, claims Anderson, Edwards was prepared to overthrow materialism by a well-established argument for "the reality and the spiritual nature of God, and to show how the finite world, even as understood in the sciences, depends upon God's infinite wisdom and the free and purposeful exercise of his infinite will for its creation and preservation."<sup>61</sup> Contrary to the contemporary trends in theology, Edwards was

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being but the shadows of beings, they must be so much the more charming as they shadow forth spiritual beauties." *JE (Yale)*, vol. 6, p. 305.

<sup>58</sup> "Diary," in Dwight, "Memoirs," p. xxxi.

<sup>59</sup> Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 119.

<sup>60</sup> Another Cambridge Platonist that Edwards read with benefit was John Smith. The importance of Smith for the development of Edwards's conception of religious psychology is just beginning to be assessed; e.g. see Wilson Kimmach, "Editor's Introduction," *JE (Yale)*, vol. 10, pp. 6-9, and James Hoopes, "Jonathan Edwards's Religious Psychology," *Journal of American History*, 69 (March, 1983): 862f.

<sup>61</sup> *JE (Yale)*, vol. 6, p. 54.

convinced that both divine revelation and natural philosophy were on the side of a Calvinistic reading of Christianity.

By the time Edwards was preparing to settle in Northampton, the foundations of the four ideological pillars that shaped his conception of true religion had been laid. True religion necessarily implied experience. It involved more than simply a notional understanding of doctrinal truths; it possessed a true "sense" of their beauty and reality. While rational apprehension was essential, it was not enough. True religion was essentially affectional as opposed to rational and possessed a correspondent aesthetic aspect. Secondly, the experience of his own conversion, his conviction of the absolute sovereignty of God, coupled with his Augustinian view of human nature and divine grace, convinced him that true religion was both evangelical and Calvinist. Thirdly, the "Enlightened" footing for Edwards's later theological reflections had also been laid. Already he can be seen harnessing the new thinking for the purpose of placing evangelical Calvinism on a firmer and more contemporary foundation. Utilizing the conceptual categories provided by the Enlightenment, he united Calvinism with a metaphysical system in keeping with the new science, and would later borrow Lockean nomenclature to describe the experience of regeneration.<sup>62</sup> Finally, he held to a non-provincial, international outlook of the evangelistic mission of the church. The aim of

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<sup>62</sup> According to Robert W. Jenson, "all his work, including the revival preaching, was controlled by a theological-metaphysical system that puts him among this century's half dozen greatest thinkers," "Mr. Edwards' Affection," *Dialog*, 24 (Summer, 1985): 169. See also Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards*. It must be remembered, however, that while Edwards freely employed certain Enlightenment concepts, he worked at cross-purposes to some of the later assumptions of that movement by reasserting a divine centrality to the universe rather than the melioristic view of human capabilities fostered by both theologians and philosophers. Although the main lines of reasoning, especially at the early stages of the English Enlightenment, were generally theistic in nature, by the middle of the eighteenth century the emphasis had shifted away from the strong theistic base from which Newton and Locke had worked.

every minister was above all to bring people into a saving union with Christ. Though he ministered his entire life within the borders of New England, he labored with a view to God's glory throughout the entire world. In Edwards's mind, these four assumptions were designed and orchestrated to sustain the theme of God's glory and centrality in the universe, and its true *sense* in the human heart. Ultimately the beauty of true religion consisted in the union of the aspects of particularity and universality in the divine work of redemption, and Edwards would labour for its true expression on both fronts.

On February 15, 1727 Edwards was ordained and began his ministry at Northampton as assistant to the aging Stoddard. Two years later Stoddard died and Edwards assumed the full ministerial duties of the church of Northampton. Little did he know how severely his four convictions would be tested during the remaining years of his life: initially in the fires of revival controversy, then under the challenge brought against his firm belief in the experimental nature of religion by his congregation during his dismissal, and throughout everything by his response to contemporary philosophical and theological systems hostile to orthodox Christianity generally and Calvinism more particularly. But neither was Edwards aware that he would be aided significantly during this same period of time by a group of ministers from the Church of Scotland, who not only shared Edwards's Reformed heritage, but defined that theological heritage along lines very similar to his own four convictions. These ministers represent the Scottish half of the ideological bridge that allowed the influential transit of Edwards's ideas and concerns to Scotland and who saw to it that these same ideas and concerns were heard in Scotland.

The earliest event connected to the rise and development of eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicalism within the Church of Scotland that pertains to Edwards's Scottish connection was the doctrinal dispute known as the Marrow Controversy. During this controversy the particular theological touchstones that formed the ideological bridge between Edwards and these Scottish evangelicals were forged. The story of the Marrow affair has been told before, and its details need not detain us. However, two developments connected with the controversy do concern us. As was noted in chapter one, the Marrow Controversy was precipitated by the reprinting of the seventeenth-century English work *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* in Scotland in 1718. The work was republished at the recommendation of Thomas Boston (1676-1732), minister of Etrick. Boston began his pastoral career confused over a view of the preaching of the gospel that had become prevalent in the Kirk during the second half of the seventeenth century. James Walker described the source of Boston's confusion as the previous century's "Judaic theory of the world's conversion."<sup>63</sup> According to Walker, theologians of the latter half of the seventeenth century tended to think of conversion as a

sort of expansion of nationalism after the Jewish fashion, in which, when God has elect ones among a people to be gathered in, He takes the nation into external covenant with Himself, and within the order and under the ordinances of a visible Church as His "office-house of grace," ....He carries out the purposes of grace; calls, shields, sanctifies His chosen; and when He has no more of these, then lets the framework fall in pieces.<sup>64</sup>

It was common at the time, he went on to say, to think "that members of the visible Church had the right to have the gospel preached to them, just as though no others had."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Theology and Theologians*, p. 92.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Thomas F. Torrance traces this restriction of the gospel offer to developments resulting from the influence of the federal system of theology and the Kirk's adherence to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The former emphasised the doctrine of predestination, the judicial or forensic aspects of justification, a logicalised and causal idea of limited atonement restricted to the elect for whom alone it is causally efficacious, and a contractual notion of covenant which stressed a 'covenant of works' containing legal stipulations which had to be fulfilled in order for the covenant to take effect.<sup>66</sup> The adoption of the latter by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1647, brought with it a more legalistic Calvinism, says Torrance, that "was authoritatively grafted on to the more evangelical Calvinism of the older Scottish tradition" which was rooted in the *Scots Confession* and the *Book of Common Order*.<sup>67</sup> The combined influence of federal theology and the *Westminster Confession* worked to undermine the evangelical and theological heart of the Scottish Reformation by encouraging the restriction of the gospel offer to only the covenanted and by injecting into the Kirk a tendency toward neonomianism. This resulted in the neglect of missionary. Further, their emphasis on a subjective rather than objective concept of saving faith weakened the more robust doctrine of assurance characteristic of the older Scottish tradition.<sup>68</sup>

Despite the persistence of the older tradition, the doctrine of the federal system came to prevail in the second half of the seventeenth century and with it the restricted offer of the gospel which Boston confronted. It was a position that he found difficult to understand and in the end could not accept. Although he held to the federal system of

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John MacLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), pp. x-xi, 93-155. Cf. Ryken, "Thomas Boston," pp. 16-22.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 217, 224ff.

theology (albeit modified) and endorsed the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, firmly believed in a limited view of the atonement and that only to the elect is the work of Christ to become effectual, he also believed that the scriptures taught that Christ fulfilled all the conditions of the covenant so that the Gospel of saving grace could be offered for all, “not to visible Church sinners” only, but to “sinners of mankind indefinitely.”<sup>69</sup> However, Boston found it difficult to reconcile his federal theology with his position on the free unconditional offer of saving grace to ‘mankind sinners’. The importance of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* is that it offered Boston a distinctly evangelical sense of the Gospel of free grace within a modified federal system of theology, and encouraged his wider vision of conversion and freed him to order his preaching accordingly.<sup>70</sup>

When, therefore, Boston’s concern over what he perceived as a growing legalistic strain within the Kirk was heightened by the condemnation of the Auchterarder Creed by the General Assembly in 1717, he recommended the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* as a means of mitigating this drift towards legalism by its presentation and reaffirmation of the earlier evangelicalism of the older Scottish tradition. Not all shared his conviction, however, and some began to condemn the teaching of the *Marrow* from their pulpits, claiming, among other things, that it advocated Antinomianism and Universalism. James Hadow (c. 1670-1747), Professor of Divinity and Principal of St. Mary’s College, St.

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<sup>69</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians*, pp. 92, 94. John MacLeod, and more recently Thomas F. Torrance, corroborate Walker, attributing its development in Scotland to the influence of Hyper-Calvinist doctrine: MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 140-43; Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 204, 215.

<sup>70</sup> Ryken, “Thomas Boston,” pp. 1-46. In contrast, speaking of Samuel Rutherford, Torrance observes: “He insisted relentlessly that the intrinsic sufficiency of Christ’s atoning satisfaction availed only for the elect; there was no ‘universal grace’ for the heathen. ‘Christ did not die for Pagans.’ Even when Rutherford spoke of the covenant generally as a ‘simple way of saving sinners’, he remarked that while considered formally,..., it applies to all within the visible Church, but considered *in concreto*, ‘the Lord carries on the covenant in such a way commensurably with the decrees of Election and Reprobation.’ This meant in restrictive practical terms, for example, that infants ‘being without the Covenant...cannot be chosen and predestinate in Christ to salvation.” *Scottish Theology*, p. 101.

Andrews, led the attack against the *Marrow* theology and was mainly responsible for drawing up the charges that were levelled against it. The General Assembly officially condemned the work in 1720, prohibiting all ministers from recommending it and requiring them to warn their people against it. An appeal was made in 1721, but after further consideration, the General Assembly confirmed, in 1722, their earlier decision.

M. Charles Bell has provided a concise summary of the main accusations brought against the *Marrow* doctrine: 1. that assurance of salvation is of the essence of faith, 2. universal or unlimited atonement, 3. that holiness is not necessary to salvation, 4. that fear of punishment and hope of reward are not proper motives for Christian obedience, and 5. that believers are not under the law as a rule of life.<sup>71</sup> Behind these accusations and ultimately the Assembly's condemnation was the fear of Antinomianism. While it can be said that some of the expressions of the *Marrow* could be construed as carrying Antinomian sentiments, neither the *Marrow* or the Marrowmen were guilty of this heresy.<sup>72</sup> Boston, along with the other Marrowmen, contrary to what they were accused of, were as concerned for the need for the practice of holiness as their anti-Marrow brethren. Yet Boston insisted that genuine Christian obedience was the fruit only of the believer's union with Christ by faith, and that, therefore, to preach the free grace of the gospel is to direct people to the "true spring of evangelical obedience."<sup>73</sup> The scope of Boston's evangelistic vision placed him among the first within the Church of Scotland at the turn of the century to embrace the modern missionary spirit.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> M. Charles Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of the Assurance* (Edinburgh: Handel Press, 1985), p. 152.

<sup>72</sup> That neither the *Marrow* nor the Marrowmen were guilty of the charge of Antinomianism represents the majority historical consensus, and is clearly demonstrated by Ryken in his study "Thomas Boston", pp. 41-44.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44. See also Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 207-08, where he argues that Boston's general theological approach was more christocentric than either the federal theology or the Westminster Tradition.

<sup>74</sup> See Walker, *Theology and Theologians*, pp. 92-94.

David Lachman concluded that the Marrow Controversy was a “conflict between the majority in the Church of Scotland who represented in some degree a late seventeenth century tendency toward legalism, Neonomianism and even Arminianism in Reformed thought and the minority who wished to return to what they considered, perhaps rightly, true Reformed Orthodoxy.”<sup>75</sup> Lachman’s perception that the majority party was tainted with a form of Neonomianism confirms Boston’s concerns over legalism. It also indicates a possible connection between the Neonomianism of the early eighteenth century and the contractual conception of the covenant of conversion emphasised during the latter half of the seventeenth century. The development of what Walker called the seventeenth century divines “Judaic theory of the world’s conversion” appears to have been fostered by the seventeenth century neonomianism that the Marrowmen believed was threatening the very foundations of gospel truth.

The importance of these developments for Edwards’s connection with Scotland, is that he faced a very similar challenge in New England and responded to it in a way reminiscent of Boston. For much of the seventeenth century, New England witnessed a steady inclination toward Arminianism that progressively stifled the evangelical impulse that characterized the religious community that settled there in 1620. Edmund S. Morgan has shown that this deadening effect is, at least in part, traceable to the development in the seventeenth century of what he calls tribalism within the New England community. Using the Puritan emphasis on depicting the relationship between God and his people as one of a marriage covenant, he observes, that “God tended to become not merely a husband or father, but the husband or father only of families that belonged to orthodox

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<sup>75</sup> Lachman, *The Marrow Controversy*, p. 491.

New England churches.”<sup>76</sup> Although the Puritans of New England retained the thought that their God was the God of the universe, Morgan says, “they made him so much their own, in the guise of making themselves his, that eventually and at times he took on the character of a tribal deity.”<sup>77</sup> In spite of the desire of the first generation to make New England a “beacon to the world” and not a “refuge from it,” later generations lost sight of this vision. More and more they placed the emphasis on saving their children, which according to Morgan, “paralyzed the evangelical impulse that gave their religion meaning.”<sup>78</sup>

As a result the church organisation was directed only toward the saints. Adults were admitted only if they could prove that they were no longer in need of conversion. “Instead of an agency for bringing Christ to fallen man,” observed Morgan, “[the church] became the means of perpetuating the gospel among a hereditary religious aristocracy,” where conversion was preached to “hypocrites who had been admitted to membership by mistake, and the children of the godly who enjoyed membership though not converted.”<sup>79</sup> The predominant focus became not, “what must I do to be saved,” but what must I do to come under the Covenant?<sup>80</sup> The pattern is remarkably similar to what developed in Scotland during the same period. Like Scotland, New England had allowed their emphasis on the obligations of their covenanted status to shut out the call of the gospel to the unbeliever. In addition to Walker, John MacLeod’s summary of the effects in

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<sup>76</sup> Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, p. 168.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 174-75.

<sup>80</sup> The issues informing the Synod of 1662 and the Half-Way Covenant, played a critical role in the development of the New England idea of covenant inherited by the eighteenth century. See Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1969), pp. 238-39.

Scotland of its own form of covenanted “tribalism” equally fits the state of New England, thus demonstrating the strong ideological connection between the two countries.

Those who give place in their thinking...that there is nothing to answer for when there is no power to obey, can find no place in their teaching for commending the Gospel except to those who are already under Divine tuition and have learned to some purpose that they are lost sinners. So the open way that the Gospel sets before the sinner which he may take--and must take--in coming back to God is as good as shut when a therapeutic type of preaching doles out the Gospel to those only who are alive to their ruined plight.<sup>81</sup>

The result of this thinking, said MacLeod, was that “the note of warning for the unbelieving and the impenitent did not get its own place, and no more did the wooing note that sought to win the sinner to obedience of faith.”<sup>82</sup>

Edwards, like Boston, perceived this restricting of the gospel offer to only the covenanted community as both unscriptural and an occasion for the growth of legalism and Arminianism. Both men challenged this closed system in their preaching, injecting as they did, a fresh evangelistic impulse into their respective religious communities, along with a vision for extending the call of the gospel well beyond their own covenanted borders. By doing so, they each encouraged within their respective places of ministry an evangelical movement that would in time successfully break with the nationalistic conception of conversion inherited from the previous century.<sup>83</sup> John (Rabbi) Duncan (1796-1870), Professor of Hebrew at New College, Edinburgh, who described Boston as a commonplace genius, described the affinity between Edwards and Boston in this way:

If I met a man from New-England, I would say to him--'Read the Marrow-men.' If I met a Marrow-man, I would say to him--'Read the

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<sup>81</sup> MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, p. 142.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Concerning Boston's connection with eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicalism, Philip Ryken has convincingly shown that Boston's preaching and theology evince all the hallmarks of modern evangelicalism and concludes that he may rightly be considered one of the first Scottish evangelicals, “properly speaking” of the eighteenth century: “Thomas Boston,” p. 241.

New-England Men.' They are the compliment of each other. Men like Wilson on the one hand, and Bellamy on the other, are extreme; but between Boston and Edwards there is no contradiction, and they are important to each other....I would say, though it is an exaggeration, I would like to sit at Jonathan Edwards's feet, to learn what is true religion, and at Thomas Boston's, to learn how I am to get it.<sup>84</sup>

In as much as Boston was one of the leading advocates of the Marrow theology, much of this evangelical quality was also characteristic of the other Marrowmen.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, Edwards also shared much in common with them.<sup>86</sup> Yet, Edwards would ultimately share a closer theological kinship with Boston than with the other Marrowmen and with those Scottish evangelicals who specifically identified with Boston but chose not to secede.

Edwards's theological connection with Boston, and to a certain extent with the other Marrowmen, represents a clear link in the ideological bridge. It consisted in a shared conception of free grace in relation to conversion that was both evangelical and cosmopolitan and differed from the narrower contractual notion of the covenant developed by federal theologians of the later seventeenth century. The central concerns of Boston and the other Marrowmen were essentially Edwards's concerns and the answers he provided, as we shall see, proved well adapted to the Scottish context and later were taken up and used by Scottish evangelicals to promote and defend the revivals of 1742.

Edwards's ideological tie to the Marrow controversy, however, presents us with a problem. As noted above, his Scottish connection consisted primarily of evangelicals

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<sup>84</sup> *In the Pulpit and At The Communion Table*, edited by David Brown (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1874), pp. 34, 63.

<sup>85</sup> See Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 224-29.

<sup>86</sup> Given this initial affinity, it is no wonder that Edwards expressed surprise at the division that later developed between the Seceding ministers and those of the Kirk; Edwards particularly cited with approval the works of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine in a letter to James Robe dated May 12, 1743, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 538.

who either were part of the anti-marrow party or who later refused to follow the Marrowmen into secession. Furthermore, some of the Marrowmen who chose to secede, later publically attacked Edwards's theology and his support of the revivals. The question of how Edwards became theologically alienated from those Marrowmen who seceded will be taken up fully in chapter four. The pressing question at this juncture is how Edwards's ideological connection with the concerns of the Marrowmen worked to connect him with the evangelicals of the Church of Scotland? Lachman's assessment of the Marrow Controversy provides us with a clue. Although he suggested in his summary, that at the time of the Marrow Controversy the majority party in the Church of Scotland were tainted with Neonomianism, Lachman indicated elsewhere that there also existed within the majority party a substantial consensus of Reformed, evangelical orthodoxy.<sup>87</sup> Many of the ministers who became members of the anti-Marrow party, he shows, were in substantial agreement with the Marrow theology. Two of the most prominent ministers of the anti-Marrow party that Lachman cites as holding a theological position "virtually identical with those of the Marrow Brethren," were John Willison of Dundee and John MacLaurin of Glasgow. Both men became leaders of the evangelical party of the Church of Scotland and each of them became a regular correspondent of Edwards.<sup>88</sup>

Willison spearheaded the efforts to conciliate the Marrowmen, and when in 1733 certain of the Marrow brethren chose to separate from the Church of Scotland because of the threat to the Kirk posed by the ecclesiastical issue of patronage, he once more undertook to draw them back into the fold. Further, both MacLaurin and Willison shared

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<sup>87</sup> This evangelical ethos was preserved in many parishes of the Kirk through the persistent presence of the older Scottish theological tradition of pastoral care. The ministry of Thomas Boston clearly illustrates this as Torrance demonstrates in his *Scottish Theology*, pp. 204-20.

<sup>88</sup> Lachman, *Marrow Controversy*, pp. 198-99. Cf. John MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, p.145; Ryken, "Thomas Boston," pp. 38-39.

the Marrowmen's concern over the spiritual and ecclesiastical implications of patronage and the legal and non-evangelical preaching that informed many of the pulpits of Scotland, as well as their passion to see true religion re-established in the land. Like Boston, they rejected the late seventeenth-century emphasis of conversion that limited the offer of the gospel to only the covenanted among them. Moreover, they agreed with the Marrow theology that Christian obedience was the fruit of belief and union with Christ only; that preaching should combine both head and heart; and that the emphasis from the pulpit should be "preaching Christ" for the purpose of bringing people into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. John MacLaurin's sermons, in particular, championed these aspects of the Marrow doctrine, the most prominent among them being *Glorying in the Cross of Christ*, *The Knowledge of Christ Crucified the Sum and Substance of Saving Knowledge*, and *On The Scripture Doctrine of Divine Grace*.<sup>89</sup> These along with Willison's sermon, *The Church's Danger, and the Minister's Duty*, delivered in the year of the secession, 1733, could easily have been preached from one of the pulpits of the Marrowmen. Still hoping to win them back, Willison led the effort to pass through the General Assembly an Act, which he helped to craft, designed to call the church back to the evangelical preaching that had marked the Reformers. Eventually passed in 1736, the Act failed to conciliate the Marrow brethren, but did succeed in raising the profile of evangelical preaching within the Kirk.<sup>90</sup>

Given the affinity between the theology of the *Marrow* and a sizeable portion of the majority party, how are we to account for their opposition to the Marrowmen? The

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<sup>89</sup> *The Works of the Rev. John MacLaurin*, edited by W.H. Goold, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: John Maclaren, 1860).

<sup>90</sup> *Acts of the General Assembly 1638-1842* (Edinburgh: Publication of the Church Law Society, 1843) pp. 636-37; cf. MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 169-71.

most obvious reason was their difference of opinion on the way in which the grievance of patronage should be addressed and responded to. Those evangelicals who opposed the marrowmen held strictly to a non-separating position. For them secession was not an option and they strongly objected to it as a means of responding to the issue. But there were other issues that fed into this picture. Lachman suggests that they opposed the Marrow theology because its terminology was unfamiliar and therefore was assumed to be unacceptable. He concluded that “a considerable number who either actively opposed the *Marrow* or who acquiesced in its condemnation did so out of ignorance.”<sup>91</sup> Ryken’s investigation of the matter led him to a similar conclusion. He draws attention to the low level of theological disputation that characterized much of the pamphleteering on both sides, especially in the early years. Inaccuracies and a blatant disregard for context badly marred the exchange and led to much misunderstanding. Chief among the factors that contributed to the controversy’s poor quality of theological discourse, Ryken claims, was the widespread practice, picked up by ministers trained in the universities of the day, of relying on “polemical works rather than first-hand acquaintance with divergent theologies.”<sup>92</sup> Many of the opponents of the *Marrow*, he goes on to observe, were unfamiliar with its actual contents, “having been exposed to them only in unreliable and inaccurate pamphlets.”<sup>93</sup>

The Marrow controversy proved instrumental in forming a consensus among non-seceding evangelicals, inspiring them to initiate a reform movement within the Church of Scotland that was guided by a set of theological priorities that also reflected the central

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<sup>91</sup> Lachman, *Marrow Controversy*, pp. 199, 487.

<sup>92</sup> Ryken, “Thomas Boston,” p. 40. Cf. *Ibid.*, p.488.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

religious concerns of Edwards. Even though Edwards shared the central concerns of the *Marrow*, he was never to enjoy a friendly association with the secession ministers who defended the *Marrow* before the General Assembly. Ironically in fact, during the revivals he would find himself working at cross-purposes to them. The heart of Edwards's Scottish connection would be with the evangelicals of the Church of Scotland, with Willison and MacLaurin and their like. One other difference between the Marrow party and church evangelicals points to yet another link in the ideological bridge offered to Edwards from Scotland.

In concluding his introductory chapter to his study of the theology and theologians of Scotland in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Walker draws our attention to the dramatic change that took place between the "old schoolmen" whose roots were embedded in the federal theology of the seventeenth century and a certain few who began to grace Scotland with a fresh theological outlook that harkened back to the older presbyterian tradition. In order to illustrate this theological shift he highlighted Thomas Boston, John MacLaurin and Adam Gib. Speaking first of Boston, he states that we have the cosmopolitan idea of Christianity brought into prominence that was not found in these earlier theologians.<sup>94</sup> Calvinism under Boston's evangelical ministry, as we have seen, began to break free from the narrow and nationally defined covenantal moorings resulting from a half a century federal influence, and took on a new international quality.<sup>95</sup> In MacLaurin, however, Walker perceived yet another new quality that further distinguished the church evangelicals of the eighteenth century from both those of the previous century

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<sup>94</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians*, p. 34.

<sup>95</sup> Ryken provides a concise summary of the theological development behind Boston's international Calvinism in "Thomas Boston," pp. 11-23.

and from those of the secession, and which served to unite them more closely with Edwards. In comparing the work of MacLaurin to the Scottish theologians who preceded him, Walker noticed what he described as a “vast change.” “He is beyond all doubt an earnest believer in the doctrines of grace, and substantially one with Rutherford and Brown; yet he is evidently looking at all things from a changed point of view.... There is an underlying apologetic in what he writes. Still more striking to me is the literary culture which he displays.” “In MacLaurin,” he continues, “we see Christianity forming an alliance with modern culture and modern speculation, yet in such a way as to promise hopeful results.”<sup>96</sup>

MacLaurin viewed the alliance of Enlightenment thinking with evangelicalism Calvinism in the same way Edwards did. He recognized that the old formulations of doctrine and the categories of thought used to express them were rapidly becoming either obsolete or no longer relevant in light of the new complex of ideas and questions posed by the Enlightenment.<sup>97</sup> He also recognized that the new learning was not necessarily hostile to Christianity, and in fact could be used to philosophically ground evangelical Calvinism more firmly and articulate it much more effectively. As with Edwards, the alliance was made in order to harness the new thinking for the service of true religion; what was needed were “new wineskins” not new wine. What has been said of Edwards equally applied to MacLaurin: he was first and last a religionist who knew well “how to make all his reading subservient to religion.”<sup>98</sup> Central to his concerns was the

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<sup>96</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>97</sup> See Clark, “Moderatism and the Moderate Party,” pp. viii-ix.

<sup>98</sup> “Memoir,” by John Gillies, in *Works of MacLaurin*, vol. 1, pp. xiv. For examples of MacLaurin’s use of the new learning see, *Prejudices Against the Gospel*, pp. 269-313, *On the Scripture Doctrine of Divine Grace*, esp. sections IV-VI, pp. 402-85, in vol. 1; and *Philosophical Inquiry into the Nature of Happiness*, pp. 479-501, in *Works of MacLaurin*, vol. 2.

reassertion of a divine centrality to the universe. But he was also one with both Boston and Edwards in defending the doctrines of grace and the free unrestricted preaching of the word that defined the Reformation; and like them the advancement of “vital religion” was his greatest joy.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, MacLaurin was one of the most prominent ministers during the first half of the eighteenth century, and one of the Kirk’s most able preachers. As a theologian he competed with William Leechman for the chair of Divinity at Glasgow, and though the overwhelming favorite, he was edged out through the influence of a powerful minority.<sup>100</sup> The point is, MacLaurin and Boston were instrumental in shaping the ideological contours of the evangelical community that emerged within the Church of Scotland following the Marrow Controversy.<sup>101</sup>

Walker’s assessment, published in 1872, of the “enlightened” or “modern” character of Scotland’s eighteenth-century evangelicals, found little support from other religious historians until more recently.<sup>102</sup> Ned Landsman, when explaining how John Witherspoon (1723-1794), the Scottish evangelical and author of the *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (a satirical broadside aimed at the Moderates), American College president and leading Presbyterian of the middle colonies, could extend covenanted status

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. xv-xxiv.

<sup>100</sup> Burleigh attributes MacLaurin’s defeat to Francis Hutcheson’s “judicious wire pulling” that secured “against much opposition” Leechman’s appointment, *Church History of Scotland*, p. 295f; Henry Sefton indicates that Leechman beat MacLaurin only after a third candidate withdrew, “Early Development of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland,” p. 180, n. 9. cf. Fawcett, *Cambuslang*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>101</sup> Even though Walker does not name John Willison, he may be included with Boston and MacLaurin.

<sup>102</sup> Examples of recent assessments include, Bebbington, *Modern Evangelicalism*; Ned Landsman, “Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity in Scottish Evangelical Culture,” *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment*, pp. 29-45; and “Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland, 1740-1775,” in *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, eds. John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), pp. 194-209; and W.R. Ward, “The Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival in Central Europe and in the English-Speaking World,” in *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c. 1500-1700*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

from Scotland to America, observes that Scottish “orthodoxy itself changed during the eighteenth century” allowing for a more “expansive” and “enlightened” rather than “narrow” or “parochial” viewpoint.<sup>103</sup> Landsman goes on to describe this change among Scottish evangelicals in terms strikingly similar to Walker’s.

While retaining their essential commitment to the basic tenets of Reformed theology, to the mantle of John Knox’s and his covenanting heirs, and to the concept of a uniform Presbyterian establishment, a new generation of devout Scottish Calvinists managed to accommodate themselves in important ways not so much to the Moderates, who were their contemporaries, as to the rapidly changing culture of an eighteenth-century Scotland increasingly enmeshed in evangelicalism, enlightenment and the transatlantic world. In the process they adopted many of the same concepts, values and terms as their more ‘enlightened’ opponents. They committed themselves to the new learning and to the values of literary culture and refinement, although they adapted them to evangelical ends....Above all, they changed their view of church and nation, away from a strictly national and sectarian conception to the broader perspective of provincial Britons.<sup>104</sup>

The Scottish evangelicals, especially those with whom Edwards would enjoy a close and supportive relationship, were men who were willing to utilise the new thinking of their day to adapt, clarify and strengthen their Calvinist convictions in order to meet the challenges of a changing world. They were, like Edwards, not bound by denominational boundaries, but held to a transatlantic vision of the spread of the gospel. They were in short evangelical, enlightened and every bit as much Calvinist as their New England counterparts, and they shared a passion to propagate their conception of true religion throughout the world.

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<sup>103</sup> Landsman, “Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity,” pp. 30-31.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30. Landsman’s assertion that this change was not an accommodation to the Moderates, but rather their face to face response to the rapid changes in the culture of 18th century Scotland brings into question Ian D.L. Clark’s contention that the rise of the evangelical party in the late eighteenth century was in fact due mostly to the influence of the Moderate party: see “Moderatism and the Moderate Party, 1752-1805,” (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cambridge University, 1964), pp. 192-95, 244ff. Similar assessments may be found in G.D. Henderson, *The Church of Scotland, A Short History* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland Youth Committee, 1939), pp. 19f; and Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 20-74.

In contrast, Adam Gib, who joined the Associate Presbytery in 1735, represented something “altogether different” from either Boston or MacLaurin. Unlike the other two, he remained rooted in the federal theology and church doctrines of the seventeenth century which represented a place of refuge for those who held to the past. Walker classified him as an ecclesiastic of the second Reformation.<sup>105</sup> In general, Gib and his fellow secession ministers were backward looking. They believed the restoration of true religion in Scotland was to be found in the theological tradition that had grown up under the federal theology of hyper-Calvinists and the Westminster Tradition and the renewal of the Solemn League and Covenant and the National Covenant.<sup>106</sup> The church evangelicals, on the other hand, who shared an allegiance to the Westminster Tradition and to the Covenants, were also forward looking in as much as they sought to advance the cause of true religion by adapting the new thinking to evangelical ends.<sup>107</sup> These differences were to become more pronounced during the revivals of 1742.

What remains to be emphasised is that the protracted controversy that followed the publication of the *Marrow* helped to create a distinct evangelical concensus within the Church of Scotland. Three things are worth noting here. First, during the controversy evangelical positions were given a much higher profile than previously had been the case. Second, the controversy forced church evangelicals to bring greater doctrinal definition and clarity to their distinctly evangelical concerns. Third, in their attempt to conciliate the seceders and effect a reunion, church evangelicals were made to distinguish their own

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<sup>105</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>106</sup> “Memoir,” by John Gillies, in *Works of MacLaurin*, vol. 1, pp. xiv.

<sup>107</sup> An exception to this would be Ralph Erskine’s *Faith no Fancy: or A Treatise of Mental Images* (Edinburgh, 1745). In this work Erskine utilises aspects of the new learning to argue against what was essentially Edwards’s conception of mental images. How much the more enlightened manner of Erskine’s refutation is to be attributed to the nature of Edwards’s argument is a question worthy of further investigation.

position from the one endorsed by the secession ministers. The result was, that by the middle 1730's there existed within the Church of Scotland a self-conscious group of evangelicals who held to a set of theological convictions that were distinct from their seceding brethren and which harkened back to the older Scottish theological tradition of the Reformers and the *Scots Confession*. Consequently, they moved away from the parochial view of church and nation with its emphasis on the rights, privileges and duties of a covenanted people that had come to characterise much of the Church of Scotland in the second half of the seventeenth century. In addition, they opened themselves up to the new learning and began to extend their religious loyalties beyond the pale of the Kirk. Intrinsic to this new evangelical outlook was a critique of Scottish culture and religion.

The breakdown of Scottish religious parochialism and the emergence of a international vision among eighteenth-century Scottish church evangelicals soon led them into prominence within the growing and active transatlantic network of evangelical communication that characterized the eighteenth century. This development proved particularly important for Edwards's Scottish connection. According to Susan O'Brien, the contacts between Scottish evangelicals and their New England counterparts formed the most impressive set of "bilateral relations" that existed during the eighteenth century. Moreover, among the ten ministers O'Brien cites as forming the core of the eighteenth-century evangelical letter-writing network, were Edwards and four of his Scottish correspondents: James Robe, William McCulloch, John MacLaurin, and John Erskine.<sup>108</sup>

Although they did not play as large a role in the transatlantic dimension of evangelicalism, Edwards's other two Scottish correspondents, John Willison and Thomas

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<sup>108</sup> O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755," *The American Historical Review*, 4 (October, 1986): 819.

Gillespie were central figures in the Edwards-Scotland connection. Other Scottish ministers who supported Edwards and actively participated in the letter-writing network included Alexander Webster of Tolbooth, John Hamilton and John Gillies of Glasgow. Their main objective for their involvement in the transatlantic network was the growth and expansion of true Christianity as they understood it. Their reason, by their own admission, for specifically joining ranks with Edwards was that in him they found a Calvinist divine of superior rank and genius and unquestionable evangelical piety, who could argue their cause against the intellectual forces of their day with unequal command, and whose writing was “well-adapted” to the Scottish context.

The success of Edwards’s Scottish connection was built upon the uniquely enlightened and evangelical ideology which Edwards shared with a coterie of influential evangelical ministers. At the centre of this ideological connection was a quest that revolved around their mutual love and pursuit of true religion and their inexhaustible efforts at re-establishing the integrity of its Calvinist and evangelical character. From 1735 to the year of Edwards’s death in 1758, they consciously cultivated the unity that existed between them. During his lifetime Edwards was to find no better friends than the Scottish ministers he had the pleasure to correspond with. From them he received not only encouragement, comfort and support for his writing ministry, but also monetary assistance during one of his greatest personal trials. In return, without ever crossing the Atlantic, Edwards became one of their chief advocates by producing the most enlightened, most articulate and influential presentation and defense of revivalism and evangelical Calvinism published in the eighteenth century. His first contribution would

be an account of a religious awakening among the people of his Northampton congregation.

### Chapter Three

#### Catalyst: A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God

Beginning in the early part of 1742, a series of parish based revivals, similar in character and intensity to those that had been transforming the American colonies since 1740, broke out in Scotland. Recent assessments in favor of the historical and religious importance of the Scottish revivals point to the importance of the first phase of Edwards's influence on Scottish religious life in the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> His connection with Scotland began with these revivals and his subsequent influence emerged out of them. His involvement signaled the end of his isolation on the edge of the New England wilderness, introduced him into an international evangelical network, and initiated his connection with Scotland which figured most prominently among his transatlantic contacts. The experience of concurrent transatlantic religious awakenings eventually linked Edwards to a network of Scottish divines who later were responsible for expanding his influence among the evangelicals of the Church of Scotland and insured that this influence would extend well into the nineteenth century. Edwards's connection began with the Scottish revivals of 1742 and it is here that we must begin to assess his specifically theological influence.

Edwards spearheaded the theological defense and management of the revivals on both sides of the Atlantic. Three early works, all published in Scotland, provided the theological foundation upon which his influence was built. The first, which took the form

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 20-74, and Ward, *Protestant Evangelical Awakening*, passim.

of a revival narrative, propelled him into the forefront of Scottish revivalism and set the paradigm by which the Scottish revivalists conducted and interpreted the work within their own country. In the other two, Edwards laid out a comprehensive and enlightened defense of the revivals by delineating the distinguishing marks of true piety over against counterfeit notions. These were freely appropriated by Scottish revivalists to defend the work against its detractors and to safely guide the subjects of the revival through the experience of conversion. The revivals were the catalyst that initiated Edwards's Scottish connection and became the hub out of which his importance for the Church of Scotland subsequently radiated. It is within this context that Edwards began to impress his particular religious ideals and values upon Scottish evangelicalism.

The purpose of the next two chapters will be to analyze Edwards's connection to the Scottish revivals of 1742, and to show his influence on their rise and on the way they were conducted, defended, and interpreted. The present chapter will address the question of how the Scottish revivalists specifically appropriated Edwards's revival narrative to interpret their own revival, and in what way it became a catalyst for the spiritual awakening experienced among Scottish parishes in 1742.

Five years before the Scottish revivals began, Scotland had published Edwards's account of a spiritual awakening experienced by his and neighboring parishes in the Connecticut Valley that began towards the end of 1734 and continued into the spring of 1735. The 1737 publication in Edinburgh of *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton*, as the narrative was titled, launched the Edwards-Scotland connection. Although multiple factors, both inside

Scotland as well as without, contributed to the rise and character of the Scottish revivals of 1742, of those factors originating outside the borders of Scotland, none was to prove more important than the publication in Scotland of the *Faithful Narrative*.<sup>2</sup> Edwards's narrative, even more the spiritual principles outlined within it, did more to inspire the Scottish revivals than any other single external factor. In order to fully appreciate the impact of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* on the revival and revivalists of Scotland it will be necessary to first present a summary of the events that led up to the Northampton revival and to the publication of the narrative in Scotland in 1737.

The roots of Edwards's Scottish connection, which began with the publication of his revival narrative in 1737, can be traced to the events of July 8, 1731. The occasion was the weekly Public Lecture held in the First Church of Boston. The honour that Thursday morning was afforded Jonathan Edwards, the young successor and grandson of Solomon Stoddard. Originally added at the desire of the people to supplement the two sermons heard on Sunday, the Public Lecture by 1731 had evolved into a professional exhibition attended mostly by clergy.<sup>3</sup> With the gradual breakdown of the solidarity of the New England Puritan front, the Public Lecture was increasingly used to voice individual concerns. If a minister had anything to say, observed Perry Miller, this was the time and place to say it.<sup>4</sup> Such was the case for the young Edwards that Thursday in Boston. He had something to say and the Boston clergy took particular notice, as the publication of the lecture within the month unquestionably signified.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, for a reliable summary of the factors related to the Scottish revivals, and Crawford, *Seasons of Grace* and Ward, *Protestant Evangelical Awakening* for these factors connected with the larger transatlantic revival context.

<sup>3</sup> Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4

At the time of the Boston public lecture, the young minister had led the church in Northampton for two years. Since Stoddard's death the valley had been fairly quiet. Because of the antipathy that had so long existed between Northampton and Boston, the Boston clergy were particularly interested in what the successor and grandson of Stoddard had to say. Concern over a general decline in the state of religion was being lamented by many, and a growing alarm was being raised over a type of preaching labeled 'Arminian' that some feared was making its way into many New England pulpits.<sup>6</sup> Boston was the hub of the new religious emphasis, but was accustomed in any case to hearing forceful commentary from Northampton. Where did Edwards stand relative to the new theological views? Would he strike a note of peace, or challenge this liberalising current?

At the Boston public lecture, Edwards's delivered his answer in a sermon entitled "God Glorified in Man's Dependence". It was a clarion call to return to unadulterated Calvinism. The gauntlet had been thrown down. Edwards drew a line in the sand on that occasion in Boston, by making clear on which side of the theological divide he stood. His unequivocal answer in that early Boston sermon placed him squarely in the ranks of Calvinists, and New England recognized immediately that Calvinism had found a powerful and youthful advocate as the preface to his published sermon made clear.<sup>7</sup> With the Boston lecture, Edwards laid out a theological base upon which he would subsequently build an impressive international reputation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Haroutunian, *Piety Versus Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932), pp. 3-14. Edwards, himself, makes specific mention of the unsettling atmosphere created among his people by the spread of Arminianism, "Unpublished Letter of May 30, 1735 to Rev. Dr. Benjamin Colman", *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 100-01.

<sup>7</sup> "Preface" by William Cooper and Thomas Prince, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> See Wilson Kimnach, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 10, p. 108 for an account of the reputation achieved by this sermon.

Reputations are seldom established without help, and Edwards gained some important friends in Boston. Among those who took special notice of Edwards's lecture and welcomed it as an optimistic sign for New England included some of Boston's elite: Benjamin Colman (1673-1747), the pastor of the Brattle Street Church, William Cooper (1694-1743), Colman's colleague at Brattle Street, and Thomas Prince (1687-1758), one of the ministers at Boston's Old South Church.<sup>9</sup> Cooper and Prince wrote the preface to the published lecture, where they praised him for tackling such a "noble subject, and treating it with so much strength and clearness."<sup>10</sup>

Colman was by far the most prominent figure of the three at the time and the most important at this juncture for Edwards's connection with Scotland.<sup>11</sup> He was educated at Harvard, graduating in 1692. He spent four years in England where he cultivated the modern tastes for decorum, moderation and the writing of polished prose.<sup>12</sup> He actively corresponded with English and Scottish divines and received from the University of Glasgow an honorary Doctorate of Divinity.<sup>13</sup> His entrance into New England religious life came in 1699 when he accepted a call to be the first minister of the controversial Brattle

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<sup>9</sup> These three were part of a recognizably conservative caucus that at this time was just emerging, but took real shape during the controversies surrounding the revivals.

<sup>10</sup> W. Cooper and T. Prince, "Preface", "God Glorified in Man's Dependence," *Works*, vol. 2, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Cooper and Prince would eventually play an equally important role in promoting Edwards abroad, but that was not to come until later, during the American revival known as the Great Awakening.

<sup>12</sup> "Benjamin Colman", Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, pp. 122-23. The description Perry Miller provides of Colman is remarkably similar to descriptions of Scottish moderates. Cf. Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 17-21 with Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 151-212. However, while Colman certainly gained first hand experience of English modernism, and was well acquainted with the new intellectual currents of his day, his personal associations and correspondence clearly indicate a closer association doctrinally with the more conservative and evangelical element of the day than with the religiously avant-garde. In this respect, therefore, he clearly differed from the Scottish Moderate leadership. "Colman Papers", *Massachusetts Historical Society*, PN 133 (hereafter cited as *MHS*); Shipton, *Harvard Graduates*, pp. 120-29.

<sup>13</sup> Among Colman's Scottish correspondents was the renowned Robert Wodrow. In a letter to Colman dated April 1, 1734, Robert Wodrow the younger, the older Wodrow's son, shared the news of his father's death, who he says, "had the honor and happiness of your acquaintance and friendly correspondence." It seems that Colman had met Wodrow during his long stay in Britain. See "Colman Papers," *MHS*, PN 133.

Street Church, after having received his ordination from the London Presbytery in England.<sup>14</sup> The important thing for our purposes is that Colman became an influential figure on both sides of the Atlantic and was soon to use his influence to help bring Edwards to the attention of the evangelical communities in England and Scotland.<sup>15</sup> Colman engineered this link up by arranging the cross-Atlantic publication of Edwards's account of a spiritual awakening among his Northampton congregation that took place nearly four years after the Boston lecture.

The friendly correspondence which we maintain with our brethren of New England, give us now and then the pleasure of hearing some remarkable instances of divine grace in the conversion of sinners,... But never did we hear or read, since the first ages of Christianity, any event of this kind so surprising as the present narrative hath set before us. The reverend and worthy Dr. Colman of Boston had given us some short intimations of it in his letters; and upon our request of a more large and particular account, Mr. Edwards, the happy and successful minister of Northampton, which was one of the chief scenes of these wonders, drew up this history in an epistle to Dr. Colman.<sup>16</sup>

The "remarkable" event referred to above was a spiritual awakening that took place among Edwards's congregation in Northampton and in a number of other towns and villages of Hampshire County beginning in December of 1734. The text was written by

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<sup>14</sup> Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, p. 476. The Brattle Street Church was established at the very end of the seventeenth century by some prominent members of the Boston community. Colman was called as its first pastor. A number of innovations introduced at its inception were viewed with suspicion. Among them were: the reading of Scripture without comment from the clergy, greater formality in worship, more freedom for the people to interpret Scripture for themselves, and members admitted to full standing if the pastor was satisfied with the spiritual state of the candidate.

<sup>15</sup> Susan (Durden) O'Brien, who has provided the most rewarding and thorough account of the evangelical transatlantic network to date, supplies abundant evidence of the prominent place Edwards played in the formation of the transatlantic community of evangelicals that evolved out of the transatlantic revival phenomena generally, and most particularly in Scotland. See "A Study of the First Evangelical Magazines," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27 (July, 1976): 255-75; "Transatlantic Communications and Literature in the Religious Revivals, 1735-1745," (unpublished PhD Thesis, Uni. of Hull, April, 1978); and most recently in "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755," *The American Historical Review*, 91 (Oct., 1986): 811-32.

<sup>16</sup> Isaac Watts and John Guyse, "Preface" to *A Faithful Narrative* (London, 1737) in Goen, *JE(Yale)*, p. 130.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748), minister of the London Dissenting congregation at Mark Lane and John Guyse (1680-1761), the Dissenting minister of London's New Broad Street church, in their preface to the first published edition of Edwards's account of the revival. As suggested by their preface, Watts and Guyse first heard about the revival from Colman who had received his information from Edwards.

News of the valley revival stirred considerable interest throughout New England. On May 30, 1735 Edwards responded by letter to a request from Colman to write an account of the recent awakening.<sup>17</sup> Colman was obviously pleased with the report, for soon after receiving it he wrote to his friend and correspondent Rev. Dr. John Guyse, communicating with him much of its contents. Guyse seemed equally impressed and shared the news with his friend and fellow minister, Isaac Watts, who was also one of Colman's correspondents. In addition, Guyse took the liberty to communicate the news with his congregation in a Sunday sermon. Moved by such remarkable events, his congregation requested that the sermon be published. Guyse lost no time in seeking permission from Colman to reproduce parts of his letter. When Colman received Guyse's request, he wrote to Edwards's uncle William Williams (1665-1741) of Hatfield, Massachusetts, sharing the situation with him and suggesting that he encourage his nephew to write a more detailed account. Edwards welcomed the opportunity and let his congregation know of the developments as an encouragement to their new found faith and an exhortation to persevere in it.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For the following summary I am indebted to C.C. Goen's judicious account of the development of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 32-46. See as well, "Letters of Dr. Watts," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2nd ser., vol. 9, 1894-95 (Boston, 1895).

<sup>18</sup> Iain Murray records that it was Watts who communicated the New England events to his congregation in a sermon and who took the initiative to publish it at the request of his congregation, *Jonathan Edwards: New Biography*, p. 118. This is not only at odds with Goen's account but also Edwards's. See *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 33-34 for Goen's and p. 144 for Edwards's.

In a letter dated November 6, 1736, Edwards sent to Colman the promised fuller account of the valley revivals. Colman subsequently abridged this account and appended it to two sermons he had prepared for print by Edwards's uncle Williams. These were published in Boston in December, and Colman sent copies to Watts and Guyse in London with a cover letter to Watts. Watts replied on February 28, 1737 that the extract had given him such pleasure that he wondered whether a more complete account might yet be secured.

Dr. Guyse has your present to him, and is as much pleased with it as I am. We both agree that your abstract of the letter is very happily drawn; but the hints are brief, and many things are omitted which we long to see, and we are of [the] opinion that so strange and surprising work of God that we have not heard anything like it since the Reformation, nor perhaps since the days of the apostles, should be published, and left upon record with all its attending circumstances....<sup>19</sup>

So enthused were Watts and Guyse that they subscribed five pounds towards the printing of the complete account in Boston, requesting as many copies as the bookseller deemed appropriate. Their desire, they said, was to "spread the narrative in the world."<sup>20</sup> While the narrative was never destined to touch the entire world, Watts and Guyse made good their aim in spreading it throughout Britain. Due to circumstances in Boston, Colman decided that Edwards's narrative might be better handled by his friends in London, and sent the complete manuscript letter to them around the beginning of May.<sup>21</sup> In October, 1737, the

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<sup>19</sup> Goen, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36-37. The reason Colman decided not to have the narrative published in Boston is unclear. Goen, however, most likely strikes near the mark at making sense of the affair. On May 19, 1737, Edwards wrote Colman stating that he was altogether pleased with his abridgement and even was honored, but objected that his uncle Williams had not approved the addition of the abridgement to his book of sermons. Goen surmises from this comment and from the fact that a long and often bitter rivalry had existed between the Williamses and the Edwardses, that more likely the unexpected appearance of his young nephew's account of the recent religious revival had upset the influential Williams. Attempts were consequently made to block the printing of Edwards's complete work in Boston, and Colman determined that the only way to insure its publication was to turn the manuscript letter over to Watts and Guyse in London.

account was published in London under the title *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton*. Almost immediately an edition was published in Edinburgh.<sup>22</sup>

The events that led so quickly to this Scottish edition are difficult to determine. Clearly Watts and Guyse were involved in providing the text for publication. Knowing how eager they were to spread the account, it appears likely that they took it upon themselves to inform certain Scottish friends of the news from New England by circulating among them the earlier published abstract that Colman had sent towards the end of 1736. Further, it is probable that they let their Scottish correspondents know at the same time that they were hoping to secure the printing of a more complete account in due course.<sup>23</sup> But evidence also suggests that Colman was involved. In 1735, Colman had written to Robert Wodrow, the son of the celebrated Scottish churchman and historian from Eastwood, telling him the news of the valley revivals.<sup>24</sup> Responding on August 8, 1735, Wodrow remarked, "...ye account of ye saving change wrought on ye people of Hampshire and likewise on ye account of ye pious lives of some eminent Xns I have seen of late in your pamphlets from Boston. [ ] precious memoirs I hope will be useful both to your selves and your brn in Scotland, or any place they are sent."<sup>25</sup> The account referred to here must have consisted of excerpts from Edwards's original letter to Colman of May 30, 1735.

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas H. Johnson, *The Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758: A Bibliography* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), p. 5. A copy of the 1737 Edinburgh edition can be found in the National Library of Scotland, catalogue no. 5.2983(9).

<sup>23</sup> By 1738 Watts had received requests from Scotland for further attestations from New England concerning the Northampton revival, see *PMHS*, 2d ser., 9, 353 (Goen p. 40). Joseph Tracy asserted that Watts and Guyse circulated the 1736 extract extensively "with good effect" both in England and Scotland. Unfortunately, he failed to give his source of information. See *The Great Awakening*, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Wodrow initiated the correspondence through the encouragement of Cotton Mather, Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 68.

<sup>25</sup> "Colman Papers," *MHS*, PN 133, no. 87; cf. letter from Edwards to Colman, Northampton May 19, 1737, "Colman Papers," *MHS*, PN 133, no. 104. In her Thesis, "Transatlantic Communication and Literature in the Religious Revivals, 1735-1745," p. 76, when making reference to this letter, Susan (Durden) O'Brien fails to

Whatever the precise sequence was, a section of the Scottish Church was clearly aware of the events that took place in Northampton well in advance of the publication of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* in 1737, and great interest was aroused by its appearance. For example, Arthur Fawcett records a letter written to Edwards by Henry Davidson, minister at Galashiels, in which he states that his acquaintance with Edwards began in 1735 with news of the remarkable period of spiritual awakening in Northampton.<sup>26</sup> Such an early awareness of the events surrounding Northampton came to Scotland in the same way that it came to Watts and Guyse; namely, from Colman who was the first to receive a written account from Edwards. Thus, not only is Colman to be credited with engineering the London publication of *A Faithful Narrative*, but also with informing Scotland of the events which no doubt helped prepare the way for its publication there the same year.<sup>27</sup>

Edwards began his narrative with an account of the legacy of spiritual awakenings Stoddard had left Northampton. No less than five such periods had been experienced

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identify its author as the little known Robert Wodrow the younger, perhaps giving the general reader the impression that the letter was from his celebrated father who died March 21, 1734. Colman did in fact correspond with the elder Wodrow. In a letter dated April 1, 1734, Robert the younger wrote to Colman, sharing the news of his father's death and speaking of Colman's acquaintance with his father. But the letter in question was dated Eastwood, August 8, 1735, more than a year after his father's death. Robert Wodrow the younger was licensed on December 19, 1733 and received a call to the ministry at Eastwood to replace his father on November 18, 1734. He was ordained February 20, 1735 and was the settled minister of Eastwood who penned the letter to Colman that August, 1735. Hew Scott, ed., *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1920), pp. 135-36.

<sup>26</sup> Arthur Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival: The Scottish Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1971), p. 91. Fawcett mistakenly indicates that Edwards's narrative was published in the same year that Davidson first heard of the revival; as noted above, *A Faithful Narrative* was not published until 1737, which means that he must have heard through early reports such as the one Wodrow received from Colman.

<sup>27</sup> The letter from Wodrow and from Davidson raises a point that Goen addresses pp. 32f, where he says there appears to be no published account of JE's original account of the revival recorded in his letter to Colman dated May 30, 1735. However, both Wodrow and Davidson speak of an account from 1735.

during Stoddard's sixty years of ministry.<sup>28</sup> Northampton was no stranger to tides of spiritual ferment. The last one to take place, however, had been in 1718, eleven years before Edwards assumed the sole ministry of the church. It was, according to Edwards, less remarkable than the ones which had proceeded it, and was followed by a "far more degenerate time" of religious decline.<sup>29</sup> From 1718 to the time that Edwards joined Stoddard at Northampton, there were some small outbursts of uncommon religious activity, but generally it was a time of spiritual decline when people's interests were more engaged in matters other than the strictly religious. Soon after Stoddard's death in 1729, Edwards stated that an "extraordinary dullness in religion" had set in among them, especially among the youth, and a more liberal lifestyle seemed to pervade the town.

There is reason to believe that Edwards was aware of the problem described by Morgan as tribalism, though he would likely have interpreted it differently.<sup>30</sup> At the time, Edwards traced the decline of vital religion among his people specifically to the destructive developments of an incipient Arminianism which he says began to be heard in New England about that time.<sup>31</sup> Arminianism was not incompatible with tribalism, however, in fact Morgan indicates that tribalism created a fertile environment where the seeds of Arminianism could grow. Interestingly, the way Edwards went about addressing the

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<sup>28</sup> Edwards had himself experienced similar awakenings as a boy under his father's ministry in East Windsor. Speaking of his father's parish, he claimed that no other place had been "favored with like mercy, above any on this western side of New England, excepting Northampton," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 120.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146. Also, see pp. 70f above for an earlier discussion of Morgan's idea of tribalism.

<sup>30</sup> In a letter to his Scottish correspondent Thomas Gillespie dated July 1, 1751, Edwards described the people of Northampton, past and present, in terms remarkably similar to the way Morgan has described tribalism. See *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 561-65.

<sup>31</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 148. Concerning the Arminian inroads against Calvinism in the 18th century, I received particular help from C.C. Goen, "Editors Introduction", *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 4-14, which is best read in conjunction with Gerald J. Goodwin, "The Myth of 'Arminian-Calvinism' in Eighteenth-Century New England," *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 41 (March, 1968) no. 1, pp. 213-37. See also Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 6ff, and Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening, A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield* (Boston: Charles Tappan, 1845), pp. 7-11.

problem of Arminianism also effectively challenged and undercut the underlying assumptions of New England tribalism.

For more than a century following its founding in the 1620's, New England witnessed a steady inclination toward Arminianism, marked by "periodic reassertions of the Calvinist dogma" by prominent preachers.<sup>32</sup> By the opening of the eighteenth century a greater dependence on the cultivation of morality and the right use of man's free will was being advocated in certain pulpits as a means of receiving the benefits of Christ's saving grace. The subtle tilt toward Arminianism, coupled with the presence of tribalism, pressured ministers into preaching that man must earnestly seek salvation with the hope that in seeking they would be rewarded. The result was the loss of an evangelical spirit in their preaching that was evident with the first generation.<sup>33</sup> This was to the old Calvinism a serious distortion of the gospel, which saw morality as a fruit of the change in man's nature brought about by a sovereign work of divine mercy. To Edwards it was tantamount to 'another Gospel' which held forth for the sinner nothing but the prospects of hell. He specifically objected to the tendency to minimise the crippling effects of original sin and to emphasise man's religious and moral self-sufficiency. New England would remain theologically orthodox well into the eighteenth century, but, the growing emphasis on the cultivation of morality and the right use of man's free will brought a change in piety--one less "ardent and emotional."<sup>34</sup> In seeking to lead his people out of their false sense of security and into authentic religious experience, Edwards attacked the foundation of New England tribalism. The result was the beginning of an evangelical critique of New England

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<sup>32</sup> Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958), pp. 136-37.

<sup>33</sup> Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, p. 473.

religion that eventually would succeed in unsettling the spiritual status quo of Northampton and open the way for spiritual renewal.

Three published sermons, preached in 1731, 1733, and 1734 respectively, serve to highlight the development of Edwards's critique that theologically cleared the way for the revival.<sup>35</sup> The first one is the sermon Edwards delivered in Boston that Thursday in 1731, *God Glorified in Man's Dependence*. He had preached it to his own congregation before delivering it in Boston. It was not intended to be particularly innovative, but rather a carefully crafted expression of the mainline New England Calvinism preached by Congregationalists.<sup>36</sup> "What God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption," he began, is "that man should not glory in himself, but alone in God," for "the nature and contrivance of our redemption is such, that the redeemed are in every thing directly, immediately, and entirely dependent on God: they are dependent on him for all, and are dependent on him every way."<sup>37</sup> And it is by reason of this dependency that redemption is received through faith. For as Edwards put it, "there is included in the nature of faith, a sensible acknowledgment of *absolute dependence* on God in this affair."<sup>38</sup> It is essential to "saving faith" that man should be "emptied of self" and aware of his complete dependence on God for "all" his salvation.<sup>39</sup> He concludes, "Hence those doctrines and schemes of divinity that are in any respect opposite to such an absolute and universal dependence on God, derogate from his glory, and thwart the design of our redemption," and are "repugnant to the design and tenor of the gospel, and robs it of that which God accounts

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<sup>35</sup> For an analysis of Edwards's critique from the perspective of a theologian, see Robert W. Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 53-88.

<sup>36</sup> Goodwin, "The Myth of Arminian-Calvinism," p. 228f.

<sup>37</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

its lustre and glory.”<sup>40</sup> The force of Edwards’s argument began to undercut the false sense of religious security that New England’s tribalism had helped to cultivate, by placing the benefits of salvation into the arena of personal dependence upon God, rather than on the exclusive privileges of the covenant community.

Edwards’s concern that Thursday in Boston was not simply the threat of doctrinal error, but the threat it posed for the expression of true religion and its implications for personal salvation. Two years later in August, 1733, he further developed his exposition of this theme in a sermon published early the following year under the title “*A Divine and Supernatural Light, Immediately Imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God.*” Here Edwards picked up where he left off in his sermon “*God Glorified*” by describing the true nature of that religious experience that is entirely dependent upon the free grace of God. The sermon contains an enlightened and masterful exposition of religious epistemology, which Edwards had first conceived at the time of his conversion. True religion, he asserted, is the product of the impartation of a “spiritual and divine light” that is “immediately imparted to the soul by God,” and is totally different in nature “from any that is obtained by natural means.”<sup>41</sup> Edwards described this “spiritual and divine light” as “A true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the word of God,” which had its seat in the heart not in the mind.<sup>42</sup> It is as real as the five natural senses but of a “vastly higher” nature, and is immediately imparted by a sovereign act of God through the regenerative experience of “saving faith” that affects the heart and sanctifies the reason, leaving a person transformed and converted. Those who have received this “new spiritual sense,” insisted Edwards, do not “merely

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 6, 7

<sup>41</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

rationally believe that God is glorious,” but have a “sense of the gloriousness of God” in their heart, which “no merely notional or speculative understanding of the doctrines of religion” could ever bring about.<sup>43</sup>

At the centre of Edwards’s understanding of true religion was a “divine and supernatural light” which consisted of a direct, intuitive apprehension of the ‘excellency’ and ‘beauty’ and ‘love’ of God. Such light could not be attained on a purely notional level because it was essentially experiential and involved a sensible understanding of spiritual truths. Only a regenerative experience, claimed Edwards, could secure true religion to any degree in an individual’s life. Arminianism with its emphasis on the role of man’s will in receiving the benefits of Christ’s saving work served only to obscure the real issue of religion, which is a spiritual new birth immediately and sovereignly imparted by the Spirit of God on the basis of Christ’s merit alone. Once again, Edwards placed the experience of salvation outside the sphere of the covenantal or communal ideology of tribalism, and beyond the reach of any form of self effort.

In his doctrine of spiritual understanding, Edwards was following the tradition of Augustine, the Puritans and the Pietists. But in his emphasis on the “sensible” factor in the operation of that “spiritual and divine light,” Edwards took his cue from the Cambridge Platonist, John Smith (1618-52), and the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704).<sup>44</sup> Smith provided Edwards with the notion of religious knowledge as “spiritual sensation.”<sup>45</sup> According to Smith, there is a “Divine and Spiritual sense” that elevates reason and understanding to the level of *Sense* and *Vision*, and transforms the human soul by imparting

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 14, 16.

<sup>44</sup> Smith was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge where he studied under Benjamin Whichcote, one of the leaders of the group known as the Cambridge Platonists. Smith was principally a philosopher, but also taught mathematics at Queens College, Cambridge. He was known by his colleagues as a “walking library.”

<sup>45</sup> See Editor’s Introductions in, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 47 and vol. 10, pp. 6-9.

a *new nature*.<sup>46</sup> Edwards's "new spiritual sense of the heart" clearly points in the same direction. It consists of a real sense of the divine excellency rather than merely a conceptual grasp of it. And it is this as Edwards understood it that marks the difference between genuine piety from that which is spurious.<sup>47</sup>

David Bebbington is correct in pointing out that Edwards was translating the "older idiom" of traditional Reformed orthodoxy into contemporary terminology.<sup>48</sup> In framing his idea of the "new spiritual sense" Edwards had borrowed from the nomenclature of the Enlightenment. Specifically he modified Locke's conception of a "new simple idea," by extending the range of senses available to human beings by postulating a "new spiritual sense" as real as sight or smell.<sup>49</sup> A person who receives this "new spiritual sense," he said, receives a knowledge of God that is indubitable and with it a new and sensible conviction of the truth of the gospel.<sup>50</sup> For Edwards the "new spiritual sense" of the heart was the fountain head of all true religious experience and the source of all genuine religious knowledge.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., vol. 10, p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 47.

<sup>48</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 48. M.X. Lesser expressed the contemporary significance of Edwards's use of the "new sense of the heart" thus: "It is a way of knowing akin to John Locke's empirical model... a "new simple idea" unmediated by thought or logic, innate and little beyond. It is the transforming light of Isaac Newton's *Opticks* made metaphor, the reconciliation of God and man in the physics of the natural world....It is all these, the confluence of Edwards's philosophical, scientific, and theological thought, the new language of old belief," *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 40-41. James Hoopes, while in general agreement with Bebbington and Lesser, adds, however, an important qualification that will be taken up more fully in the next chapter. To think that Edwards did no more "than assert old concepts in new words", says Hoopes, is to miss the deeper significance of what he was about. "Edwards's strategy was not, as is so commonly believed, primarily to describe religious experience in a new way consistent with psychological empiricism. Instead, he mainly attacked the metaphysical assumptions underlying empiricism [i.e. its materialist assumptions] in order to make it consistent with the old view of religious experience." See, "Jonathan Edwards's Religious Psychology," p. 851

<sup>49</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 205.

<sup>50</sup> See Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 47-48.

The confidence in the powers of human knowledge expressed by Edwards in the sermon was something new. Neither the Puritans nor the Reformers had presumed that such a firm knowledge of the things of God as the sermon claimed possible was available to human beings. Received Protestant piety dictated questioning, not confidence.<sup>52</sup> Edwards's doctrine of spiritual understanding allowed him to bring a new dimension of assurance to experimental religion by creating with unprecedented clarity and confidence a new evangelical morphology of conversion. True religion necessarily implied love to God demonstrated in a life of testable piety. In other words "saving faith" was open to verification.

Edwards's fusion of the older Puritan understanding of religious experience with contemporary epistemological categories provided him with the understanding he later used to interpret the religious experiences of those spiritually awakened during the revival that visited his congregation in 1735. The importance of Edwards's thinking for eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicalism would be realised several years later through the influence of his published works on the Great Awakening. The more immediate influence, however, was upon Edwards's congregation, which anticipates the affect he would have on the Scottish revivalists.

Even before he joined Stoddard at Northampton, Edwards was consciously seeking to improve his effectiveness as a preacher. During the most formative period, 1722 to 1727, he routinely made adjustments to the form and structure of his sermons. He often experimented with various patterns of delivery, striving to make it both more dynamic and flexible, allowing for a more extemporaneous presentation. Edwards's efforts produced,

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<sup>52</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 42-47. On this point, see also Hoopes, "Jonathan Edwards's Religious Psychology," pp. 849-65.

says Wilson Kinnach, a depth of homiletical authenticity and realism beyond the reach of most pulpeters of his day.<sup>53</sup> One of the features evident at this time, revealed in the expression of Edwards's language, was the desire to dramatize the true nature of spiritual questing.<sup>54</sup> Edwards was shaping his preaching style for the purpose of creating within his people a need and desire for a more authentic religious experience, one involving either the vivification of the spiritual experience of the regenerate or the awakening of others to their unsaved state and need for conversion. Edwards was not preaching in order to maintain the religious status quo. The status quo was sadly lacking the reality of true spirituality. Rather he preached to rescue his congregation from the deadening effects of New England's culture religion. The sermon, *A Divine and Supernatural Light*, was a turning point in Edwards's preaching ministry. In the sermon he assured his people that an immediate knowledge of God and of their standing with him was indeed possible. Such news was truly remarkable, and it effectively breached the wall of the spiritual lethargy that had for years characterized his congregation.

About that time, Edwards recorded that a visible reformation of the social and spiritual ills that had pervaded Northampton was apparent. In particular, the young people began to show a marked increase of religious concern, and at the end of 1733 "there appeared a very unusual flexibleness, and yielding to advice" among them.<sup>55</sup> Taking advantage of this state of affairs, Edwards pressed forward and began publically to call for a reformation of particular social "evils". This openness continued through to the spring of

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<sup>53</sup> Kinnach. "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 10, pp. 106-07.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>55</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 147

the following year when the town experienced two sudden and remarkable deaths, which served to increase the already growing religious interests.

Further, by 1734 a sense of impending spiritual crisis among the people of Northampton was evident. The effects of tribalism and Arminian preaching had subtly driven a theological wedge into the religious culture of New England, separating the people from the tenets of their theological legacy, and, from Edwards's perspective, from true saving faith. Edwards's persistent challenge of the spirit of religious self-reliance created a sense of spiritual insecurity among his congregation, causing many of them to fear that God had given them over to corruption. At this time Edwards observed,

The friends of vital piety trembled for fear of the issue; ...Many who looked on themselves as in a Christless condition, seemed to be awakened by it, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land, and that we should be given up to heterodoxy and corrupt principles; and that then their opportunity for obtaining salvation would be past; and many who were brought a little to doubt about the truth of the doctrines they had hitherto been taught, seemed to have a kind of trembling fear with their doubts, lest they should be led into bypaths, to their eternal undoing: and they seemed with much concern and engagedness of mind, to inquire what was indeed the way in which they must come to be accepted with God.<sup>56</sup>

His answer to their question, how can we be accepted by God, was a series of sermons, begun in the fall of 1734 on the subject of justification by faith alone. Building on the foundation laid in his earlier sermons, Edwards's once again set out to defend the old protestant doctrine of *justification by faith alone* against the "new fashioned divinity" and to redirect his people back into the Calvinist fold of true religion.<sup>57</sup> It was another uncompromising statement of man's inability to merit God's approval and the utter futility

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, pp. 620-21.

of his good works in this regard, and once again Edwards drew upon the conceptual framework of the Enlightenment to reassert the Old Calvinism in a new way. Edwards began by reaffirming the Calvinist understanding of the nature of justification: "We are justified only by faith in Christ, and not by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own."<sup>58</sup> By grace and grace alone men were freed from sin and made truly righteous before God. Yet, while this grace was realized *through* the act of faith, Edwards took pains to point out that the act of faith was not what justified a person, rather the person had faith because of God's grace; and that faith was *not* a moral act, but one ordained by God and naturally "fit" for bringing a person into actual "union" with Christ.<sup>59</sup> The first was no more than a restatement of orthodox Calvinism. The second, however, reflected Edwards's distinction between "natural" and "moral" fitness. Faith has a "naturally" fit, not a "morally" fit relation to justification.

A person has a moral fitness for a state, when his moral excellency commends him to it, or when his being put into such a good state is but a fit or suitable testimony of regard or love to the moral excellency, or value, or amiableness of any of his qualifications or acts. A person has a natural fitness for a state, when it appears meet and condecant that he should be in such a state or circumstances, only from the natural concord or agreeableness there is between such qualifications and such circumstances; not because the qualifications are lovely or unlovely, but only because the qualifications and the circumstances are like one another, or do in their nature, suit and agree or unite one to another.<sup>60</sup>

According to Edwards, there is a naturally fit relation between faith and justification, or what is the same thing, between faith and Christ, or faith and salvation; faith does not possess the nature of moral fitness. The crux of the matter is that faith, as a naturally fit

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 622.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 623-28. For a more detailed account of Edwards's understanding of "faith" see, Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1974), pp. 90-106; and Thomas Schafer, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification By Faith," *Church History* 20 (December, 1951): 55-67.

<sup>60</sup> "Justification by Faith," *Works*, vol. 1, p. 627.

relation, is of a strictly non-meritorious nature. "God does not give those that believe, a union with or interest in the Saviour, in reward for faith, but only because faith is the soul's active uniting with Christ."<sup>61</sup> Faith unites Christ and the believer in such a way as it makes them one, and justification is the union between Christ and the believer; it is the union that justifies, and it is faith that unites. And where does faith originate? It is a gift of God.

Edwards is here restating a view central to early Calvinism and one that reflects the older Scottish theological tradition with its emphasis on the believer's faith in the objective work of Christ and union with Christ and as the basis for both salvation and assurance.<sup>62</sup> But Edwards does it in a new way. The language he uses reflects the new thinking of the period, which he enlisted to avoid problems central to the question of faith.<sup>63</sup> The one that most concerns us here is how faith can be an indispensable qualification for justification, but not a condition, if by condition is meant that which is to be rewarded with justification. "There is a difference," Edwards observed, "between being justified *by* a thing, and that thing universally, and necessarily, and inseparably attending or going with justification; for so do a great many things that we are not said to be justified *by*."<sup>64</sup> The distinction Edwards drew here is tied to his earlier distinction between naturally and morally fit relations, which

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 626.

<sup>62</sup> See Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, passim.

<sup>63</sup> By suggesting that Edwards's idea of justifying faith bears the marks of the contemporary thinking of the day, I do not intend by this to imply, as Perry Miller has done, that Edwards drew directly from Isaac Newton's *Principia*; rather I mean that Edwards's distinction between "natural" and "moral" fitness reflects the language and thinking of his day. See Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 79ff, and Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>64</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, p. 623. Italics mine. Alan C. Clifford fails to understand the distinction Edwards draws here between being justified by a thing, and a thing being necessarily connected with justification, when he attempts to draw parallels between Edwards's position and those of Baxter and Tillotson; for Edwards the faith that justifies (bearing only a natural fitness) by virtue of actively uniting the believer with Christ, makes possible the faith by which the believer obeys Christ (bearing a moral fitness); see Clifford's, *Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology 1640-1790, An Evaluation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 213, 218-19.

Edwards used to steer clear of Neonomianism on the one hand and Antinomianism on the other.<sup>65</sup>

Such a straightforward pronouncement of God's sovereignty in man's salvation must have offended New England's liberal churchmen. Edwards indicated that some had faulted him for "meddling" in the controversy,<sup>66</sup> ridiculed his attempt, and claimed that such "speculative niceties, and subtle distinctions" did not serve the cause of religion, but rather helped to bury it in "controversy and dispute."<sup>67</sup> But unlike his detractors, Edwards believed that right doctrine was essential for true piety. If a person is to experience true religion, reasoned Edwards, they must understand the true nature of that religion. And if salvation is received through faith, and faith is "a sensible acknowledgment of *absolute dependence* on God in the affair,"<sup>68</sup> then it follows that people must know these things before they can be led to a saving faith in Christ.

Notwithstanding his critics, Edwards's persistence was rewarded. His clear exposition of the nature of true saving faith cleared away the people's confusion, laid to rest their doubts and fears with respect to the way of salvation, and released them to pursue in a new way acceptance with God: "their minds were engaged the more earnestly to seek that they might come to be accepted of God, and saved in the way of the Gospel, which had been made evident to them to be the true and only way."<sup>69</sup> Edwards pointed out, both in the *Faithful Narrative* and in his preface to a collection of his sermons published in 1738, that the discourse on justification by faith alone was above all the doctrine on which the work

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 629-30.

<sup>66</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 116.

<sup>67</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, p. 621.

<sup>68</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> *Faithful Narrative*, p. 149.

was founded and progressed: "I could not but look upon [the work] as a remarkable testimony of God's approbation of the *doctrine of justification by faith alone*."<sup>70</sup>

Not long after he had finished this series of sermons, toward the end of December, Edwards recorded,

the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us; and there were, suddenly, one after another, five or six persons who were to all appearances savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner...., a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion and the eternal world became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees and all ages....All other talk about spiritual and eternal things was soon thrown by....The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and everyone appeared pressing into it....It then was a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what persons' minds were intent upon was to escape for their lives, and to fly from the wrath to come. All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls....There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those that were wont to be vainest and loosest, and those that had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did as it were come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and delivered out of an horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock with a new song of praise to God in their mouths....I am far from pretending to be able to determine how many have lately been the subjects of such mercy; but if I may be allowed to declare anything that appears to me probable in a thing of this nature, I hope that more than 300 souls were savingly brought home to Christ in this town in the space of a half a year.<sup>71</sup>

Edwards believed that the spiritual awakening that his Northampton parish experienced at this time was an example of true doctrine transformed into authentic religious experience by the immediate action of God's Spirit on the souls of those who

<sup>70</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, p. 620. *Justification by Faith Alone* led this collection of five sermons.

<sup>71</sup> *Faithful Narrative*, pp. 149-51, 158.

heard.<sup>72</sup> In other words, it was not the result of simply an appeal to become more religious, but rather an uncompromising critique of New England religious culture.<sup>73</sup> Edwards had effectively stripped away the spiritual security of his people by stressing the individual covenant of grace over the social covenant. This emphasis of the individual over the social would take on a larger profile five years later during the Great Awakening.

News of the events of Northampton quickly made their way to Scotland. Even before the publication of the *Faithful Narrative* in 1737, William McCulloch, minister at Cambuslang, Henry Davidson, minister at Galashiels, and Robert Wodrow at Eastwood were reading accounts of the spiritual awakening they had received from their American correspondents. In fact reports of the Connecticut valley revival had reached Scotland as early as 1735, and by 1737, the year the *Faithful Narrative* was published, news had reached as far as the Highlands.<sup>74</sup> These unpublished reports were brief, however, and gave only hints of the true nature and extent of the work. When, therefore, the *Faithful Narrative* was published in Scotland in 1737, there was an audience ready and waiting for a more detailed rendering of the events and results of the work. In the *Faithful Narrative*, Edwards

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<sup>72</sup> Gerald Goodwin, in his article, "The Myth of 'Arminian-Calvinism,'" p. 229, draws the conclusion that Edwards, Thomas Prince and William Cooper did not view doctrine as culpable for the decline of piety within New England. He supports this view with a number of contemporary references that contend that while "vital religion" was in a state of collapse, the purity of doctrine was retained. However, this does not accurately represent Edwards's position, nor altogether Prince and Cooper. Both in his preface to his *Five Discourses on Important Subjects*, *Works*, vol. 1, pp. 620-21, and in his *Faithful Narrative*, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 116, 131-32, 164-68, Edwards strongly implies that the increase of genuine piety within his congregation was related to his preaching on specific doctrinal themes. In addition, in his treatise on *Religious Affections*, he explicitly states that without a clear and settled understanding of the nature of true religion there is little hope for its revival. See Smith, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 39. Further, one of the reasons Prince and Cooper state for their enthusiastic appreciation for Edwards's sermon "God Glorified," was that he struck with "much strength and clearness" at the very core of "practical religion, without the belief of which, that must soon die in the hearts and lives of men," *Works*, vol. 2, p. 2). Here Prince and Cooper are voicing the same conviction, i.e. that vital piety is tied to the preaching of the doctrines of practical religion.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Jensen, "Mr. Edwards' Affections," *Dialogue: A Journal of Theology*, 3 (Summer, 1985), p. 173.

<sup>74</sup> *CMH*, No. 5, August, 1745, p. 131.

presented the revival as a genuine work of the Spirit of God and of God's redemptive grace, and argued the point by clearly and systematically documenting the genesis, fruition and decline of the revival with an analysis of each stage. At the same time he laid out the doctrine he believed God used to promote the work and the spiritual principles he used to interpret the genuineness of the religious experiences of those revived. The latter he illustrated with case studies, two of which he presented in great detail. No previous history of revivalism had offered either the depth of analysis or breadth of observation contained in Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*.

The narrative not only provided the desired full account, but its publication served to spread the news of the Northampton awakening much more widely within Scotland, bringing encouragement and stirring up a spirit of optimism among Scottish evangelicals within their own parishes. Ministers and their people alike received the news enthusiastically and actively shared it among themselves. "The Joy in Proportion was great," wrote James Robe, minister at Kilsyth, "upon hearing the first Revival of Religion in *Northampton*, and neighbouring Towns and villages of the County of *Hampshire*, in the Province of *Massachusetts*."<sup>75</sup> Henry Davidson (c. 1687-1756), minister at Galashiels, spoke of the Northampton revival as "that remarkable period of the century,"<sup>76</sup> and a minister from Glasgow, writing in 1738 to one of the four New England ministers who added a preface to the 1738 edition of the *Faithful Narrative*, shared, "The friends of serious religion here were much refreshed with the printed account of the extraordinary success of the Gospel, of late, in some parts of New England."<sup>77</sup> Reports of its reception

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<sup>75</sup> *CMH*, no. 1, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> "Memoirs," *Letters to Christian Friends by the Late Henry Davidson* (Edinburgh, 1811), p. 126. Quoted in Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, p. 91.

<sup>77</sup> *JE*(*Yale*), vol. 4, p. 142. The four ministers were Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince, John Webb, and William Cooper.

came from as far north as Golspie and as far south as Galashiels, from Glasgow in the west to Dundee in the east. "He must be a stranger in *Israel*," declared Robe, "who has not heard of the uncommon Religious Appearances, in some of the *British American Colonies*,..., among Persons of all Ages and Characters, for some Years past." Many in Scotland, Robe went on to say, "have judged and represented the Work, in the main, to be a genuine Work of the Holy Spirit, and the Effect of that Out-pouring of the Comforter, [that] zealous Christians have been praying, longing and waiting for."<sup>78</sup> By the following year a second Scottish printing was required.

Even those of the secession, who were later to become some of the most bitter opponents of the Scottish revivals of the 1740's, welcomed Edwards's account as a sign of blessing. It was with surprise that Robe, when speaking of the secession's opposition to the revivals of Cambuslang and Kilsyth, pointed out that these same ones were glad when they heard the "joyful news" of the Northampton revivals and "praised the Lord for them."<sup>79</sup> John Willison, in a blistering letter to James Fisher, one of the original seceders, claimed that if the revivals now being witnessed in Scotland had taken place before the secession, Fisher would have welcomed them as enthusiastically as himself.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, the Rev. John Moorehouse, Pastor of a Presbyterian church in Boston, writing to a gentleman in Scotland on June 14, 1743, laments the fact that Ralph Erskine appeared to have changed his mind after the revivals broke out in Scotland.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Preface *CMH*, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Preface, *CMH*, p. 4, and No.1 (November, 1743), p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> *A Letter from Mr. John Willison Minister at Dundee. To Mr. James Fisher Minister at Glasgow. Containing Serious Expostulations with Him concerning his Unfair-dealing in his Review of Mr. Robe's Preface, etc., and Several suitable Advices to him and others* (Edinburgh, 1743), p. 26.

<sup>81</sup> *CMH*, No. 2 (December, 1743), p. 17; cf. William Cooper's similar response to a Scottish correspondent, No. 4 (February, 1744), pp. 4-5.

Several factors helped the almost uniform acceptance of Edwards's narrative among Scotland's evangelicals. First, as noted in the previous chapters, Scotland and New England shared a similar theological and religious context. Calvinism, as explicated by the Westminster Confession of Faith, supplied the standard of orthodoxy adhered to by both regions. Steps had been taken at the turn of the century to cooperate together in an attempt to provide a united front against the encroachment of English Arminianism. During the early decades of the eighteenth century inroads made by not only Arminianism, but Arianism, Deism and Socinianism were perceived by many to be challenging the traditional stance of the Church of Scotland, and theological controversy had plagued the Kirk since the late seventeenth century. The unmistakable Calvinist position endorsed by the narrative along with its anti-Arminian tone, commended itself to the majority within the Church of Scotland.<sup>82</sup> Its message was clear--Calvinism was still very much alive and spiritually potent.

Secondly, by the turn of the century a general decline in the spiritual state of the Church of Scotland had begun to be observed and lamented in both places. While this uneasy religious climate had led some to become disinterested in religion generally, it produced in others a desire for a more evangelical and less ponderously dry and didactic approach to spiritual ministry. An increasing number of ministers began to voice concern over a style of preaching they described as legal and non-evangelical, characterized by an emphasis on doctrinal conformity to the loss of personal piety. The Scottish equivalent of New England tribalism also contributed to the loss of an evangelical impulse within the

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<sup>82</sup> In contrast, John Wesley, who like the Scots welcomed the news the *Faithful Narrative* brought, took exception to the strong Calvinist tone, and took the liberty to edit out the more offensive parts in his summary of the text published ca.1744.

Church of Scotland. The issue for these ministers was the lack of evangelical heart not theological orthodoxy.<sup>83</sup> In the early part of the century the Marrowmen were led to bring the issue before the General Assembly. Although the Marrowmen were eventually censured by the General Assembly, other concerned Kirk evangelicals later succeeded in getting the Assembly to officially recognize by the "Act concerning Preaching" the lack of evangelical preaching in the land. The Act was submitted to the General Assembly on May 21, 1736 and ratified in 1737.<sup>84</sup> The publication of Edwards *Narrative* in Scotland in 1737 was perfectly timed to reinforce the positive nature of the Act. Edwards had made it clear in his revival narrative that the spiritual awakening was the result of God's blessing upon the preaching of the Reformed doctrines of grace, and in particular the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ alone.<sup>85</sup>

Thirdly, the news of God's out-pouring of grace in New England created a sense of optimism among many in Scotland who began to look for a similar out-pouring of God's Spirit upon Scotland as the appointed means of restoring true religion in the land. Such expectations were fed by memories of past visitations of spiritual blessing upon the Kirk. Scotland, like New England, could boast of a legacy of spiritual awakenings, and readers of

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<sup>83</sup> James Robe's description of the religious atmosphere of the Church of Scotland was not untypical for the time: "While the Government, Worship and Doctrine established in this Church were retained in Profession, there hath been an universal Corruption of Life,...: A formal Round of professional Duties, was the Religion of the Professors...,As to the Multitude they were visibly profane, and without any Sense of Religion at all," Preface, *A Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth, and other Congregations in the Neighbourhood* (Edinburgh, 1742), pp. iii-iv. See also, *James Gordon's Diary, 1692-1710*, eds. G.D. Henderson and H.H. Porter (Aberdeen, 1947), "Introduction" pp. 36f.

<sup>84</sup> At the centre of the Marrow Controversy, as noted in chapter two, were theological issues arising out of a pastoral concern about the preaching of legalism and neonomianism. See as well: Ebenezer Erskine, "The Standard of Heaven Lifted up against the Powers of Hell." *The Whole Works of Ebenezer Erskine*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1793); Ralph Erskine, "Law-death, Gospel-Life; or The Death of Legal Righteousness, the Life of Gospel Holness," *A Collection of Sermons on Several Subjects: preach'd some by Rev. Ebenezer Erskine,...; and others by the Rev. Ralph Erskine...*, vol. 2 (London, 1757); John Willison, *The Church's Danger and the Minister's Duty* (Edinburgh, 1733).

<sup>85</sup> *JE (Yale)* vol. 4 , pp. 116, 148. Watts and Guyse make the same point in their preface, p. 132. See also *Works*, vol. 1, p. 620.

Edwards's narrative of "surprising conversions" did not miss the striking resemblance of the experience of Northampton to the Scottish revivals of Stewarton and Irvine (1625), and Shotts (1630).<sup>86</sup> Of Stewarton and Irvine it was said,

it was remarkable,...many were choaked and taken by the heart, that, through terror, the Spirit in such a measure convincing them of sin, in hearing of the word, they have been made to fall over, and thus carried out of the church; who after proved most solid and lively Christians...yea thus like a spreading moor-burn, the power of godliness did advance from one place to another, which put a marvellous lustre on these parts of the country.<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, five years later, at the Kirk of Shotts, following the communion service of June 20, 1630, those in attendance witnessed an extraordinary "downpouring of the spirit" in which nearly five hundred individuals from various ranks in society "had at that time a discernible change wrought on them, of whom most proved lively Christians afterwards."<sup>88</sup> Their memory had been kept alive through books like Robert Fleming's (1630-94) *The Fulfilling of Scripture*, and through the widespread activities of prayer societies so prevalent in Scotland at the time that had, for years prior to 1737, been "praying, longing, and waiting" for God to bless the Scottish Kirk with spiritual renewal.<sup>89</sup> The publication of Edwards's narrative with its account of an extraordinary revival of religion that encompassed more than thirty New England communities and reached all ages and levels of the community, was also well timed to feed into this growing desire among many in Scotland for a large scale evangelical renewal.

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. James Robe, *Preface to A Faithful Narrative Of The Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth, and other Congregations in the Neighbourhood* (Edinburgh, 1742), pp. vii-ix.

<sup>87</sup> John Gillies, *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel* (Kelso, 1845), reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust, 1981, p. 197.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* p. 198.

<sup>89</sup> James Robe, "Preface," *CMH*, No.1, p. 3. See also Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 57-74; and AGA, "Act appointing a solemn National Fast," p. 582.

Fourthly, at the time of its publication, the *Faithful Narrative* was the first extended account and analysis of a period of religious awakening in a single congregation, and the first recorded experience of a large scale parish based revival.<sup>90</sup> Although religious awakenings were not new to eighteenth-century New England, up until 1734 they had been local affairs that only occasionally spilled over into a neighbouring town or towns. The scale of the religious revival in and around Northampton was, even by New England standards, unprecedented and so also was the comprehensive nature of Edwards's account.<sup>91</sup> If Scots could boast a counterpart to the work at Northampton, they could not boast of a like narrative. The records left behind and used by men like Fleming lacked the thoroughness, clarity and systematic approach so evident in Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*. "The Omission of our worthy Forefathers to transmit to Posterity a full and Circumstantial account of the Conversion of 500...at the Kirk of Shotts in the Year 1630," was according to James Robe, something "much complained of and lamented."<sup>92</sup> Edwards's narrative not only presented a "full and Circumstantial account," it also broke new ground in the genre of revival literature by systematically developing a theory of revivals that reflected much of what had been only implicit in earlier revival accounts.<sup>93</sup>

To begin with, the manner in which Edwards structured the narrative, recorded the events of the revival, and interpreted the experiences of the awakened resonated with the growing scientific and empirical bent that characterized the Enlightenment. He gave a full account of both times and places, set the revival in its historical context and interpreted its

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<sup>90</sup> Edwards mentioned thirty-two separate communities in his narrative that experienced some degree of spiritual wakening: *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 22-23.

<sup>91</sup> H.S. Stout, "Great Awakening," in the *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, eds. Daniel G. Reid, et.al. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1990), pp. 494f. Hereafter cited as *DCA*.

<sup>92</sup> *A Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilysth and other Congregations in the Neighbourhood* (Glasgow, 1789), p. 62.

<sup>93</sup> Crawford makes the same point in, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 124.

meaning and import for the present, analyzed the significance of changing social conditions, and provided a clear and sensitive account of the religious experiences he was seeking to judge. The entire performance evinced a measure of objectivity and clinical detail missing from previous revival narratives.<sup>94</sup>

Such care and caution is illustrated by the fact that Edwards used nearly half of the *Faithful Narrative* to describe and interpret the conversions he observed.<sup>95</sup> Although his overall pattern of conversion did not substantially deviate from the traditional morphology inherited from the Puritan forefathers, several aspects of Edwards's account distinguished it from previous treatments. First, he did not believe that any particular order or method of operations and experiences was a certain sign that they were divinely inspired, and consequently he refused to restrict conversion to some fixed or uniform pattern. Remarking on the experiences of those converted, Edwards observed, "there is a vast variety, perhaps as manifold as the subjects of the operation; but yet in many things there is a great analogy in all." He was unwilling either to reject an experience simply because it did not follow some prescribed pattern, or accept "every religious pang and enthusiastic conceit for saving conversion."<sup>96</sup> Secondly, Edwards incorporated insights from the new psychology of Locke to describe and explain the end results of the conversion phenomenon, which was a "new sense" and inward impression of the reality of divine things such as they never had before their conversion.<sup>97</sup> The practical result was a greater emphasis on the experience of assurance that followed conversion. Finally, Edwards morphology of conversion was inextricably tied to the the experience of the converted, that is to say, the *Narrative* provided

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<sup>94</sup> Smith, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 5; Lesser, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 49.

<sup>95</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 159-91.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 159-60, 185f.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-85, 208.

a clear, objective and vivid account of the facts and experiences he was attempting to interpret. What this illustrates is just how seriously Edwards took experimental religion.<sup>98</sup> Although reports of other evangelical stirrings of the Spirit of God soon followed,<sup>99</sup> no comparable account originating outside of Scotland would be published or circulated so widely, and none would prove so timely in its relation to the spiritual state of the Church of Scotland.

Fifthly, unlike the period of revivalism that began a few years later in 1739, there was no specific crisis or theological controversy associated with the revival events of 1734 and 1735. Writing in their Preface to the first edition of the *Faithful Narrative*, Watts and Guyse observed,

‘Tis worthy of our observation, that this great and surprising work does not seem to have taken its rise from any sudden and distressing calamity or public terror that might universally impress the minds of a people. Here was no storm, no earthquake, no inundation of water, no desolation by fire, no pestilence or any other sweeping distemper, nor any cruel invasion by their Indian neighbours, that might force the inhabitants into serious thoughtfulness, and a religious temper by the fears of approaching death and judgment....in the present case the immediate hand of God in the work of his Spirit appears much more evident, because there is no such awful and threatening providence attending it.<sup>100</sup>

Scottish evangelicals also took note of this fact. Contrasting the work of God in Northampton in 1735 with the periods of revival before and after, the editor of the Scottish religious periodical the *Christian Monthly History* noted that it was the more remarkable because it followed a “Time of great Security, when there was no terrible Dispensation of Providence to awaken the Minds of Men.”<sup>101</sup> Moreover the work was free from the stigma

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<sup>98</sup> For an insightful account of the role of experimental religion in the work of Edwards see Smith’s “Editor’s Introduction,” *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 43-53.

<sup>99</sup> For example, Freehold, New Jersey, Wales, and later the evangelical conversions of George Whitefield and John Wesley. See Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, p. 52.

<sup>100</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 133.

<sup>101</sup> *CMH*, no. 3 (June, 1745), p. 86.

of doctrinal disputes and the taint of enthusiasm. Edwards does allude in the narrative to the existence of notions of saving grace and faith contrary to Calvinism, but he described them in terms of theological tensions rather than public controversies. Even in the process of interpreting and analyzing the conversion experiences of his people he successfully distinguished the spirituality of the revival from the pitfalls of Antinomianism and Neonomianism.<sup>102</sup> In addition, he took care to point out that the people of Northampton were “as rational and understanding a people as most I have been acquainted with.” He also carefully distinguished between the experience of those awakened and religious enthusiasm, and expressed his gratefulness that the work was not spoiled by aberrant behavior and emotional excesses, but marked by a spirit of charity, moral reform, and a new confidence in the Reformed doctrines of grace.<sup>103</sup>

The ideological similarities, timing, and the absence of controversy represented by Edwards’s account resonated with the needs, expectations, and basic assumptions of Scotland’s evangelical Calvinists. The critical point in this connection is that there was nothing to keep them from accepting the revival as a genuine work of the Spirit of God and the result of his blessing of the free offer of salvation through the preaching of the doctrines of grace.<sup>104</sup> At a time when Calvinist doctrine was being marginalized in England and on much of the continent, and evangelical piety was waning in Scotland, the news that Edwards’s narrative brought to Scotland was a powerful testimony to the renewal of evangelical religion through the doctrine they counted orthodox.

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>103</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 148f, 159-91.

<sup>104</sup> Preface, *CMH*, p. 7.

It is worth noting as well, that the doctrinal basis of the Northampton awakening was further strengthened when five of the sermons that Edwards thought most used to ignite the work were published and appended to the 1738 Boston edition of the *Faithful Narrative*.<sup>105</sup> They were published at the desire and expense of the town of Northampton and entitled: *Discourses on Various Important Subjects, Nearly Concerning the Great Affair of the Soul's Eternal Salvation*. Although the 1738 Scottish edition did not contain the sermons, Dwight said they were extensively circulated throughout England and Scotland, and proved especially effective in the latter country.<sup>106</sup> There is sufficient reason to believe Dwight was correct. To begin with, we know that John Willison, whose own books and sermons were a main stay for many in Scotland, had read them sometime between the 1737 and 1742, and claimed they showed Edwards to be an "orthodox, judicious Divine,...., of long experience in dealing with exercised Souls under their various Temptations and Distresses."<sup>107</sup> Also John Erskine, who later became one of Scotland's foremost evangelical churchmen and a friend and correspondent of Edwards, read them with great benefit during his days as a student at Edinburgh University.<sup>108</sup> In fact, G.D. Henderson claims the sermons' represented the "beginning of the distinctively theological influence of Edwards on Erskine's own thinking."<sup>109</sup> Given these sermons' relationship to the narrative, it may be very near the truth to say that they represent the beginning of Edwards's distinctively theological influence on the religious life of Scotland as well.

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<sup>105</sup> The five sermons were: *Justification by Faith Alone; Pressing into the Kingdom of God; Ruth's Resolution; The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners; The Excellency of Christ*.

<sup>106</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, p. lxxii.

<sup>107</sup> *Letter from Mr. John Willison Minister of Dundee, to Mr. James Fisher Minister at Glasgow,...*(Edinburgh, 1743), p. 6.

<sup>108</sup> John Erskine, *The People of God Considered As All Righteous*; in *Three Sermons*; preached at Glasgow, April, 1745 (Edinburgh, 1745), p. iv.

<sup>109</sup> *The Burning Bush: Studies in Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrews Press, 1957), p. 154.

By the third and fourth decades of the eighteenth century, Scotland and New England had developed between them one of the most impressive transatlantic communication networks of the day.<sup>110</sup> Evangelical Calvinists in particular enjoyed an active exchange of news, printed sermons, pamphlets, and books and were highly conscious of one another's activities.<sup>111</sup> Because of the sensation Edwards's narrative had created among Scottish evangelicals, it is safe to assume that copies of Edwards two earlier published sermons, *God Glorified in Man's Dependence* (1731) and *A Divine and Supernatural Light* (1734), were being circulated by this time as well. The first of these had won for Edwards the respect of Boston's elite, and the second, published separately from the five discourses, was one of the most important sermons of the revival.<sup>112</sup> Altogether these sermons show forth a depth of theological acumen that set Edwards apart from his contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic and endowed his narrative with even greater prestige. In the *Faithful Narrative* Scottish revivalists found the teaching of these sermons made real: the divine sovereignty of God glorified in the work of redemption; a new sense of spiritual and divine things immediately experienced by those truly awakened; and the assurance that comes by the undoing of religious security through the doctrine of justification by faith through grace alone.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Susan O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-55," *The American Historical Review* 4 (October, 1986): 811-32.

<sup>111</sup> *CMH*, Preface, p. 4; *Ibid.*, p. 813.

<sup>112</sup> On the importance of *A Divine and Supernatural Light* to the revival see above pp. 97ff; cf. Thomas Schafer, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith," *Church History* 20 (December, 1951): pp. 61, 66 n. 55. Robert Wodrow, Jr., in a letter to Benjamin Colman on August 8, 1735, rejoiced in the news of the spiritual awakening among the people of Northampton, thanked Colman for some sermons, and acknowledged the receipt of pamphlets from Boston. Given the subject matter of the letter and the publication of Edwards's two sermons in Boston, it is possible that one or both of the sermons were among those Colman had sent.

<sup>113</sup> Lesser, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 49.

Finally, and closely related to the last point, it is the consensus of the literacy studies written on this period that the greater percentage of the population in Scotland were at this time conversant with theological and biblical ideas.<sup>114</sup> Further there existed a more than normal desire for reading material, perhaps exaggerated by the paucity of books and magazines available at the time.<sup>115</sup> Peter Laslett's and T.C. Smout's studies on the period in particular suggest that people even of humble means were eager to acquire publications and sermons.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, it would seem that whatever published material of Edwards that was available in Scotland at this time would have had a better chance of being picked up and read.

What is important to notice, is that the cumulative effect of these factors was the almost uniform reception of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* as an account of a genuine work of the Spirit of God by Scotland's evangelicals that gave to it, from the beginning, a normative status.<sup>117</sup> Although ministers of the Associate Presbytery eventually reversed themselves and challenged this assumption, this did not occur until five years after the publication of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*, and by that time, the narrative had done its work of inspiring and giving shape to the Scottish revivals of 1742.<sup>118</sup> It breathed a new spirit of optimism into Scottish hopes for a renewing work of God's Spirit within the life of the Kirk and helped renew fresh confidence in the doctrines of grace.<sup>119</sup> But most

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<sup>114</sup> See for e.g. Peter Laslett, "Scottish Weavers, Cobblers and Miners Who Bought Books in the 1750's," in *Local Population Studies Magazine and Newsletter*, 3 (Autumn, 1969), pp. 7-14; T.C. Smout, "Born Again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland," *Past and Present*, 97 (1982): 114-27; cf. Muirhead, "Revival as a Dimension of Scottish Church History," pp. 185-88. For a less optimistic assessment see R.A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe, Culture and Education 1500-1800* (London and New York: Longman, 1988), pp. 42-60, 81-86, 104-10, 132-45, 205-11, 218-29.

<sup>115</sup> Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 79ff. See also Laslett, *Ibid.*, p. 10f.

<sup>116</sup> Laslett, "Scottish Weavers," pp. 7-14; Smout, "Born Again at Cambuslang," p. 123.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Preface, *CMH*, p. 3; Goen, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 27.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>119</sup> A recurring theme in the Scottish revivalist's defense of the revivals would be that the spiritual Awakenings on both sides of the Atlantic were the product of the Reformed doctrines of grace; cf. *CMH*, Preface, pp. 28-31.

importantly, through the narrative and sermons, Edwards formed to a great extent the Scottish revivalists understanding of the nature of religious awakening by establishing and shaping their expectations. This he did by making explicit, through concrete detail, how the Spirit of God worked the renewal of true religion within the human heart and in a religious community.<sup>120</sup>

This last observation points to the factor which perhaps ultimately proved the most dynamic of all. By presenting the revival as a genuine work of the Spirit of God, and arguing the point by a clear and systematic presentation and analysis of the genesis, growth and decline of the Northampton awakening, Edwards supplied Scotland with what they believed was an authentic record of God's pattern for spiritual renewal.<sup>121</sup> Just as they had no reason to question the genuineness of the work as recounted and interpreted by Edwards, so also there was nothing to keep them from following the pattern Edwards so carefully and unmistakably laid out. And this they did with the hope that God in like manner would favor the Church of Scotland with the blessing of spiritual renewal.

Such confidence in Edwards's narrative was certainly not limited to Scotland. Watts and Guyse, for example, stated in their preface to the first edition of the *Faithful Narrative*: "From such blessed instances of the success of the Gospel, as appear in this narrative, we may learn much of the way of the Spirit of God in his dealing with the souls of men, in order to convince sinners and restore them to his favor and his image by Jesus Christ, his Son."<sup>122</sup> John Wesley, after pondering over Edwards's account, exclaimed,

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See also Alexander Webster, *Divine Influence, The True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang and Other Places in the West of Scotland*;..... Second Edition, With a Preface and several Additions in Answer to the Reverend Mr. Fisher's Review, etc. (Edinburgh. 1742), and Robe, *Kilsyth Narrative*.

<sup>120</sup> cf. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 125-27.

<sup>121</sup> Representing the Scottish revivalists, Robe asserts they "have judged and represented the Work, in the main, to be a genuine Work of the Holy Spirit," Preface, *CMH*, p. 3.

<sup>122</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 132.

“Surely, ‘this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’”<sup>123</sup> George Whitefield, who read it during his first visit to Georgia in 1738, held the same opinion of both the work and the narrative.<sup>124</sup> Thomas Prince captured the response of so many New Englanders when he reported, “The rumour of that surprising work of God resounded through the country,...., both in view of what the mighty power and grace of God had wrought, and in the hopeful prospect that this blessed work would go on and spread throughout the land.”<sup>125</sup> But none were truer disciples of Edwards’s anatomy of revivalism than Scotland’s church evangelicals. No one else appropriated the theology, principles, and interpretive framework of the *Faithful Narrative* as thoroughly as the Scottish revivalists did. They consciously used it to inspire, promote, document and defend the revivals that broke out first at Cambuslang and then Kilsyth in 1742. An examination of the rise of the Cambuslang and Kilsyth revivals demonstrates this point.

Since his entering upon the ministry in 1731, William McCulloch, the minister at Cambuslang, had suffered periods of doubt about his own conversion and fitness for the ministry. A preaching series on the nature of conversion delivered during his first year helped to precipitate the doubts. The more he preached, he said, the less sure he became about his own spiritual experience.<sup>126</sup> Tortured by doubts, McCulloch initially sought help from the older and experienced minister of Eastwood, Robert Wodrow. However, Wodrow died in 1734, and it is not clear to what extent he had helped McCulloch resolve the issues

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<sup>123</sup> Nehemiah Curnock, ed., *The Journal of John Wesley*, Standard Edition, vol. 2 (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), pp. 83-4.

<sup>124</sup> Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the 18th Century Revival*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh,: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), p. 436.

<sup>125</sup> Thomas Prince, ed., *The Christian History, containing Accounts of the Revival and Propagation of Religion in Great Britain and America*, vol. 2 (Boston, 1744/45), p. 379.

<sup>126</sup> Fawcett, *Cambuslang*, p. 43.

that plagued him. If he was still struggling in 1737, it appears that Edwards's presentation of the true nature of conversion contained in his revival narrative had a hand in moving McCulloch beyond his doubts, at least in his ministry. Both he and his congregation were deeply moved by Edwards's account. The news of God's powerful outpouring of grace in the conversion of so many in Northampton through the preaching of the doctrines of grace lifted McCulloch's spirits and inspired him to press on in hope that God might do the same for his own people. In the same year the *Faithful Narrative* was published in Scotland he began to read parts of it to his congregation from the pulpit on Sunday evenings.<sup>127</sup>

With regard to the spread of the work of conversion, Edwards emphasized the following point: "There is no one thing that I know of, that God had made such a means of promoting his work amongst us, as the news of others' conversion; in the awakening [of] sinners and engaging them earnestly to seek the same blessing, and in the quickening of saints."<sup>128</sup> Likely this observation was what inspired McCulloch to continue the practice of the public reading of various accounts of conversion to his people received from his correspondents. Reports of other renewal activity soon followed from England, Wales, and the American Colonies. In the year the *Faithful Narrative* was published, newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic reported the successful ministry of George Whitefield in the churches of Bristol and London.<sup>129</sup> Then in 1739, accounts of Whitefield's open air preaching went abroad. The *Scots Magazine*, beginning with its first issue in January of 1739, provided continued coverage of Whitefield's activities, and included articles and reports relating to the revivals at home and abroad until 1743 at which time they began to

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-92.

<sup>128</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p.176.

<sup>129</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitfield*, vol. 1, p. 429.

taper off.<sup>130</sup> Also around this same time accounts were received about an awakening in Wales.<sup>131</sup> But Scotland's connection with America, particularly New England, dominated their attention.

Reports of Scottish revivalists focused chiefly on events at home and in New England, and their correspondence was predominantly concerned with their relationship with New England.<sup>132</sup> As pointed out in chapter two, the strong connection between Scotland and New England was in part the result of a shared ideology. However, as Susan O'Brien has shown, it was also the product of conscious cultivation, and the Scottish publication of the *Faithful Narrative* proved the most important and influential early event in this connection.<sup>133</sup>

Beginning in 1740, numerous accounts of an even greater work among God's people in the American colonies began to be sent to Scotland. "For some Years past, we have had transmitted to us," reported James Robe, "Manuscripts and Prints from *New-England, Philadelphia, &c.* informing of a glorious Work of God, in the Conviction and Conversion of Multitudes, begun and carried on, in these Parts, in an extraordinary Manner, and accompanied with some *uncommon Appearances.*"<sup>134</sup> The Great Awakening, as this larger work is generally referred to, vastly superseded the earlier work of Northampton in size (though not in kind), by taking in the greater percentage of the American colonies. The first signs began toward the end of 1739. It is important to notice that the majority of the

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<sup>130</sup> The first issue contained extracts from Whitefield's Journal along with a letter from Tristan Laud to Whitefield on his doctrine of regeneration. pp. 47-48. The reports varied from highly critical of Whitefield and the work in general to others that received it as a sign of God's favor.

<sup>131</sup> D. MacFarlan, *The Revivals of the Eighteenth Century, particularly at Cambuslang* (London & Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1847), pp. 19-21.

<sup>132</sup> Susan [Durden] O'Brien, "The First Evangelical Magazines," pp. 267-73; and "Transatlantic Community of Saints," p. 819.

<sup>133</sup> Durden, "The First Evangelical Magazines," p. 268.

<sup>134</sup> Preface, *CMH*, p. 4.

reports received from New England prior to 1742 affirmed the normative nature of the earlier work experienced by Edwards's Northampton congregation.<sup>135</sup> But it also needs to be emphasized at this point, that the Scottish revivalists did not perceive the pattern of revivalism described by Edwards as *the* means of revival, but rather as a pattern which God had blessed and therefore could bless again.

Inspired by the spreading spiritual renewal, James Robe, the minister at Kilsyth, began in 1740 to preach on the doctrine of regeneration. The following year, McCulloch also began a series on the nature and necessity of regeneration, which he continued throughout the entire year.<sup>136</sup> Their efforts to educate their people more thoroughly in the doctrine of conversion may have been encouraged by Edwards's observation in *Faithful Narrative*, that when his people had been better instructed in the saving nature of grace and so allowed to hope in their own conversion, it had the effect of awakening "the gracious disposition of their hearts into life and vigor, as the warm beams of the sun in the spring have quickened the seeds and productions of the earth. Grace being now at liberty, and cherished with hope, has soon flowed out to their abundant satisfaction and increase."<sup>137</sup>

George Whitefield's first visit to Scotland in the summer of 1741 coincided with this preaching and served to heighten the already growing expectancy among Scotland's evangelicals. Though he did not visit either Cambuslang or Kilsyth on this trip, Whitefield's presence and reputation was enough to encourage Robe and McCulloch to persevere in the agenda they had set for themselves. Robe's and McCulloch's emphasis in their preaching on the doctrines of grace reflected the same preaching pattern followed by

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>136</sup> James Robe, *A Short Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang* (Glasgow: William Duncan, 1742), p. 4.

<sup>137</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 176.

Edwards in the *Faithful Narrative*, and echoes the admonition contained in the penultimate sermon of the revival, *Justification by Faith*.

And it further appears, that justification by *faith alone* should be strenuously urged by all gospel ministers, while they have to do continually with persons whose inquiry is, "What shall we do to be saved?" To such as thus *inquire* after the way of salvation, who *seek* acceptance with God, who are about to *choose* for themselves "the way they will take," what answer can be given, in effect, but what is contained in the apostles words? "To him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."<sup>138</sup>

As Edwards did before them, the Scottish revivalists were at pains to demonstrate that the body of doctrine by which the work of revival had been promoted and carried on was the same doctrine professed by the Reformed Churches, such as "Man's guilt, Corruption and Impotence; supernatural Regeneration by the Spirit of God, and free Justification by Faith in the Righteousness of Christ; and other Doctrines of Christianity, rejected by *Arminians*, and other Enemies to the Grace of God."<sup>139</sup> But they were equally concerned to emphasise the evangelical nature of the work through the freeness of the gospel preached.

Knowing that the news of others conversion was the primary means of promoting the work in Northampton and surrounding areas, and wanting to further the growing interest among his own people, McCulloch launched the first religious periodical published in Scotland, *The Glasgow Weekly History*. The *Weekly History* included a wide variety of religious news and devotional material. It was printed weekly, the first issue appearing December 1741, and ran for fifty-two issues before McCulloch discontinued it near the end

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<sup>138</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, p. 627, n. 19.

<sup>139</sup> Preface, *CMH*, p. 7. Cf. *Short Narrative of the Work at Cambuslang*, p. 8f; Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. iv-v; Webster, *Divine Influence*, p. 8;

of 1742.<sup>140</sup> McCulloch's purpose for publishing the magazine was to keep the need for spiritual renewal before Scotland.

By the beginning of 1742, evidence of a growing interest in religion among the people of Cambuslang began to appear. In January two leading laymen from McCulloch's parish, who had heard Whitefield preach the previous summer, took it upon themselves to put a petition together stating the desire for a weekly lecture to be set up on Thursdays. Ninety heads of families signed it and McCulloch gladly obliged.<sup>141</sup> On Sunday, January 31, as McCulloch was preparing to close his sermon, he exclaimed, "I see marks of more apparent concern about salvation, than in times past, among some of you. Beware of a noisy or ostentatious religion; and, at the same time, take heed that you run not to the opposite extreme, by endeavouring to stifle the convictions you may feel. "Follow on to know the Lord, 'who comforteth them that are cast down; and his going forth shall be prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.'"<sup>142</sup> What McCulloch had in mind, and the people may have understood as well, from this reference to the book of Hosea 6:3, was a spiritual awakening after the order of New England. The following month, McCulloch's hopes were realized.

Encouraged by the news from Cambuslang, Robe persevered with his people in Kilsyth. Three months later he had the joy of witnessing a similar spiritual awakening among his own people. By the middle of July, Robe estimated that about 200 of his own people had been awakened. McCulloch figured that by the time the work at Cambuslang

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<sup>140</sup> *The Glasgow-Weekly-History Relating to the Late Progress of the Gospel at Home and Abroad; Being A Collection of Letters, partly reprinted from the London-Weekly-History, and partly printed first here at Glasgow. 1742.* (Glasgow: Printed by Wm. Duncan. 1743). Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, p. 92f.

<sup>141</sup> Robe, *Short Narrative of the Work at Cambuslang*, pp. 5-6; *Statistical Account*, p. 108.

<sup>142</sup> William McCulloch, *Sermons on Several Subjects* (Glasgow, 1793), p. 241.

had died out, approximately 400 had been awakened, 70 of which were from Cambuslang.<sup>143</sup>

Scottish revivalists viewed this “remarkable out-pouring” upon the Church of Scotland as a sovereign and gracious act of God, and considered it a part of the recent out-pouring of the Spirit of God in the American colonies which traced its roots to the earlier awakening in Northampton.<sup>144</sup> This conviction served to further strengthen the normative status of the *Faithful Narrative* in the minds of the Scottish revivalists, giving them added reason to use it to help them interpret and document their own revivals. To begin with, Scottish revivalists used the principles in Edwards’s narrative to interpret and assess the genuineness of the conversions experienced by their people. At the outset they recognized that the experiences of those converted during the Scottish revivals were remarkably similar, in degree and kind, to those described by Edwards in his narrative. Consequently, the guidance Edwards provided through his narrative naturally fit the circumstances faced by his Scottish counterparts.<sup>145</sup> Robe was the principle publicist and historian of the Scottish revivals and his work best illustrates Scottish dependence on the *Faithful Narrative*. Both in his *Short Account of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang* (1742) and his *Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth* (begun in 1742), Robe followed the two-fold pattern of analysis Edwards had laid out for examining the conversion experiences of his people. Like Edwards, he begins by having them give an account of their experience of conversion: “what they felt in their Convictions and Humiliation for Sin, of the Way of their Relief by Faith in the Mercy of God thro’ Jesus

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<sup>143</sup> *Statistical Account*, p. 110.

<sup>144</sup> *CMH*, no. 5, p. 149.

<sup>145</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. vi.

Christ, and of the Change they feel in the prevalent Inclinations and Dispositions of their Hearts.” He then proceeded to observe the results or “fruits” of conversion in the form of a visible reformation of their lives such as: laying aside of cursing, swearing and drinking, remorse for acts of injustice and violation of duties involving restitution where appropriate, forgiving of injuries, a new and fervent love for one another, greater regard for the ordinances and attention to family worship, and increased love for the Scriptures.<sup>146</sup>

Robe was not alone in following the path that Edwards had so clearly marked out in the *Faithful Narrative*. McCulloch’s record of the work at Cambuslang reveals the same procedure of examination of the subjects of the revival, beginning with their “first awakenings” followed by “soul-exercises...distresses, deliverances,” and finally comforts.<sup>147</sup> The same pattern is evident as well in Alexander Webster’s account, *Divine Influence The True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang, and Other Places in the West of Scotland*.<sup>148</sup>

Furthermore, the *Faithful Narrative* provided the standard of documentation and analysis used by the Scottish revivalists. Twenty-five American revival narratives, says Michael Crawford, were printed between the years 1741 and 1745, the majority of which were modeled after Edwards’s *Faithful Narrative*. Crawford breaks down the contents and organization of the typical revival narrative of this period, showing as he does how Edwards narrative was the blueprint. The following is a summary of his efforts.

- A brief history of the town concerned:

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<sup>146</sup> *Short Narrative of the Work at Cambuslang* (Glasgow, 1742), pp. 6-8; and *Kilsyth Narrative* (Glasgow, 1790), pp. 65-83; cf. with *Faithful Narrative*, JE(Yale). vol. 4, pp. 159-84.

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, p. 5. McCulloch’s records consist of two bound volumes entitled, “Examination of Persons under Scriptural Concern at Cambuslang during the Revival in 1741-42 by the Revd. William McCulloch, Minister of Cambuslang, with Marginal Notes by Dr. Webster and Other Ministers.” The volumes are kept at New College Library, Edinburgh.

<sup>148</sup> Edinburgh, 1742, first edition.

- A statement describing the people as generally sober and honest, whose religion was little more than a religious formality; where the true power of godlines had long been in little evidence;
- A description of the beginning of the revival;
- A description of the moral reformation in the town;
- A brief analysis of the kinds of persons awakened;
- Description of the various experiences of the awakened;
- Comments on the extent and prevalence of extraordinary bodily effects;
- Comments on disorders in practice and errors in doctrine, and the measures taken to correct them;
- Accounts of the experiences of individual converts;
- Mention of how long the new convictions continued;
- An attestation to the evidence that the revival is a genuine work of God.<sup>149</sup>

Edwards's influence on Scottish revival narratives, however, was even more pronounced than on their American counterparts. Robe again provides the best example. Each of the narratives of the Kilsyth revival clearly manifests the same content and structure as the *Faithful Narrative*.<sup>150</sup> This is clearly evident in specifically four areas.

- Each narrative begins with a description of the town and of its inhabitants;
- Each author devotes several paragraphs to a history of the spiritual condition in his town;
- Each author describes the circumstances leading to the awakening;
- Both authors proceed to describe the transformation of their towns into more godly communities and the spread of the revival to other towns.<sup>151</sup>

In addition to following Edwards's organization, the Scottish revivalists also adopted Edwards's method of documentation. Both Robe's revival journals and McCulloch's conversion accounts reflect the same systematic and empirical approach and attention to detail exemplified in the *Faithful Narrative*. McCulloch's two bound

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<sup>149</sup> Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 185. Cf. *Faithful Narrative*, JE(Yale), vol. 4, pp. 144-211. Concerning the last item, attestations, these were not included either in the London or Edinburgh 1737 editions of the *Faithful Narrative*; they were added at the request of Colman's British correspondents to the 1738 Boston edition.

<sup>150</sup> Robe published his *Kilsyth Narrative* in a series of installments beginning in 1742 and ending in 1745.

<sup>151</sup> *Faithful Narrative*, JE(Yale), vol. 4, pp. 144-59; *Kilsyth Narrative* (1790), pp. 65-83. This summary is also reflected in Crawford's fuller analysis which he develops in his article, "New England and the Scottish Religious Revivals of 1742," *American Presbyterian*, 1 (Spring, 1991): 28.

manuscript volumes of conversion accounts record the spiritual experiences of 110 individuals.<sup>152</sup> According to McCulloch, those examined gave “very particular accounts of God’s dealings with their souls, in their first awakenings and outgates, with their following soul-exercises...distresses, deliverances, and comforts....I set down very many of these from their own mouths, always in their own sense and very much also in their own words.”<sup>153</sup> The accounts themselves reveal scrupulous attention to detail.

Like McCulloch, Robe kept a careful record of the process of the spiritual awakening of those under his charge. Having deeply regretted that a full and particular account of the progress and circumstances of the revival at Shotts (1630) had not been written down, and knowing the great benefit of the comprehensive account transmitted by Edwards, Robe was determined to preserve to the greatest extent the facts and experiences of the revival at Kilsyth: “I cannot but think, that, if after such Complaints, we are guilty of the same Neglect, we will be more blame-worthy before God, our own Consciences, and Posterity.”<sup>154</sup> Consequently, he goes on to say, I was inclined “from the Beginning, with all the Exactness I was capable of, to observe every Thing that past; and with the most scrupulous Niceness, to examine every uncommon Circumstance, and to take down Notes of what appeared to me most Material. I was encouraged and directed in this by some of great Judgment, and who justly have Influence upon me.”<sup>155</sup> It can be safely assumed that Robe included Edwards among those of influence, sense, such completeness and precision

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<sup>152</sup> “Examination of Persons at Cambuslang.” For a social-historical assessment of the 110 individuals see, T.C. Smout, “Born Again at Cambuslang,” pp. 114-27.

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Fawcett, *Cambuslang*, p. 5. Smout observes that McCulloch’s accounts represent the first Scottish oral history project, *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>154</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. xviii.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

had no precedent before Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*. But Robe went even beyond Edwards in his method of record keeping.

...from Day to Day, I wrote down whatever was most Material in the Exercise of the Distrest. This may appear an unsupportable Labour at first view, especially where the Number of the Distrest are so many. Yet I found it to be very easy, it saved much Time to me. An Index I kept, brought me soon to the part of the Book, where the Person's Case was recorded. I had then a full View of their Case, as it was when they were first with me: I saw what Progress their Convictions had made, and knew where I was to begin with them, without examining the Case every Time from the very beginning anew.<sup>156</sup>

In addition to the guidance provided by Edwards, Robe's exhaustive attention to detail was also encouraged by the growing opposition to the revivals. This as we have seen was not something Edwards had to contend with in 1737. The controversy centered around the credibility of the conversions experienced under the remarkable circumstances of the revival. Robe countered with a defense of the reasonableness and trustworthiness of the recorded testimonies of the converted. He began with the premise that "it is agreeable to the known Rules of just Reasoning, about the proper Evidence of Facts, which is credible Testimony, to prefer that of the Friends and Asserters of the good Work, to that of the Opposers."<sup>157</sup> He then went on to assert,

when Matters of Fact are attested by Witnesses, who have sufficient Means of Knowledge or Information and *causa scientiae*, and when the Character of the Witnesses is known to be good, especially if their Number is known to be considerable, and there is no apparent Defect in the Testimony itself, then an Assent to Testimony is well founded, and we are obliged to give it.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. 102.

<sup>157</sup> Preface, *CMH*, p. 15.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

Continuing with this line of reasoning, he concluded that the testimony of the friends of the revival was to be preferred to that of its detractors, because they had proper “*causa scientiae*, and sufficient Means of Knowledge and Information, which the other Side altogether, or in a great measure want,....,which is so important and requisite in Witness bearing.”<sup>159</sup> Such careful, thorough and systematic collection and presentation of materials concerning conversions and the revival served Robe’s and McCulloch’s purposes in two ways: one, it provided them with the indubitable facts necessary to render a right judgment concerning the credibility of conversions, and two, it would insure that an accurate and comprehensive record of the revival would be left for future generations.<sup>160</sup>

Such confidence in the powers of human knowledge as displayed by Robe and McCulloch was as new to the Church of Scotland as Edwards’s religious epistemology was to the Reformed community of New England. This is not surprising, however, for as we have already seen, the church evangelicals of Scotland represented something of a new breed among ministers in Scotland.<sup>161</sup> Among other things, they had imbibed more of the new thinking than many of their contemporaries and had been made aware of its potential usefulness for religion particularly through the works of John MacLaurin. They obviously recognized the importance of Edwards’s religious epistemology as expressed in his sermon *Divine and Supernatural Light*, and his application of it in the *Faithful Narrative*, for the

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>160</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. xix: “In this Narrative I propose to give an Account of this surprising Dispensation of Grace, in the Beginning, Progress, and various Circumstances of it, with the strictest Regard to Truth in all the Exactness I can”; and “But Praise to our God, for these his mighty Acts are not to be confined to the present Generation, wherein they appear, Posterity shall reap the Benefit of them, and it is our Duty to transmit the History of them to Posterity, that they may reap the greater Benefit by them, and praise the Lord more distinctly for them.”

<sup>161</sup> McIntosh, “The Popular Party in the Church of Scotland,” p. 469; Landsman, “Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity,” pp. 30-31.

measure of specificity and assurance offered through their pastoral guidance echoed both Edwards's theology and practice.<sup>162</sup>

One other factor that perhaps influenced Robe's meticulous and systematic method was the Scottish publication of Edwards's, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*.<sup>163</sup> The significance of *Distinguishing Marks* for Scotland will be taken up more fully in the following chapter, but it is important to note that in this work Edwards identified and developed in the context of the controversial circumstances of the revival, what the distinguishing signs of a true work of conversion were. In the process he made a point of emphasizing how great the responsibility was for making such determinations, and the tremendous care required to do so responsibly. Although Robe admitted to not having had read *Distinguishing Marks* until after the revival had begun at Kilsyth, it is evident that he was well acquainted with it by the time he wrote the Preface to his *Kilsyth Narrative*.<sup>164</sup>

The precision and thoroughness of Robe's and McCulloch's method of collecting material, and the content and organization of the former's revival narratives were clearly modeled after Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*.<sup>165</sup> Again, it needs to be re-emphasized that behind this reliance upon Edwards was the conviction, shared by most, if not all, the Scottish revivalists, that the revivals in Scotland and New England were parts of one glorious work of the Spirit of God.

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<sup>162</sup> See Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 47.

<sup>163</sup> *The Distinguishing Marks Of a Work of the Spirit of God. Applied to That Uncommon Operation That Has Lately Appeared on the Minds of Many of the People of This Land: With a Particular Consideration of the Extraordinary Circumstances with Which This Work Is Attended* in 1742. The first edition was published near the end of the 1741 in Boston and copies could easily have been circulating in Scotland by early the next year. If not, according to Whitefield, a London edition would have been available by May 1 and an Edinburgh edition by June 1; see Letter from Whitefield to McCulloch, August 31, 1742 in , *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield, Containing all his Sermons & Tracts which have been already published: with a Select Collection of Letters*, vol. iv (London, 1771-72), p. 78.

<sup>164</sup> *Mr. Robe's Fourth Letter To Mr. Fisher* (Edinburgh, 1743), p. 4. For Robe's use of *Distinguishing Marks* see the Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. vi, viii, x.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Crawford, "New England and the Scottish Revivals," p. 28.

Finally, unlike the spiritual awakening that took place at Northampton in 1735, the revivals that broke out in the American colonies and Scotland in the 1740's were marred by controversy. In fact they were uniquely united by controversy. Speaking to the issue, Robe observed, "As there were the same Appearances accompanying such an Effusion of the Holy Spirit in some of our American Colonies; so the same Objections were made against them, which have been made against this Appearance of God among us."<sup>166</sup> The fact that the religious awakening of Northampton and Edwards's account of it were not produced in an atmosphere of controversy, allowed the *Faithful Narrative* to escape the censorship that was routinely levelled against the other pro-revival publications of the 1740's. Anti-revivalists rarely called attention to either Northampton or the *Faithful Narrative*, nor did they criticize it as they did the Great Awakening in America and the work at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in Scotland. On the other hand, the revivalists frequently referred to and used the *Faithful Narrative* to illustrate, support and defend the work; and they did so for precisely the same reason the anti-revivalists didn't, its integrity could not be so easily challenged.

What is clear, is that the Northampton revival of 1735 and Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* stood at the headwaters of eighteenth-century Scottish revivalism. Outside the borders of Scotland it was the most formative and influential event and publication linked to them. The narrative's credibility united Scottish evangelicals together with their New England counterparts in the pursuit of revivalism. Its pattern of conversions became firmly fixed in the minds of both ministers and people alike, and through it Edwards, as Michael

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<sup>166</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. vi.

Crawford has so aptly expressed, “exported his perception of the potential of the local revival”, which especially fit Scottish “assumptions about how the Spirit acts.”<sup>167</sup> It was a model that could be followed, and because God had honored it once, Scottish evangelicals hoped he would do so again. Looking back from a distance of four years, Thomas Gillespie, minister at Carnock, who assisted Robe during the height of the Kilsyth revival, praised God for Edwards’s *Faithful Narrative* as his instrument for helping to bring the same gracious out-pouring of the Spirit of God on the Church of Scotland.<sup>168</sup> But it was not only the catalyst that prepared the way for the Scottish revivals of 1742, it also introduced a new genre of revival literature which was picked up and used by Scottish revivalists to good effect, and became the pattern followed by later Scottish religious historians.

Furthermore, the Scottish publication of the *Faithful Narrative* was an important moment for Scottish evangelicalism more generally, for it marked the beginning of Edwards’s specifically theological influence. Through the revivals he helped to inspire, Edwards began to exert a formative influence on the shape of the eighteenth-century Scottish evangelical Calvinism that emerged from the Cambuslang and Kilsyth revivals. The international character of the revivals that the *Faithful Narrative* fostered, further encouraged the breakdown of the narrow theological parochialism inherited from the late seventeenth century that had begun under the evangelical ministries of Thomas Boston and John MacLaurin. It also signaled a new stage in the transatlantic connection between New England and the Church of Scotland. The exchange of religious information between the two evangelical communities increased dramatically during the revival period, developing into the most impressive of the transatlantic relationships. Moreover, Edwards’s masterful

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<sup>167</sup> Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 127.

<sup>168</sup> Letter to Edwards, November 24, 1746, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 470.

portrayal of the true Christian convert resonated with his Scottish counterparts conception of “vital Christianity,” won their respect and trust, and prepared them to receive what Edwards had yet to offer their revival efforts.

## Chapter Four

### A Critique of True Religion: *The Distinguishing Marks Of a Work of the Spirit of God*

Near the end of 1739, the epoch making revival known as the Great Awakening began its sweep through the American colonies. About the same time news of similar religious awakenings in Britain began to be heralded. By 1741, both sides of the Atlantic were caught up in an unprecedented wave of revivalism that continued strong through the following year, eventually running its course during the early part of 1743. The publication of Edwards's widely acclaimed *Faithful Narrative*, three years earlier, had helped pioneer the way and gain for him a reputation as a minister of sound religious judgment. Unlike the earlier Northampton revival, the Great Awakening and its transatlantic counterpart were not without their detractors. Instances of unguarded zeal on the part of some revivalists had cast a shadow over the work and stirred up strong opposition. Twice Edwards was compelled to respond. On each occasion he sought to answer the criticisms that were being levelled against the work by its opposers as well as rein in the disruptive conduct and expose the unorthodox theology being propagated by the revivals more radical proponents.

Edwards's purpose was to help rescue the movement from the reproaches of its detractors by providing a standard by which genuine piety could be distinguished from that which was false. The first work, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, published in Boston near the end of 1741, and in Scotland and England in 1742, represented

the first full scale defense and critical analysis of the revivals as a genuine work of the Spirit of God on either side of the Atlantic.<sup>1</sup> Its appearance quickly established Edwards as the leading theological figure within the transatlantic revivalist network.<sup>2</sup> Even so, not all were convinced by his performance. A series of anti-revival pieces from New England's religious rationalists against the Awakening and *Distinguishing Marks* soon followed. In answer, Edwards published a more extended treatment of the subject entitled, *Some Thoughts Concerning the present Revival of Religion in New England, and the Way in which it ought to be acknowledged and Promoted*.<sup>3</sup> In this work, as the title suggests, he further developed his defense of the awakening as a glorious work of God. It was published in Boston in 1742 and early the next year in Scotland.

The timing of the publication of *Distinguishing Marks* in Scotland in 1742 could not have been better calculated. It came at the height of the Cambuslang revival and coincided with the beginning of the work at Kilsyth. Circumstances and criticisms similar to those that had drawn forth Edwards's defense and interpretation of the revival phenomena in New England attended both works in Scotland. Having found the theology of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* effective in generating spiritual renewal, Scottish revivalists quickly recognized that Edwards's analysis of the New England spiritual awakening was equally well adapted to the work in Scotland, and immediately began to utilise it.<sup>4</sup>

At this critical juncture in the revivals and in the formation of Scottish evangelicalism, Edwards defense of the revival phenomena and delineation of the nature of

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<sup>1</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 214-88.

<sup>2</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 290-530.

<sup>4</sup> See for example, John Willison, "Preface to the Scots Reader," Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1742); James Robe, Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. vi. See also, Letter from Thomas Gillespie to Edwards, dated November 24, 1746, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 470.

a true saving work of God was taken up by Scottish church evangelicals and incorporated into the fabric of their theological understanding. In particular, *Distinguishing Marks*, and later its companion *Some Thoughts*, served the needs of Scotland's revivalists and church evangelicals in three specific and influential ways. First, it provided them with a formidable defence of the revivals as a genuine work of God's Spirit against the mounting attacks by Scottish detractors who were claiming it was nothing but an expression of over-heated emotions, calculated to undermine real religion.<sup>5</sup> Second, it offered them the needed pastoral guidance for dealing with the subjects of the revival. Lastly, it helped to further the evangelical critique of Scottish culture-religion that began with Boston's rejection of the Church of Scotland's conception of national conversion inherited from the late seventeenth century. These three areas represent the heart of Edwards's revival connection with Scotland and delineate the three major areas covered in this chapter.

On the 15th day of July, 1742, ministers of the secession passed the *Act of the Associate Presbytery Anent A Publick Fast*, appointing the 4th day of August a public fast as "their indispensable Duty, at this Time, to excite themselves, and all under their Inspection, to search and try our Ways, and turn again unto the Lord, and to be humble before Him, on account of the manifold Sins and Provocations which we and all Ranks are guilty of."<sup>6</sup> The publication of the *Act* signaled the beginning of an irreparable breach between the evangelicals of the Church of Scotland and the Associate Presbytery. Included among the *Act's* many accusations against the established church, was a pointed and caustic

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<sup>5</sup> See Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, and *Mr. Robe's Second Letter to the Reverend Mr. James Fisher...Wherein Mr. Edwards's Sermon, upon the distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God, is vindicated from Mr. Fisher's Objections against it...* (Edinburgh, 1743).

<sup>6</sup> Published 1742, p. 7. Hereafter cited as *Act*.

attack on the Scottish revivals. A bitter and protracted public controversy that revealed a sharp ideological division between the two evangelical communities followed. Although thousands of miles removed, Edwards was to factor significantly in the course of these events.

The controversy began as a disagreement over the *cause* of the religious decline in the Church of Scotland and the *means* to her spiritual recovery. Underlying this disagreement was the profound and fundamental question: what are the marks of a true work of the Spirit of God? The revivalists interpreted the spiritual awakenings of Cambuslang and Kilsyth as a genuine work of the Spirit of God, and enthusiastically promoted the work as God's gracious provision for the recovery of true religion in the land. The Associate Presbytery, on the other hand, denied that the revivals were either God's work or God's provision for the spiritual renewal of Scotland. Rather, they argued that it was a work of delusion and full of corruption.

The revivalists recognized that it was imperative that they refute the charges and clear the work of suspicion. Nothing less than the cause of true religion and the eternal destiny of those said to have been converted under the revival were at stake. What the situation required was a biblical and rational account of those signs that distinguished a true work of God's Spirit from a spurious one and that took into account the peculiar circumstances presented by the revival. Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks* fitted the profile exactly. In response to their detractors, Scottish revivalists relied almost exclusively on Edwards's work. They claimed it answered all the major objections levelled against the revival, and in their own defense and promotion of the awakening they consistently followed Edwards's pattern of interpretation and argumentation.

Although the controversy spanned three years and involved numerous publications, the heart of the matter was set forth in the initial exchange represented by James Robe's Preface to his *Kilsyth Narrative* and the Associate Presbytery's *Act Anent a Fast*. These two documents contain the fundamental issues that characterized the rest of the controversy. Moreover, they define the core issues that effectively severed the ties between the two groups and indicate the theological influence Edwards had gained among Scotland's church evangelicals by this time. A summary of the events that led to the *Act* is necessary to place this interchange in context.

The Associate Presbytery was formed on December 5th, 1733 by four brethren after seceding from the Church of Scotland due to issues arising over the issue of patronage. Their intent was to protest against the prevailing party in the Kirk until they repented. To this end they published early in 1734, *A Testimony to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Church of Scotland: or Reasons ...for their Protestation*.<sup>7</sup> At the time they agreed that they were free to continue in communion with like minded ministers of the established Church. At the same time, attempts continued to be made by church evangelicals to try and heal the unfortunate separation. But further acts taken by the seceding Church, such as *The Judicial Testimony* issued in December 1736, condemning corruptions in the Church of Scotland, served to widen the separation between themselves and their evangelical brethren in the established church. Yet even as late as 1737, when Ralph Erskine acceded to the Associate Presbytery, affirming the judicial testimony, he stated that "By joining with the said brethren, I intend and understand no withdrawing from

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<sup>7</sup> Published in Edinburgh, 1734.

the ministerial communion with any of the godly ministers of this national church, who are groaning under, or wrestling against, the defections of the times.”<sup>8</sup>

This perspective soon underwent a radical change. The first clear sign came in 1741 when George Whitefield visited Scotland for the first time at the invitation of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine. In the exchange of letters that preceded Whitefield’s arrival, Ralph Erskine indicated that it was their desire that Whitefield restrict his association while in Scotland to the Associate Presbytery lest he give the impression of countenancing their “persecutors.” In his response Whitefield made it quite clear that he could not comply: “This I cannot altogether agree to. I come only as an occasional preacher, to preach the simple Gospel to all who are willing to hear me, of whatever denomination.”<sup>9</sup>

Whitefield arrived in Dunfermline on the 5th of August, having travelled up from Edinburgh. After preaching to a packed meeting house, he was urged to remain and meet with a group of their ministers. The meeting was established, said Whitefield, in order to set him right about church government and the Solemn League and Covenant. He described the meeting in a letter to Mr. Thomas Noble of New York. Having perceived the intent of the meeting and the gravity with which those gathered viewed the proceedings, Whitefield asked them what they wanted him to do. They responded by telling him that he should preach only for them, but they would not insist on him signing the Solemn League and Covenant until he received further light on the matter from them. When asked why he should preach only for them, Ralph Erskine replied, because “they were the Lord’s people.” This was too much for a man of Whitefield’s evangelistic vision. “Were there no other Lord’s people but themselves,” he asked? And then replied:

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Fawcett, *Cambuslang*, p. 183.

<sup>9</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, vol. 2, pp. 86-7.

supposing all others were the devil's people, they certainly had more need to be preached to, and therefore I was more and more determined to go out into the highways and hedges; and that if the Pope himself would lend me his pulpit, I would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Christ therein.<sup>10</sup>

The result, Whitefield shared, was an open breach. "I retired, I wept, I prayed, and after preaching in the fields sat down and dined with them, and then took a final leave."<sup>11</sup>

Immediately following his time with the seceders, Whitefield began to associate with the Scottish evangelicals of the established church. The seceders responded by completely disassociating themselves from him, and soon after began to preach against him.

Not long after these events, Adam Gib published, *A Warning against Countenancing the Ministrations of Mr. George Whitefield, Published in the New Church at Bristow*.<sup>12</sup> Gib's censorship of Whitefield was the first published denunciation of the Scottish revivals and their promoters by a secession minister. Much of the work is directed against the epiphenomena of the revival which he attributed to the work of Satan: blind impulses, frights, freaks, raptures, visions, revelations, etc.<sup>13</sup> Gib was not alone in his condemnation. Ralph Erskine had preached a series of three sermons on the Scottish Awakening during the summer. In the last sermon he openly attacked the revivals.<sup>14</sup> By the time the secession ministers drew up the *Act of the Associate Presbytery Anent A Publick Fast*, at Dunfermline on 15 July, 1742, Whitefield and the Scottish revival with its centres

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<sup>10</sup> *Works of Whitefield*, vol.1, pp. 307-8. It is interesting to note that, two weeks later, in a letter published in the *Glasgow Weekly History*, Whitefield shared, "I have often declared in the most publick Manner, that I believe the Church of Scotland to be the best constituted National Church in the World"; no. 37, pp. 5-8. It is also interesting to observe that Whitefield's position on the preaching of the gospel closely resembles Thomas Boston's, and the response of the seceders harkens back to the Nationalistic conception of the seventeenth century. See chapter 2, p. 59.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>12</sup> Published in Edinburgh, 1742. Adam Gib joined the Associate Presbytery in 1735 and was ordained the first Secession minister in Edinburgh. In 1747, he led the party who condemned the Burgess Oath and helped form the General Associate Synod (Antiburgher).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> *The Sermons and Other Practical Works of the Late Reverend Ralph Erskine*, vol. 3 (London, 1865).

at Cambuslang and Kilsyth were marked out as prime factors contributing to the *Error* and *Delusion* under which the Church of Scotland was languishing.

The dispute began, as it will be recalled, with a disagreement over the cause of the present religious decay in Scotland and the means to be employed for its healing. The Associate Presbytery attributed the present state of the Church of Scotland to a “Current of Apostacy and Defection” from the “covenanted Reformation-principles” to which the Church was bound.

“altho’ this Land stands indispensibly bound by the Word of God, and agreeably thereto, by our Covenants, national and solemn League, to endeavour the Preservation of the reformed Religion of the Church of *Scotland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, in Opposition to Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresy, Schism, Profaneness, and whatever shall be found to be contrary to sound Doctrine, and the Power of Godliness; and to continue in the Profession and Obedience of the foresaid Religion..., yet we... have dealt unfaithfully with God, and have not been *steadfast in his Covenant*. From the *Days of our Fathers have we been in a great Trespass unto this Day...By all which, a holy and righteous God is greatly dishonoured, and justly displeased, as appears by the many spiritual Judgments which are already inflicted, and continue to be further threatened, because we have not turned to him that was smitting us. nor sought the Lord of Hosts.*<sup>15</sup>

The crux of the matter for the Associate Presbytery was the Church’s violation of its covenant obligations. The only path to renewal they would allow was the revival of a “covenanted Work of Reformation.”<sup>16</sup> That is to say, Scotland could not expect God to send forth a renewing work of His Spirit without first the work of repentance and renewal of the covenant, by which they meant a recommitment to the Solemn League and Covenant and a national reformation of covenant obligations. The assumption was that God would not, he could not, bless the Church of Scotland in its present state of apostasy.

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<sup>15</sup> *Publick Fast*, p. 1-3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

By principle, therefore, the Associate Presbytery could not accept the revival as a genuine work of the Spirit of God because it was produced without a national renewal of the covenants, and they said as much. After equating the work of revival with the aberrations of *Quakers*, *Camizars*, and other *Enthusiasts* “which no sound Divine, amongst us, hath ever maintained, as agreeable to, and concerned with the saving Operations of the Spirit of God,” they asserted,

Nor will any of the Fruits of this Work, that have hitherto been alledged, be sufficient to difference it, either from the common Work of the Spirit of God upon Hypocrites, or from the Delusions of *Satan*: But the following Fruits and Effects of it are undeniably evident, *namely*, the *warmest Aversion* and *Opposition* to a Testimony for *these same very Principles* which have been *sworn* to and *suffered for unto Blood* in these Lands.<sup>17</sup>

The seceders viewed the lack of emphasis on covenant responsibilities by the revivalists as inherently designed to deceive and to lead people to throw over their *covenanted Reformation-principles*. They claimed that if God did not prevent the spread of this delusive Spirit, it “may run but to a great length, to the throwing-off of all Religious and civil Obligations, and involve these Lands in the saddest Calamities and direful Confusions.”<sup>18</sup> Their position left no room for ambiguity. They alone were the faithful remnant of the true covenanted Church of Scotland and upholders of the true faith; all others, we are left to assume, dwelt in various degrees of darkness and delusion. Little wonder that James Robe, the minister of Kilsyth, a centre of Scottish revival activity second only to Cambuslang, called the publication “the most Heaven-daring Paper, that hath been published by any set of Men in *Britain* these hundred Years past.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, xiii.

Robe's statement was part of larger critique of the Associate Presbytery's opposition to the revivals that he presented with the first edition of his *Faithful Narrative of Kilsyth*. On July 29, 1742, two weeks after the Associate Presbytery issued their *Act*, Robe sat down to write the preface to his narrative. Just the Monday before he had received a copy of the *Act*. Recognizing the implications for the revival, and especially for those whose lives had been changed by it, he was compelled to reply to the charges levelled against the work by his seceding brethren.<sup>20</sup> Robe began the preface in a way reminiscent of how the seceders introduced their *Act*, by citing the increase of *iniquity* and *backsliding*, and the decline of serious religion to a *Shadow*, and acknowledging the great defection of the Church of Scotland from the Lord.<sup>21</sup> However, the similarities between the two stopped there. Robe's analysis of the cause of the sunken state of religion in the land differed significantly from the authors of the *Act*, and illustrates an important and fundamental ideological distinction between the two evangelical groups.

According to Robe, the decline of serious religion in Scotland was due primarily to the absence of true spiritual reality in the lives of its people, not the corruption of and inattention to church covenants. The latter was merely a product of the former. Consequently, in contrast to the Associate Presbytery, the revivalists believed that the only means of restoring true religion within the church was the renewal of personal religion through an out-pouring of God's Spirit in the conversion of the unsaved and the vivification of the spiritual life of the saints. What Robe referred to as "disputable Things" (i.e. matters relating to the Church covenants) had, he asserted, become for the seceders the "Vitals of Religion," and what he and other church evangelicals considered the "Vitals of Religion"

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. xviii.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. iii-iv.

had now been relegated to the position of secondary matters by the seceders.<sup>22</sup> In their quests for reviving true religion in the land, seceders and church evangelicals found themselves pursuing two essentially different and incompatible conceptions of true religion as they related to the national reformation of Scotland.

Given the revivalists' position, it is not surprising to find that the way in which the Associate Presbytery went about discrediting the revivals was by discrediting the experiences of those converted. According to the *Act*, the work of conversion was a product of delusion and the revivalists were deceived in believing it was a genuine work of the Spirit of God. By their reckoning the entire affair was fraudulent.<sup>23</sup>

These points did not escape Robe's attention, and he had an answer ready at hand. After summarizing the conditions and events that led up to the revivals, he turned his attention to the objections that had been levelled against the work. His first line of defense was the recommendation of Edwards's recently published sermon, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, which he had sitting next to him. Robe's estimate of the status of Edwards's work is worth quoting in full.

As there were the very same Appearances accompanying such an Effusion of the Holy Spirit in some of our American Colonies; so the same Objections were made against them, which have been made against this Appearance of God among us. This hath occasioned the Reverend and Judicious Mr. Edwards Minister of the Gospel at Northampton in New-England to preach, and publish a Sermon upon the distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God, wherein he satisfyingly answers and takes off the foresaid Objections. It would be superfluous and unnecessary to answer apart from him, seeing this Sermon hath been oftener than once reprinted in North Britain, and is, and will be in as many Hands, as any other Answer probably can, with the Advantage, that, by the surprising Direction of Providence, it comes from one in a

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<sup>22</sup> I say "now" because the foremost concerns of the secession brethren during the Marrow controversy then reflected more closely the position of the revivalists. Cf. *Letter From Willison to Fisher*, in which Willison distinguishes between *fundamental* and *extrafundamental* things.

<sup>23</sup> *Act*, p. 5-6.

foreign Country, who preached and published it long before this Appearance of the Lord in his Glory and Majesty amongst us.<sup>24</sup>

Due to the definitive nature of Edwards's argument, its obvious applicability to the objections leveled against the work in Scotland by the Associate Presbytery, and its availability throughout the land, Robe considered *Distinguishing Marks* the best and most complete answer to the detractors charges. His confidence in the force of Edwards's argument in support of the Scottish revivals echoed the preface Willison had appended to the Scottish edition of *Distinguishing Marks* just the month before.

The ensuing Treatise, by the Reverend Mr. *Edwards* at *Northampton* in *New-England*, concerning the Work and Operations of the Holy Spirit upon Men's Consciences, is, in my humble Opinion, a most excellent, solid, judicious, and scriptural Performance, which, I hope, thro' the Divine Blessing, will prove most useful to the Church, for discerning a true and real Work of the Spirit of God, and for guarding against Delusions and Mistakes. It is certain a great Mercy to the Church, that this Subject hath been undertaken and handled by such an experienced well-furnish'd Scribe, that hath been long acquainted with the Spirit of God his [sic] Dealings with the Souls of Men, in his own Congregation, and Country where he lives. And seeing the extraordinary Work there at present...is of the same Kind with that at *Cambuslang*, and other Places about, and meets with the same Opposition; the Author doth, with great Judgment, answer the common Objections which are made against the Work, both here and there, so that scarce any Thing further needs be added.<sup>25</sup>

As I have noted earlier, Willison was one of the most respected and influential evangelical ministers of the Church of Scotland during the first half of the eighteenth century. He was a gifted preacher and popular author who had actively campaigned to bring the seceders back into the fold of the established church. His support and participation in

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<sup>24</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. vi. *Distinguishing Marks* was printed in Edinburgh by T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, and in Glasgow by R. Smith.

<sup>25</sup> Preface June 23, 1742, *Distinguishing Marks* (Edinburgh/Glasgow, 1742).

the Cambuslang and Kilsyth revivals had enhanced their credibility considerably and his recommendation of Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks* did no less.

Two observations from the foregoing two recommendations need to be highlighted. First, both Robe and Willison assumed that the revivals in Scotland and America were part of a single work of the Spirit of God, and that opposition to the work in one place was viewed as a criticism of the work in the other, and support for the one as confirmation of the genuineness of the other. Consequently, the revivalists believed that not only were they justified in appealing to Edwards's argument, but that it was incumbent upon them as good stewards of God's provisions to use it. This assumption, as will be pointed out more fully in a moment, was shared, interestingly enough, by their detractors who sought to use it against them. Secondly, Robe and Willison agreed that Edwards's performance was superlative and treated his answers to the main objections levelled against the revivals as definitive. From this they concluded that any further response to the detractors of the revivals would necessarily build on the foundation Edwards had laid down. Scottish revivalists needed only to apply Edwards's principles more specifically to their own context.

Furthermore, Robe cited two advantages and Willison one, of Edwards work as it specifically related to the Scottish context. The first was that Edwards's sermon would soon be widely available in Scotland. Robe was evidently confident that *Distinguishing Marks* would not only effectively silence the critics, but its distribution would succeed in promoting the revival more widely in Scotland. He also saw a great advantage in the fact that neither the author nor the work were officially connected in any way to the work in Scotland; the idea was that no party spirit could be attached to Edwards's position. Much

like Edwards's earlier *Faithful Narrative, Distinguishing Marks* was free from any controversial connection to Scotland. Unfortunately, this advantage was never preserved, at least not as Robe had envisioned it. The controversy free status of *Distinguishing Marks* was marred soon after Robe's narrative hit the press. How this happened will be taken up in a moment.

The additional advantage that Willison cited is particularly important for what it reveals about Edwards's reputation among Scotland's church evangelicals. Willison characterised Edwards as a seasoned divine, whose experience with the ways of God with the souls of men was deep and reliable. This was high praise. Firstly, because experimental religion in Scotland had gained a place of great importance due in part to the need to determine whether a person was truly converted or not before admitting them to the Lord's Table.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, Edwards was twenty-three years Willison's junior.<sup>27</sup> Willison measured his judgment of Edwards, in addition to his reading of *Distinguishing Marks*, by his engineering and management of the Northampton revival recorded in the *Faithful Narrative*, the legacy of New England revivalism of which Edwards had been a part since his childhood, his earlier published works that were circulating in Scotland, and on the testimonies of those who prefaced the narrative and sermon.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Leigh Eric Schmidt, "Sacramental Occasions and the Scottish Context of Presbyterian Revivalism in America," in *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment*, eds. Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey R. Smitten (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 68. See also John Gillies, *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel*; Published Originally in 1754, and now reprinted with a Preface and Continuation to the Present Time, by Horatius Bonar (Kelso, 1845; reprinted, Banner of Truth, 1981), p. 452; cf. Muirhead, "Revival as a Dimension of Scottish Church History," p. 190.

<sup>27</sup> In addition, Edwards was fifteen years younger than Robe and ten years younger than MacLaurin.

<sup>28</sup> Willison very likely had William Cooper's preface to the Boston edition of *Distinguishing Marks* in mind, when he says, "the place where he [Edwards] has been called to exercise his ministry has been famous for experimental religion: and he has had opportunities to observe this work in many places where it has powerfully appeared. and to converse with numbers that have been the subjects of it; these things qualify him for this undertaking above most," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 224. The additional works included, *Faithful Narrative*, five sermons attached to the second Boston edition of 1738, and his published sermons, *God Glorified* and *Divine and Supernatural Light* had been circulating for some time. With the exception of *Faithful Narrative*,

Robe's and Willison's testimonies make clear that they were convinced they were right in placing the primary defense of something so critical to the evangelical vision for Scotland into Edwards's hands. As it turned out, their enthusiastic endorsements of Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks* contrived to place it and its author at the centre of the growing controversy. In order to appreciate this development, we must first look more closely at Edwards's sermon in its New England context.

*Distinguishing Marks* originated as a commencement address, delivered by Edwards on September 10, 1741, before the faculty and students of Yale College in New Haven, Connecticut, and a group of eminent ministers and gentlemen. Drawn from the biblical text, I John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world," the sermon was designed to meet the pressing need for sound Scriptural principles by which to judge a true work of God's Spirit from that which was not. Due to the proliferation of unusual and irregular behaviour accompanying the experiences of many of the subjects of the revival, the occasion demanded a thoroughly biblical, analytically sound, measured and calm approach. Edwards delivered on all accounts.

The situation Edwards faced that September was particularly daunting due to a series of events that climaxed in New Haven shortly before Edwards arrived. George Whitefield had left the Colonies throbbing with revivalism following his tour of itinerant preaching in 1740, and problems soon followed. In March of that year, Gilbert Tennant, a

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Edwards's sermon *Divine and Supernatural Light* best demonstrated Edwards's skill in the area of experimental preaching. It also was most closely connected with his most recent performance *Distinguishing Marks*.

Presbyterian minister in New Brunswick, New Jersey and one of the chief spokesman for the supporters of the revival, preached a sermon entitled “The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry.” The sermon assailed the opponents of the revival and questioned whether such men were in fact converted. The consequences were large and tumultuous, causing division and deep-seated resentment among clergy and people. By mid 1741, the Great Awakening had reach a zenith. Edwards began to notice that the external manifestations accompanying conversions were generally more demonstrative than those accompanying the work of 1735: they were “frequently wrought more sensibly and visibly; the impressions stronger, and more manifest.”<sup>29</sup> Although Edwards was able to contain the emotions of his people within suitable limits, the rest of New England was not as successful.

One of those deeply affected by Whitefield and Tennant was James Davenport, pastor of the church in Southold, Long Island. Inspired by Whitefield’s example and Tennant’s zeal, he abandoned his church to become an itinerant revivalist. Davenport arrived in New London, Connecticut in July of 1741 and proceeded to preach his way down the eastern seaboard, putting ministers to the test by calling on them to recount their experience of conversion, whipping up division, hysteria and outrage as he went. He had left New Haven just days before Edwards arrived.

What had started out as a glorious work of the Spirit of God, now appeared to be anything but. Some who had come to hear Edwards that commencement day, had begun to question whether it was ever a work of God. The answer Edwards provided was a firm, yet qualified, yes. He was aware that not all that accompanied the revival was necessarily the fruit of the saving operations of the Spirit. In many places some had run to great excesses.

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<sup>29</sup> A letter to Thomas Prince, December 12, 1743, Goen, “Editor’s Introduction,” *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 549.

But to judge the entire work by these irregularities, Edwards argued, was neither rational nor scriptural. What was needed were “certain rules, and distinguishing and clear marks by which [the church] might proceed safely in judging of spirits, and distinguish the true from the false.” In the fourth chapter of John’s first epistle, Edwards pointed out that the Apostle supplies “such marks of the true Spirit as may be plain and safe, and surely distinguishing, and well accommodated to use and practice;...and what rules soever we may find in the Holy Scriptures to this end, we need not be afraid to trust to. Doubtless that Spirit that indited the Scriptures knew how to give us good rules, by which to distinguish his operations from all that is falsely pretended to be from him.”<sup>30</sup>

Edwards’s design was clear and straight forward: “to shew what are the true, certain, and distinguishing evidences of a work of the Spirit of God, by which we may proceed safely in judging of any operation we find in ourselves, or see in others.”<sup>31</sup> He structured the sermon under two headings followed by an extended treatment called “Application”. Under the first heading Edwards presented nine negative signs, or as Edwards identified them: “what are not signs that we are to judge of a work by, whether it be the work of the Spirit of God or no.” This was followed by a second heading in which he set forth five positive signs, that is, “what are the sure, distinguishing, Scripture evidences and marks of a work of the Spirit of God.” Then in the “Application” Edwards used the two foregoing sections to justify his approval of the revival as a genuine work of the Spirit of God, and concluded by warning that those who would oppose the work would themselves be fighting against God.

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<sup>30</sup> *Distinguishing Marks, JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 226, 228.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

The strength of *Distinguishing Marks* lies in its combining of a strong pastoral and apologetic orientation. The nine negative signs, which reveal the analytical force Edwards brought to bear on the subject, were designed to disarm those who were discrediting the work on the basis of its epiphenomena. He reasoned that nothing either positive or negative could be concluded from the things the opposers cited as evidence against the revivals as a work of the Spirit of God. In other words, they could not be used as signs either for or against the Awakening as a genuine work of the Spirit of God. It was, as Goen has pointed out in his introduction to the sermon, an ingenuous way to begin, for it anticipated most of the objections the critics of the revivals cited against the work.<sup>32</sup> The five positive signs, on the other hand, were those true and certain marks which could be used to distinguish a genuine work of conversion from either a common work of grace or a false one.

Edwards's arguments for the work of revival in New England as a true work of the Spirit of God were obviously fresh in Robe's mind as he addressed the objections of the *Act* of the Associate Presbytery. An examination of the objections alongside Edwards's principles shows that Robe was not rash in his estimate of the usefulness of *Distinguishing Marks*. The main objections of seceding ministers can be broken down according to Edwards's own categories of negative and positive signs. The negative fruits which the *Act* attributed to the revivals and designated as the "usual Symptoms of a delusive Spirit" are all placed under the rubric of *Errors* and *Delusions*: bitter outcries, faintings, severe bodily pains, convulsions, visions and revelations. All of them are more than covered by the following nine negative signs from Edwards's sermon.

1. Nothing can certainly be concluded from this, that the work that appears is carried on in a way very unusual and extraordinary....No deviation from what has hitherto been usual, let it be never so great, is an

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<sup>32</sup> Goen, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 53.

argument that a work is not the work of the Spirit of God, if it be no deviation from the rule that God has given, to judge of a work of his Spirit by (pp. 228-30).

2. A work is not to be judged of by any effects on the bodies of men; such as tears, trembling, groans, loud cries, agonies of Body, or failing of bodily strength...,and the reason is, because the Scripture nowhere gives us any such rule (pp. 230-34).
3. 'Tis no argument that an operation that appears on the minds of a people, is not the work of the Spirit of God, that it occasions a great ado, and a great deal of noise about religion (pp. 234-35).
4. 'Tis no argument that an operation that appears on the minds of a people, is not the work of the Spirit of God, that many that are the subjects of it, have great impressions on their imaginations (235-38).
5. 'Tis no sign that a work that appears, and is wrought on the minds of people, is not from the Spirit of God, that example is made use of as a great means of it. 'Tis surely no argument that an effect is not from God, that means are made use of in producing it; for we know that 'tis God's manner to make use of means in carrying on his work in the world (pp. 238-41).
6. 'Tis no sign that a work that is wrought amongst a people is not from the Spirit of God, that many that seem to be the subjects of it, are guilty of great imprudences and irregularities in their conduct (pp. 241-43).
7. Nor are many errors in judgment, and some delusions of Satan intermixed with the work, any argument that the work in general is not the work of the Spirit of God. However great a pouring out of the Spirit there may be, 'tis not to be expected that the Spirit of God should be given now in the same manner that it was to the apostles, infallibly to guide them in points of Christian doctrine, so that what they taught might be relied on as a rule to the Christian church (pp. 243-44).
8. If some such as were thought to be wrought upon, fall away into gross errors and scandalous practices, 'tis no argument that the work in general is not the work of the Spirit of God. That there are some counterfeits, is no argument that nothing is true: such things are always to be expected in a time of reformation (pp. 244-46).
9. 'Tis no argument that a work is not from the Spirit of God, that it seems to be promoted by ministers insisting very much on the terrors of God's holy law, and that with a great deal of pathos and earnestness (pp. 246-48).

According to the *Act*, such errors and delusions as they accused the revival of promoting, "no sound Divine amongst us, hath ever maintained, as agreeable to, and concerned with the saving Operations of the Spirit of God."<sup>33</sup> Robe refuted the charge by

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<sup>33</sup> *Act*, p. 6.

using the basic working premise of Edwards's negative signs; namely, that such signs neither prove nor disprove a work to be from the Spirit of God. "Can you say," he declared, "that sound Divines amongst us maintain that they are *inconsistent* with the saving Work of the Spirit of God, and that there can be *no* saving Operations of the Spirit where these are? If you had said this, and proven it, you would have said something: But this is what you could not, what you durst not say."<sup>34</sup> Although Robe confidently offered *Distinguishing Marks* as a satisfactory answer to the main objections to the Scottish revivals, he was still compelled to offer some remarks of his own that were related more specifically to the Associate Presbytery and the Scottish revival context. However, in doing so he specifically asked his readers to keep in mind that any response he offered should be taken as an extension of the principles Edwards had already laid down.<sup>35</sup>

The first one that concerns us is Robe's juxtaposing of the Scottish revivals of Stewarton (1625) and Shotts (1630), which he knew the seceders accepted as a true work of God's Spirit, with the long-term fruits of the Northampton revival of 1734-35. After appealing to the similarities in the physical effects accompanying the present revivals with those a century earlier, he reminded the reader that hundreds were physically affected in Northampton in the same way many had been at Cambuslang and Kilsyth, and that the majority who were thought to have been converted at Northampton had now continued for years in the ways of real vital religion. "And shall we not hope the same of these converted

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<sup>34</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. xiv. Italics mine. Alexander Webster also felt free to use Edwards's principle to respond to Fisher: "That Mr. Fisher has offered nothing to prove, that the outward Effects upon the Body, wherewith this Work is attended in some of its Subjects, are *inconsistent* with a Work of the Spirit of God. This is what Mr. Fisher must prove, or he says nothing to the Purpose.--For we don't build on *unusual Symptoms*,--or pretend that Persons so affected must of Consequence be savingly wrought upon,--but only plead that they are not *incompatible* with saving Operations upon the Mind." Preface, *Divine Influence The True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang and Other Places in the West of Scotland*... (Edinburgh, 1742), p. vi.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vif.

amongst us,” Robe asked, “seeing also they have continued for several Months or Weeks, since they appeared to be converted, in a Desirable Way?”<sup>36</sup> Robe is here appealing to Edwards’s testimony at the end of the *Faithful Narrative* to the fact that after many months, those that had been thought converted continued to manifest a changed life. Summarising the long-term effects of the work, Edwards then observed, “we still remain a reformed people, and God has evidently made us a new people.”<sup>37</sup> The fact that Edwards made this observation not long after the revival had spent itself (1736), and that it still held good seven years later, meant that the Scottish revivalists claims were not unprecedented or unfounded.

Robe next turned to Scriptural instances of similar physical effects in support of the premise that irregular physical influences are not inconsistent with a work of saving grace. Once again he refers to Edwards’s sufficient treatment of the matter, but remarked that it was surprising that the opposers of the work had not taken these examples into account.<sup>38</sup> Two further objections are taken together, one brought by an earlier anti-revival piece and the other brought by the *Act*.<sup>39</sup> The first claimed that in the light of the biblical text, “The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation” (Luke 17:20), the present work “so open to publick Notice, and accompanied with “so much Noise” must be fraudulent.<sup>40</sup> Robe cites Beza’s commentary on Luke 17 in answer, yet both the objection and Robe’s answer correspond precisely to what Edwards covered in the third negative sign.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. viii.

<sup>37</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 208-09.

<sup>38</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>39</sup> The first is most likely, *A Short Account of the Remarkable Conversions at Cambuslang in a Letter from a Gentleman in the West Country to his Friend at Edinburgh* (Glasgow, 1742).

<sup>40</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. ix-x.

<sup>41</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 234-35.

One of the primary charges brought against the revivals by the *Act*, was that the present work was no different than that of the Camisards.<sup>42</sup> It is clear from the more extended treatment given to this subject by Robe, that he was anxious to make certain that he disassociated the revivals from any identification with the enthusiasm of this group of radical French Huguenots.<sup>43</sup> The Camisards, or French Prophets as they were also called, came into existence in 1688 and were notorious for convulsions, prophecies and speaking in tongues. By the early eighteenth century they had made their way to Britain. Edwards gave no notice of the Camisards in *Distinguishing Marks*, and only briefly addressed the subject in the later work, *Some Thoughts*.<sup>44</sup> Even so, Robe's first line of defense was to fall back on the principle underlying Edwards negative signs. "I would have them to observe, *first*, That as those bodily Agitations are no Evidence of Persons being under any Operations of the Spirit of God, else all the Persons under Convulsions, Cramps, Histerisms, &c. would be such: So, upon the other Hand, they are no Evidence that these thus affected are under a Spirit of Delusion....So that the bodily Agitations, considered in themselves, are no Symptoms of Persons being under the Influence either of a good or bad Spirit."<sup>45</sup> Only after having established this premise, did he go on to contrast the symptoms of the Scottish revivals with those of the Camisards.

In the latter third of the preface, Robe deliberately set out to reason more directly with his "Brethren of the *Secession*." In one of the central points developed in the section, he charged the seceders with deliberately refusing to honestly inform themselves of the true nature of the work. His argument reflects explicitly the strategy used by Edwards against

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<sup>42</sup> *Act*, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. xi-xiii; see also, pp. 53-55.

<sup>44</sup> See Edwards, *Some Thoughts, JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 313, 330, 341.

<sup>45</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. xi. Cf. sign two, *Ibid.*, pp. 230-34.

the New England detractors. At the beginning of the section designated "Application" in *Distinguishing Marks*, Edwards asserted that in judging a work only two things needed to be known: rules and facts. The rules were contained in the Word of God. As to facts, there was only two ways to ascertain them, "either by our own observations, or by information from others that have had opportunity to observe."<sup>46</sup> Applying these principles to the detractors of the Awakening in New England, Edwards expressed amazement,

that those that have doubted of the work that has been attended with such uncommon external appearances, should be easy in their doubts, without taking thorough pains to inform themselves, by going where such things have been to be seen, and narrowly observing them, and diligently inquiring into them; not contenting themselves only with observing two or three instances, nor resting till they were fully informed by their own observations....How greatly have they erred, who only from the uncertain reports of others, have ventured to speak slightly of these things? That caution of an unbelieving Jew [Gamaliel] might teach them more prudence, Acts 5:38-39, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel, or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God."<sup>47</sup>

Robe's expostulation with the seceders is strongly reminiscent of the foregoing line of reasoning.

Now, my dear Brethren, for whom I tremble, have you been at due Pains to know the Nature and Circumstances of this Work? Have you taken the Trouble, to go to any of these Places where the Lord hath appeared in his Glory and [sic] Majesty, and informed yourselves anent it from Ministers, some of whom I can assure you would have concealed nothing from you? Have you ever so much as written to any of them to receive Information from them, and have they declined or refused to give it?...is it not amazing Rashness, without Enquiry or Trial, to pronounce that to be the Work of the Devil, which, for any Thing you know, may be the Work of the infinitely Good and Holy Spirit? Is not this too like the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who ascribed the miraculous Work of our Lord wrought by

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<sup>46</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 260-61.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 274-75.

the Holy Ghost, to an evil and unclean Spirit? Are you not not afraid lest you come too near this Sin?<sup>48</sup>

Robe went on to claim, that by opposing this work of the Spirit of God, the seceders were making themselves enemies of the cross of Christ, and concluded with precisely the same warning Edwards brought to bear on the matter: "If you go on to hinder and oppose us in this, and associate yourselves with other Enemies to the cross of Christ, take heed, lest you be found Fighters against God."<sup>49</sup>

Virtually every objection to the revivals was connected to those things Edwards had identified as negative signs, and Robe answered them in a way that was consistent with either one of Edwards's negative signs, or with the principle upon which they were erected. At only one point did the *Act* criticize the positive qualities the revivalists had claimed for the revivals. Without having themselves identified what the true marks of a work of the Spirit of God were, the leaders of the Associate Presbytery declared that none "of the Fruits of this Work, that have hitherto been alledged," were "sufficient to difference it, either from the common Work of the Spirit of God upon Hypocrites, or from the Delusion of *Satan*."<sup>50</sup> In his brief but pointed rejoinder, Robe questioned the integrity of the charge by pointing out that the seceders had previously endorsed in their preaching and writing the very same "Fruits" as evidence of a genuine work of the Spirit.<sup>51</sup> How could they now deny, he asked, what they had already publically affirmed? By their own admission they had read the

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<sup>48</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. xiii-xiv. Cf. Webster, "Preface," *Divine Light*, pp. 1-6.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

<sup>50</sup> *Act*, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. xv.

narratives and attestations the revivalists had published which supplied a list of the alleged fruits, so they could hardly deny they knew what they were.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to failing to present their own case for a true work of grace, the seceders also neglected to list the alleged fruits the revivalists had claimed for the work. Their failure to do so, Robe said, again showed a lack of integrity, in as much as they condemned the work without letting the reader know what it was they were objecting to. To remedy the situation Robe listed the qualities the revivalists claimed were sufficient to distinguish the work, “both from the common Work of the Spirit of God upon Hypocrites, and from the Delusions of Satan.”<sup>53</sup> The inventory included ten characteristics: “godly Sorrow for Sin, universal Hatred at it, renouncing their own righteousness, and embracing the Righteousness of God by Faith in Jesus Christ, embracing Him in all his Offices, universal Reformation of Life, a superlative Love to our blessed Redeemer, Love to all they see bear his Image, Love towards all Men, even their Enemies, Earnest Desires and Prayers for the Conversion of all others.”<sup>54</sup>

Robe saw no further need to justify the criteria the revivalists used to judge the true nature of the revival. It is reasonable to assume, and certainly consistent with his opening disclaimer, that it would be “superfluous and unnecessary to answer apart” from Edwards, because all ten evidences were consistent with the five biblically derived positive signs Edwards had thoroughly explicated in *Distiguishing Marks*.<sup>55</sup> The five signs set forth by Edwards were:

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. xiv-xv. Page 5 of the *Act* makes it clear that the authors were familiar with the bulk of what had been published by the revivalists.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. xv.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

1. When that spirit that Is at work amongst a people is observed to operate after such a manner, as to raise their esteem of that Jesus that was born of the Virgin, and was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem; and seems more to confirm and establish their minds in the truth of what the Gospel declares to us of his being the Son of God, and the Saviour of men; 'tis a sure sign that that spirit is the Spirit of God...vv. 2-3 (pp. 249-50).
2. When the spirit that is at work operates against the interest of Satan's kingdom, which lies in encouraging and establishing sin, and cherishing men's worldly lusts; this is a sure sign that 'tis a true, and not false spirit...vv.4-5 (pp. 250-53).
3. That spirit that operates in such a manner, as to cause in men a greater regard to the Holy Scriptures, and establishes them more in their truth and divinity, is certainly the Spirit of God...v. 6 (pp. 253-54).
4. Another rule to judge of spirits may be drawn from those opposite compellations given to the two opposite spirits, in the last words of the 6th verse, "The spirit of truth" and "the spirit of error"...therefore, if by observing the manner of the operation of a spirit that is at work among a people, we see that it operates as a spirit of truth, leading persons to truth, convincing them of those things that are true, we may safely determine that 'tis a right and true spirit (pp. 254-55).
5. If the spirit that is at work among a people operates as a spirit of love to God and man, 'tis a sure sign that 'tis the Spirit of God...v. 7 (pp. 255-59).

Robe's marks of "godly Sorrow for Sin, universal Hatred at it, renouncing their own Righteousness," and a "universal Reformation of life," Edwards had developed under his second scriptural sign; the qualities of "embracing the Righteousness of God by Faith in Jesus Christ" and "embracing Him in all his Offices" in his third and fourth signs; a "superlative Love to our blessed Redeemer in the first and fifth; and finally the three qualities of "Love to all they see bear his Image, Love towards all Men, even their Enemies," and "Earnest Desires and Prayers for the Conversion of all others," under sign five.<sup>56</sup>

The reason Edwards developed only five signs was because he chose to restrict his treatment of the subject to the biblical text he was working from which only contained

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

five.<sup>57</sup> However, he pointed out that while the five were not definitive in number, they were sufficient criteria to distinguish a true work of grace from a spurious one.<sup>58</sup>

Two additional early revivalist pieces deserve to be mentioned in this context. Shortly after Robe's preface appeared, Alexander Webster, minister at Edinburgh Tolbooth and brother-in-law of Ebenezer Erskine,<sup>59</sup> published a letter under the title, *Divine Influence the True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang and Other Places...; Illustrated in a Letter from Alexander Webster,...., to a Gentleman in the Country.*<sup>60</sup> In his account, Webster repeated the same basic assertions that Robe had offered in answer to the charges made against the revivals, and endorsed with equal enthusiasm Edwards's position on the subject as demonstrated in *Distinguishing Marks*. During this same period, John MacLaurin wrote a substantial defense of the New England revival which was published in a series of letters in the *Glasgow Weekly History*.<sup>61</sup> He assumed that clearing the name of the American revival was essential to the defense of the work at home. His painstaking documentation reveals a thorough acquaintance with the New England Awakening and its publications, and shows in another instance how closely connected the revivalists in Scotland perceived the Scottish revivals were to the work in New England and to Edwards.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> *JE*(Yale), vol. 4, pp. 228, 249. Four years later, in his most mature work on the subject, *A Treatise on Religious Affection*, he would expand the five to twelve.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 227-28. Later Robe explicitly affirmed, against the anti-revivalists, that Edwards five distinguishing marks were sufficient to judge a true work of conversion from a false one. See *Mr. Robe's Second Letter To the Reverend James Fisher, Minister of the Gospel in the Associate Congregation at Glasgow....*(Edinburgh, 1743), pp. 39f. Willison also approved of Edwards's five distinguishing marks in, *A Letter from Mr. John Willison Minister at Dundee, To Mr. James Fisher Minister at Glasgow.....*(Edinburgh, 1743), pp. 11f.

<sup>59</sup> Erskine was one of the leading founders of the Associate Presbytery.

<sup>60</sup> Edinburgh, 1742.

<sup>61</sup> No.'s 35-38.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Susan Durden, "The First Evangelical Magazines." p. 269. By clearing the name of the work in America, MacLaurin believed he would also clear the awakening in Scotland.

Two points need to be emphasised here. First, it is clear from the *Act*, that the Associate Presbytery believed that what the revivalists considered to be sure signs of a true work of the Spirit of God were in fact insufficient to distinguish true piety from either a common work of grace or from a work of the devil. At best, they considered the fruits of the revival to be no more distinguishing than Edwards's nine negative signs; which was to say that they proved nothing either negative or positive about the work. Secondly, by this judgment the seceders summarily rejected what Edwards and the Scottish revivalists believed were the marks of true religion. It is to be remembered that Willison, MacLaurin, Robe and Webster, who represented not only the revivalists, but the majority of the evangelicals of the Church of Scotland, had publically endorsed Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks* as offering a true understanding of the subject. Therefore, although this exchange represented only the beginning of the controversy, it is already apparent that the two evangelical parties were divided over what they considered to be fundamental to their entire religious outlook, and that Edwards's understanding of the issues had helped define in important ways the revivalists's position. The differences became even more pronounced and entrenched as the dispute developed.

Robe concluded his preface to the *Kilsyth Narrative* with the confidence that he had cleared the revivals of the secession's false charges, and had sufficiently demonstrated that Edwards's performance adequately answered the detractors main objections. MacLaurin and Webster had presented their case for the revivals with a similar confidence. As it turned out, they woefully misjudged the influence of their arguments and the depth of antipathy directed against the revivals by the Associate Presbytery. A much more caustic denunciation of the revivals was forthcoming, one in which Edwards remained at the centre.

Acrimonious criticisms against the American Awakening and Edwards's sermon began to be published in New England and exported abroad. News of the growing controversy in America reached Scotland soon after Robe's *Kilsyth Narrative* was published. From May to November a series of anti-revival pieces from liberal ministers in New England were published in Scotland, throwing suspicion on the previously received favourable accounts of the American Awakening.<sup>63</sup> In the light of the new reports crying down the work in America as the "Effect of *enthusiastic Heat*," what were Scots to think of the revivals at home which their supporters had cried up as part of the same blessed work?<sup>64</sup> Following the pattern set by the revivalists, Scottish detractors began to use American anti-revival literature against the work in Scotland.<sup>65</sup>

A month after Edwards delivered the commencement address at Yale College and a few weeks before it was published, John Caldwell, an Irish Presbyterian minister of Blanford, Massachusetts, preached an anti-revival sermon using the same text that Edwards

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<sup>63</sup> The following were the primary anti-revival pieces received from New England: *A Letter from A Gentleman in New-England*, May 24, 1742, signed A.M. (Edinburgh, 1742); Charles Chauncy, *The Creature Describ'd, and Consider'd as a sure Characteristick of a Man's Being in Christ* (Edinburgh, 1742); John Caldwell, *An Impartial Trial of the Spirit Operating in this Part of the World; by comparing the Nature, Effects, and Evidences of the present supposed Conversion, with the Word of God* (Glasgow, 1742); Anonymous, *The Wonderful Narrative, or a Faithful Account of the French Prophets,...., by Anti-Enthusiasticus* (Glasgow, 1742); and Charles Chauncy, *A Letter from A Gentleman in Boston, To Mr. George Wishart, One of the Ministers of Edinburgh, Concerning the State of Religion In New-England, August 4, 1742* (Edinburgh, 1742).

<sup>64</sup> Chauncy, *Letter to Wishart*, p. 21; cf. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 170f. "Enthusiasm" was a perjorative term used from the 16th century well into the 19th century to refer to religious extremists who claimed to have a uniquely close relationship with God and could not contain their emotions or zeal within the bounds of religious convention. They often believed immediate inspiration from God coinciding with claims of divine authority. The standard work on the subject is R.A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion, with a special Reference to the Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950). See also the more recent studies by David S. Lovejoy: *Religious Enthusiasm and the Great Awakening* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), and *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World, Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985).

<sup>65</sup> Speaking to a correspondent in Boston, Willison observed that "many Papers publish'd here to Discredit [the work], as if it was Delusion and Diabolical: and some of these have come from *Boston*. But we need not be much surprised at them, when we see they speak as calumniously of the work here, to which we are Eye-Witnesses...." Letter to a minister in Boston, April 25, 1743, *Christian History*, No. 27, p. 211.

had used in his address, I John chapter four. The sermon entitled, *An Impartial Trial of the Spirit Operating in This Part of the World; by Comparing the Nature, Effects, and Evidence of the Present supposed Conversions, with the Word of God*, was published in Scotland not long after the publication of Edwards's sermon. As the title implies, Caldwell sought to challenge Edwards's thesis on its own terms. While it is inferior to Edwards's production, it was enough to unsettle the favorable opinions of some toward the Scottish revivals. Following on the heels of Caldwell's piece came a far more influential attack. In a letter to George Wishart, minister at Tron, Edinburgh, dated Boston, August 4, 1742, Charles Chauncy, copastor of Boston's First Church and the foremost of the Old Light anti-revivalists, dismissed the entire American Awakening as a scandal against the Spirit of God.

For my self, I am among those who are clearly in the Opinion, that there never was such a *Spirit of Superstition and Enthusiasm* reigning in the Land before; never such *gross Disorders and barefaced Affronts to common Decency*; never such *scandalous Reproaches on the Blessed Spirit*, making him the Author of the greatest *Irregularities and Confusions*.<sup>66</sup>

According to Wishart, he published the letter for the "Cause of Truth" and the "Interests of real Religion."<sup>67</sup> Obviously, the revivalists were not the only ones who perceived themselves as fighting for the principles of true religion.

Around the same time, an anonymous letter from a gentleman in Boston concerning the state of religion in New England was also published in Scotland. It condemned the awakening in America as a demonstration of enthusiasm and religious bigotry, and directly contradicted Edwards's interpretation presented in *Distinguishing Marks*.<sup>68</sup> This particular

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<sup>66</sup> Charles Chauncy, *A letter from a Gentleman in Boston, To Mr. George Wishart*, p. 21.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, from his preface "To The Reader," November 8, 1742.

<sup>68</sup> Anonymous, *The State of Religion in New-England since Mr. George Whitefield's Arrival Here, A Letter from a Gentleman in New-England*, May 24, 1742, Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1742.

piece of America anti-revival literature was used more often by Scottish detractors to discredit the revivals than any other publication originating outside Scotland. For example, the seceders who did not share the theological principles of the liberal New England clergy who authored these attacks (nor Wishart for that matter whose leanings were in a more moderate direction<sup>69</sup>), were not above referring to and using its arguments in their anti-revival publications.<sup>70</sup> As a result of the close connection drawn by revivalists and anti-revivalists between the spiritual awakenings in New England and Scotland, and the Scottish revivalists' published testimonies concerning the strength and applicability of Edwards's defense and interpretation of the work to their own congregations, *Distinguishing Marks* became the central target of secession opposition. By discrediting Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks*, the seceders hoped to successfully challenge the claims of the Scottish revivalists and condemn the revival.

James Fisher, one of the original secession ministers, spearheaded the opposition.<sup>71</sup> In response to Robe, Webster and Willison he published, *A Review of the Preface to a Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Kilsyth*, in which he reaffirmed the positions taken by the Associate Presbytery in their *Act Anent a Publick Fast*.<sup>72</sup> His main line of attack focused on the two main transatlantic revivalist figures, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. Of the two, Edwards was clearly singled out as the one most critical to the

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<sup>69</sup> It is interesting to listen to Wishart's rationale for overlooking Chauncy's liberalism: "The Opposition he [Chauncy] shows to that Spirit of Bigotry, which would damn all those who don't believe all the Points of Calvinism, is by no means to be constructed to the Prejudice of his own way of thinking as to these Points" [i.e. the revivals], "To The Reader," *Letter to Wishart*.

<sup>70</sup> For example see James Fisher, *A Review of the Preface to a Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Kilsyth* (Glasgow, 1742), p. 29. Hereafter cited as *Review*.

<sup>71</sup> The first minister from the Associate Presbytery to draw critical attention to Edwards's sermon was Adam Gib. Near the end of his diatribe, *A Warning Against Countenancing the Ministrations of Mr. George Whitefield*, Gib addressed a pamphlet from New England, which he said had been "transmitted *hither*, reprinted *here*, and warmly recommended by Messieurs Willison and W\_\_\_\_\_d." The unnamed work was Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*: p. 60.

<sup>72</sup> Fisher, *Review* (Glasgow, 1742).

theological credibility of the Scottish Awakening. Fisher granted the revivalists their close theological identity with Edwards, believing he was capable of bringing Edwards down and with him the revivals. “This *Pamphlet* of Mr. *Edward’s*,” he proclaimed, “is very highly extol’d by the *Promoters* of this Work,” and “cry’d up, as the Standard-piece of the Work,” and in “Obedience” to Mr. Whitefield’s “Order,” Mr. *Willison* commends it *most earnestly*” to the Church of Scotland. “I suppose none will discredit the Account,” he continued, “when it comes from Mr. *Edwards*, whom they set up as a *great Patron* and *Defender* of *this Work*.”<sup>73</sup> Yet, Fisher went on to observe, “It would require a *Treatise* by itself, to follow the Chain of *Error*, both in *Philosophy* and *Divinity*, that runs thro’ the *whole* of this *Performance*,” even so, “I shall endeavour to make it appear, that whatever was the Intention of the *Author*, yet, the manifest *Design* of his *Work*, is to *overthrow* the very *Foundation* of *Faith*, and all *practical Godliness*, and to *establish* mere *Enthusiasm* and *strong Delusion*, in the *Room* of the *true Religion*, revealed and required in the Word.”<sup>74</sup>

Fisher launched an all out attack on Edwards’s *Distinguishing Marks*, with a particular emphasis on Edwards’s understanding of the role of bodily behaviour and the imagination in religious experience. Rejoinders followed not long after. Webster’s response took the form of a preface to a second edition of *A Divine Influence*.<sup>75</sup> His objective was to clear the revivals of the charges Fisher brought against them, by defending Edwards’s and Robe’s interpretation and doctrinal analysis of them. After addressing certain specific accusations in the first half of the preface, he concluded that taken together the charges suggest that “the Point in Debate is brought to this one Question;--Whether or

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<sup>73</sup> Fisher, *Review*, pp. 10, 11, 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>75</sup> *To The Reader in Divine Influence*. The second edition was printed at the end of the year 1742. The preface ran to twenty-five pages.

not, from the Facts *alleged, proved, and not disputed*, there be Ground to conclude, in the Judgment of Charity, that many Persons in the West, lately brought under Soul-concern, are become *real* Christians or *truly* converted?"<sup>76</sup> The question asked whether the signs cited by the revivalists and evinced by those converted were in fact positive signs of a true work of the Spirit of God. Webster answered in the affirmative and went on in the second half of the preface to argue his position. In the process he relied on the evangelical interpretive framework provided by Edwards on which Robe had piggybacked.<sup>77</sup>

Concluding his critique of Fisher's *Review*, Webster pointed out that as a contestant, he considered Fisher ill-matched for the likes of Edwards and Robe. He "seems not to have judged so well in entering the Lists with Messieurs *Edwards, Robe, &etc.* I dread, on his Account, the Issue of the Contest: and cannot but lament over him, in the Words of the Poet, *Infelix puer, atque impar congressus Achilli.*"<sup>78</sup> What is interesting here is that Webster apparently believed that there was a possibility that Edwards would respond directly to Fisher's charges, or at least hoped he would. Edwards never did, at least not directly. However, he did touch on a number of areas related to Fisher's objections in, *Some Thoughts Concerning the present Revival of Religion in New-England*, which was published the following year in Scotland. But before it appeared, Robe and Willison took up Edwards's side of the argument and answered Fisher on his behalf.

Robe's engagement with Fisher involved a series of three published letters, and constitute the most sustained and in depth response to Fisher's allegations and defence of Edwards's position. In the first letter, published in Glasgow during the latter part of 1742,

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xxiv.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv.

he challenged the accusation that the work at Cambuslang and Kilsyth was produced by their “extraordinary fervent desires” to be “sharers of the same very Spirit” that was at work among the American colonies.<sup>79</sup> Both Fisher’s allegations and Robe’s defense again demonstrate how closely the work in Scotland was identified with the Great Awakening in America. But more importantly, this exchange reveals that the success of the revivals was, in the minds of Scottish revivalists, inextricably connected with the theological leadership embodied in Edwards’s revival tracts. This reliance, on the part of the Scottish revivalists, began with the publication of Edwards’s *Faithful Narrative* and the exporting of his conception of revivalism to Scotland.

Robe closed this first letter by stating that “I shall now refer the consideration of what you object, against this sermon of Mr. Edward’s, to a second letter designed to you.”<sup>80</sup> As it turned out, it took Robe two letters, not one. On the title page of the second letter, dated the first of December 1742, the reader is alerted that in what follows “Mr. *Edwards*’ Sermon, upon the *distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of GOD*, is vindicated from Mr. *Fisher*’s Objections against it in the said *Review*.” With this letter, Robe answered point by point the charges made against Edwards’s sermon covered in the first twenty-three pages of Fisher’s *Review*, quoting in full, text after text from *Distinguishing Marks* to expose each occasion where Fisher misquoted, misrepresented, or glossed Edwards’s words and meaning. Citing both the London and Scottish editions of the sermon in the process, Robe demonstrated not only a mastery of Edwards’s text, but that he had adopted its arguments as his own.

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<sup>79</sup> *Mr. Robe’s first Letter to...Mr. Fisher, Minister,...in the Associate Congregation at Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1742), pp. 5-26.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

One of the ways Fisher tried to discredit the work was to accuse Robe and the others of being excessively dependent on Edwards.<sup>81</sup> But rather than distancing himself from Edwards's position as a result of Fisher's persistent jabs, Robe took every opportunity to reaffirm his commitment to Edwards's principles. For example, he opened his third letter with the admission, "What remarks of mine may be the same with Mr. Edwards, as you observe by the by, are not the worse for this; I judge them needful in carrying on the Argument as laid in my Preface."<sup>82</sup> Robe had built his original response to the *Act* of the Associate Presbytery on Edwards's work, and in these three letters he made it quite plain that he had no intention of changing his strategy. Picking up where he left off in the second letter, in the third he continued his detailed rebuttal of Fisher's arguments against *Distinguishing Marks*, carrying his attack right through to the end of Fisher's *Review*.<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps the most potent response came from the pen of John Willison. In a letter to Fisher, published in 1743, Willison used all his ecclesiastical stature and his memory of Fisher's earlier theological positions to produce a scathing critique of his thinking and behavior.<sup>84</sup> Willison was sixty-three years old at the time, and the tone he took with Fisher is strikingly different from either Webster's or Robe's. Willison was clearly incensed. His approach was strongly authoritative. The letter not only reveals his own position, but sheds further light on Webster's and Robe's spirited defense of Edwards as well.

I had prepared an Answer to your unreasonable Attacks upon the Reverend Mr. Edwards' Sermon; but, finding I was happily prevented by the Reverend Mr. Robe and Mr. Webster, I recalled mine and have left out many Things which they insist in (especially Mr. Robe) at considerable Length. And indeed they have sufficiently exposed your Management, and laid open the surpassing Unfairness, Dishonesty and

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<sup>81</sup> For example see Fisher's *Review*, pp. 16, 23, 24, 25, 31, 35.

<sup>82</sup> *Mr. Robe's 3rd Letter to Mr. James Fisher...*(Edinburgh, 1743), p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> In the third letter, Robe also takes up the accusations Fisher brought against George Whitefield, defending him with equal determination.

<sup>84</sup> Willison, *Letter from Willison to Fisher*, 1743.

Disingenuity of it before the World. You have in the most shameless Manner curtailed, mangled and wrested the Words of Messieurs Edwards, Robe, and Webster, in citing, glossing and sensing of them in such Manner as hardly could have been expected from any honest Man, far less from one of your character.<sup>85</sup>

He went on to ask Fisher why he was so “very angry” with Edwards, “whose Praise is in the Churches of Christ,” and how it was that he could bring such groundless charges against such an “*excellent Sermon!*”<sup>86</sup> So confident was Willison that Edwards had got it right that the only thing Willison could attribute Fisher’s hostility to was a “party spirit.”

Had you [Fisher] and I got such Accounts of the Success of the Gospel in Parishes through Scotland about a Dozen of Years ago, as now, blessed be God, you would have rejoiced at it as well as I, and have frankly agreed with me and others to have kept Days of Thanksgiving for these News for which you now keep Days of Fasting. I am sure the same very Doctrine is preached in these awakened Parishes that was preached by you and us at that Time;... Now, how sad it is that our Sentiments of Things should depend so much upon our Situation, and our Thoughts alter with our outward Interest and Circumstances.<sup>87</sup>

One cannot be sure how far Willison meant his statement that Edwards’s praise “in the Churches of Christ” was to be taken. It is reasonable to assume that he had at least the Church of Scotland in mind, which raises an interesting point. With the exception of Adam Gib’s rather oblique reference to *Distinguishing Marks*, Fisher was the only minister from the Associate Presbytery to take Edwards on directly.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, no one from the established church published anything against Edwards’s revival works either directly or

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 23-24. The actual nature and causes of the change noted by Willison is in need of further investigation.

<sup>88</sup> Ralph Erskine’s debate with Robe over the role of imaginary ideas in religious experience was in fact a debate over Edwards’s position on the matter as expressed in *Distinguishing Marks*. Yet, curiously Erskine never spoke of Edwards directly. See Erskine’s, *Faith No Fancy: or, a Treatise of Mental Images, Discovering the Vain Philosophy and Vile Divinity of a Late Pamphlet, Intituled, Mr. Robe’s Fourth Letter to Mr. Fisher....*(Edinburgh, 1745); cf. John K. La Shell, “Imaginary Ideas of Christ: A Scottish-American Debate” (unpublished doctoral thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1985).

indirectly.<sup>89</sup> Even the *Scots Magazine*, which published several antagonistic pieces against the revivals and George Whitefield, contained nothing in opposition to Edwards. With the one exception of Fisher, Edwards appears to have been the least censored of the revivalists in Scotland. If there were others who believed like Fisher, they were obviously reluctant to publish their sentiments.<sup>90</sup>

The lack of Scottish censorship of Edwards together with Willison's statement that Edwards's praise was "in the Churches of Christ," would seem to indicate that the anti-revivalists viewed Edwards's handling of the subject of revivalism differently. Perhaps they found it difficult to refute him. While students at the University of Edinburgh, John Erskine and William Robertson hotly debated the subject of the revivals and more specifically the ministry of George Whitefield. An observation by Richard Sher about the debate suggests an important reason why Edwards may have drawn relatively little public criticism. Erskine represented the revivalists side of the debate, and Robertson took up the viewpoint of the anti-revivalists.<sup>91</sup> Against Erskine, Sher states, "Robertson most likely argued that Whitefield's brand of evangelicalism violated the principles of enlightened Christianity and threatened to revive the fanaticism and disorder of the seventeenth century."<sup>92</sup> Whether Whitefield's kind of evangelicalism was in fact opposed to the Enlightenment is debatable. However, Edwards treatment of the subject unmistakably bore the marks of enlightened

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<sup>89</sup> *CMH*, Preface, p. 32.

<sup>90</sup> Robe's comments to Fisher support this position. Speaking of the reception of *Distinguishing Marks* in Scotland, Robe stated, "This Performance is extolled, not only (according to you) by the Promoters of this Work, but by all unprejudiced and intelligent Persons", and "If there be Hundreds in *Scotland*, as you hope, to whom Mr. *Edwards'* Answers are further Objections against the whole Work; it is strange the Publick have never heard of these new Objections until now." *Robe's Second Letter to Fisher*, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood. *Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D. Late one of the Ministers of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1818), pp. 100-01. Erskine (1721-1803) became the leading member of the evangelical wing of the Church of Scotland during the second half of the eighteenth century, and Robertson (1721-93) successfully led the Moderate party for twenty-eight years. They served together at Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh for twenty-six years.

<sup>92</sup> Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 31-32.

thinking. While the moderate leaning clergy may have remained unconvinced, the measured and balanced tone, the biblical grounding, and rational structure of Edwards's argument must have commended itself to their more liberal sentiments, and left little room for the kind of criticism reserved for others.<sup>93</sup>

The pamphlet warfare entered a second phase when Ralph Erskine joined the ranks in 1743 in response to a fourth letter from Robe to Fisher.<sup>94</sup> A series of exchanges that lasted until 1745, involving a second edition of Fisher's *Review* with an added preface,<sup>95</sup> two publications by Erskine,<sup>96</sup> and responses from Robe and Webster concluded the controversy. Although one of the underlying issues in this series of interchanges was Edwards's understanding of the nature and role of imagination in religious experience, it had less bearing on Edwards's connection with Scotland's church evangelicals.<sup>97</sup>

The same cannot be said for the first phase of the controversy. Its importance for church evangelicals and its connection with Edwards was pronounced. First of all, by 1743, the Associate Presbytery's opposition to the revivals had succeeded in severing the remaining ties that existed between them and their evangelical brethren in the established church.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, by forcing them to defend their position, the controversy led church

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<sup>93</sup> The idea that moderate leaning ministers found Edwards's understanding and approach to be more acceptable is further supported by their later endorsement of his work. See chapter 1, pp. 2-3.

<sup>94</sup> *Mr Robe's Fourth Letter to Mr. Fisher*, wherein His *Preface* to a 2nd edition of his *Review* is Considered; the Promoters of the Divine Work, opposed by Mr. Fisher, are vindicated from his Libel against them, concerning Toleration-Principles: As also, the Fraud and Falsehood of the Rev'd Mr. *Ralph Erskine's Appendix to his Fraud and Falsehood*, etc., is laid open (Edinburgh, 1743).

<sup>95</sup> Second edition, Published in Glasgow, 1743.

<sup>96</sup> *Fraud and Falsehood Discovered: or Remarks upon Mr. Webster's Postscript to the second Edition of his Letter....*(Edinburgh, 1743), and, *Faith or Fancy*.

<sup>97</sup> For an indepth study of this phase of the controversy see, LaShell, "Imaginary Ideas of Christ".

<sup>98</sup> Michael Crawford indicates that the "wall of enmity" between the two evangelical groups came much earlier, between the years 1733 and 1740. Certainly a formal separation from the national church took place during those years, and differences in ideology became apparent between the two evangelical groups. However, there are at least three reasons to think that Crawford is premature in his dating of the real breach between church evangelicals and seceders. First, in 1737 Ralph Erskine went on record as saying that by joining with the secession he did not intend to break communion with other godly ministers of the national church, and there is no indication that he moved away from this position until his encounter with Whitefield in 1741. Secondly, the

evangelicals to define more fully and articulate more precisely their understanding of the true nature of religious faith and experience. By doing so, they distinguished themselves theologically from both the evangelicals of the secession and the non-evangelical constituency of the established church. For Scotland's church evangelicals, this development proved to be the first step toward an independent ecclesiastical identity within the Kirk. Thirdly, in their defense of *Distinguishing Marks*, Scottish revivalists closely identified the cause of Scottish revivalism with Edwards and the pattern and theology he articulated in his revival works, thus deepening the theological imprint of Edwards on Scottish evangelical Calvinism. This last point is brought into clearer relief through the positive way in which the revivalists used *Distinguishing Marks* to manage the revivals.

Under the peculiar circumstances the revivals produced, Scottish ministers found that to lead so many people into the first throes of conversion and out the other side to a "peace of mind with God," presented new problems and raised a number of questions that could not be answered by rule of thumb. The most pressing and also the most difficult was how to distinguish true from defective conversions. Many things tended to accompany the experience of those converted that under normal circumstances were absent, such as faintings, bodily agitations, and unusual emotional conduct. How were ministers to interpret such behaviour? In addition to the uncommon epiphenomena created by the revivals, matters were further complicated by the decline of an evangelical presence in the Church of Scotland, and with it a corresponding decline in experimental religion. In the

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fact that the seceders were willing to embrace the ministry of Whitefield as late as 1741 would suggest their relationship with their evangelical brethren in the Kirk was not as antagonistic as Crawford signifies. Lastly, it is clear from their responses to members of the Associate Presbytery that the revivalists did not expect opposition to the revivals from them. Just the opposite was true. They had assumed that they would, like themselves, receive the work as God's gracious provision for the renewal of the Church of Scotland. See Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 168.

second half of the seventeenth century national and institutional concerns began to dominate the Kirk's attention. National conversion, with its emphasis on covenant keeping, eclipsed the place of personal conversion, resulting in a loss of emphasis on God's dealing with individual souls.<sup>99</sup> Willison, Robe and Webster all recognized and lamented this loss of experimental religion in the Kirk, and McCulloch, as we have seen, despaired of what he considered his own ignorance of the matter.<sup>100</sup> Even though these men were familiar with the extensive corpus of Puritan works on experimental religion, there was no figure, either in Scotland or England, writing on the issues of experimental religion from a contemporary perspective that was expressly designed to address the unusual conditions and difficulties created by the revivals. This void opened the door for the reception of Edwards's particular analysis on the subject.<sup>101</sup>

New England faced circumstances similar to those of their evangelical brethren in Scotland. When commending Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks*, William Cooper quoted the English Puritan, John Howe, with approval and a sense of the immediate applicability of Howe's observation to New England: "...we know not how to speak living sense unto souls, how to get within them,...we speak not as persons who hope to prevail, that expect to make

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<sup>99</sup> See chapter 2 above, pp. 66-71. Cf. Landsman, "Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity," pp. 30f; MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, p. 142, and Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 108, 126-27, 150-3, 247. C.G. M'Crie, while acknowledging the dominance of the position stated above, which he sees as an outgrowth of Scottish federal theology, also shows that the subjective aspect of salvation was not altogether wanting during this period, *The Confessions of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1907), pp. 72-82.

<sup>100</sup> See Willison, "Preface," *Distinguishing Marks*; Robe, "Preface," *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. iv-v, ix; Webster, *Divine Light*, pp. 9-10; and for McCulloch, see chapter 3 above, pp. 121f. Further indication of this condition (as noted in chapter 2) was the Marrow controversy, which was essentially about the dearth of evangelical preaching in Scottish pulpits. The Act concerning preaching which was passed by the Assembly in 1736 was an effort to confront the problem. The works of Thomas Halyburton (1674-1712) and Thomas Boston (1676-1732) were notable exceptions. Another highly significant exception was the work of John MacLaurin who's *On the Scripture Doctrine of Divine Grace* alone could have supplied much of what was required by the revivals. Unfortunately, this treatise along with the rest of MacLaurin's work was not published until after his death in 1754.

<sup>101</sup> Although Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* was still being used to help promote the work on both sides of the Atlantic, it did not provide sufficient criteria for helping the revivalists to discern the difference between true and false conversions. Yet it was strategic in building a bridge between Edwards and the Scottish revivalists.

you serious Christians. The methods of alluring and convincing souls, even that some of us have known, are lost from amongst us in a great part.”<sup>102</sup> Like Scotland, New England had lost its evangelical edge, leaving clergy and people with few clear and sure rules to judge the experiences of those spiritually awakened during the revival.<sup>103</sup> Due to the highly experiential nature of the revivals and the decline of experimental religion, the American Awakening quickly became a breeding ground for unorthodox thinking and religious enthusiasm.

Even before James Davenport began his march down the New England coastline, Edwards was aware that there was much that was being done and said in the name of true religion that was void of the Spirit and attributable to the prevailing ignorance of experimental religion in the land.<sup>104</sup> His great concern that commencement day in New Haven was to provide ministers and their people with the necessary guidelines to better manage the work and bring under control the ever-increasing aberrant aspects which were marring it and feeding its critics. He was convinced that the best apologetic the revivalists could offer was the work of the revival itself, carefully and wisely managed according to sound biblical principles.<sup>105</sup> This concern accounts for the strong pastoral orientation Edwards brought to bear on the subject.

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<sup>102</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 218.

<sup>103</sup> Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, p. 173; Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, p. 9.

<sup>104</sup> “It is very apparent, that the want of thorough distinction in this matter, through the defect either of sufficient discerning or care, has been the chief thing that has obscured, obstructed and brought to a stand all remarkable revivals of religion,.... the very chief reason why the most hopeful and promising beginnings have never come to any more than beginnings.” Edwards, Preface to Joseph Bellamy’s, *True Religion delineated; or, Experimental Religion, As distinguished from Formality on the one Hand, and Enthusiasm on the other, set in a Scriptural and Rational Light* (Boston, 1750), in *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 569. See also Edwards’s Preface to, *Some Thoughts Concerning the present Revival of Religion in New-England*, *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>105</sup> See for example his exhortation in the final section of *Distinguishing Marks*, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 276-88.

Unfortunately, Edwards's effort to bring the Awakening in New England under the strict management of Scriptural guidelines had little effect. By the time *Distinguishing Marks* was published in America, the revival was almost two years old, and patterns of thinking and interpretation proved difficult to reverse. This was not the case in Scotland. *Distinguishing Marks* was published in Scotland much nearer to the beginning of the work there and was quickly recognized for its pastoral value. In its defense, Webster and Robe attested to its sufficiency and reliability as a guide for governing the work in Scotland, and Willison recommended it first and foremost as a handbook for assisting them in "discerning a true and real Work of the Spirit of God, and for guarding against Delusions and Mistakes," adding the warning that,

it is most seasonable and necessary that they should read and peruse the Treatise at this Time, that they may be directed how to pay suitable Regard to the Works of the Lord, and Operations of his Hands,..., and particularly, that they may avoid that very alarming Threatening, Psal. xxviii. 5, *Because they regard not the Works of the Lord, and the Operations of his Hand, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*<sup>106</sup>

The success of Edwards's sermon as a manual of pastoral guidance, again, had much to do with its relationship to the Scottish context. For example, the fact that *Distinguishing Marks* was written in the crucible of the same kind of revival fires experienced at Cambuslang and Kilsyth set it apart from anything previously written on the subject. But more important at this juncture than the similarities between the two transatlantic works were two dissimilarities. First of all, as mentioned above, in contrast to the work in New England, *Distinguishing Marks* was published in Scotland within months of the beginning of the work at Cambuslang and coincided with the genesis of the awakening at Kilsyth. Just as they used the strength of its argument to defend the

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<sup>106</sup> Preface, *Distinguishing Marks*.

awakenings, so they freely employed as well the principles for discerning a true work of the Spirit of God to manage them. Consequently, coming as it did at the formative stage in the life of the Scottish revival the influence of *Distinguishing Marks* was more marked in Scotland than New England.

Secondly, while the revival in New England was marred by division from within their ranks, the Scottish revivalists exhibited a remarkable sense of unity.<sup>107</sup> Responding to the revival accounts he had received from Robe, Edwards judged that the work in Scotland appeared “less mixed with error and extravagance,” and on the whole better managed than in New England. “You have taken a more wise and prudent care to prevent things of that nature, or to suppress them as soon as they have appeared.”<sup>108</sup> Edwards went on to connect their judicious management of the revival with the cooperative relationship the revivalists shared. “[M]inisters that have been the principal promoters of the work, have seemed to be more happily united in their sentiments, and so under greater advantage to assist one another, and to act as co-workers and fellow helpers.”<sup>109</sup> Robe confirmed Edwards’s observations in his return letter: “We acknowledge, with praise and thanks, the Lord’s keeping his work hitherto, *with us*, free from those errors and disorders, which, through the

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<sup>107</sup> John Moorhead, a minister of Boston, lamented the situation in New England among the revivalists in a letter to Willison, dated July 30, 1742, published in *GWH*, No. 42, p. 3: “We are under Apprehensions of Deadness and Confusion, arising from contradictory Sermons, Pamphlets, Anonymous Libels, Enthusiastick and Visionary Notions, which are among some indiscreet Zealots both Ministers and Hearers.” The existence of a radical dissenting wing of revivalists who tended to promote religious enthusiasm, did not allow for a uniform management of the work in New England.

<sup>108</sup> Letter from Edwards to Robe, May 12, 1743, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 536.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* The point is, that although the Scottish revivals did become a major point of contention within Scottish Presbyterianism, the revivalists themselves were unified in their approach to the awakening. Ned Landsman’s work is particularly helpful here. See especially *Scotland and Its First American Colony*, pp. 232-42; and “Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity in Scottish Evangelical Culture,” in *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment*, pp. 29-45.

subtily of the serpent, and corruptions even of good men, were mixed with it in New England.”<sup>110</sup>

The point to be made is that both the unity the Scottish revivalists experienced and their ability to prevent and suppress disorders and to cultivate the best of the Spirit’s work of renewal was aided to a large extent by the inspiration and instruction they received from Edwards’s revival publications. With respect to their unity, it must be remembered that even allowing for their strong ideological identity and revival history, Scotland’s church evangelicals were further unified under the revival impulse generated by the Northampton Awakening of 1735 and Edwards’s account of it in the *Faithful Narrative* which they used as a pattern for generating the work in Scotland. Four years later these same Scottish evangelicals forged a more distinct identity within the Church of Scotland by their support of the Great Awakening in America, which they viewed as a continuation of the earlier Northampton revival. When *Distinguishing Marks* was published, Scottish revivalists rallied behind it, defending and promoting Edwards and his sermon in support of the work in Scotland. Furthermore, it must also be kept in mind that the large amount of time and effort that Willison, Robe and Webster expended to publicly defend and promote *Distinguishing Marks* was done in order to justify their use of it to discern true from false conversions and to appropriately handle the unusual behavior that accompanied the work. In sum, the Scottish revivals were unified in theology, method and practice around

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<sup>110</sup> Letter from Robe to Edwards, August 16, 1743, *Works*, vol. 1, p. lxxiv. Unlike the situation in New England, the ideological differences that separated the church evangelicals from the evangelicals of the Associate Presbytery did not effect the management of the revivals because the seceders did not participate in them.

Edwards's revival works which the revivalists used as textbooks for dealing with the unique issues created by the revivals.<sup>111</sup>

In regard to the prevention of disorders, *Distinguishing Marks* helped prepare the Scottish revivalists to deal with the kinds of problems they could expect from the heightened emotional tensions produced by the revivals. By the time the revival at Cambuslang broke out in February, 1742, news of "imprudences, irregularities" and other "exceptionable" behaviour connected with the work in America had reached Scotland, alerting them to the potential damaging effect they could have on a work of the Spirit of God.<sup>112</sup> However, no positive guidance with respect to dealing with such irregularities was available prior to the publication of *Distinguishing Marks*. Edwards specifically addressed the subject in the concluding section of his sermon. He identified and biblically critiqued six areas of error or misconduct along with directives on how to avoid them.<sup>113</sup> The influence of Edwards's exhortation is clearly indicated by comparing Edwards's opening exhortation in *Distinguishing Marks* with Webster's final comments in the preface to his *Divine Influence*. Edwards begins:

I come now,...to apply myself to those that are friends of this work, and have been partakers of it, and are zealous to promote it. Let me earnestly exhort such to give heed to themselves to avoid all errors and misconduct, and whatsoever may darken and obscure the work, and give occasion to those that stand ready to reproach it,...., that he that was of the contrary part might be ashamed, having no evil thing to say to them....Humility and self-diffidence, and an entire dependence on our Lord Jesus Christ, will be our best defense.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> George Whitefield played an equally influential role in the Scottish revivals that consisted predominantly in inspiring and promoting the work. However, he lacked the theological and philosophical sophistication needed by the Scots to contend with the revival phenomenon and its detractors. Interestingly, Harry S. Stout, in *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pp. 186f, 205, shows that the theological centre of Whitefield's revivalism, i.e. the 'new birth,' followed Edwards's conception of a supernaturally infused "new sense".

<sup>112</sup> Robe, *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. 9.

<sup>113</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 276-88.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276-77.

Webster followed Edwards almost verbatim.

...exhorting (as Mr *Edwards* does his People in *New-England*) such as are Friends of the Divine Work amongst us, and have been Partakers of it, or are zealous to promote the same, to give diligent Heed to themselves, to avoid all Errors and Misconduct, and whatever may darken and obscure its genuine Lustre; and so to watch over their whole Behaviour, in Dependence on Divine Grace, as that they of the contrary Part may be ashamed, having no Evil to say of them.<sup>115</sup>

The result of the warnings and instruction offered by Edwards was a more carefully governed revival. All who were thought to be awakened at Cambuslang were strictly examined so that counterfeit conversions could be detected and exposed. “In those watchful Endeavours,” said Robe with respect to Cambuslang, “some *Imposters* were found to have mix’d with the *Sincere*; but...so far as yet appears, they have been very few; and as these have been severly rebuk’d, so the most awful Warnings have been given,...[and]there is Ground to believe, have very good Effects.”<sup>116</sup> The same method of management was employed at Kilsyth and surrounding areas with the same positive result.<sup>117</sup>

More important yet was the benefit the Scottish revivalists received from the signs Edwards employed for discerning a genuine religious experience in a time of spiritual awakening. Unique was his understanding and application of what he designated as negative signs. The heightened emotional tension that attended the revivals in New England fostered the unusual and extraordinary experiences of dreams, trances, great outbursts of crying, groanings and physical trembling, and uncommon impressions on the imagination. Mixed with these were instances of errors in judgment. Edwards’s conclusion, based on Scripture, reason and experience, was that these things did not qualify

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<sup>115</sup> Webster, Preface, *Divinie Light*, p. xxvii.

<sup>116</sup> *Short Narrative of the Work at Cambuslang*, p. 4.

<sup>117</sup> See *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. 9; cf. Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. xviiiif.

as evidence either for or against the work as being a work of the Spirit of God; they were negative in that they evinced nothing that positively connected them with a work of God. Such epiphenomena, he argued, were simply the natural consequences of heightened natural and spiritual affections which were to be expected under the conditions the revivals generated.<sup>118</sup> That the Scottish revivalists followed Edwards lead in this and with success, Robe made clear in one of his earliest letters to Edwards.

What you write about the trial of extraordinary joys and raptures, by their concomitants and effects, is most solid; and our practice, by all I know, hath been conformable to it. It hath been in the strongest manner declared, that no degree of such rapturous joys evidenced them to be from God, and carried with them those things which accompany salvation. Such conditional applications of the promises of grace and glory as you justly recommend, hath been all along our manner. A holy fear of caution and watchfulness, hath been much pressed upon the subjects of this work, who appeared to believe through grace.<sup>119</sup>

By their appropriation of Edwards's negative signs and the Scriptural precepts that undergirded them, Scottish revivalists were able to avoid in their ministry to those awakened the kind of preoccupation with the more extraordinary aspects of the revival that hindered the work in New England. They also provided them with the Scriptural means they needed to confidently assess the relationship of the epiphenomena to the work of conversion. And perhaps most important of all, by reducing the epiphenomena to non-factors in discerning a true work of the Spirit, Edwards's negative signs allowed the

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<sup>118</sup> See *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 228-48, 260-70, for Edwards's detailed treatment of these points. MacLaurin argued almost the identical case in his treatise, *On the Scripture Doctrine of Divine Grace*, in *Works of MacLaurin*, vol. 1, pp. 467-79. In fact, MacLaurin's work, which was completed in 1732 but never published until after his death in 1754, anticipated much of what Edwards did in *Distinguishing Marks*.

<sup>119</sup> Letter from Robe to Edwards, August 16, 1743, *JE, Works*, vol. 1, p. lxxiv. The published work of Edwards that Robe's speaks of was *Distinguishing Marks*, although *Some Thoughts* may be included since it had been published in Scotland by the time the letter was written..

revivalists to direct their attention more decisively to those distinguishing marks the Scriptures assign to a genuine work of the Spirit of God.<sup>120</sup>

Edwards's explication of the five signs that positively show what are the "sure, distinguishing, Scripture evidences" of a work of the Spirit of God was not new in the way that his concept of negative signs was. Yet the manner in which he argued for them was to inject a new dynamic into traditional conceptions of conversion. But before addressing this subject, it is necessary first to establish a clear connection between Edwards's work on the subject and the Scottish revivals. For our purposes, an examination of Robe's response to James Fisher's attempt to discredit the marks of grace analysed by Edwards will be sufficient.

In his review of Robe's preface to the *Kilsyth Narrative*, Fisher had mounted a sustained attack against Edwards's positive signs of the true Spirit of God. He began with a sweeping dismissal of the credibility of Edwards's signs. "[T]he *positive Marks* which he [i.e. Edwards] gives of the true Spirit," Fisher claimed, "are no way *distinguishing*; they are such as will agree, not only with *common influences* of the Spirit, but even with the *Delusions* of Satan." He offered four reasons in support of his assertion. First of all, he notes that Edwards failed to give a full counting of the distinguishing marks found in

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<sup>120</sup> In addition to the letter quoted immediately above, see: McCulloch, "Examination of Persons at Cambuslang;" Webster, *Divine Influence*, pp. 32f, and Preface, pp. vi-xxvii; Robe, *Narrative of the Work at Cambuslang*, pp. 6-10, Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. vi-vii, and *Narrative*, et.al., and his Second and Third Letters to James Fisher; Willison, *Letter to James Fisher*, pp. 11-13, 22-24. Admittedly their published defences of the revivals were dominated by discussions of the more unusual and extraordinary aspects that accompanied the work. The reason for this, however, was that they were writing in response to their critics who were themselves fixated on such phenomena and cited it as evidence against the work being a genuine work of God. This point is well illustrated by Robe's earliest account, *Short Narrative of the Work at Cambuslang*, which contains no reference to the unusual aspects except a brief statement concerning their warning against the "least appearance of *Enthusiasm* and *Delusion*." It focuses entirely upon the "good Fruits" that were being produced, especially those that indicated that the "Work [was] from God." Robe wrote it with no intent of defending the work, but rather simply to present the "material *Facts*." However, the flurry of anti-revival pieces that soon followed forced Robe and others to publically address the accusations.

Scripture. Secondly, he claimed that a person could have all the marks Edwards gives and yet be under a “*gross Delusion.*” Next he pointed out that Edwards failed to distinguish between a common “Operation of the Spirit” and a “Delusion of Satan,” and by doing so left people to have their faith ruined by “*satanical Imposture.*” And finally, because he failed to distinguish the common influences of the Spirit from the delusions of Satan, the marks of a saving operation of the Spirit of God which Edwards purported to give, were themselves a delusion.<sup>121</sup> “From what has been said,” concluded Fisher, “it too evidently appears that this *grand Performance* of Mr. Edwards, so much applauded by the *Promoters* of this Work, is just calculated for supporting *Enthusiasm*, and consequently for *razing* the very *Foundation of Faith*, and all Practical Godliness.”<sup>122</sup>

Robe’s second published letter to Fisher was entirely devoted to taking up Edwards’s position and defending it against the charges Fisher had brought against it. In the latter part of the letter, he specifically addressed the issue of the credibility of Edwards’s five positive marks in answer to Fisher. Contrary to Fisher’s claim that Edwards expressly stated that he was undertaking a full counting of those Scriptural signs of God’s Spirit, Robe quoted Edwards as stating that he was not undertaking a full enumeration of distinguishing signs but only those the Apostle John gives in the fourth chapter of his first Epistle.<sup>123</sup> Second, to the accusation that the five marks that Edwards gave were insufficient to properly distinguish true from false religion, Robe contended with Edwards that they were in every way sufficient, and added the conviction that Edwards had even proven this to be the case.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, Robe showed that the four additional marks that Fisher said

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<sup>121</sup> Fisher, *Review of the Preface to the Kilsyth Narrative* (Glasgow, 1742), pp. 20-23.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>123</sup> Robe’s *Second Letter to Fisher*, p. 40. Robe quotes from *Distinguishing Marks, JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 249.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41. For Edwards’s argument for the sufficiency of the five marks see, *Distinguishing Marks, JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 259-60.

Edwards didn't mention were in fact included in the first three and fifth of Edwards's signs.<sup>125</sup> Additionally, Robe argued contrary to Fisher, that none of the distinguishing marks given by Edwards agreed with the delusions of Satan, and in fact, he claimed that if a person were to have some of them, he could not be deluded in thinking he was in a state of grace.<sup>126</sup> Robe concluded his critique of Fisher's charges by expressing the assurance that rather than supporting religious enthusiasm and "razing the very Foundation of Faith, and all practical Godliness," Edwards's sermon had succeeded in providing the church with the means whereby it could safely distinguish both the common and saving operations of the Spirit from a delusion of Satan.<sup>127</sup>

It is evident from the entire tenor of Robe's response that in his management of the revival he had incorporated Edwards's way of discerning a true work of God's Spirit from a spurious one. The same can safely be said of Willison and Webster.<sup>128</sup> However, in saying this, I do not mean to imply that the Scottish revivalists slavishly followed Edwards in their thinking and practice. This would be to attribute too much to Edwards's connection. But it is to say that there was an obvious reliance by the Scottish revivalists on Edwards's experience and judgment in matters central to the proper management of a people spiritually awakened under the outpouring of God's Spirit. Furthermore, my research indicates that they did not extend this kind of reliance to anyone else outside the Kirk.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., pp. 39, 40-41. Cf. *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 258.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. 43-44. In this same context Robe indicated that where Edwards had succeeded others, like Fisher himself, had failed. See *Distinguishing Marks*, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 258-60.

<sup>128</sup> Webster, Preface, *Divine Influence*, pp. viii-xxiv; Willison, *Letter to Fisher*, pp. 6, 11-23. See also Thomas Gillespie's Letter to Edwards, November 24, 1746, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, pp. 470f. Gillespie often assisted Robe during the Kilsyth revival.

<sup>129</sup> Though these same Scottish ministers passionately supported and defended George Whitefield, the kind of reliance exhibited in their connection with Edwards is missing in their relationship to Whitefield. Whitefield had no interest in the divine epistemology or religious psychology that was at the heart of the controversy facing the Scottish revivalists. On Whitefield's relationship to the Scottish revivals see: Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*; Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*; Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, chapters 6-8, and "George Whitefield in Three

What then did this reliance on Edwards mean for the Scottish revivalists? Out of their attention to Edwards's analysis of the nature of religious conversion came a greater confidence in their recognition of the true signs of conversion concomitant with a heightened notion of the doctrine of assurance. Puritan views on the assurance of salvation were varied and tracing their development is a complicated one.<sup>130</sup> Although the Puritans had much to say about the doctrine of assurance, the subject presented them with difficulty and confusion. First, there was the danger of being deceived by misinterpreting the "signs" of salvation; on the other hand, the surest way to deception, they believed, was to have no doubts.<sup>131</sup> The confusion, in other words, was that "the best sign of assurance was to be unsure."<sup>132</sup> Doubt played an essential role in the Puritan conception of assurance of salvation, and while assurance was the goal and theoretically possible, it was seldom if ever actually achieved in practice. For the "visible saint" there would of necessity always be lingering doubts. Even after a person reached the place of assurance, "his doubts would continue," says Edmund S. Morgan. "If they ceased, that would be a sign that he had never had faith to begin with, but had merely deluded himself," for "the surest earthly sign of a saint was his uncertainty; and the surest sign of a damned soul was security."<sup>133</sup> The Puritan quest for assurance, along with its non-attainment, cultivated an introspective piety

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Countries," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George Rawlyk, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 58-72.

<sup>130</sup> See Patricia Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative: The Beginnings of American Expression* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983); Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946); Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1989); David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); and Owen C. Watkins, *The Puritan Experience: Studies in Spiritual Biography* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

<sup>131</sup> Donald K. McKim, "Some Aspects of Death and Dying in Puritanism," in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, Robert V. Schnucker, ed., vol. X, *Seventeenth-Century Essays and Studies* (1988), pp. 182-83.

<sup>132</sup> Stannard, *Puritan Way of Death*, p. 75.

that became the centre of Puritan religion.<sup>134</sup> Although true assurance was also to be accompanied by the change of outward conduct in conformity with God's commands, such evidence was also the kind most easily open to deception.<sup>135</sup>

The note of uncertainty evident in the Puritan doctrine of assurance was introduced into Scotland through the theology of the federal system and the influence of the Westminster Confession. According to Torrance, the "rigidly contractual concept of God as lawgiver together with a necessitarian concept of immutable divine activity allied to double predestination, with its inescapable implication of the doctrine of limited atonement,...., [and] a strictly forensic notion of justification," reflected in both the federalists and the Confession, undercut the evangelical approach to the doctrine of assurance of the older Scottish theology, resulting in the doubts and fears of a misdirected faith.<sup>136</sup> Consequently, those ministers of the Kirk who laboured within the federalist and Westminster systems of theology, struggled to offer the same sense of assurance to their parishioners that characterised the Reformers.

During the period of revivalism under inspection, the Puritan emphasis on doubt and introspection in experimental religion, and the tension between the theology and the pastoral practice and teaching of ministers on assurance created by the high Calvinism of the seventeenth century, gave way to an increase of attention to and confidence in outward conduct as a means of ascertaining genuine piety among church evangelicals. The shift is not difficult to trace in Scotland and is effectively illustrated in the ministry of John

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<sup>133</sup> Morgan, *Visible Saints*, pp. 69, 70. Cf. Stannard, *Puritan Way of Death*, p. 74.

<sup>134</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 44. See also Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Practice*, p. 7, "This stress on experience is, indeed, a characteristic of the seventeenth century in England,....It is the age of diaries, often intensely introspective and finding in the slightest events God's personal dealings with the writer's souls."

<sup>135</sup> Morgan, *Visible Saints*, p. 70.

<sup>136</sup> Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 110-11, 136-7, 176-78, 218-20.

Willison. In 1716, on the eve of the Marrow Controversy and more than twenty years before the publication of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*, Willison offered the following advice to potential communicants. After setting forth a list of criteria to be used to examine themselves to see if they were in a state of grace, Willison observes:

I pity those poor trembling, and doubting souls, who cannot attain to any light or clearness about their condition; who yet are labouring for it, and would give all the world to obtain it: and though, in the mean time, they dare not renounce all hope, yet they can see no solid ground to build upon, and are often tempted to give over all further endeavors. To such I would say, that you ought to wait on God, and hold on in the way of duty to your lives' end, and whatever discouragements you may meet with therein, God in his own time will let you know that your labour is not in vain.<sup>137</sup>

He goes on to say, "The Assurance of faith is indeed to be sought and endeavoured by all in their approaches to God, but yet it is not the attainment of every believer in his approaches to God." What then is one to do? It is at this point that Willison is caught between directing his readers to the objective finished work of Christ on the one hand (reflecting the older Scottish tradition), and the more subjective side characterised by introspection (patterned after the Puritan tradition of the Confession): "The best course we can take, under a burden of fears and perplexities, is to go with them to Jesus Christ for relief....O believer, your rock Christ is higher than you, higher than all your enemies, higher than all your fears and temptations; he is sufficiently able to overmatch them all," immediately followed up with, "It is good, then, O discouraged communicant, to be in use of means, searching and trying yourself, and making preparations for this ordinance, however small your hopes may

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<sup>137</sup> Willison, *A Sacramental Directory; or A Treatise concerning the Sanctification of a Communion Sabbath, in The Whole Practical Works of the Reverend and Learned Mr. John Willison,....* (Aberdeen: Printed by D. Chalmers and Co., 1817), pp. 137-39.

be of success; for a poor soul may sometimes find Christ, when he hath least hopes of doing so.”<sup>138</sup>

Willison’s approach was clearly not one of despair with regard to the attainment of the assurance of faith. But at the same time, a certain amount of uncertainty is introduced as he moves back and forth between a subjective concept of faith that betrays a legal foundation and the objective concept of faith that rests solely in the finished work of Christ.<sup>139</sup> Absent as well is the kind of robust confidence he expressed twenty-six years later to James Fisher in defense of the biblical signs Edwards offered as representative of a true work of the Spirit of God.

Now, how terrible must it be to hear any Man say these are not Evidences of Conversion, but may be found in Persons under Delusions of Satan! I may now retort the Charge you bring against Mr. Edwards and me, and say more truly, That your writing thus tends to raze the very Foundations of our Faith, and all practical Godliness, and I may add, to drive poor Sinners to Despair. I pity your Hearers if this is your Doctrine.... Would to God that many of my People could apply these Marks which you reject as the Product of Satan! I would not fear to declare them in a happy Case, and bid them sing *Psal. cxvi. 7, 8.*<sup>140</sup>

Willison’s fellow church evangelicals and revivalists had by this time likewise adopted this more energetic and positive conception of assurance. For example, in his third letter to Fisher, Robe contests Fisher’s charge that he and the other revivalists were giving assurance based on fundamentally corrupt or inadequate evidences. “Mr. Webster hath

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., pp. 144-45.

<sup>139</sup> A similar tension was evident in Thomas Boston’s. See Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 204-20.

<sup>140</sup> Willison, *Letter to James Fisher*, p. 12. The text of Ps. 116: 7,8 lends further drama to Willison’s response. “Return, O my soul, to your rest, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.” Fisher’s charge against Willison had to do with his recommendation of Edwards’s *Distinguishing Marks* as “useful to the Church, for discerning a true and real Work of the Spirit of God, and for guarding against Delusions and Mistakes.” Fisher, *Review of the Preface*, p. 23. Interestingly, Fisher was still working within the old Puritan framework, as he claimed that a person could have all the marks Edwards gives and yet be under “gross delusion.”

clearly proved, that the Evidences he had given in his first letter are such distinguishing Marks of Grace, as warrant us to conclude Persons converted who have them. I have likewise, I hope, proved the same in my first and second letters concerning these Evidences brought by the Narrative and by Mr. Edwards.”<sup>141</sup>

David Bebbington locates the turning point between the two attitudes on assurance in the fresh pastoral guidance Jonathan Edwards offered to those converted during the Northampton revival of 1734-35. In fact, he locates the shift in a particular text from Edwards’s *Faithful Narrative* and for good reason. Though perhaps a less dramatic shift than he would want us to believe, there is reason to believe that Bebbington is correct in his assessment. First, the particular passage represents a clear break with received Puritan practice with its doubt ridden concept of assurance that characterized much of the late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century Kirk.<sup>142</sup> Second, as far as I have been able to determine, the majority of the subsequent accounts on the subject of assurance published by the transatlantic evangelical community that emerged from the revivals followed Edwards’s example in tone and substance. In the text in question, rather than directing his people to continue to wrestle through their doubts and fears over a protracted period, as previous Puritan practice dictated, Edwards encouraged them to rise above them and enter into the joy of their Lord.<sup>143</sup> “I have been much blamed and censured by many,” recorded Edwards,

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<sup>141</sup> *Mr. Robe’s Third Letter to the Reverend James Fisher* (Edinburgh, 1743), p. 11. For the reference to Alexander Webster, see *Divine Influence*, pp. 4-8. Further evidence of the shift can be found in Robe, Preface, *CMH*, pp. 14-15, 17; *CMH*, No. 1, pp. 14f; *Short Narrative of Cambuslang*, p. 9; Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. xiv-xv; Webster, Preface, *Divine Influence*, pp. xiii-xv; Willison, *Letter to Fisher*, pp. 21-24.

<sup>142</sup> The one significant exception at the beginning of the eighteenth century was the position taken by the Marrowmen. A central concern of the marrowmen at the time of the controversy was the recovery of the evangelical notion of assurance taught embodied in the theology of the Reformers and reflected in the older Scottish tradition. See Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, p. 242.

<sup>143</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 47.

that I should make it my practice, when I have been satisfied concerning persons' good estate, to signify it to them... Yet I should account it a great calamity to be deprived of the comfort of rejoicing with those of my flock that have been in great distress,..., when there seems to be good evidence that those that were dead are alive, and those that were lost are found.... Grace in many persons, through this ignorance of their state, and their looking on themselves still as objects of God's displeasure, has been like the trees in winter,..., and many in such cases have labored to their utmost to divert their minds from the pleasing and joyful views they have had, and to suppress those consolations and gracious affections that arose thereupon. And when it has once come into their minds to inquire whether or no this was not true grace, they have been much afraid lest they should be deceived with common illuminations and flashes of affection, and eternally undone with false hope. But when they have been better instructed, and so brought to allow of hope, this has awakened the gracious disposition of their hearts into life and vigor, as warm beams of the sun in the spring have quickened the seeds and productions of earth.<sup>144</sup>

Edwards was sharply criticized for breaking with the prevailing and deeply rooted concept of assurance by doubt. However, his own convictions were also deeply rooted and four years later, beginning with *Distinguishing Marks*, he began to systematically lay out his conception of the activity of the Holy Spirit and the criteria whereby true religion was to be judged. Edwards began *Distinguishing Marks* by comparing the present revival with the extraordinary influences of the Spirit during the apostolic age. At that time, Edwards observed:

as the influences of the true Spirit abounded, so counterfeits did also then abound: the Devil was abundant in mimicking both the ordinary and extraordinary influences of the Spirit of God, as is manifest by innumerable passages of the apostles' writings. This made it very necessary that the church of Christ should be furnished with some certain rules, and distinguishing and clear marks by which she might proceed safely in judging of spirits, and distinguishing the true from the false.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *Faithful Narrative*, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 175-76.

<sup>145</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 226.

The Apostle John, Edwards went on to note, specifically addressed this concern in the fourth chapter of his first epistle. The plain intent of the text, Edwards asserted, was to supply the church with the necessary rules by which to distinguish true evidences of the work of God's Spirit from counterfeit. Calling attention to the marked parallels between the present revivals and the apostolic context, Edwards proceeded to observe:

There are undoubtedly sufficient marks given to guide the church of God in this great affair of judging spirits, without which it would lie open to woeful delusion, and would be remedilessly exposed to be imposed on and devoured by its enemies: and what rules soever we may find in the Holy Scriptures to this end, we need not be afraid to trust to....This the Spirit of God has done of set purpose, in the chapter wherein is the text; and done it more particularly and fully than anywhere else.<sup>146</sup>

Edwards was convinced, that as the Scriptures are the "great and standing rule which God has given to his church to guide them in all things relating to the great concerns of their souls," the fourth chapter of John's epistle offered the church reliable and divinely ordered guidelines for shepherding God's people through the remarkable and unusual events created by the revivals.<sup>147</sup> Cooper's preface reinforced Edwards's pastoral emphasis by commending *Distinguishing Marks* first and foremost as a "seasonable and necessary" antidote to the decline of experimental religion afflicting the land, and recommending it as a reliable manual, "tried by the infallible touchstone of the Holy Scriptures," for a proper understanding of the "uncommon operation" of the Spirit of God in their midst.<sup>148</sup> Following his analysis of the Apostles five positive evidences for a work of the Spirit of God, Edwards concluded:

...therefore when there is an extraordinary influence or operation appearing on the minds of a people, if these things are found in it, we are safe in determining that 'tis the work of God, whatever other

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., pp. 227-28.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

circumstances it may be attended with, whatever instruments are improved, whatever methods are taken to promote it;..., and whatever motions there may be of the animal spirits, whatever effects may be wrought on men's bodies. These marks, that the Apostle has given us, are sufficient to stand alone, and support themselves; and whatever they be, they plainly shew the finger of God.<sup>149</sup>

These five Scriptural evidences, gleaned from the Apostle John, Edwards insisted, were sufficient to judge the quality of any spiritual experience "without the danger of being misled."<sup>150</sup> When applying these marks, Edwards made the important qualification, that what is being judged is the sign and not the inner "aims and disposition of men's hearts." The actual state of men's souls is a judgment God alone can make. However, if some or all of these marks are present, says Edwards, we can be certain that it arises from either the common or saving operations of the Spirit of God.<sup>151</sup>

Edwards's confidence in interpreting Christian experience, which exceeded his Puritan forefathers, was closely tied to his understanding of the nature of spiritual knowledge and its relationship to the work of conversion. In his theory of knowledge, Edwards distinguished two forms--*speculative* or "notional" understanding and *sensible* knowledge, or knowledge that is the *sense of the heart*. The former consist of perceptions that are distinct from the will and disposition, that is to say, ideas are only entertained in the mind and do not affect the person volitionally. Sensible knowledge, however, is chiefly tied to the will or inclination and involves delight or pleasure in the presence of the idea of a thing. Unlike speculative knowledge, a person is no longer a spectator but a participant when engaged in knowledge which is of the *sense of the heart*.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> JE(Yale), vol. 4, pp. 258-59.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., pp. 249f.

<sup>151</sup> JE(Yale), vol. 4, pp. 283-87.

<sup>152</sup> Works, vol. 2, p. 17. Sensible knowledge is superior to speculative knowledge, because the former involves both a "notional" understanding of the idea as well as a sensible apprehension of it. Edwards illustrated the difference by distinguishing between *opinion* and *sense*. "There is a difference between having a rational

Carrying his idea of sensible knowledge over into the spiritual realm, Edwards believed that through the supernatural work of regeneration, God imparts a new spiritual sense of the heart into the soul, enduing it with powers of spiritual perception that are unavailable to the natural or unregenerate man. The natural man, lacking the spiritual sense of the heart, can relate to divine things only on a notional level. In other words, he is like a man that having no taste buds, has seen, touched, and even eaten honey but has never known its sweetness. He may know much about Scripture but cannot perceive or “taste” its spiritual excellence.<sup>153</sup> In contrast, the truly regenerate person, by virtue of the new spiritual sense of the heart, has a “true sense of the divine excellency of the things of religion; a real sense of the excellency of God and Jesus Christ, and the work of redemption, and the ways and works of God revealed in the Gospel.”<sup>154</sup> The new spiritual sense of the heart gives rise to new spiritual affections, or inclinations that are expressed in love, faith, hope and joy. True religion consists precisely in the experience of these new spiritual affections manifested in holy living.<sup>155</sup> Edwards first laid out this theory of religious knowledge in his published sermon, *A Divine and Supernatural Light*, with which the Scottish revivalists were familiar.

Building on his religious epistemology, Edwards conceived the idea that by means of Scriptural signs or marks the critical and regenerative mind could judge the quality of

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judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness” (Ibid., p. 14) A person may hold the opinion that honey is sweet without having tasted it, but only one who has a sense as well as the idea truly knows that honey is sweet.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Hoopes, “Edwards’s Religious Psychology,” p. 862.

<sup>154</sup> *Works*, vol. 2, 14.

<sup>155</sup> John Smith, “Jonathan Edwards: Piety and Practice in the American Character,” *Journal of Religion* 54 (April, 1974): 171. MacLaurin’s theory of religious knowledge, contained in his *Scripture Doctrine of Divine Grace* (see esp. pp. 327-32, 420-28), is strikingly similar to Edwards’s. For instance, MacLaurin states, “It is evident...concerning the Scripture account of the effects of Divine grace, and the distinguishing characters of true holiness, that the lively and vigorous exercise of the grace of divine love is a chief part of true religion “ p. 420f.

religious experience. This was his answer to the biblical demand for “testing the spirits” of those thought to be converted under the extraordinary circumstances of the revival which he systematically worked out in *Distinguishing Marks*. Edwards’s theory of signs differed from the Puritan practice of “soul searching” in two novel and influential ways. First, by circumscribing the evidences of true religion, he turned the process of judging away from a subjective (introspective) and immediate affair to one objective and “discursive” and, therefore, open to verification. “Purely private and inner certainties” were no longer admissible. Although individual religious experience was the focus, the criterion of judgment was not to be intuitively applied. Second, he made the signs of conversion part of the “total bearing” of a person, not isolated “enclosed states of mind” that could be known or understood apart from behavior. In others, spiritual graces are understood as “tendencies” that can only be perceived through their active manifestation in some overt and living way. Once subjected to valid testing, they could be publicly assessed.<sup>156</sup>

By setting up outward practice as the chief test of true piety, Edwards took the idea of experimental religion within the Reformed community to a new level. While carrying on the Puritan emphasis of true religion as essentially a matter of the heart, he demanded that the inner life be subjected to rigorous public examination.<sup>157</sup> In so doing, he created a new “Evangelical framework for interpreting Christian experience.”<sup>158</sup> The uniform application

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<sup>156</sup> I gratefully express my indebtedness for these two points to John Smith, “Edwards: Piety and Practice,” pp. 172-73. See also his “Editor’s Introduction” to Edwards’s *Treatise on Religious Affections*, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, pp. 41-43. Again, MacLaurin’s thinking parallels Edwards: “One comprehensive and principal excellency of the best devout affections, is their principal influence on practice,” *Scripture Doctrine of Divine Grace*, p. 427.

<sup>157</sup> Edwards’s insistence on outward examination as a test of inward genuine religious affection led him in 1748 to exclude from the Communion all but those who professed their Christian faith as founded upon a definite conversion experience. His decision eventuated in his dismissal two years later. Edwards’s published his position in 1749 in *An Humble Inquiry Into The Rules of the Word of God, Concerning The Qualifications Requisite to a Compleat Standing and full Communion In the Visible Christian Church*, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 12.

<sup>158</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 47. For a similar assessment of the influence of Edwards’s thinking in this area, see Hoopes, “Jonathan Edwards’s Religious Psychology”; John Smith,

of Edwards's thinking by Scottish revivalists produced several important results. First, as alluded to earlier, the revivals in Scotland were better managed than those experienced in New England. "[W]hat is greatly comfortable, and reason of great praise to our God," said Robe to Edwards, "is, that there is, as is yet known to any one in these bounds, no certain instance of what can be called apostacy; and not above four instances of any who have fallen into any gross sin."<sup>159</sup> The Scottish revivals were marked by unity among its promoters, orderly accounts of conversion activity, methodical examination of those awakened, and minimal disorder.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, in their theology and practice they succeeded in steering a straight course through the twin curses of Reformed thought-- Antinomianism and Arminianism.<sup>161</sup> Which, as we have seen, bore connection not only with Edwards's approach to interpreting religious experience, but also his reassertion of the doctrine of justification by faith reminiscent of the Reformers and the older Scottish theology.<sup>162</sup>

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"Edwards: Piety and Practice," and "Testing the Spirits: Jonathan Edwards and the Religious Affections," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 37 (Fall, 1981).

<sup>159</sup> Letter from Robe to Edwards, August 16, 1743, *Works*, vol. 1, p. lxxiv.

<sup>160</sup> Harry Stout indicates that the Scottish revivals were characterized by a greater degree of "convulsions," "histerisms," and "visions," particularly "out-of-body visions," than their New England counterpart. However, his observations appear to be based exclusively on the Cambuslang experience. See "George Whitefield in Three Countries," *Evangelicalism*, pp. 66-67. Ned Landsman also argues a strong case for the existence of a substantial disparity of understanding of the revivals between lay participants and their evangelical ministers. See "Evangelists and Their Hearers: Popular Interpretation of Revivalist Preaching in Eighteenth-Century Scotland," *Journal of British Studies* 28 (April, 1989):120-49. Michael Crawford has argued with equal force against Landsman's position. See *Seasons of Grace*, pp. 201-17. My own reading of the matter leads me to believe that Landsman's argument is not altogether convincing. First, several of the texts he uses to build his case can equally be construed as advocating just the opposite view, which Crawford's critique reveals. Second, his conclusions, like Stout's, are drawn almost exclusively from the Cambuslang revival. In comparing the work of Kilsyth with the reports he had received from Edwards, Robe claimed that thus far the work at Kilsyth had been free "from those errors and disorders, which, through the subtilty of the serpent, and corruption even of good men, were mixed with it in New England." See letter from Robe to Edwards, Aug. 16, 1743, *Works*, vol. 1, p. lxxiv. What can confidently be said, I believe, is that the Scottish revivalists did a far better job of maintaining order and avoiding factions and scandals than did New England.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. *CMH*, Preface, p. 10.

<sup>162</sup> Not only did Edwards's conception of faith reflect the Scottish reformers, his particular approach to the atonement also reflected the older Scottish tradition. Unlike the federal theologians, Edwards did not believe that the atonement obligated God to save anyone, but it did free him to save anyone he so willed. In other words, Edwards did not perceive a cause/effect relationship between the atonement and the salvation of any

Second, the shift in the doctrine of assurance within the framework of Edwards theory of experimental religion opened the door to a new emphasis on evangelism and missions among ministers and laity. The paralysing effects of self-doubt fostered by the Puritan idea of assurance had given way to a new confidence in God. The paramount task was no longer the establishment of one's own salvation but the bringing of salvation to others. These new evangelicals turned their attention from their own spiritual state to the task of proclaiming the message of the Gospel to others.<sup>163</sup> The increase of prayer societies established for the sake of praying for the success of the Gospel, a great concern for the souls of others, a desire for the work of conversion to spread throughout the land, and a willingness to give testimony for the sake of the Gospel are consistently listed among the fruits of the conversion.<sup>164</sup> "Never did any Converts appear indowed with more of a *truly Christian Spirit*," wrote Alexander Webster. "Their Souls burn with Love to God, and Desire to promote his Interest in a World...How *great* their Concern for the *Salvation* of Mankind, let their Works declare,....Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, they *perswade* Men;--having tasted also that he is gracious, they commend his precious Grace;--their Labour of Love indefatigable;--their Success great, insomuch that Numbers, now in a promising Way, date their *first* Concern from hearing others declare *what God had done for their Souls*."<sup>165</sup>

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given individual. See Christopher W. Mitchell, "Jonathan Edwards's Theology of the Atonement: A Reappraisal" (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Wheaton College, 1986); cf. Torrance. *Scottish Theology*, pp. 140-41.

<sup>163</sup> These points were first suggested by David Bebbington, given in a paper entitled, "Revival and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England," and delivered at New College, Edinburgh during the fall of 1989. Subsequent research has corroborated Bebbington's conclusions. The impact of this new evangelical activism stemming from the revivals of the 18th century, is traced by Bebbington in chapter two of his book *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*.

<sup>164</sup> See Robe, *Short Narrative of Cambuslang*, pp. 6-9 and his Preface, *Kilsyth Narrative*, pp. xf; Webster, *Divine Influence*, pp. 7, 14-15; John Erskine, *The Signs of the Times consider'd: or, The high Probability, that the present Appearances in New-England, and the West of Scotland, are a Prelude of the Glorious Things promised to the Church in the latter Ages* (Edinburgh, 1742), p. 12.

<sup>165</sup> Webster, *Divine Influence*, p. 7.

Another manifestation of this new evangelical activist impulse was the production of two Scottish religious periodicals established for the purpose of furthering the progress of the Gospel by spreading news of its success both home and abroad. The first of these was begun by William McCulloch of Cambuslang and published under the name, *The Glasgow Weekly History*. The second, *The Christian Monthly History*, started the following year and edited by James Robe.<sup>166</sup> Letters made up the great percentage of the content of the *Glasgow Weekly History*, with the remaining space given to extracts of local and international revival narratives. McCulloch's special concern was the widespread propagation of the revival movement. The periodical ran for one year publishing its last number at the end of 1742. By 1743, the revival had moved into a different phase and Robe's strategy for the *Christian Monthly History* reflected that change. In addition to encouraging further conversions and the spread of God's Kingdom through the world, Robe's monthly periodical was designed to leave a faithful record of God's extraordinary "Dealings with his Church in this Age" to posterity, and to sustain the community of saints in the present times.<sup>167</sup> To lend additional credibility to the enterprise, Robe quoted Edwards's concluding sentiments in *Some Thoughts*, where he earnestly recommended that someone undertake to write a comprehensive history of the Awakening. Robe prefaced the quote by stating, "It will not be unacceptable to many Readers, that I insert the Judgment of the Judicious, Pious, and Reverend Mr. *Edwards*."<sup>168</sup> Particularly noteworthy was the place both periodicals gave to Edwards and the laity. In her study of eighteenth-century religious

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<sup>166</sup> *The Glasgow Weekly History* published a total of fifty-two numbers all with the year 1742. The *Christian Monthly History* was published at Edinburgh with sixteen numbers being issued between November 1743 and January 1746.

<sup>167</sup> CMH, Preface, pp. 33-37. For a reliable account of the connection of these periodicals to the revivals and their evangelistic influence see Susan O'Brien, "Eighteenth-Century Publishing Networks in the First Years of Transatlantic Evangelism," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 38-57.

periodicals, Susan [Durden] O'Brien observed that in general there was more emphasis on describing conversion experiences and spiritual progress in American and Scottish magazines than in England, and more attention given to the work of Edwards.<sup>169</sup> Moreover, in the pages of these periodicals the rank and file, for the first time, were "taking actions that placed them at the forefront of *news*."<sup>170</sup>

Furthermore, the spiritual confidence produced by the more robust doctrine of assurance fostered by Edwards's paradigm for interpreting religious experience gave fresh impetus to postmillennial hopes. The widespread success of the revival on both sides of the Atlantic fed into a growing optimism which found expression in the doctrine of millennialism. Expectations of the nearness of the latter days increased.<sup>171</sup> The first to make explicit reference between the work of revival and its possible connection with the latter days was Isaac Watts and John Guyse in their preface to the London edition of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*. "We are taught also by this happy event how easy it will be for our blessed Lord to make a full accomplishment of all his predictions concerning his kingdom, and to spread his dominion from sea to sea, through all the nations of the earth..., with one turn of his hand, with one word of his mouth, to awaken whole countries of stupid and sleeping sinners, and kindle divine life in their souls."<sup>172</sup> John Erskine, expressed similar expectations in 1742 in his work *Signs of the Times Consider'd*. Having rehearsed the fruits of the great out-pouring of God's Spirit in New England and the West of Scotland, and the biblical prophecies relating to the end times, he reasoned, "It must be owned, we have not yet seen the full Accomplishment of these Prophecies; but it is Matter of

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-37. For the text quoted from Edwards see *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 529.

<sup>169</sup> [Durden], "The First Evangelical Magazines," p. 269.

<sup>170</sup> Stout, *The Divine Dramatist*, p. 146.

<sup>171</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 60-62.

<sup>172</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 132.

*Thankfulness*, that something may be observed of a Tendency that Way.”<sup>173</sup> Unlike Watts, Guyse and Erskine, Edwards refrained from speculating on the matter in his narrative of the Northampton revival, and only made passing reference to the subject in *Distinguishing Marks*.<sup>174</sup> But by 1742 the revival had apparently become sufficiently widespread for him to speak more confidently. “Tis not unlikely that this work of God’s Spirit,..., is the dawning, or at least a prelude, of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind.”<sup>175</sup> These and other reflections on the connection of the revival with the imminent approach of the latter days further energized the outreach of Scottish evangelicals.<sup>176</sup>

Out of this mood of optimism and activism came two further evangelical movements whose influence extended far beyond the boundaries of Scotland. The first was the United Concert for Prayer. In 1744 John MacLaurin and other Scottish ministers initiated a transatlantic prayer society which required members to enter into a two-year covenant to pray that God would “revive true religion in all parts of Christendom...and fill the whole earth with his glory.” Commenting on the importance of this movement, Susan O’Brien states that one of the “major legacies bequeathed by the mid-eighteenth-century revivals to evangelical protestantism” was the United Concert for Prayer.<sup>177</sup> The second activity was the Scottish overseas missionary movement. The origins of the movement, Andrew Walls tells us, lie in the confluence of two streams, the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge and the Scottish revival of 1742.<sup>178</sup> Other key factors

<sup>173</sup> Erskine, *Signs of the Times*, p. 11.

<sup>174</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 271-72.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>176</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 60.

<sup>177</sup> O’Brien, “Transatlantic Community of Saints,” p. 829.

<sup>178</sup> Andrew F. Walls, “Missions: Origins,” *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, pp. 567-568.

were the Concert for Prayer and two publications of Edwards, *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer* (1747) and *An Account of the Life of the Late Reverend Mr. David Brainerd* (1749).<sup>179</sup>

The shift in experimental religion from introspection and doubt to activism and optimism inspired in part by Edwards had far-reaching effects on the shape of the Scottish evangelicalism that emerged from the revivals. In addition to helping ignite and conduct the revival, it also injected a new activist impulse into the religious profile of Scottish evangelicalism.<sup>180</sup> The burst of religious activity outlined above was its first fruits. Further growth and development would not only lead Scottish evangelicalism to a position of strength within the Kirk by the end of the eighteenth century, but its influence would shape evangelical Calvinism more generally well into the nineteenth century.<sup>181</sup> Of more immediate importance, however, was the impact the revivalist theology had in altering the ecclesiastical contours of the Kirk.

The evangelical temper and theology of the revivalists came into sharp conflict with the evangelical ideology of the seceders. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the controversy between the two groups began as a disagreement over the *cause* of the religious decline in the Church of Scotland and the *means* to her spiritual recovery. By the end, however, the revivalists's critique of their seceding brethren revealed that they, not the seceders, were the true disciples of Thomas Boston's quest for true religion that found expression in Boston's promotion of Edward Fisher's *Marrow of Modern Divinity*.

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<sup>179</sup> These topics will be treated in more detail in the next chapter.

<sup>180</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 10-12, 42-63. Bebbington has identified four central characteristics that shaped modern evangelicalism: conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism.

<sup>181</sup> A helpful account of the influence of Scottish Calvinism on the evolution of the Calvinist movement into the nineteenth century is provided by Mark Noll, "Revival, Enlightenment, Civic Humanism, and the Evolution of Calvinism in Scotland and America, 1735-1843," *Amazing Grace*, pp. 73-107.

According to the *Act Anent a Publick Fast*, the Associate Presbytery's reason for dismissing the revival as a work of delusion hung entirely on the principle of fidelity to the Church's national responsibilities as outlined by the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant. They were among those convinced that God could not bless the Church of Scotland without first a movement of national repentance and a renewal of the Church's covenant obligations.<sup>182</sup> Robe challenged this assumption in the preface to his *Kilsyth Narrative*. After rehearsing the sins of the Kirk in a manner reminiscent of the opening paragraphs of the *Act* of the Associate Presbytery, Robe asserted that one of the leading factors responsible for the decline of religion in Scotland was that certain ministers had fixed their attention on things that were either not their sins, or the least of the church's sins, to the neglect of her greatest sins and the true cause of "God's controversy" with her. That Robe had the seceders in mind he made clear in the following observation.

They looked upon some Things of Mismanagement in Government and Discipline, which others were dissatisfied with as well as they, with such Earnestness, that they cried out against them as the most crying Sins, the Cause of the Lord's Controversy with us, portending dreadful Judgments, and what corrupted the Church so far as nothing could secure the Salvation of her Members but coming out of her, and separating from her. Hereby, they were led to overlook what was our greatest Evil,....,namely the Corruption of the Lives of the Members of this Church,...., in a great Measure dead, as to Faith, Love to God and one another, and other Branches of Holiness.<sup>183</sup>

Sundays were especially notorious, Robe went on to say, for conversation amounting to little more than discussions of "Ministers, Church Judicatories, and some other disputable

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<sup>182</sup> The primary documents outlining the position of the seceders were the *Act of the Associate Presbytery Anent a Fast*, and Fisher, *Review of the Kilsyth Narrative*.

<sup>183</sup> *Kilsyth Narrative*, p. iv. John Willison made a similar observation in his preface to the Scottish edition of Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks*: "Infidelity, Error, Lukewarmness, Carnality and Profanity have been on the growing Hand; so that we had Cause to fear God was about to remove our Candlestick out of its Place, or come against us with some desolating Judgment." He then went on to assert that the remedy was not to be sought in the mending of church government, etc., but in personal reformation through the pouring out of God's grace through his Spirit.

Things, far from the Vitals of Religion,” which he identified as, “Regeneration, Conversion, and amending their Ways and Doings.”<sup>184</sup> Robe’s contention with the Associate Presbytery was that they had allowed their loyalty to the national covenant, and matters directly related to it, to usurp the primacy of the covenant of grace.

John Willison seconded Robe’s criticism in response to James Fisher’s insistence that the revival was a work of delusion. “You alledge these Converts are not real,” Willison said, “because [say you] they are not concerned for the Sins of the Land and of our Fathers.”<sup>185</sup> But how, he asks,

Do you ever expect to see National Reformation till you see Personal?  
And do you ever expect true personal Reformation until the Spirit concur  
with the Word for convincing and converting Sinners to God?...Tho’ you  
and others in this divided State should attempt to renew our Covenants,  
that will not bring about a *National Reformation*, until there be a pouring  
out of the Spirit upon all Ranks.”<sup>186</sup>

Contrary to what their seceding brethren thought, the revivalists believed that the object of “God’s controversy” with the Church was not primarily the corruption of the church’s profession, but the inward corruption of the life of its members whose only remedy lay in the hope of regeneration.

But more critical yet, Willison perceived that their entire premise betrayed an Arminian bent. “When some alledge, God will not be pacified, nor return to us, till we thoroughly reform ourselves; it is to say, We must first chuse him before he chuses us; which is impossible, and contrary to the method of God’s preventing free Grace: For still

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> *Letter from Willison To Fisher*, p. 24.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 18-19. As early as the year in which the secession took place, Willison was already placing personal renewal before corporate. For example in the sermon entitled, *The Church’s Danger, and the Minister’s Duty*, Willison took the first half of the sermon to set forth in detail the backsliding condition of the church in ways reminiscent of the Associate Presbytery. However, when in the second half of the sermon he began laying out the steps to be taken to remedy the problem, he turned his attention not to the renewal of the covenants, but to the outpouring of the Spirit of God on the existing ordinances, churches, and ministers of the land.

God pities and turns to us, before we really and unfeignedly turn to him. He must pour out his Spirit to cause us to *mourn* and *reform*, before we can do either.”<sup>187</sup> The same Arminian undertone was also apparent to Alexander Webster.

How far we in this Land have departed from the Lord God of our Fathers, is not easy to say; but to suppose that until we return...we are beyond the Reach of Mercy, is an *unworthy Limitation of Divine Goodness*, and proceeds from a *fatal Mistake*, That in converting Men, God is moved by *something Good and Valuable* in them, and acts not for *his own Name's Sake*, the *Glory and Freedom* of Divine Grace, but *for our Sakes*: A Supposition contrary to *repeated Declarations* in Scripture, and daily Experience, which teaches, that *he is found of them that don't seek him*, and hath Mercy on the *very chief of Sinners*, that in them he may shew forth a Pattern of all Long-suffering to those who should hereafter believe.<sup>188</sup>

In their zeal to preserve the primacy of the Church's Presbyterian establishment, the seceders had in effect turned on the core theological concern that moved Boston to promote the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. Although they continued to champion free grace and the free offer of the Gospel, their way of justifying their rejection of the revivals was to put corporate holiness before personal holiness. This the revivalists claimed was plainly contrary to the doctrines of grace. If Scotland was to experience a revival of true religion in the land it would have to begin with the “convincing and converting” of individual sinners through an outpouring of God's Spirit.

Although the founding members of the Associate Presbytery had with Boston supported the doctrine of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, they failed to embrace the heart of his evangelical vision. Consequently they fell back into the pattern inherited from the seventeenth century of linking the Church of Scotland's mission to the preservation of an

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<sup>187</sup> John Willison, Preface, *Distinguishing Marks*.

<sup>188</sup> Webster, *Divine Influence*, pp. 9-10.

“unvarying Presbyterian establishment.”<sup>189</sup> The real irony of the controversy is that Boston’s vision for extending the free offer of the Gospel beyond the covenanted borders of the Kirk, had challenged the seventeenth century closed system of preaching that restricted the gospel offer to the Covenant community the seceders were so zealously guarding. Equally ironic was the fact that much of Boston’s evangelical vision was realized by the Scottish revivals. What is more, in their zeal to protect the godly commonwealth of the Scottish Kirk against the revivalists, the seceders apparently slipped into a form of argumentation that approximated Arminianism.

The theological breakdown between the revivalists and the seceders was indicative of the emergence of a new and sharply defined evangelical community within the Church of Scotland. In his work on eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicalism, Ned Landsman has drawn attention to the relationship between the emergence of Scottish evangelicalism and the breakdown of the old ecclesiastical order. By successfully accommodating enlightened concepts, values and terms and adapting them to evangelical ends, he says that Scottish evangelicals moved away from a “strictly national and sectarian conception to the broader perspective of provincial Britons,” thus adding a new and dynamic ecclesiastical face to the Kirk.<sup>190</sup> The Scottish revival was both a source of this change and evidence of it. The fact that the revival’s theological ties to Edwards were considerable suggests just how profound and pervasive was his influence on Scottish evangelicalism.

Edwards more than any other Reformed theologian exemplified the adaptation of enlightenment learning for the purpose of evangelical ends referred to by Landsman.

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<sup>189</sup> Landsman, “Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity,” p. 32.

<sup>190</sup> Landsman, “Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity”, p. 30f. See also his, “Presbyterians and Provincial Society,” p. 196f.

Moreover, Susan O'Brien, in her study of the mid-eighteenth-century revivals notes that their real significance was "their combining of traditional Puritan practices with fresh evangelical techniques and attitudes." It was a combination, she said, "that played a key part, and perhaps the most creative part, in the systematic development of evangelicalism."<sup>191</sup> Her findings also affirm that Edwards more than any other revival figure provided the most thorough, creative, and fresh combination of these elements. Michael Crawford's work on the period strongly suggests the same thing.<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, Bebbington assures us that the Reformed theological structures upon which the Calvinist revivals were erected had Edwards as their architect as well.<sup>193</sup>

The significance of these claims for Edwards's Scottish connection is that the unconditional reception of Edwards's ideas by the Scottish revivalists was unmatched on either side of the Atlantic. To begin with, they used the inspiration generated by the Northampton revival and the principles gleaned from Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* to propagate and promote the Scottish revival. Second, they patterned their own revival narratives after his. Third, they considered *Distinguishing Marks* the best defense of the revival and used it extensively to answer the charges leveled against the Scottish revival. Fourth, they believed it offered the most timely, Scriptural and well reasoned teaching on experimental religion available and relied on it for examining and interpreting the religious experiences of those spiritually awakened.

In summary, none gave more attention to Edwards's published work, nor used and quoted him as authoritatively as the Scottish revivalists. Through their conscious

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<sup>191</sup> O'Brien, "Transatlantic Community of Saints," p. 815.

<sup>192</sup> Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*.

<sup>193</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 65.

cultivation of Edwards's method and theology, his thinking on the nature of true religion was absorbed into the theological fabric of Scottish evangelicalism. If it is true to say that Edwards was the theological architect of the revivals, then his most faithful disciples were to be found in Scotland and not New England.

## Chapter Five

### The Epistolary Connection: 1743-1758

One of the most impressive and historically influential developments created by the mid-eighteenth-century revivals was the network of correspondence that evolved between Jonathan Edwards and six of the most prominent evangelical ministers of the Church of Scotland: John MacLaurin of Glasgow, John Willison of Dundee, William McCulloch of Cambuslang, James Robe of Kilsyth, Thomas Gillespie of Carnock, and John Erskine of Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> These particular epistolary connections are historically significant because they formed the creative heart of Scottish evangelicalism and evangelical Calvinism more generally in the eighteenth century. Willison, MacLaurin, Robe and McCulloch, as we have already seen, were transitional figures who opened the door to a new evangelical outlook, which under the guidance of Gillespie, Erskine and others would adapt Scottish Calvinism from its old didactic/catechising function within a godly commonwealth, to a mission oriented role in which faith would become essentially a matter for the individual. In this connection, Edwards stands out for the creative theological contribution he made to this process. By means of letters and the works he published during this period, he helped them form the rich theological heritage that characterized evangelical Calvinists in Scotland for more than a century.

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<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, "Transatlantic Community of Saints," p. 819. Although Edwards did on occasion correspond with other Scottish ministers, for example Henry Davidson of Galashiels and John Gillies, when he referred to his Scottish correspondents, he had these six in mind.

published during this period, he helped them form the rich theological heritage that characterized evangelical Calvinists in Scotland for more than a century.

Inspired and encouraged by Edwards's published works these Scottish ministers recognized that they shared a common evangelical and Calvinist vision with the man from New England, and chose to formally link up with him through the only means available to them, the correspondence network. Of the approximately one hundred plus letters that were exchanged between Edwards and his Scottish correspondents between the years 1743 and 1758 (the year he died), forty-one have survived.<sup>2</sup> This epistolary link opened a new chapter in Edwards's life, bringing unlooked for benefits that enhanced his ministry and mind. Through their many exchanges these six Scottish ministers became some of Edwards's closest and most loyal friends, his most ardent supporters, and the most important contributors to the life of his mind during the remaining years of his life. In return, Edwards supplied his Scottish friends with a steady stream of books, commentary on the religious events and thinking of the day, and personal encouragement which they used to help shape the cause of evangelical Calvinism in the Church of Scotland.

The period of correspondence falls into two almost equal periods: the first, 1743-1750, consists of the letters that passed between him and his Scottish correspondents while he was at Northampton; the second period, 1751-1758, involves the missives that

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<sup>2</sup> Only forty-one letters are now extant. The majority of them are preserved at Andover Theological Seminary, in the Andover Collection of Edwards Manuscripts. The others have been preserved in Religious Periodicals, which often printed extracts only. What happened to the others is open to speculation. However, we do have Alexander B. Grossart's word that in preparing his volume of *Selections from the Unpublished Writings of Jonathan Edwards* (For Private Circulation, 1865), he traveled to New England ten years before and obtained, apparently by personal transcription, a collection of letters, which were never printed. See his "Introduction," pp. 11-15. The Andover Collection of letters were printed by Edwards's great-grandson, Sereno E. Dwight, in his *Life of President Edwards*, in *The Works of President Edwards*, vol. 1 (New York: Converse, 1829). Hereafter cited as *JEW*.

will be touched upon only where necessary. The Northampton period saw Edwards go from the heights of the Great Awakening to the disrupting experience of his dismissal from his charge by his people and resettlement at the missionary outpost in Stockbridge. During this phase relationships were formed, mutual cooperation and support were developed, and theological concerns were fine tuned for the sake of the spread of the revival of true religion. Also four major works of Edwards were published and circulated in Scotland. Each one was closely and uniquely related to the perpetuation and spread of the revival of religion.

The chapter is organized along three lines of enquiry. The first section looks at how each epistolary connection was made, when it was made and why. In the second, the quality of the epistolary connection and its importance for Edwards is explored. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the contribution Edwards's relationship made to his Scottish counterparts and to Scottish evangelical Calvinism.

It took approximately three years before Edwards's Scottish epistolary network was complete. With one exception, the initiative in each case came from the Scottish side. Sereno E. Dwight, Edwards's great-grandson and the author of his memoirs, claimed the original connection was initiated by John MacLaurin, minister of Glasgow, Ramshorn.<sup>3</sup> Although none of the early correspondence between Edwards and MacLaurin has survived, Edwards's first letter to James Robe, dated May 12, 1743, suggests that MacLaurin's first letter must have been written no later than the early spring

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<sup>3</sup> "Memoirs," *Works*, vol. 1, p. lxxii. Dwight's claim is confirmed by Edwards's first letter to James Robe, dated May 12, 1743, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 535.

of that year, and possibly before.<sup>4</sup> MacLaurin was ten years Edwards's senior. He took an M.A. from the University of Glasgow in 1712 and spent a period of study in Leyden. He was ordained in 1719 and was translated to the Glasgow parish of Ramshorn in 1723 where he remained until his death in 1754.<sup>5</sup>

It is not surprising that MacLaurin should have initiated the correspondence. By 1743 he would have had the opportunity to have read enough of Edwards's work to recognize that Edwards shared a common theological vision and articulated it in a manner very much like himself. Like Edwards, he functioned theologically on a level above most of his contemporaries, and displayed the same ability as his New England counterpart to use Enlightenment conceptions for the purpose of explicating and defending orthodox and evangelical Calvinism.<sup>6</sup> In fact, MacLaurin resembled Edwards in many respects. They combined in an unusual way for the time the strains of evangelist and apologist; they were profound thinkers and gospel preachers. "In both of them," observed John MacLeod, "massive intellect went hand in hand with heart godliness of the most pervasive, controlling and winsome character."<sup>7</sup>

The only surviving piece of correspondence between Edwards and MacLaurin that is verifiable, is an extract of a letter from Edwards dated August 10, 1743, published in the Boston based periodical the *Christian History*.<sup>8</sup> However, it is clear from the many

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<sup>4</sup> In his letter to Robe, Edwards was responding to Robe's first letter written to him, which most likely was written sometime in March or April. In the same letter Edwards acknowledged that he had received a letter from MacLaurin the same day he received Robe's. If MacLaurin's letter was his second to Edwards, and a response to Edwards's reply to his first, it is reasonable to assume that MacLaurin would have initiated his first letter no later than February. However, we have no way of knowing for certain that these letters represent the beginning of their correspondence.

<sup>5</sup> *FASTI*, vol. 3, p. 439; *SDCHT*, p. 527.

<sup>6</sup> Walker, *Theology and Theologians*, pp. 33-35; MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, pp. 189-97. See also chapter 2 above, pp. 76-77, 79-82.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> *Christian History*, No.'s 44-45 (Dec. 1743-Jan. 1744): 352-53. The missing correspondence between Edwards and MacLaurin is one of the most unfortunate dimensions of Edwards's Scottish connection. Two

the Boston based periodical the *Christian History*.<sup>8</sup> However, it is clear from the many references to their correspondence in the letters between Edwards and his other Scottish correspondents, that the exchanges between them were not only frequent but extensive and indicate a deep and mutual respect and affection for one another.

It was not long after MacLaurin had commenced writing Edwards, that he encouraged James Robe, of Kilsyth, to do the same. The first letter was posted by Robe, written sometime during the spring of 1743. Robe was born in 1688, educated at Glasgow, and ordained to the ministry at Kilsyth in 1713.<sup>9</sup> By the time he took up his pen to write Edwards, he was well acquainted with the heart of Edwards's religious convictions. From Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* he had drawn both the inspiration and the pattern he used to structure his own revival histories, *A Short Narrative of the Work at Cambuslang* and *A Faithful Narrative of the Work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth*. In addition, he drew encouragement from Edwards to commence the monthly periodical the *Christian Monthly History*.<sup>10</sup> His Kilsyth narrative indicates that he had assimilated Edwards's morphology of conversion more thoroughly than possibly any one else in Scotland.<sup>11</sup> His industrious and methodical temperament richly served Edwards's hunger for religious news, as he sent report after report to him on Scottish and English religious events, first to Northampton and then to Stockbridge. In addition to having benefited

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<sup>8</sup> *Christian History*, No.'s 44-45 (Dec. 1743-Jan. 1744): 352-53. The missing correspondence between Edwards and MacLaurin is one of the most unfortunate dimensions of Edwards's Scottish connection. Two extant letters from Edwards to unnamed correspondents, the first to a correspondent in Scotland, November 20, 1745, published in *CMH*, No. 8 (Nov. 1745): 234-54, and the second to a Reverend Minister at Glasgow, May 12, 1746, published *CMH*, No. 10 (Jan. 1746): 296-99, are routinely attributed to MacLaurin.

<sup>9</sup> *FASTI*, vol. 3, p. 479.

<sup>10</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 529.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, chapter nine, passim.

from Edwards's revival work, Robe had also spilled more ink in defense of Edwards's understanding of the revivals than any of his other fellow revivalists.

William McCulloch, of Cambuslang, was the third link in the epistolary chain. MacLaurin had informed Edwards that McCulloch had intended to send a letter along with his and Robe's. But for some reason he was hindered from doing so. Knowing this, Edwards was prompted into taking the initiative himself, and he penned a letter to McCulloch the same day he wrote to Robe, May 12, 1743.<sup>12</sup> Ordained in 1731, McCulloch's ministry at Cambuslang spanned a half a century. Although he was born twelve years before Edwards, he survived him by another thirteen.<sup>13</sup> McCulloch first heard of Edwards and the Northampton revival in the early part of 1735. Since his ordination in 1731, he had been preaching on the subject of conversion, but by 1735 had managed only to bring his own experience of conversion into question.<sup>14</sup> The news of the powerful outpouring of God's grace in the conversion of so many in Northampton through the preaching of the Reformed doctrines of grace, had lifted McCulloch's spirits and inspired him to press on in hope that God might do the same at Cambuslang. Seven years later his hope was realized. With the coming of the Cambuslang Wark, and the need to instruct and guide his people into an authentic saving encounter with Christ, McCulloch's appreciation of and reliance upon the New England minister's understanding of the nature and progress of conversion reached new heights. McCulloch was convinced that God had united Cambuslang and Northampton through a common

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<sup>12</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 539. "Mr. MacLaurin of Glasgow, in a letter he has lately sent me, informs me of your proposing to write a letter to me, and being prevented by the failing of the expected opportunity: I thank you, Rev. Sir, that you had such a thing in your heart

<sup>13</sup> *FASTI*, vol. 3, pp. 237-38. See also Fawcett, *Cambuslang*. There is an interesting manuscript profile of McCulloch written by one who knew him, bound together at the beginning of the vol. 1 of the Cambuslang manuscript testimonies. "Examination of Persons under Scriptural Concern at Cambuslang."

<sup>14</sup> Fawcett, p. 43.

work of the Spirit, and McCulloch was now eager and ready to further that connection through correspondence.

Edwards's coterie of epistolary friends also included John Willison. Willison was the senior member of the group. He was born in 1680 and was ordained in 1703, the year of Edwards's birth. He began his ministry in the parish at Brechin, but was translated to Dundee South in 1716 where he remained until his death in 1750. He was one of the most respected and influential evangelical ministers of the Church of Scotland in the first half of the eighteenth century. As mentioned earlier, he published several influential works of devotion, and publically endorsed the revivals on both sides of the Atlantic, which in the case of the Scottish revivals was taken by many as a sign of their orthodoxy.<sup>15</sup> He provided prefaces for the Scottish editions of Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks* (1742) and the sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1745), and by 1742 was well acquainted with Edwards's other published works.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, we have no way of determining when the correspondence between Edwards and Willison began. We do know that Willison had been exchanging letters with Benjamin Colman since the 1730's, and with the Boston Presbyterian minister, John Moorehead, since the early 1740's.<sup>17</sup> In 1743 he began corresponding with the influential Congregational minister from Boston, Thomas Prince, who was also the editor of the religious periodical, *The Christian History*.<sup>18</sup> The earliest extant evidence of a letter

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<sup>15</sup> *FASTI*, vol. 5, pp. 320-22; W.M. Hetherington, "An Essay on His Life and Times," in *The Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison* (Edinburgh: Blackie and Son); *DSCHT*, p. 874.

<sup>16</sup> *Letter to Fisher*, 1742, p. 6; cf. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 172. The works of Edwards either published or available in Scotland in 1742 would have been the sermons "God Glorified in Man's Dependence," "A Divine and Supernatural Light," and the five sermons published as *Discourses on Important Subjects* (1738), which included "Justification by Faith Alone"; and *Faithful Narrative and Distinguishing Marks*.

<sup>17</sup> See Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 172, and *GWH*, No. 42, pp. 1-3.

<sup>18</sup> Crawford, *Ibid.*

correspondence had commenced before this date.<sup>19</sup> How much earlier, again we don't know, but it is probably safe to assume that Willison's epistolary connection with Edwards began at least by 1745 when Willison wrote the preface to Edwards's sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, and very possibly before.

Thomas Gillespie opened the epistolary channel to Edwards with a letter written on November 24, 1746. Gillespie took his first degree at the University of Edinburgh. His original intention was to enter the ministry of the Secession Church. However, he had a change of heart and decided to attend the theological Academy at Northampton where Philip Doddridge taught. He received his ordination in England, but soon after returned to Scotland where he received a call to the parish at Carnock in Fife in the spring of 1741. He was deposed from his charge in 1752 by decision of the General Assembly and subsequently co-founded the Relief Church in 1761. He was a close friend of Robe and often assisted him with the revival at Kilsyth.<sup>20</sup>

The date of Gillespie's letter to Edwards poses a question. Why did he wait so long to begin writing to Edwards, especially when he was aware that his colleague at Kilsyth had been doing so since early 1743? Gillespie himself raised this very issue in his first letter, apologized to Edwards for his delay, but resisted sharing with him the reason behind his decision. Even so, the tone of Gillespie's letter seems to suggest that part of the reason was his sense of unworthiness.

I have ever honored you for your works' sake, and what the great Shepherd made you the instrument of,...This much I think myself bound to say. I have many a time, for some years, designed to claim humbly the privilege of correspondence with you. What had made me defer

<sup>19</sup> *JE*, Yale, vol. 5, p. 271.

<sup>20</sup> *FASTI*, vol. 5, pp. 10-11; *DSCHT*, p. 361. See also William Lindsay, *The Life and Times of the Rev. Thomas Gillespie, father and Founder of the Relief Church*, in *Lives of Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, and Thomas Gillespie, Fathers of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh: A. Fullerton & Co., 1849), pp. 217-306.

I have ever honored you for your works'sake, and what the great Shepherd made you the instrument of,...This much I think myself bound to say. I have many a time, for some years, designed to claim humbly the privilege of correspondence with you. What had made me defer doing it so long, when some of my brethren and good acquaintances have been favored with it, for a considerable time, it is needless now to mention. I shall only say, I have blamed myself for neglect in that matter. I do now earnestly desire a room in your prayers and friendship, and a letter from you sometimes, when you have occasion to write to Scotland; and I shall wish to be regular as I can, in making a return. With your permissions, I propose to trouble you now and then with the proposal of doubts and difficulties that I meet with, and am exercised by; as for other reasons, so because some solutions in the two mentioned performances [*Distinguishing Marks* and *Some Thoughts*] were peculiarly agreeable to me,...All the apology I make for using such freedom, though altogether unacquainted, is that you will find from the short attestation in Mr. Robe's Narrative, I am no enemy to you, or to the work you have been engaged in, and which you have defended in a way I could not but much approve of.<sup>21</sup>

Like the foregoing three, Gillespie had read closely Edwards's published work and found himself in essential agreement with him. He had especially benefited from *Some Thoughts*, and at the time he wrote his first letter he had already perused Edwards's most recent work, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, and was eager to solicit more from Edwards on the subject.<sup>22</sup>

John Erskine was the last to join the circle of Scottish ministers with whom Edwards corresponded on a regular basis. From the account provided us by Erskine's biographer, Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, it appears that Erskine first contacted Edwards near the end of 1746.<sup>23</sup> The youngest of all of Edwards's correspondents,

<sup>21</sup> Letter to Edwards, November 24, 1746, *JE, Yale*, vol. 2, p. 470.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 470-71.

<sup>23</sup> Wellwood indicates that Edwards responded to Erskine's first letter in 1747. In the postscript to that letter, Edwards mentioned he was including a copy of his book *Religious Affections* which had recently been published. *Religious Affections* was published in 1746 and Gillespie had access to it by November of the same year. This would seem to indicate that Edwards's letter must have been penned early in 1747, if Wellwood is correct. This in turn would suggest that Erskine's initial letter was written near the end of 1746. *Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D. Late one of the Ministers of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1818), pp.195-97.

Erskine was to prove one of his most ardent supporters. Erskine began his ministerial career at Kirkintilloch (1744-53), moved to Culross (1753-58), was translated to New Greyfriars in Edinburgh in 1758, and then to Old Greyfriars in 1767 where he ministered until his death in 1803. He was one of the leaders of the evangelical party in the Church of Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century and was instrumental in its rise in influence at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> As a student at the University of Edinburgh, he had zealously defended the revivals.<sup>25</sup> In 1745, he published three sermons under the title, *The People of God Considered as All Righteous*, with a preface in which he acknowledged his indebtedness to Jonathan Edwards's, *Discourses on Important Subjects*, published in Boston in 1738. The impression made by this collection of sermons, especially Edwards's "Justification by Faith Alone," was the beginning of Edwards's theological influence on Erskine.<sup>26</sup> Throughout the remaining years of his life Erskine would expend time, money and much energy promoting and even publishing Edwards's works.

Even though all but Gillespie and Erskine were Edwards's senior, they all accepted him as a seasoned and gifted divine of long experience.<sup>27</sup> The reputation Edwards had gained among these six Scottish ministers by 1743 has often been referred to in the earlier chapters of this study and need not detain us here. However, it is worth

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<sup>24</sup> FASTI, vol. 1, pp. 47-48. See also: Thomas Davidson, *A Sketch of the Character of Dr. John Erskine, one of the Ministers of the Old Gray Friars Church of Edinburgh,....being the concluding part of a Sermon delivered in that Church, on the Lord's Day immediately after his Funeral* (Edinburgh, 1803); and Rev. John Inglis, *The Memory of the Righteous; A Sermon, Preached in the Old Gray Friar's Church, Edinburgh, on 30th January 1803, Being the first Sabbath After the Funeral of the Rev. John Erskine* (Edinburgh, 1803).

<sup>25</sup> Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 31-32. Erskine published his thoughts on the Scottish revival while a student at the University of Edinburgh. See, *Sign of the Times* (1742).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Henderson, *Burning Bush*, p. 154.

<sup>27</sup> Even Willison who was twenty-three years older than Edwards spoke of him as "an experienced and well-furnish'd Scribe." Preface, *Distinguishing Marks*.

consideration of my vileness, to receive such undeserved testimonies of respect from servants of the Lord, at so great a distance.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, after sharing with Edwards his reason for hoping that the present work of religious revival was but the forerunner of a much greater work of God by which He would usher in the latter days, McCulloch quickly added, “I mention these things, dear Sir, not for your information, for I know that I can add nothing to you.”<sup>29</sup>

Even though the initiative for the correspondence came from the Scottish side, Edwards equally looked on the prospect of corresponding with these Scottish ministers as a great gift and a privilege. By 1743, he had already received enough reports about the Scottish revivals to have gained a sense of the spiritual orientation and calibre of the men wanting to write him, and he was genuinely honoured. “I esteem my correspondence with you, and my other correspondents in Scotland, a great honor [*sic*] and privilege; and hope that it may be improved for God’s glory, and my profit.”<sup>30</sup> When speaking of the profit to himself that he hoped to gain, no doubt Edwards had in mind a thought he expressed in a diary entry twenty years earlier.<sup>31</sup> I am “more convinced than ever,” he wrote on February 6, 1724, “of the usefulness of free religious conversation. I find by conversing..., I gain knowledge abundantly faster, and see the reasons of things much

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<sup>28</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 535.

<sup>29</sup> August 13, 1743, p. 199f. McCulloch’s indulgence in a bit of flattery here was a new experience for him, one which he explained a few months later to the Welsh revivalist Howell Harris, “I seldom ever use to speak in this strain to any. I know not, I use not, to give flattering Titles to men; if I should do so, I might have ground to fear that my Maker would soon take me away: but out of the abundance of the Heart, the Pen is sometimes bold to note down little of what the Tongue would falter to speak face to face.” The letter is dated November 4, 1743, and included in *Selected Trevecka Letters (1742-1747)*, Transcribed and Annotated by, Gomer Morgan Roberts (Caernarvon, 1956), p. 118.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from JE to most likely MacLaurin, Nov. 20, 1745, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, p. 444.

<sup>31</sup> Edwards made it a habit to regularly review the earlier resolutions he had made.

February 6, 1724, “of the usefulness of free religious conversation. I find by conversing..., I gain knowledge abundantly faster, and see the reasons of things much clearer, than in private study. Wherefore earnestly to seek at all times for religious conversation; for those that I can with profit and delight and freedom so converse with.”<sup>32</sup>

Edwards had learned early the personal benefits of the kind of informed dialogue these Scottish ministers could offer him, and he was eager to use this opportunity to its full advantage. The actual benefits Edwards derived from his correspondents were to exceed even his expectations; in fact, he stood to benefit, at least on a personal level, more than his Scottish counterparts.

The outstanding benefit Edwards experienced from his Scottish correspondents was their amazing capacity for helping him overcome the social, intellectual and spiritual liabilities of his isolation. Geographically Edwards spent the first twenty-three years of his ministerial career in the provincial town of Northampton located on the edge of the New England wilderness, and spent the last seven years of his life in the wilderness on its western frontier at the missionary station at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The effect of such isolation on the intellectual life was two-fold. The first result was the paucity of opportunities for intellectually and spiritually stimulating conversation. When Edwards recorded in his diary his thoughts on the usefulness of social conversation as a means of learning, he was then enjoying one of the rare times in his life where his actual living situation afforded him such an environment. This was during his brief stint as minister of the Scottish Presbyterian church in New York when he was living with John Smith and his mother, five years before he took up his ministry at Northampton. Unlike the parish

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<sup>32</sup> Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards*, in *Jonathan Edwards, A Profile*, ed. David Levin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), p. 21.

of Boston. The best outlet for the kind of conversation he desired came through the students he tutored who attended the informal theological school he had set up at Northampton. Two of the students, Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, became lifelong friends and ardent followers, but neither of them were to live closer than forty miles after finishing their studies.<sup>33</sup> The other possible source of the kind of social discourse that Edwards hungered for came by way of visitors. Individuals en route to some place other than Northampton would often stop for the evening. However, with the exception of the years 1740 to 1743, such visits were infrequent.

The second effect was the lack of access to libraries and opportunities for securing books. Books were difficult to secure in frontier towns and public libraries were few and far between. Private libraries were even rarer. Before 1730 there were not many more than half a dozen owners of libraries of any importance in any of the colonies.<sup>34</sup> Although the decade following would see a sharp improvement in the availability of books, most of what was available reflected popular tastes. During the same decade a number of new libraries were established as well, but none that were accessible to Edwards. The typical means of securing suitable books used by frontier ministers was borrowing and swapping among themselves.<sup>35</sup> “What literary background Edwards as a provincial minister could have,” concluded Thomas H. Johnson in his study of Edwards’s background of reading, he must have gotten, “not by casually following the taste of the

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<sup>33</sup> Bellamy took a ministry in Bethlehem, Connecticut, which at the time was on the N.W. outskirts of the colony, nearly 75 miles south of Northampton; Hopkins served a church in what later became Great Barrington, Massachusetts, some forty miles S.W. of Edwards.

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, “Jonathan Edwards’ Background Reading,” p. 217.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p.218.

community, or by reading easily circulated books of the time, but rather only by an eager, patient, persistent effort of inquiry and intermittent reading.”<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the liabilities of his geographical location, Edwards’s social isolation was compounded by a growing alienation between himself and his congregation that began to surface about the time his Scottish correspondence commenced. Tensions steadily increased during the years following the revivals. Edwards came into open conflict with his people when, in 1749, he publicly announced that he could no longer in good conscience open the communion table to any but those who could make a sound profession of faith evidenced by an experiential work of grace. A year and a half later the Northampton congregation dismissed him from his charge.<sup>37</sup>

During the years of Edwards’s Scottish correspondence, Northampton and Stockbridge offered him little in the way of the kind of learned discourse he expressed a desire for in his diary that February day in 1723. Still he was constantly driven by the desire for the exchange of ideas and the hunger for news of the learned world that would not be quenched. His own attempts to rise above the liabilities his location imposed upon him included attendance at commencements at Yale and Princeton, the trips he took to Boston, and his presence at a ministers’ convention.<sup>38</sup> As helpful as these occasions may have been, they were infrequent, often limited to provincial concerns, and lacked the intimacy of friendship.

In contrast, the exchange of letters between Edwards and his Scottish correspondents were generally frequent, filled with local, regional, and international

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 220-21.

<sup>37</sup> A full and reliable account of the events that led up to Edwards’s dismissal and those that immediately followed is provided by Patricia Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, pp. 147-94.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221

religious and political news, and characterized by an intimacy unique to Edwards's corpus of correspondence.<sup>39</sup> Communication took place as often as their circumstances allowed. However, delays could not always be avoided, and on occasion they produced concern over the state of their personal relationship. This occurred twice in Edwards's experience with McCulloch. On each occasion they reaffirmed their affection and esteem for each other and how "pleasant and profitable" they viewed their correspondence.<sup>40</sup> Edwards's abiding interest in world news of the work of God was routinely stimulated as well as satisfied by these transatlantic missives. "When the day is so dark here in New England," he remarked, "it is exceeding refreshing and reviving to hear, by your and other letters, and Mr. Robe's history, of religion's being to such a degree upheld in the power and practice of it, in those parts of Scotland, that have been favored with the late revival."<sup>41</sup>

A letter written by William Cooper to John MacLaurin in June, 1743, just as Edwards's epistolary connection with Scotland was beginning, provides a poignant illustration of the qualitative difference between Edwards's Scottish connection with that of his associations at home. Responding to MacLaurin's request for information about Edwards's ministry, Cooper admitted he had little to offer, that he had yet to pay Edwards a visit because of the great distance between Boston and Northampton, and that his Scottish correspondent probably knew more about matters pertaining to Northampton than he did anyway because of the particular accounts Edwards had been giving him.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Edwards's most regular correspondents were MacLaurin, Robe and Erskine.

<sup>40</sup> See Edwards's letters to McCulloch of January 21, 1747, October 7, 1748, and July 6, 1750 in *JEWorks*, vol. 1, pp. 230, 261-62, 413.

<sup>41</sup> The letter, dated November 20, 1745, was almost certainly written to MacLaurin. *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, p. 444.

<sup>42</sup> *CMH*, no. 4, Feb. 1744, p. 6.

Edwards's isolation was real, and the spiritual and intellectual camaraderie offered by his Scottish correspondents was viewed by him not as a luxury, but rather as the means of meeting a fundamental need in his life and ministry.

In contrast to the kind of isolation Edwards suffered, his Scottish correspondents were generally well connected and often enjoyed the kind of spiritual discourse he lacked. Even so, they recognized in Edwards a kindred spirit of uncommon ability.<sup>43</sup> Each one of his correspondents shared a common conviction that God had uniquely gifted and appointed him to bring light and understanding in their day on some of the most important subjects pertaining to true religion. They were especially desirous to see his abilities enlisted on behalf of Scotland, confident from what they had already seen that his thinking would continue to be well adapted to their particular situation.<sup>44</sup> Consequently each one found ways of encouraging his thinking, writing, and publishing, and each one used their positions to promote the reading of his works.

In this respect MacLaurin was the catalyst. He initiated the epistolary connection and was the main instrument in bringing the others into the network. He was nearer Edwards's equal than any of the others, and shared the same passion for the advancement of true religion in the world. He was also a brilliant conversationalist.<sup>45</sup> Like his fellow revivalists, he defended Edwards's interpretation of the revivals, both against attacks brought against it in Scotland and in New England.<sup>46</sup> Part of MacLaurin's design for Edwards's letters was to distribute them to other interested parties. A large number of the

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<sup>43</sup> The source of their confidence was the considerable body of Edwards's published work available in Scotland in 1743, and the testimonies concerning Edwards received from New England and printed in Scotland. For examples of the latter see *GWH*, No. 35, pp. 1-5, No. 36, pp. 1-8, No. 37, pp. 1-5; and *CMH*, No. 2, 1743, p. 12, and No. 4, 1745, pp. 93-100.

<sup>44</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 470.

<sup>45</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, p. xvi, xix, xxiii.

<sup>46</sup> For example, see the *GWH*, No.'s 35 pp. 1-5; 36 pp. 1-8; 37 pp. 1-5.

letters Edwards wrote to MacLaurin, as a result, were written with a wider distribution in mind.<sup>47</sup>

Through their long and extensive correspondence MacLaurin stimulated, challenged, and sharpened Edwards's thinking through a constant stream of news and ideas. MacLaurin's earnestness to help facilitate the propagation of Edwards's thinking is movingly illustrated in a letter addressed to Mr. William Hogg. The letter concerns their plan to raise funds and other pecuniary support from Scotland to assist Edwards and his family following his dismissal from Northampton. Speaking of the need, MacLaurin pointed out that such aid was deserving of one whose past works had been so greatly used of God and who holds such prospects for the future.<sup>48</sup> It was MacLaurin's deep conviction that the friends of true religion should do all they could to encourage the work of one as gifted as Edwards. It is interesting to notice that some of the most important works of Edwards were yet to be written when MacLaurin penned the letter to Hogg. Among them, would be Edwards's celebrated treatises *Freedom of the Will* (1754) and *Original Sin* (1758). With respect to Edwards's *Freedom of the Will*, the printing was postponed in Boston due to MacLaurin's and John Erskine's offer to circulate subscription proposals in Scotland. As a result of their efforts, forty-five subscriptions were procured and eighty-eight copies were ordered.<sup>49</sup>

McCulloch was one of the first ministers of Scotland to take parts of Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* into the pulpit to read to his congregation. In addition he published extracts from Edwards's published works and letters in his religious periodical, *The*

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<sup>47</sup> MacLaurin, *Works*, vol. 1, p. xvi-xvii. See also Edwards's letters to his other correspondents, where he regularly refers them to his letters to MacLaurin.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vlviii.

<sup>49</sup> Dwight, "Memoirs," *Works*, vol. 1, p. clxi. The figures were gathered from the subscriber list published with the 1754 Boston edition of *Freedom of the Will*.

*Glasgow Weekly History*. Through his correspondence he gave Edwards opportunity to expand his thinking, especially concerning the relationship between present events and the apocalyptic events depicted in the Scriptures.

Robe, like McCulloch, early endorsed Edwards's *Faithful Narrative* and was one of the first to publicly hail his *Distinguishing Marks* as a definitive justification of the revivals as a genuine work of the Spirit of God. By utilising the morphology of conversion presented in the former work and the principles of experimental religion set forth in the latter, both to manage the revival at Kilsyth and to construct his own revival history, he gave widespread distribution to Edwards's ideas. He also managed to keep many of Edwards's thoughts alive through his religious periodical *The Christian Monthly History* (1743-1745), by filling its pages with the great themes of true religion and its progress in the world, and reprinting letters from Edwards and excerpts from his *Faithful Narrative*.

As a part of his promotion of Edwards's work and thinking, Willison wrote the prefaces for two of his Scottish publications, *Distinguishing Marks* and *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.<sup>50</sup> For undertaking the former he suffered a surprising amount of abuse.<sup>51</sup> Even so, he stepped forward in 1743 and defended Edwards against James Fisher's vitriolic critique of *Distinguishing Marks*, and no doubt did what he could to promote Edwards's *Humble Attempt*, which he greatly admired and wished were spread throughout the world. Willison's sentiments about the latter book point, in part, to the reason behind Edwards's reputation with Scottish evangelicals: "I both love and admire

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<sup>50</sup> Edwards's sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* was first published in Scotland in 1745 and later translated into Gaelic. See Appendix A.

<sup>51</sup> Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, p. 171.

the performance upon subjects so uncommon.”<sup>52</sup> Whatever subject Edwards treated, he was certain to bring a fresh and well reasoned approach to it.

Gillespie, as much as anyone, believed Edwards was uniquely gifted and called by God to write on the most pressing religious issues of the day. In his first letter to Edwards, he strongly encouraged Edwards to write more fully on the subject of *supposed immediate revelations of facts and future events* which he had touched on first in *Faithful Narrative*, treated at more length in *Distinguishing Marks* and *Some Thoughts*, and most fully in his work *Religious Affections*: “I humbly think the Lord calls you, dear Sir, to consider every part of that point in the most critical manner, and to represent fully the consequences resulting from the several principles in that matter....And as (if I don’t mistake) Providence has already put that in your hand as a part of your generation-work, so it will give me, as well as the others, vast satisfaction to find more said on the subject by you.”<sup>53</sup> Gillespie’s motive for wanting Edwards to explore the subject more thoroughly was that he was convinced that a complete discussion of the subject by Edwards would be “one of the most seasonable and effectual services done the church of Christ, and interest of vital religion through the world.”<sup>54</sup>

Gillespie’s confidence in Edwards’s ability to bring forth truth and understanding on the most critical matters pertaining to true religion was shared by all with whom Edwards corresponded in Scotland. In addition to his advocacy for Edwards’s publishing enterprise, Gillespie also successfully drew Edwards into discussions that pushed him to

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<sup>52</sup> Letter from Willison to Edwards, March 17, 1749, *JEWorks*, vol. 1, p. 272.

<sup>53</sup> November 24, 1746, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 471.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* Gillespie’s interest in the subject of immediate revelations was longstanding and he eventually published an essay on the topic, *An Essay on The continuance of immediate revelations of facts and future events in the Christian church* (Edinburgh, 1771). Although not published until 1771, William Lindsay judges that it was probably written sometime during the year 1747. See Lindsay, *Life and Times of Thomas Gillespie*, p. 253.

further develop and clarify his thinking on issues important for Scotland. Gillespie's first question to Edwards relating to his book *Religious Affections*, is a case in point. Gillespie perceived that Edwards's argument that confident believing and trusting in God is impossible "without spiritual light or sight," was open to misrepresentation not only to his "friends" but especially by the Seceders. "I expect a mighty clamor," he remarked, "if the book shall fall into their hands."<sup>55</sup> Consequently, he pressed Edwards on two different occasions to clarify his thinking on the subject.

Of all of Edwards's correspondents, however, none laboured longer or more diligently on his behalf than John Erskine. Erskine identified most fully with Edwards's writing and publishing enterprise, and embodied the expanded international evangelical perspective evident among his Scottish counterparts perhaps more thoroughly than the rest.<sup>56</sup> Almost from the moment he began corresponding with him, Erskine sought to enhance, encourage and stimulate the growth and impact of Edwards's writing and publishing ministry. This is nowhere more evident than in the flow of books, pamphlets and sermons he sent to Northampton. Although the exchange of published materials was something that went on between Edwards and his other Scottish correspondents, the total contributions of the other five pale in comparison to what Erskine sent Edwards's way. Like the others, Erskine believed that it was part of the "generation-work" of Edwards to write on the most pressing theological questions of the day, and one of the ways he demonstrated this conviction was his habit of sending Edwards whatever books and pamphlets he thought useful. In just the fourteen surviving letters between them,

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<sup>55</sup> Letter to Edwards, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, pp. 475, 476.

<sup>56</sup> Ned Landsman makes out a similar case for Erskine in, "Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity in Scottish Evangelical Culture," p. 34.

Edwards acknowledged receiving no less than fifty-four separate titles, and at least fourteen other books not specified, numerous sermons and pamphlets, and three entire packets of books and pamphlets which he failed to itemize. How many more books and pamphlets in addition to these Erskine may have sent we are unable to determine. But it seems certain that there were more.

In his first letter to Erskine, Edwards mentioned his plan to write a comprehensive refutation of Arminianism. With Erskine's next letter Edwards received several of the best books written in Britain in support of the Arminian position.<sup>57</sup> Among them were John Taylor's, *Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin, A Key to the Apostolic Writings*, and his *Paraphrase with Notes on the Epistle to the Romans*.<sup>58</sup> Edwards was particularly grateful for the paraphrase, which he had not heard of. He remarked that had he known of it, he would "not have been easy" until he had seen it.<sup>59</sup> The paraphrase would supply Edwards with the scriptural arguments behind Taylor's position which he later used in his work on the subjects of freedom of the will and original sin.

On July 7, 1752, Edwards wrote to Erskine, "I wish I could see a *History of Enthusiasm*, through all ages, written by some good hand, a hearty friend of vital religion, a person of accurate judgment, and a large acquaintance with ecclesiastical history. Such a history, well written, might doubtless be exceedingly useful and instructive, and a great benefit to the Church of God: especially, if there were united with it a proper account and history of true religion."<sup>60</sup> Soon after Erskine sent Edwards several books and pamphlets

<sup>57</sup> Wellwood, *Life and Writings of Erskine*, pp. 199-201.

<sup>58</sup> John Taylor (1694-1761), was minister at Norwich from 1733 until 1757 when he took a post of divinity tutor at Warrington Academy. The influence of Samuel Clarke's *Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity* caused him by 1737 to formally give up his Trinitarian belief, and in 1740 his Arminian convictions were made explicit in his work on original sin.

<sup>59</sup> Letter to Erskine, Aug. 31, 1748, *Works of President Edwards*, vol. 1, p. 251.

<sup>60</sup> *JE, Works*, vol. 1, p. 497.

on the subject.<sup>61</sup> Then in the spring of 1755, Edwards received another packet of books and pamphlets with the following titles among them: *Casaubon on Enthusiasm*, Warburton's *Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, Campbell's *Apostles No Enthusiasts*, *Discourse on the Prevailing Evils of the Present Time*, *Remarks on Apostles No Enthusiasts*, Moncrief's *Review and Examination of some Principles in Campbell's Apostles No Enthusiasts*. None of these fit the description of what Edwards was looking for; but it may have been that Erskine had it in mind to supply Edwards with the needed resources so that he could write the desired work on Enthusiasm himself.<sup>62</sup> Edwards did fit his own description of the sort of person to do it, with the exception of the one point, "well acquainted with ecclesiastical history."<sup>63</sup>

What Erskine's contribution meant to Edwards becomes even more apparent when comparing it with the total contents of Edwards's personal library. We know that by 1753 (just five years before his death) Edwards's possessed 300 volumes and 536 pamphlets, which, according to the standards of the day, was unusually large for a personal library.<sup>64</sup> Given what we do know Erskine sent, and the fact that this does not represent everything, it is possible that Erskine's contribution may have counted for nearly a third of Edwards's library. The importance of Erskine's contribution was that it allowed Edwards to bring to his thinking and writing a thoroughness of research, a depth of historical and contemporary understanding, and an international perspective almost

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Edwards to Erskine, Nov. 23, 1752, p. 508. Among the books received was a French edition of *A Treatise Against Fanaticism*, which Edwards admitted he could not use because he could not read French.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Edwards to Erskine, April 15, 1755, p. 545.

<sup>63</sup> Edwards did preach a series of sermons in 1739 on the subject of Redemption from a historical perspective which demonstrates a fair measure of conversancy in the area of the history of the church. See *JE(Yale)*, vol. 9.

<sup>64</sup> The figures comes from a will that Edwards made in 1753 cited in T.H. Johnson, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading," p. 199.

unheard of among New England clergy. Edwards's literary acquaintance, concluded Thomas Johnson, would have been "unusual for any colonial minister; it was phenomenal for a provincial one."<sup>65</sup> What is obvious, though possibly not until now truly appreciated, is that behind the reality of this tribute lies Edwards's Scottish connection, and most prominently John Erskine.

Erskine's efforts were not limited to the sending of books. He also possessed a wealth of religious and intellectual knowledge which Edwards greatly desired. A facility in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Dutch and German opened for Erskine numerous avenues of information otherwise closed to the vast majority of evangelical ministers. He maintained literary correspondence with men in Holland and Germany, read foreign literary journals, and kept abreast of books published abroad. Few in the Church of Scotland were better acquainted with the state of learning, religion and morals on the Continent, and whatever he thought was useful he passed on through private correspondence.<sup>66</sup> Edwards's connection with such a man was nothing less than an intellectual windfall, and he immediately recognised it to be the case and was anxious to receive as much as Erskine was prepared to share. In his letter of October 14, 1748, Edwards expressed his heartfelt thanks for the books and sermons sent, and then went on to say,

"I hope, dear Sir, you will continue still to give me particular information of things that appear, relative to the state of Zion and the interests of religion, in Great Britain or other parts of Europe. In so doing, you will not only inform me. but I shall industriously communicate any important informations of that kind, and spread them amongst God's people in this part of the world; and shall endeavour to

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Davidson, *A Sketch of the Character of Dr. John Erskine, One of the Ministers of Grey Friars Church of Edinburgh,....delivered in that church, on the Lord's day immediately after his funeral* (Edinburgh, 1803), pp. 12-13.

my utmost to make such an use of them, as shall tend most to promote the interest of religion. And among other things I should be glad to be informed of any books that come out, remarkably tending either to the illustration or defence of that truth, or the promoting the power of godliness, or in any respect peculiarly tending to advance true religion."<sup>67</sup>

In addition to feeding Edwards's mind, Erskine also actively sought to promote his works among his countrymen. For example, as observed earlier, with the aid of MacLaurin he procured forty-five Scottish subscriptions for eighty-eight copies of the first edition of Edwards's *Freedom of the Will*, published in Boston in 1754. But Erskine's esteem for Edwards inspired him to even greater efforts. Writing to McCulloch a few months after Edwards's death in 1758, he confessed, "I do not think our age has produced a divine of equal genius or judgment."<sup>68</sup> The real significance of this statement is revealed in Erskine's tireless engineering of the publication of hitherto unpublished manuscripts of Edwards following his death. This he did through the cooperation of Edwards's son, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Edwards, Jr. The result was the publication in Edinburgh in 1774 of the series of sermons that Edwards had preached at Northampton in 1739, entitled by Erskine *A History of the Work of Redemption*. There followed in 1793 the *Miscellaneous Observations on Important Theological Subjects*, and in 1796, *Remarks on Important Theological Controversies*. These were some of the most important works of Edwards published posthumously, and it was Erskine that saw them through the press.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Works*, vol. 1, p. 266.

<sup>68</sup> Wellwood, *Life and Writings of Erskine*, p. 224.

<sup>69</sup> It is worthy of notice, that Erskine's edition of the *Work of Redemption* was not superseded until 1989 with John Wilson's definitive Yale edition, volume 9. Yale plans to soon issue a complete edition of Edwards's "Miscellanies" which will include the material contained in Erskine's editions of *Observations* and *Remarks*. The point is, that if Erskine had not collected and printed these works, very likely they would have remained unpublished.

Like the others, Erskine offered Edwards friendship as well. In these six Scottish ministers, Edwards found the intimacy, encouragement, comfort, trust and loyalty that was all too rare in New England. The well worn idea of “kindred spirits” seems to describe Edwards’s Scottish epistolary connection particularly well. No where was this more evident than at the time of Edwards dismissal from Northampton in the summer of 1750. At the time he had ten children and no prospects of resettlement. Nearly a year went by before he settled in Stockbridge, an Indian mission station located in the wilderness of Massachusetts. During the interim Edwards and his family were kept afloat through some preaching he was able to secure and through the generous gifts and efforts of their friends, not the least of which were those in Scotland.

The initial response from Edwards’s Scottish correspondents to the news of his dismissal was one of disbelief and an outpouring of comfort. Letters of sympathy and encouragement were sent by each one with the exception of Willison who died two months before. Gillespie’s response in particular is notable. Writing in reply to Gillespie’s letter, Edwards began by acknowledging Gillespie’s “most kind, affectionate, comfortable and profitable letter of Feb. 2, 1751. I thank you, Sir, for your sympathy with me under my troubles, so amply testified, and the many suitable and proper considerations you suggest to me for my comfort and improvement. May God enable me to make a right improvement of them.”<sup>70</sup> Gillespie was well acquainted with the experience of spiritual conflict and temptation, and had recently written on the subject.<sup>71</sup> His capacity to empathise with Edwards is well attested to by Edwards’s grateful and

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<sup>70</sup> Letter to Gillespie, July 1, 1751, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 561.

<sup>71</sup> *A Treatise on Temptation*. Gillespie composed it sometime in 1744, but was not published until 1774. See Lindsay, *Life and Times of Thomas Gillespie*, pp. 231f.

thoughtful response. Little did Gillespie know at the time that within a year the tables would be turned, that by a decision of the General Assembly he would be deposed and like his New England counterpart left without a charge.<sup>72</sup>

Not only did Edwards's friends in Scotland respond with sympathy and timely counsel, but also monetarily. Collections were organized by MacLaurin and others to be sent to Edwards. W. H. Goold, in his edition of *The Works of John MacLaurin*, records a series of letters from MacLaurin to Mr. William Hogg, a merchant from Edinburgh and an admirer of Edwards. In these letters, MacLaurin gives a running account of the reception of funds earmarked for Edwards's family, noting the amounts received and where they came from.<sup>73</sup> In them, reference is also made to a collection of goods already underway to be shipped to Boston to be sold, the proceeds designated for the care of Mr. Edwards and family.<sup>74</sup> Mentioned as well, is an attempt to secure a "Painter and Engraver" in Boston to draw a picture of Edwards to be engraved on copper plates. These were to be shipped back to Scotland to be sold, again for the aid of Mr. Edwards.<sup>75</sup> While it is true that Edwards also received help from New England, it simply pales before the unusual and most extraordinary effort and expense freely expended on Edwards's behalf by his Scottish friends. It is remarkable what these ministers of the Kirk were

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<sup>72</sup> On the deposition of Gillespie, see Gavin Struthers. *The History of the Rise of the Relief Church* (Edinburgh, 1848), pp. 219-23, and Hugh Watt, "Thomas Gillespie," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 15 (1966): 89-101. For a view taken from the Moderate side of the deposition, see Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 54-55, 68.

<sup>73</sup> *Works of MacLaurin*, vol. 1, pp. xlvi-lxiii.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xlvi, xlix-lxiii. The following brief account of MacLaurin's attempt to secure the best possible return for the collection of goods further underlines the deep sense of responsibility he had assumed. "...as to providential Advantages by meeting with one thus allied to Mr. Edwards: one is, that instead of directing the Cargo to be sold by any of Mr. Edwards' friends to merchants at Boston, he shewed that if all were sent up the river of Connecticut, on which it seems Northampton stands, to Mrs. Edwards, she, by her fitness to dispose of such things in places near her, might make possibly about 15 per cent more than would be got by selling to Merchants at Boston." pp. li-lxii.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxviii.

willing to do for a minister of New England located on the edge of the wilderness of Massachusetts; and it stands as a glowing tribute of their affection for him, and the great esteem with which they held him.

However, the most revealing overture from Scotland came in a letter from Erskine sent, interestingly enough, before Edwards's dismissal. Erskine had been aware of the escalation of difficulties between Edwards and his people for sometime, and was writing to invite him to move his family to Scotland, volunteering at the same time to help negotiate clerical employment for him in the Church of Scotland. Erskine's letter has not survived, but Edwards's response has. His answer, written in July, 1750 immediately following his dismissal, is particularly revealing and is quoted here in full.

You are pleased, dear sir, very kindly to ask me, whether I could sign the Westminster Confession of Faith, and submit to the Presbyterian form of Church Government; and to offer to use your influence to procure a call for me, to some congregation in Scotland. I should be very ungrateful, if I were not thankful for such kindness and friendship. As to my subscribing to the substance of the Westminster Confession, there would be no difficulty; and as to the Presbyterian Government, I have long been perfectly out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government in this land; and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God, and the reason and nature of things; though I cannot say that I think, that the Presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland is so perfect, that it cannot, in some respects, be mended. But as to my removing, with my numerous family, over the Atlantic, it is, I acknowledge, attended with many difficulties, that I shrink at. Among other things, this is very considerable, that it would be on uncertainties, whether my gifts and administration would suit any congregation, that should send for me without trial; and so great a thing, as such a removal, had need to be on some certainty as to that matter. If the expectations of a congregation were so great, and they were so confident of my qualifications, as to call at a venture, having never seen nor heard me; their disappointment might possibly be so much the greater, and they the more uneasy, after acquaintance and trial. My own country is not so dear to me, but that, if there were an evident prospect of being more serviceable to Zion's

interests elsewhere, I could forsake it. And I think my wife is fully of this disposition.<sup>76</sup>

Edwards appears not to have considered the prospect of taking up a ministry in Scotland as disagreeable--daunting, yes: daunting at the thought of the journey across the Atlantic with his large family and the potential situation of being found unfit by a Scottish congregation. Theologically, there is reason to believe that he would have made the transition from a New England congregational minister to a minister of the Kirk relatively easily. His last sentiments would also indicate that with certain assurances he could possibly be persuaded to undertake the arduous journey. At least it appears Erskine thought so, for by January of the following year he and MacLaurin had begun discussing a proposal, and in February met to hammer out the fine details.<sup>77</sup> "I expect Mr. Erskine in town to-morrow," wrote MacLaurin to William Hogg, "and propose to concert with him as to laying before Mr. Edwards different overtures that have been thought of, as this, by Divine Blessing, may help to make a right choice and determination."<sup>78</sup> What became of this second proposal we do not know. None of the subsequent correspondence has survived. Although the prospect never materialized, one cannot resist asking the question, what if Edwards had made his way to Scotland? It is a question that Erskine and MacLaurin pondered in their willingness and eagerness to make him a son of the Kirk.<sup>79</sup>

The contributions to Edwards's thinking, writing and spiritual well-being by his Scottish correspondents cannot be overestimated. Many of the books which figured into

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<sup>76</sup> *JEW*orks, vol. 1, p. 412.

<sup>77</sup> *Works of MacLaurin*, vol. 1, pp. l, lii.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lii, The letter is dated February 11, 1751.

<sup>79</sup> See Wellwood's discussion of this proposal in his, *Life and Writings of Erskine*, Note X, pp. 514f.

the later works of Edwards would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible for him to have acquired without the contributions particularly from Erskine. Further, given Edwards's location on the edge of the New England wilderness for much of his career, and in the wilderness the last several years of his life, the spiritual and intellectual fare his Scottish friends provided him kept his mind and heart healthy, fertile, lively and on the cutting edge of the intellectual and religious currents of the day. Speaking of Edwards's isolation, Dwight observed that he was "with no libraries to explore, and with no men of eminence with whose minds his could come into daily contact."<sup>80</sup> How much more exaggerated would Edwards's isolation have been without the likes of Erskine and company?

During this period Edwards published four major works, all of which had immediate and longterm effects on Scottish evangelicalism. The first was *Some Thoughts Concerning the present Revival of Religion in New-England*. It was published in Boston in March of 1742, and reprinted in Edinburgh in 1743 just as Edwards's epistolary links were being formed. As the Great Awakening in New England gathered momentum, Edwards increasingly found himself in the middle, contending for the revival as a genuine work of the Spirit of God against its detractors on the one hand, while on the other hand, seeking to temper the claims and activities of the enthusiastic wing of the revival, the radical New Lights.<sup>81</sup> Nearly four times the length of *Distinguishing Marks*, Edwards covered much of the same ground in *Some Thoughts*, yet developing those themes while incorporating new ones. In keeping with his understanding of the nature of true religion,

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<sup>80</sup> "Memoirs," *Works*, vol. 1, p. clxxxvii.

<sup>81</sup> Early indications of this development are evident in *Distinguishing Marks, JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 276-88.

which proceeds from his “new spiritual sense of the heart,” he again set out to persuade the “cold-hearted opposers” of the revival of their error in divorcing the “affections of the soul” from acts of the will.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, he emphasised much more forcefully than before the need for a biblically informed management and promotion of the work, and stressed to a much greater degree than he did in *Distinguishing Marks* the potentially aberrant nature of religious experience in an attempt to temper the revivals enthusiasts. His appeals to balanced judgment, however, proved ineffectual.

In Scotland, *Some Thoughts* received an equally enthusiastic reception as did *Distinguishing Marks*. Gillespie was especially laudatory of Edwards’s treatment of the relationship of visionary impressions and impulses to genuine religious experience. Although Gillespie was a warm admirer of Whitefield, he disapproved of his countenancing the practice of regarding impressions and impulses as immediate revelations from heaven, and was disturbed that it had led some in Scotland to adopt this position.<sup>83</sup> Gillespie told Edwards that his own thoughts on the matter “harmonized” especially well with his expanded discussion of the subject in *Some Thoughts*, and therefore welcomed it as timely and remarkably suited to the Scottish context.<sup>84</sup> Erskine also found Edwards’s thinking in this area useful. Commenting on Gillespie’s *Essay on Immediate Revelations*, Erskine remarked, “the year before I was ordained a minister, I became fully convinced of the absurdity of pretending to immediate revelations, or considering the influences of the Spirit as a rule of duty; for which I was not a little indebted to the perusal of President Edwards’s thoughts on the revival in New England,

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<sup>82</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 297f.

<sup>83</sup> Gillespie, Letter to Edwards, November 24, 1746. *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, pp. 470f. See also Lindsay, *Life and Times of Thomas Gillespie*, pp. 252-53.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

and to frequent conversations with Mr. Gillespie.<sup>85</sup> Robe referred to *Some Thoughts* as that “excellent Book” and marked out the fourth part, dealing with those things that needed to be corrected or avoided in the revival, for special notice.<sup>86</sup>

The book was not accepted, however, altogether uncritically. While Robe was praising the fourth part of *Some Thoughts*, McCulloch was struggling with it. Writing to Howell Harris on November 4, 1743, McCulloch informed him that a new book by Edwards had just been published in Edinburgh, and thought it might be available in London.<sup>87</sup> He goes on to say,

[It] contains many excellent things, & may be proper to perused by all that are, or would be imployed as Instruments in the Lords hand in carrying on his work. But he has somethings in Part 4th relating to the Leading of the Spirit, assistance of the Spirit in Prayer & Preaching, praying in faith for a particular mercy, Impressions & Impulses & Immediate Revelations &c. that would need to be taken with great Caution. I wish, my D[ear] Sir, you would consider these Points with a as much care & attention as may be and tell me how far you think what Mr. Edwards has there said, agrees to Scripture and Experience (?). Please favour with your thoughts at length on this subject next time you write.<sup>88</sup>

What McCulloch’s specific reservations were he does not make known.

However, Gillespie’s observation concerning Whitefield may offer a clue as to the source of McCulloch’s guarded approach to the fourth part of *Some Thoughts*. By the spring of 1742, McCulloch was desperate for Whitefield to visit Cambuslang, and when he came in June he was literally spellbinding.<sup>89</sup> The success of Whitefield’s ministry was all the more extraordinary for the “immediate revelations,” “visions,” and “strong impulses” that

<sup>85</sup> Erskine, Preface to Gillespie, *Essay on Immediate Revelations*, p.vi.

<sup>86</sup> Preface, *CMH*, p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> As it turned out, the Edinburgh edition of *Some Thoughts* was the only full reprint of the Boston edition to be published during Edwards’s lifetime.

<sup>88</sup> *Selected Trevecka Letters*, pp. 119-20.

<sup>89</sup> Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 101-12, 111-22; Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, pp. 148f.

accompanied it. Perhaps McCulloch had come to equate the remarkable ingathering of souls with the epiphenomena, and therefore perceived Edwards treatment of the subject potentially hostile to the revival. If so, he was certainly not the only one to have considered this. William Cooper confessed, to a correspondent in Glasgow (very likely MacLaurin) that he was tempted for a time to think that Edwards had betrayed the revival into the hands of its opposers by his critical analysis of particular aspects of the work represented in the fourth part of *Some Thoughts*.<sup>90</sup>

As substantial a piece of work as *Some Thoughts* was, its immediate influence was considerably less than *Distinguishing Marks*. This was due simply to the fact that it was published in Scotland after the revival had peaked. However, it did help to inspire two long-term effects that proved especially formative for Scottish evangelicalism. However, rather than addressing them here, they will be taken up in relationship to the two final books published during this period to which these effects are most closely connected.

While composing *Some Thoughts*, Edwards was preaching a series of sermons that he later refined and published as, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, published in Boston in the spring of 1746. Here Edwards offered his most mature analysis of religious experience and practical Christianity. Though the revival fervor had long been spent and with it the controversies that had attended it, Edwards was compelled to respond one more time to the central questions that the revivals had posed: “What is the nature of true religion?” and, “what are the distinguishing qualifications of those that

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<sup>90</sup> *CMH*, No. 4, 1744, pp. 13f. Cooper was particularly upset by a comment of a detractor printed in a Boston paper: “The 4th Part of Mr. Edwards’s Book contains an Account of greater Disorders, Delusions, Errors, and Extravagances, among the Subjects of the late Work, than the Opposers thought of, or could believe on any lower Authority.”

are in favor with God, and entitled to his eternal rewards?”<sup>91</sup> “It greatly concerns us,” said Edwards in his preface to the treatise, “to use our utmost endeavors clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist....My design is to contribute my mite, and use my best...endeavors to this end, in the ensuing treatise.”<sup>92</sup> His treatise on *Religious Affections* was as definitive a statement on the perennial question of true religion as he ever produced, and stands as a classic in the field of religious psychology to this day.<sup>93</sup>

Near the end of 1742 the work in New England had begun to decline, and by the early part of 1743 the Scottish awakenings had greatly subsided. Even so, concern over the continuation of the work and the need to detect errors in judgment and practice in the religious experience of their people remained high among Edwards and his correspondents. In his first letter to Robe, written in May, 1743, Edwards stated, “It can scarcely be conceived of what consequence it is, to the continuance and propagation of a revival of religion, that the utmost care be used to prevent error and disorder among those that appear to be the subjects of such a work; ..., and particularly that there be the greatest caution used in comforting and establishing persons, as being safe and past danger of hell.”<sup>94</sup> One of the great errors propagated under the revival, according to Edwards, was the tendency to give assurance on the basis of inconclusive evidence. Although Edwards had laboured both in *Distinguishing Marks* and *Some Thoughts* to clearly and carefully delineate between those signs that evince true religion from those that do not, an alarming lack of judgment persisted. “Many among us,” Edwards went on to say, “have been ready

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<sup>91</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 84.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>93</sup> Although published in 1746, the work began as a sermon series preached, according to Dwight, sometime during the years 1742 or 1743, *Works*, vol. p. lxxxiii.

<sup>94</sup> May 12, 1743, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 536.

to think that all high raptures are divine; but experience plainly shews that it is not the degree of rapture and ecstasy, but the nature and kind that must determine us in their favor.”<sup>95</sup> As has been noted above, Robe, Gillespie and Erskine shared with Edwards the same apprehensions.

Edwards’s design for the *Treatise* was informed by two things. On the one hand he was convinced that God had indeed accomplished great and wonderful things during the late revival. But on the other hand, he was equally aware that during the revival false ideas about what true religion was had been propagated and were becoming entrenched. “There is a great decay of the work of God amongst us, especially as to the awakening and converting influence of the Spirit of God; and the prejudices there are,...., are riveted and inveterate.” The revival in New England had created two parties, the “radical New Lights” who favored the work and the “Old Lights” who were opposed to it. Edwards laid the blame for the division in a great measure on the “imprudent management” of the revival by its supporters.<sup>96</sup> Errors continued to be multiplied and misinformation propagated. What the letter to Robe reveals, is that behind these false ideas Edwards perceived a fundamental error in judgment concerning religious experience that left unchecked would continue to hinder the spread of true religion as he and his Scottish counterparts understood it.

The *Treatise on Religious Affections* embodied the best of his previous work on experimental religion and went beyond the revival context in its application. The work is divided into three parts. In the first, Edwards takes time to define, more thoroughly than on any previous occasion, the true nature of religious experience as a matter primarily of

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., pp. 536-37.

<sup>96</sup> *Some Thoughts*, part four, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, pp. 409-95.

the heart, stating that true religion is seated in the affections or inclinations. The second identifies and examines those specious appearances of the affections which may often be substituted for true religion, but which do not manifest genuine conversion or real piety. The third, which takes up nearly three quarters of the Treatise, describes twelve marks that arise from a genuine religious conversion. In this section Edwards points out the inseparable and comprehensible qualities of personal religion, in which practical effects are united with the gracious affections of the heart. True religion is essentially a changed heart (regeneration) that manifests itself in Christian practice.<sup>97</sup>

The publication history of *Religious Affection* presents a curious problem. In his memoirs of Edwards, Dwight specifically states that the Treatise was immediately republished in England and Scotland in 1746.<sup>98</sup> But according to Thomas Johnson, the first British edition of *Religious Affections* was printed in England in 1762, with the first Scottish edition coming in 1772.<sup>99</sup> In my own search I also have been unable to uncover the edition Dwight alludes to. I did find, however, in the 1765 Edinburgh edition of Edwards's *Account of the Life of David Brainerd*, a proposal for the printing, by subscription, of a complete edition of *Religious Affections*, to be produced in Edinburgh. The conditions set down, were that the book would be published as soon as 200 copies were subscribed for. This apparently became the 1772 edition. The interesting aspect of the proposal, however, is that it indicates that a previous impression of nearly 1300 copies had at some earlier time been quickly sold off. What were these 1300 copies and when and where were they printed? The fact that Gillespie was in possession of a copy of

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<sup>97</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 452.

<sup>98</sup> "Memoirs," *Works*, vol. 1, p. lxxxiii.

<sup>99</sup> *Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 33-34. The 1762 English edition was only an abridgement, printed in London by the Rev. Mr. William Gordon. The first complete edition printed in Britain, according to Johnson, was the Edinburgh 1772.

*Religious Affections* by November of 1746,<sup>100</sup> would suggest that Dwight's claim that a Scottish edition appeared soon after the 1746 Boston printing may perhaps represent the truth of the matter.

The influence of *Religious Affections* on Scottish evangelicalism, like its predecessor *Some Thoughts*, lies less in its immediate effect than its long-term influence. The only documented example of the early influence of *Religious Affections* is recorded in the pages of Edwards's correspondence with Gillespie. The exchange of letters between the two men evince a unique blend of mutual respect and critical thinking. Although well pleased with the Treatise overall, Gillespie had difficulty ascertaining what Edwards intended by his statement, "That they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual light or sight, is an antisciptural and absurd doctrine."<sup>101</sup> Gillespie questions the validity of Edwards's statement, stating, "this doctrine, as it is understood by many, is, that Christians ought firmly to believe and trust in Christ without light or sight, and though they are in a dark, dead frame, and for the present having no spiritual experiences and discoveries."<sup>102</sup> It is surprising that Gillespie failed to understand Edwards's meaning, for Edwards prefaced the statement in question by affirming that the Scriptures do press upon the Christian the need to "walk by faith and not by sight," even setting forth the two ways in which the Scriptures intend for us to understand such walking in the dark. Edwards is speaking in the context of the doctrine of assurance, and is seeking to expose certain erroneous ideas that have continued to persist. His meaning of "spiritual light," as it relates to the statement highlighted by

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<sup>100</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 471.

<sup>101</sup> Letter to Edwards, November 24, 1746, *Ibid.*, p. 472. The point under discussion is raised by Edwards in part two, the eleventh negative sign, *Ibid.*, pp. 167-81.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 472.

Gillespie, is that light which is made possible only through regeneration. Thus he goes on to say, that faith, “which is without spiritual light, is not the faith of the children of the light, and of the day; but the presumption of the children of darkness. And therefore to press and urge them to believe, without any spiritual light or sight, tends greatly to help forward the delusions of the prince of darkness.”<sup>103</sup> In other words, and what the context of assurance makes clear, to press or urge someone to believe that they are in fact in a saved state (i.e. a child of the light and not of darkness), without any of those evidences that indicate a state of saving grace, encourages only spiritual delusion and fosters false sense of security. Edwards was fully aware that during the revival (and since), the assurance of salvation had often been pressed upon individuals whose only evidence for such a claim were inward impressions and impulses, visions and immediate revelations divorced from any Scriptural sign of “truly gracious” (i.e. saving) affections.

Unfortunately, Edwards attempt to clarify his meaning in his reply to Gillespie’s concerns only confused the situation further. By way of explanation, Edwards observed that “there is a great deal of difference between these two things, viz. its being a man’s duty that is without spiritual light or sight to believe, and its being his duty to believe without spiritual light or sight, or to believe while he yet remains without spiritual light or sight.”<sup>104</sup> In the case of the former, the premise is true; in the second case the premise is not only false but absurd. The point that Edwards is trying to make is that while all are under obligation to believe, God does not expect anyone to be capable of believing without saving faith, that is, without the light and sight that is essentially implied in faith.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., Letter from Edwards to Gillespie, September 4, 1747, p. 478.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 479.

Although Edwards was right in assuming that the difficulty was one of semantics, Gillespie was equally correct in claiming that Edwards's way of presenting it, especially in his letter, was less than helpful and open to misrepresentation, the very thing that Gillespie was trying to help him to avoid.

Gillespie's persistence may perhaps have been related to his own struggles of walking by faith rather than sight.<sup>106</sup> Before closing his first letter, Gillespie solicited Edwards advice on how to counsel one "who is incessantly harassed by Satan; can by no means keep him out of his mind; has used all means prescribed in Scripture and suggested by divines for resistance, known to him, in vain;...do what he will, seems to gain no ground against the powers of darkness?... what construction, think you, should he put on the sovereign conduct and dispensation of Heaven toward him?" The last question he posed in view of the apparent difficulty the text, "All things work together for good" (Romans. 8:20), presented to such a case.<sup>107</sup> Edwards responded at length in his next letter, beginning with two "indubitable truths" concerning the Apostle Paul's doctrine of Romans 8, followed by ten principles and three corollaries derived from the text. In his next missive, Gillespie told Edwards that what he shared about the case of temptation was "very agreeable," so much so, that he went on to say that "I shall now state the case more plainly, because I want much your further thoughts upon the it," and then went on to elaborate the particular circumstances. Gillespie's central concern this time had to do with the nature and means of Satan's manner of temptation.<sup>108</sup> Due to the problems Edwards was experiencing with his Northampton parish, it was a year and a half before

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<sup>106</sup> Lindsay, *Life and Times of Thomas Gillespie*, pp. 231, 240f.

<sup>107</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 476.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter from Gillespie to Edwards, September 19, 1748, p. 497.

he answered Gillespie. But when he eventually did respond he had little to add, except to say that if a person could be persuaded to “go on in a steady course of performance of all duties,...., without suffering themselves to be diverted from it by any violence of Satan, or specious pretense of his whatsoever,” properly ordering all responsibilities to God, family, work and society, “I think,...., they would be best guarded against the devil.”<sup>109</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Gillespie had written an essay on the subject at hand entitled, *A Treatise on Temptation*. It was completed by or before 1744, but he continued to develop his thinking on the topic with a plan to eventually publish an enlarged and more definitive study on the matter. There is no doubt that his solicitations from Edwards on the subject were with the view of inclusion into the expanded work. William Lindsay tells us that according to John Erskine, Gillespie reviewed the work towards the end of his life, but was prevented from completing it, with the consequence that nearly one third of what he had planned was never published.<sup>110</sup> Missing from the published treatise is any discussion of the things that passed between Gillespie and Edwards. However, there is every reason to believe that it was Gillespie’s intention to incorporate what he had gleaned from Edwards had he the opportunity.

One final observation concerning Gillespie’s relationship to Edwards. It was brought out earlier that near the end of his life Gillespie published an essay on the continuation of immediate revelations. In his first two letters to Edwards he asked him to share more of his thinking on the subject. Edwards did not bring up the issue in his first letter, and at the end of his second letter of April, 1750, he excused himself of pursuing the subject further with Gillespie having already written so much on the topic in his

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., Letter from Edwards to Gillespie, April 2, 1750, pp. 511-12.

<sup>110</sup> Lindsay, *Life and Times of Thomas Gillespie*, p. 241.

earlier works. From the correspondence that has survived, there is no evidence that Edwards ever addressed the subject again. I bring this up only to call attention to the fact that in the two areas in which Gillespie wrote and thought extensively, he earnestly desired to know as much of what Edwards thought about them as possible. This says much about Gillespie's profound respect for Edwards thinking, and is indicative of the kind of influence Edwards exercised on his thinking.

But the real importance of Edwards's treatise is not to be found in its immediate reception, but rather in its continuing influence. Speaking of the influence of Jonathan Edwards's *Religious Affections* in Scotland to an American audience in 1903, James Orr (1844-1913), the renowned Scottish theologian and apologist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, had this to say:

I took the opportunity before I left home of making a few inquiries in Christian homes as to what books they had of Edwards, and the reply was, I think invariably, the Treatise on the Religious Affections. Yet it must be confessed that the numbers acquainted with this pearl of Edwards's religious writings are becoming ever fewer. It is not the rising generation, but their fathers and mothers, their grandfathers and grandmothers, who can speak with knowledge of this great experimental classic.<sup>111</sup>

Orr here points to the outstanding aspect of the long-term influence of Edwards's *Religious Affections* on Scottish evangelicalism--it was used to train several generations of Scottish evangelicals in the ways of experimental religion. Between the years 1772 and 1831 nine separate editions of the treatise were issued in Scotland.<sup>112</sup> Testimonies by Scottish evangelicals concerning the preeminent place *Religious Affections* had assumed

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<sup>111</sup> "Jonathan Edwards: His Influence in Scotland," *Congregationalist and Christian World* 88 (3 October, 1903): 467.

<sup>112</sup> Six were published in Edinburgh (1772, 1789, 1810, two in 1812, 1822) and three in Glasgow (1822, 1825, 1831).

in the field of experimental religion by the end of the eighteenth century abound.

However, there are two from the nineteenth century that, like James Orr, powerfully indicate the extraordinary place Edwards's treatise had attained among Scottish evangelical culture.

The first comes from Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood (1750-1827). Wellwood was the leading evangelical at the turn of the nineteenth century and one of the most influential churchmen of his day. He became minister of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh in 1775 and remained there until his death. He was appointed Moderator of the General Assembly in 1785, and was instrumental in the rise of evangelical influence in the General Assembly in the 1780's, and the subsequent Moderate decline during the same period.<sup>113</sup> In his indispensable biography of John Erskine (published in 1818), when discussing the role of Edwards's *Religious Affections* in the life of Erskine, Wellwood gave his own impressions of the book.

[It] is not too much to say, that it is not only worthy of the talents and sincerity of its author, but that, while it shews that he was neither forward nor rash in estimating striking or sudden impressions of religion, it contains more sound instruction on its particular subject, and lays down more intelligible and definite rules to distinguish true from false religion, and to ascertain, by distinct characters, the genuine spirit of vital piety, separated from all fanatical delusions, than any other book which has yet been given to the world.<sup>114</sup>

But possibly the most telling of all comes from the preface to a collection of addresses delivered in Glasgow in 1840 by leading evangelicals and published the same year. Of the several "valuable and judicious treatises" on revivalism available to the reader of the day, the author states,

<sup>113</sup> John R. McIntosh, "Wellwood, (Sir) Henry Moncrieff," *DSCHT*, p. 860.

<sup>114</sup> Wellwood, *Life and Writings of John Erskine*, p. 197.

...it is impossible to name any that so powerfully demand the attention of the candid and thoughtful reader, as the work on Religious Affections by Jonathan Edwards,---that entitled A Narrative of the Revival of Religion in New England, with Thoughts on that Revival, by the same great Author..., it is of unspeakable importance to be able to refer to the writings of such a man as Edwards, equally distinguished as a pre-eminent philosopher, a profound divine, and a sincerely pious and practical Christian. The statements and the reasonings of such a man are alike suitable for the perusal of those who oppose and those who advocate the cause of relivals of religion....[Those who] are little acquainted with their true nature, and consequently feel themselves unable either to defend them in argument, or to aid in promoting them when they appear to be in operation, or to distinguish between a reality and a counterfeit, should lose no time in making themselves thoroughly acquainted with these inestimable works....For though a considerable period has elapsed since these works were first produced, their applicability to similar cases has not diminished..., Time itself will grow old before the writings of Jonathan Edwards become obsolete.<sup>115</sup>

Edwards's *Treatise on Religious Affections* remained the standard work among evangelicals in Scotland until near the end of the nineteenth century. The influence the treatise exerted on Scottish evangelicalism from the middle of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century was perhaps more than any other single volume on the subject.

Two other works of Edwards's, published during this period, were also to leave a permanent impression on the face of eighteenth and nineteenth century Scottish evangelicalism. The strong connection, noted in chapter four, between the widespread success of the revival and the prophecies concerning the latter days by the revivalists, found expression in Scotland in the United Concert for Prayer and the Scottish overseas missionary movement. Each was initiated and carried out by evangelicals, and each was

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<sup>115</sup> *The Revival of Religion: Addresses by Scottish Evangelical Leaders delivered in Glasgow in 1840* (Glasgow, 1840, reprinted by Banner of Truth Trust, 1984), pp. xviii-xix. See also, "Review," *Presbyterian Review* 12 (January, 1840): 454ff; and "Letter to the Editor: "On Revivals of Religion," *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, New Series, 3 (December, 1834): 781-85

closely connected with the two publications of Edwards. The first was, *An 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 Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture-Promises and Prophecies concerning the last Time.*<sup>116</sup> Edwards produced this work as a commendation and apologetic for the United Concert of Prayer. The second, *An Account of the Life Of the late Reverend Mr. David Brainerd, Minister of the Gospel*, was Edwards's carefully crafted memoir of the New England missionary.<sup>117</sup>

The rise of the United Concert of Prayer and the subsequent publication of Edwards's *Humble Attempt* was the direct result of the spread of millennial speculations within Scotland's evangelical community. John Erskine was the first to argue for the possible connection between the revival and the imminent fulfillment of the prophecies of the last days.<sup>118</sup> Edwards seconded Erskine's speculations in *Some Thoughts* which was published a year later in 1743 in Scotland.<sup>119</sup> Edwards's thinking on the subject held an idea that brought a greater sense of reality to the millennial notions Erskine had presented. Certain prophecies of Scripture led Edwards to think that the end time events would very probably have their rise in America. Scottish evangelicals were already of the general opinion that Northampton was the source of the present work. Consequently, Edwards's ability to rationally tie Scriptural prophecy to the specific development of the present work caught their imagination and helped increase their apocalyptic expectations.

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<sup>116</sup> The title given here represents only the first third of the full title which is no less than 186 words. Hereafter it will be cited as *Humble Attempt*. See *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5.

<sup>117</sup> See *JE(Yale)*, vol. 7.

<sup>118</sup> See his *Signs of the Times Considered* (1742).

<sup>119</sup> In the second part of that work Edwards stated that there was reason to believe that the present extraordinary work of revival was the "dawning," or at least a "prelude," of that great and glorious work of God foretold in Scripture that would "renew the world of mankind," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 353.

McCulloch was especially taken by Edwards's reasoning. Writing to Edwards in August of 1743, he opened his letter with the following statement.

The happy period in which we live, and the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, wherewith you first were visited, in Northampton, in the year 1734: and then, more generally, in New England, in 1740, and 1741; and then we, in several places in Scotland, in 1742, and 1743; and the strong opposition made to this work, with you and with us, checked by an infinitely superior Power; often brings to my mind that prophecy, Isaiah lix. 19; "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the West; and his glory from the Rising of the sun; When the enemy shall come in like as flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall be lift up a standard against him."<sup>120</sup>

McCulloch went on to say that he believed this prophecy "eminently points at our times," and counts it as "remarkable" that the prophet, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, puts the west before the east, thus signifying, he believes, "that the glorious revival of religion, and the wide and diffusive spread of vital christianity, in the latter times of the gospel, should begin in the more *westerly* parts, and proceed to these more *easterly*."<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, as we have seen, Edwards's doctrine of assurance injected a new religious optimism among Scottish evangelicals. One of the results was an increase in the number of Scottish prayer societies.<sup>122</sup> By 1741 it had become common practice among the societies to independently set aside an arranged day to come together and pray for a general revival of religion. The following year, in March, soon after the parish of Cambuslang was awakened, an attempt was made to coordinate the praying of the societies of Dundee. Led by John Willison, the ministers "agreed to observe Thursday next for Thanksgiving to the Lord in all our praying Societies, and others are invited to

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<sup>120</sup> *JEW*orks, vol. 1, p. 198.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198-99.

<sup>122</sup> See O'Brien, "Transatlantic Community of Saints," p. 829; and Stephen Stein, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, p. 37.

them to join in praising the Lord, for what reviving of the Lord's Work we see here,...and also to pray for Increase,...that they may turn to a general Reviving of the Lord's Work in poor languishing, withering Scotland."<sup>123</sup> Notice was taken of their example and less than a year later, Edinburgh sponsored their own coordinated day of prayer, circulating a public announcement inviting other societies to join them. The day proposed was the 18th of February 1743. The announcement contained the following clarification: "But if that Day does not suit with the Conveniency of any of the Societies, or private Christians, that desire to keep such a Day, they may chuse another more convenient for them."<sup>124</sup> The ideas of coordinated days, agreement in prayer for the general revival of religion, and the emphasis on inclusiveness were taken to a new level the next year.

Encouraged by the successes of these efforts, in October, 1744 a group of Scottish ministers, headed by John MacLaurin, proposed a United Concert of Prayer with the joint participation of their American and English counterparts. Promotion was done mostly through correspondence, though the *Christian Monthly History* devoted the entire number of April, 1745 to it.<sup>125</sup> The agreement involved a two year pledge in which individuals and societies would commit to weekly and quarterly prayer times during which they would pray for the universal revival of religion.<sup>126</sup> Upon receiving news of the concert, Edwards wrote to express his sincere joy and support for the enterprise. "Such an agreement and practice appears to me exceeding beautiful, and becoming Christians; and

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<sup>123</sup> Letter from Willison to McCulloch, March 22, 1742, printed in *GWH*, No. 26, 1742, pp. 7-8.

<sup>124</sup> *The Christian History*, No. 1, p. 87.

<sup>125</sup> *CMH*, No. 1, pp. 1-27.

<sup>126</sup> O'Brien, "Transatlantic Community of Saints," pp. 829-30.

I doubt not but it is so in Christ's eyes."<sup>127</sup> Edwards was repeating sentiments he had expressed four years earlier in *Some Thoughts*.

"I have often thought it would be a thing very desirable, and very likely to be followed with a great blessing, if there could be some contrivance that there should be an agreement of all God's people in America, that are well affected to this work, to keep a day of fasting and prayer to God; wherein we should all unite on the same day in humbling ourselves before God;...to address the Father of mercies, with prayers and supplications, and earnest cries, that he would continue and still carry on this work, and more abundantly and extensively pour out his Spirit;...and that he would bow the heavens and come down and erect his glorious kingdom through the earth."<sup>128</sup>

Whether or not Edwards is to be credited with suggesting the original idea for the concert for prayer, what is clear is that he came to the idea independently of his Scottish connection. This in itself is important for what it signifies about the union of minds that existed between himself and his Scottish friends.<sup>129</sup>

A proposal to continue the concert of prayer for another seven years was adopted in August 1746, after the two year pledge had expired. The new proposal took the form of a printed "Memorial" that was circulated within the transatlantic evangelical network.<sup>130</sup> Edwards was the main organiser of the concert in America, and received 500 copies of the "Memorial" from Scotland for distribution. Disturbed by the problems of

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<sup>127</sup> The letter, dated November 20, 1745, was originally printed in the *CMH*, No. 8, 1745, pp. 234-54, and is reprinted in *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, pp. 444-60. The quoted portion is found on pp. 444-45. The correspondent is unnamed, but was probably John MacLaurin.

<sup>128</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 520.

<sup>129</sup> Arthur Fawcett thinks the idea was probably partially inspired by Edwards. See *Revival of Cambuslang*, p. 225. Susan O'Brien states that Edwards "may have encouraged" the Scots "own interest in shared prayer," in "Transatlantic Community of Saints," p. 829. Stephen Stein believes that the idea definitely did not begin with Edwards, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, p. 36. Stein's sense of certainty is, however, open to question. He makes his judgement on the basis that the prayer day sponsored by the societies of Edinburgh was announced (January, 1743) before Edwards's suggestion appeared in print (here he is referring to the Scottish publication of *Some Thoughts* which was printed much later in the year). But he has failed to take into consideration the fact that the Boston edition of *Some Thoughts*, which was published in March of 1742 (see *JE(Yale)*, vol. 4, p. 65), could easily have been available in Scotland before the end of 1742. The transatlantic exchange of books and pamphlets was by this time a common practice.

<sup>130</sup> The "Memorial" is reproduced in full in the text of Edwards's *Humble Attempt*, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, pp. 324-328.

disruption and division that were troubling New England, his efforts were galvanized by the thought that the concert offered a new basis for community and harmony.<sup>131</sup> When less than a year later he wrote the *Humble Attempt*, Edwards's aim was to foster religious union on two fronts--locally and internationally. He shared his thoughts soon after he completed the manuscript with McCulloch. "I have taken a great deal of pains to promote this Concert here in America, and shall not cease to do so.... I have written largely on the subject, insisting on persuasions, and answering objections; and what I have written is gone to the press."<sup>132</sup> The *Humble Attempt* was published in Boston in 1747. Although Dwight claims that the work was immediately republished in England and Scotland, there is no record of an edition issued in England before 1789 and in Scotland before the nineteenth century.<sup>133</sup> Edwards did, however, send a copy to each of his correspondents and there is evidence that other copies were sent and widely circulated throughout Britain soon after its publication in Boston.<sup>134</sup> Willison's comment that he desired that the book be spread not just in Scotland, but "universally" suggests that it was the intention of Edwards's Scottish friends to circulate the *Humble Attempt* as widely as possible within Scotland.<sup>135</sup>

The work is broken down into three parts. In the first, Edwards lays out a biblical rationale for the kind of prayer advocated by the concert. He then goes on, in part two, to

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<sup>131</sup> Stein, "Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, p. 39.

<sup>132</sup> Letter from Edwards to McCulloch, September 23, 1747, *JEWorks*, vol. 1, p. 243.

<sup>133</sup> *JEWorks*, vol. 1, p. 245. The Scottish edition referred to contained only selected portions. See *Edwards's Call to United Extraordinary Prayer and Concert for Prayer of 1746, Renewed* (Dundee, 1846). However, the first three volumes of Edwards's collected works containing the *Humble Attempt* were published in Scotland early in the nineteenth century. See Johnson, *The Printed Writings of Edwards*, pp. 112ff.

<sup>134</sup> See Edwards's letter to McCulloch, Oct. 7, 1748. *JEWorks*, vol. 1, p. 263; and John Foster, "The Bicentenary of Jonathan Edwards' 'Humble Attempt'." *The International Review of Missions*, vol. xxxvii (1948): 375-81.

<sup>135</sup> Letter from Willison to Edwards, March 17, 1749. *JEWorks*, vol. 1, p. 272.

give seven motives for complying with the proposed memorial. The first five focus on the glory of the eschaton, while the last two direct the reader to present circumstances and the potential glory to be realized by the visible union of the church of Christ in explicit prayer for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. In the final section he answers the objections that this kind of special prayer is superstitious, whimsical, legalistic, premature, and novel and thus inappropriate.<sup>136</sup>

The apocalyptic paradigm Edwards presented in the *Humble Attempt* drew forth relatively little discussion from his correspondents.<sup>137</sup> In 1749 Willison indicated that he approved of Edwards's remarks on Moses Lowman, and agreed that the Antichrist's fall would be gradual in the way Edwards explained it.<sup>138</sup> McCulloch was more eager to engage Edwards on the particulars of his end-times scheme. They exchanged thoughts on the subject off and on for five years, from 1743 to 1748. Though the details of their discussion are not relevant for the purposes of this study, the way in which Edwards brought a close to their interchange is. "If we do not exactly agree in our thoughts about these things, yet in our prayers for the accomplishment of these glorious events in God's time, and for God's gracious presence with us, and his assistance in endeavours to promote his kingdom and interests, in the mean time, we may be entirely agreed and united."<sup>139</sup> Edwards's agreement with his Scottish correspondents and commitment to

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<sup>136</sup> See *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, pp. 309-436.

<sup>137</sup> On eighteenth-century millennialism see Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial themes in American thought, 1756-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); James West Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); and Earnest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

<sup>138</sup> *JEWorks*, vol. 1, p. 272. Moses Lowman (1680-1752) was an English non-conformist divine who advanced a figurative interpretation of the 'latter-day' raising of the saints and the coming of Christ. See also Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, p. 10. For an account of the relationship of Edwards's apocalyptic theory to that of Lowman's, see *Ibid.*, pp. 16-20, 120-25, 141-42, and Stein, "Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, pp. 22-23, 44-45, 55.

<sup>139</sup> Letter from Edwards to McCulloch, October, 7, 1748, *JEWorks*, vol. 1, p. 264.

the concert of prayer as a Scripturally approved way for advancing God's divine programme as it relates to the latter days had enduring effects on Scottish Calvinism and on the development and worldwide impact of evangelical Calvinism.

The long-term importance of the *Humble Attempt* for Scottish evangelicalism lay not in its apocalyptic theory, but in the meaning it gave to the idea of the concert of prayer, and its use in promoting and sustaining it.<sup>140</sup> Willison told Edwards, "I know of nothing that hath a greater tendency to promote the aforesaid happy Concert, than the book you lately published about it."<sup>141</sup> This was undoubtedly largely due to Edwards's overriding concern, passion and vision, which was, as he expressed it in the book's title-- to promote the explicit agreement and union of God's people for the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth according to the prophecies of the last time. The underlying catholic attitude was inescapable. In part two of the work, for example, Edwards marshalled together a chorus of Scripture describing the glory of the latter days as,

...a time of vast increase of knowledge and understanding,... wherein religion and true Christianity shall in every respect be uppermost in the world,... a time of wonderful union, and the most universal peace, love, and sweet harmony,... wherein all heresies and false doctrines shall be exploded, and the church of God shall not be rent with a variety of jarring opinions,... a time wherein the whole earth shall be united as one holy city, one heavenly family, men of all nations shall...sweetly correspond one with another as brethren,... [and] wherein this whole great society shall appear in glorious beauty.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Susan O'Brien's study suggests that the meaning the majority of participants within the transatlantic community gave to the apocalyptic significance of the revival was derived from Edwards. "Transatlantic Community of Saints," passim.

<sup>141</sup> Letter from Willison to Edwards, March 17, 1749, *JEWorks*, vol. 1, p. 271.

<sup>142</sup> *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, pp. 338-39.

He concludes, “surely ‘tis worth praying for.”<sup>143</sup> A broadening of religious outlook, first kindled by the revivals, was being cultivated by the concert of prayer, and the *Humble Attempt* was its most definitive statement of purpose and vision.

If this new attitude was in fact engendered by the revival, we should expect it to be present at its inception. And indeed it was. Arthur Fawcett records that in the early part of 1745 Robe encouraged Erskine of Grange to invite the Wesley brothers to join the concert of prayer. John Wesley replied and thanked Erskine, remarking that “It shows a truly Christian spirit” and adding, “Might it not be practicable to have the concurrence of Mr. Edwards in New England.”<sup>144</sup> Fawcett’s penetrating comment on this interchange illustrates the unifying power of the concept of the United Concert for Prayer. “So it was that an English Episcopalian recommended to Scottish Presbyterians the inclusion of an American Independent within the comprehension of united intercession.”<sup>145</sup>

One year after Edwards published the *Humble Attempt*, certain evangelical ministers of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, John Erskine and John Gillies (the son-in-law of John MacLaurin) among them, created a scandal when they opened their pulpits to George Whitefield. The matter was raised soon after at a meeting of the Synod. Those in opposition objected on several grounds. For one thing, Whitefield was an ordained Anglican clergyman. Secondly, he had never subscribed to the Westminster Confession of Faith. He obviously lacked the qualifications necessary for a Presbyterian minister. Those responsible for inviting Whitefield argued that Anglican membership and refusal to subscribe to the Westminster Confession were not sufficient grounds for disqualifying

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>144</sup> Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, p. 226.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 227. Wesley the Arminian was also on the other side of the fence theologically from both his Scottish and New England counterparts.

him from preaching in a pulpit of the Church of Scotland.<sup>146</sup> Erskine further exemplified the new broad-minded attitude in the preface to his published account of the debate, *A Fair and Impartial Account of the Debate in the Synod of Glasgow and Air* [sic], by stating that its intent was “To promote right Sentiments as to occasional Ministerial Communion with other Protestant Churches, and to give the world a specimen of the moderation and catholic principles of the most numerous Synod of Scotland,” and “To shew,...that Difference of Sentiment ought not to occasion Breach of Charity in the smallest Degree.”<sup>147</sup> John Gillies went a step further when in 1753 he invited John Wesley to preach in his pulpit at College Church. Wesley commented later, “Surely with God nothing is impossible! Who would have believed, five and twenty years ago, either that the minister would have desired it or that I should have consented to preach in a Scotch Kirk.”<sup>148</sup> What needs to be re-emphasised at this point is that the chief sources for this new broad-mindedness were the revival and the concert for prayer, and Edwards had published the most definitive statements for both.

The new evangelical catholic attitude, the concert for prayer and Edwards’s *Humble Attempt* were all closely related to the rise of the Scottish overseas missionary movement. Scottish missions, Andrew Walls states, had their rise from the confluence of two streams of “activity directed toward Scotland” that were themselves “transformed by transatlantic influences.” The two streams were the Scottish awakening which was transformed by the transatlantic United Concert for Prayer, and the other was the Scottish

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<sup>146</sup> John Erskine, *A Fair and Impartial Account of the Debate in the Synod of Glasgow and Air* [sic], Sixth October 1748, Anent employing Mr. Whitefield (Edinburgh, 1748), pp. 3-26.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., Preface.

<sup>148</sup> Quoted in Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, p. 222. John Gillies (1712-96), minister of the College Church in Glasgow, exemplified the new evangelical attitude. His *Historical Collections Relating to... the Success of the Gospel*, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1754), helped prepare for the revivals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He also corresponded with Edwards, though not regularly.

Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge<sup>149</sup> which was transformed by the missionary activity of New England's David Brainerd and the account of his life published by Edwards.<sup>150</sup>

Walls indicates that two of the most transforming transatlantic influences were Edwards's *Humble Attempt* and the *Account of the Life of David Brainerd*.<sup>151</sup> When Edwards's promotion of united action for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the *Humble Attempt* was joined to the dynamic of the concert of prayer, it helped fuel the missionary vision of taking the Gospel into heathen lands kindled by the revivals. Moreover, Stuart Piggin, in his finely researched study of the making of evangelical missionaries described Edwards's view of prayer in the *Humble Attempt* as "pregnant with democratic potential, optimism, and synergism."<sup>152</sup> Although the *Humble Attempt* was to leave its mark on Scottish missions, the potential which Piggin describes was realised first by a group of English Baptist ministers. Yet even here a Scottish connection was involved.

In 1784 Andrew Fuller, the Baptist minister at Kettering in Northamptonshire, England, received a parcel of books from John Erskine which included a copy of the *Humble Attempt*. Within a few weeks Fuller and his ministerial colleagues of Northamptonshire had resolved to keep the first Monday of each month for prayer for the

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<sup>149</sup> Cited hereafter as SSPCK. The Society was founded in 1709 primarily for the purpose of instructing the people of the highlands in the Reformed Protestant faith, but had included in its charter a provision for the advancement of the Christian faith in heathen countries.

<sup>150</sup> Walls, "Missions," *DSCHT*, p. 567.

<sup>151</sup> In his study of Scottish theology, Torrance notes the detrimental impact the federalist theology and the Westminster tradition had on Scottish missions, and acknowledges the connection of the growth of Scottish missions with the Scottish revivals of 1742 and the subsequent rise of the modern Scottish evangelicalism, but fails to perceive any connections with Edwards. See *Scottish Theology*, pp. 101, 141, 202-04, 228-29, 249-51.

<sup>152</sup> Stuart Piggin, *Making Evangelical Missionaries, 1789-1858: The Social Background, Motives and Training of British Protestant Missionaries to India* (The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1984), p. 251.

revival of religion and the coming of Christ's kingdom. William Carey, the renowned missionary statesman, soon became associated with the group. A shoemaker and school teacher at the time, he later claimed that the prayer concert was the inspiration behind his vision for missions and founding of the Baptist Missionary Society.<sup>153</sup> Carey's missionary call and association with the Northamptonshire circle signaled the beginning of the modern missionary movement.<sup>154</sup> What this account reveals is that the original impetus behind the modern missionary movement is traceable back through Erskine to Scottish evangelicalism to the work of Edwards.

Edwards's *Account of the Life of David Brainerd* proved equally influential in fostering evangelical piety and missionary activity.<sup>155</sup> David Brainerd was appointed by the SSPCK in 1742 as a missionary to the Indians of America. His remarkable missionary career was prematurely cut short by his death in 1747 at the age of twenty-nine. At the time of his death he was in the process of preparing his private Diary for publication.<sup>156</sup> For reasons that will become apparent in a moment, Edwards inherited the unfinished task. The completed work was first published in Boston in 1749, and

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<sup>153</sup> The account is traced by John Foster, "The Bicentenary of Jonathan Edwards' Humble Attempt," p. 381; and by Arthur Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 229-30.

<sup>154</sup> The history of these events are developed more thoroughly in E.A. Payne's, *The Prayer Call of 1784* (London, 1941), *The Church Awakes: The Story of the Modern Missionary Movement* (London, 1942) and "The Evangelical Revival and the Modern Missionary Movement," *Congregational Quarterly* (July, 1943): 223ff; J.A. de Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions, 1640-1810* (Kampen, 1970). For an account of Edwards's place in missions see, S.H. Rooy, *The Theology of Missions in the Puritan Tradition* (Delft, 1965); and Ronald Edwin Davies, "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord: The Missiological Thought and Practice of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), unpublished PhD. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, June, 1989.

<sup>155</sup> Hereafter cited as *Life*.

<sup>156</sup> Reliable accounts of the life and influence of Brainerd can be found in, Norman Pettit, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 7, pp. 1-85; and Joseph Conforti's, "David Brainerd and the Nineteenth-Century Missionary Movement," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (1985): 309-29, and "Jonathan Edwards's Most Popular Work: 'The Life of David Brainerd' and Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Culture," *Church History* 54 (June, 1985): 188-201.

according to Willison was reprinted in Scotland the same year.<sup>157</sup> Since that time more editions and reprints of the *Life* have been issued than any of Edwards's other books.<sup>158</sup> In Scotland alone eleven separate editions were published between the years 1749 and 1858. Its popularity had much to do with the unique intensity of Brainerd's religious affections and approach to missions.

In his concluding observations on Brainerd's life, Edwards, in summary fashion, listed the distinguishing qualities of Brainerd's piety and commending it as a superior study in the case of true religion. Included among the distinguishing marks were,

...an high degree of love to God, delight in the perfections of his nature, placing the happiness of life in him; not only in contemplating him, but in being active in pleasing and serving him;...uncommon resignation to the will of God, and that under vast trials; great and universal benevolence to mankind, reaching all sorts of persons without distinction; attended with extraordinary humility, meekness, forgiving injuries, and love to enemies;... a most diligent improvement of time, and earnest care not to lose no part of it; great watchfulness against all sorts of sin, of heart, speech, and action;... [an] unmoveable stability, calmness, and resignation, in the sensible approaches of death.<sup>159</sup>

What is apparent here and needs emphasising, is the interconnection between inner piety and outward behaviour, and submission to the sovereign will of God and human responsibility. This was no accident. Edwards had been Brainerd's mentor and his early revival works had shaped Brainerd's spiritual life significantly even before the publication of *Religious Affections*. As a consequence Brainerd's Diary reads like a record of his efforts to realise the distinguishing marks of true religion Edwards developed and analysed in *Religious Affections*.<sup>160</sup> Being fully aware of this, Edwards

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<sup>157</sup> Thomas Johnson does not list a 1749 Scottish edition. The edition spoken of by Willison included a preface by Dr. Doddridge, which he dedicated to the SSPCK. See Johnson, *Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>158</sup> Conforti, "Jonathan Edwards's Most Popular Work," p. 191.

<sup>159</sup> *An Account of the Life Of the Reverend David Brainerd, JE(Yale)*, vol. 7, pp. 520-21.

<sup>160</sup> I owe this insight to Joseph Conforti, "Jonathan Edwards's Most Popular Work," p. 194.

used the occasion of editing the Diaries to reinforce the principles of experimental religion he had set forth in his treatise. The result, says Joseph Conforti, was “a nearly perfect extended case study of genuine religious affections.”<sup>161</sup>

Edwards deliberately designed the *Life* as a companion to *Religious Affections*. Thus the practice of piety demonstrated in the *Life* served to authenticate the analysis of true religion he had presented in *Religious Affections*. A rather striking example of this symbiotic relationship is found Horatius Bonar’s preface to the 1851 Edinburgh edition of the *Life*.<sup>162</sup> Speaking of what he described as the “religious easy-mindedness” that prevailed at the time, Bonar observed,

It holds out an awful contrast to the religion of David Brainerd. Every page of his memoir, every entry in his diary, every letter from his pen, breathes an intensity of earnestness which protests against the tame and facile piety above averted to, but makes us feel that if it be true godliness, then Brainerd’s was fanaticism; and that, on the other hand, if Brainerd’s be the simple reality of religion, than the other is a mere piece of ill-acted mimicry or cold externalism.”<sup>163</sup>

Bonar believed that Brainerd’s life exemplified the way of true holiness. However, a mere mimicking of Brainerd was not what he was advocating. Rather it was the spiritual principles that undergirded Brainerd’s life, he insisted, that must be paid attention to. “He who uses Brainerd’s life as a copy which he must labour to imitate as closely and correctly as he can, will succeed in producing nothing but a piece of unhealthy religionism; he who uses it to arouse and stimulate, to detect flaws and deficiencies, to

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid. For a more nuanced assessment of the importance of Edwards’s editorial work, see Norman Pettit, “Editor’s Introduction,” *JE(Yale)*, vol. 7, pp. 71-74.

<sup>162</sup> Bonar (1808-89) was a well-known nineteenth-century hymnwriter and Free Church minister at Kelso. Among his writings were three bestsellers: *God’s Way of Peace*, *God’s Way of Holiness*, and *The Night of Weeping*. See J.S. Andrews, “Bonar,” *DSCHT*, p. 84.

<sup>163</sup> Horatius Bonar, Preface to *The Life of David Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians: Chiefly taken from his Diary, and other Private Writings*. By Jonathan Edwards (Edinburgh, 1851), p. xvi.

quicken his conscience, and urge him forward in the same path of high attainment, will find it an unspeakable blessing.”<sup>164</sup>

Two interrelated observations are called for here. First of all, to read the *Life* in the way Bonar advocated was to imbibe Edwards’s brand of piety, for Brainerd’s religion, as already has been noted, had been cultivated in the Edwardsian school of religious affections. Secondly, by placing the *Life* in the form of a case study of true religion, Edwards made his understanding of genuine piety accessible to the ordinary evangelical.<sup>165</sup> The influence of Edwards’s account of the life of Brainerd on the Scotland’s evangelical conception of genuine holiness perhaps is due more than anything else to the outworking of the second of these two points.

By capturing Brainerd’s extraordinary missionary outlook and exemplary Christian life the way he did, Edwards also succeeded in raising the missionary consciousness in Scotland to new heights. Specifically the *Life* was important for the Scottish missionary movement in two ways. First, at the time the *Life* was published the idea of missions in Scotland was ill-conceived if conceived at all by the majority within the Kirk. The one shining exception was the SSPCK. However, as a mission organization it was still in its infancy. The authorities of the mission saw in Brainerd a great opportunity to promote the cause of missions in Scotland, and they placed all their hopes on this “pious and ingenious youth” whom they praised for “diligence and success in his mission.”<sup>166</sup> At such a formative period in the history of Scottish missions, the

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

<sup>165</sup> The second point I owe to Joseph Conforti, “Jonathan Edwards’s Most Popular Work,” p. 195. Stuart Piggin has claimed a similar kind of influence for the *Humble Attempt*. See Piggin, *Making Evangelical Missionaries*, p. 251.

<sup>166</sup> From the manuscript records of the Society for the Propagating Christian Knowledge, November 5, 1747, quoted in Norman Pettit, “Editor’s Introduction,” *JE(Yale)*, vol. 7, p. 65.

popularity of Edwards's account of Brainerd helped to generate new and widespread interest in the idea of missions: its orthodoxy appealed to Scottish religious sensibilities and argued for the biblical soundness of the missionary enterprise, and its biographical and narrative framework served to educate Scottish readers about missionary life and activity. Arthur Fawcett's study of the outworking of the Scottish revivals has led him to call Edwards's life of Brainerd "one of the greatest inspirations behind the missionary enterprise."<sup>167</sup> And according to Stuart Piggin's, its role in shaping evangelical missionaries's view of genuine spirituality during the years 1789 to 1858 was enormous. It was the second most read biography by applicants for missionary service among Britains various missionary agencies during this same period.<sup>168</sup>

Second, I would propose that the *Life* almost single-handedly infused into the Scottish missionary enterprise a new dimension of respect for the missionary vocation, and elevated the role of the missionary to the place of a spiritual hero. An early indication of Brainerd's success with respect to the first is evident in the praise the directors of the SSPCK lavished on him after just five years of service. Another is the increased number of applicants to mission agencies. Between the years 1789 and 1858 alone, over one hundred and forty Scottish evangelicals applied to one of four missionary agencies, forty-eight to the Scottish Foreign Mission.<sup>169</sup> Concerning the second, through multiple editions of the *Life* published throughout American and Britain, Brainerd quickly became a religious folk hero within the evangelical community on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>170</sup> His deep piety expressed through his missionary service caught the spiritual

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<sup>167</sup> Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, p. 217.

<sup>168</sup> Piggin, *Making Evangelical Missionaries*, p. 19, 26 n. 72.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.254-83.

<sup>170</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp 19, 63, 229-31; Pettit, "Editor's Introduction," *JE(Yale)*, vol. 7, pp.3-4; Conforti, "Jonathan Edwards's Most Popular Work," *passim*.

imagination of Scottish evangelicals, and his connection to the SSPCK identified his work with the Church of Scotland. Brainerd's *Life* remained unrivaled as the standard religious biography for missionary candidates until William Orme published the memoirs of the Scottish evangelical John Urquhart.<sup>171</sup> One might go so far as to say that a new breed of "Scots Worthy" had been introduced into Scotland's religious profile. As Willison had observed, Brainerd was "one in a thousand." Nearly a century later, in 1832, the young Robert Murray McCheyne, while pursuing a course of divinity under Thomas Chalmers at Edinburgh, wrote of Brainerd: "Most wonderful man! What conflicts, what depressions, desertions, strength, advancement, victories, within thy torn bosom!... Tonight more set upon missionary enterprise than ever."<sup>172</sup>

Brainerd had set a high and lofty standard of inner piety and outward practice, demonstrating that the calling of the missionary was every bit as high as the call to the Kirk, and worthy of giving one's life for. The prospect of missions was especially appealing to the young generation of evangelicals (as the figures above show) who's piety had been formed by the revival and had been nurtured by the call to prayer.

In conclusion, several things need to be emphasized. Between the dawn of the eighteenth century and its mid-point within the Church of Scotland, Scottish evangelicals moved away from a narrowly sectarian and parochial conception of religion and church affairs to a more broad-minded, open and forward looking one. This transformation was the result of a change in the Scottish evangelical view of true religion. The old Scottish

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<sup>171</sup> Piggis, *Making Evangelical Missionaries*, p. 229. William Orme, *Memoirs, including Letters and Select Remains of John Urquhart: Late of the University of St. Andrews* (Boston: Cocker and Brewster, 1828).

<sup>172</sup> Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoirs and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne* (Philadelphia, 1844), p. 19.

Calvinist conception of salvation, emphasising continual striving, catechetical adherence and fidelity to the national covenants within a godly commonwealth, gave way to a new enterprising conception of salvation that was based upon discernible signs of genuine religious affections. Within this new salvific paradigm, personal assurance of salvation increasingly became the normative experience of the individual believer. The result of this new “robust” sense of assurance in terms of individual spirituality, says, Bebbington, was a “calmer, sunnier devotional life.”<sup>173</sup> The change in understanding of nature of true piety, in turn, redirected the way in which individuals pursued their faith. Or to put it another way, the change in the conception of the nature of true piety necessarily altered the nature of the quest. Under the old outlook spiritual pursuits were characterised by a perpetual and earnest striving after one’s own salvation. In contrast, under the new evangelical conception, conversion marked only the beginning of a life-long quest for true holiness. Sanctification, not conversion, filled the horizon of the evangelical’s personal spiritual pursuit, and an active spiritual concern for the salvation and spiritual growth of others took the place of the former preoccupation with one’s own saved state.

The architect of this new and enterprising religious perspective was Jonathan Edwards, and its influence among Scottish evangelicals was insured by the enthusiastic propagation of its creed through the writings and ministries of his Scottish friends. Edwards’s *Religious Affections* provided the theological heart of this new interpretation of genuine spirituality, and the *Humble Attempt* and *Life* embodied the dynamic and enterprising qualities that informed the religious quest of evangelicals. Stuart Piggin’s observation on Edwards’s view of prayer in the *Humble Attempt* as “pregnant with

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<sup>173</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 47.

democratic potential, optimism, and synergism,” points to three additional qualities that characterized the pursuit of true religion by Scottish evangelicals in the second half of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.<sup>174</sup> Concerning the democratic dimension, Piggin points to the vision Edwards expressed in the *Humble Attempt* which appealed “to all classes in society” and was the avenue for spiritual “achievement by the working man and the professional man alike.”<sup>175</sup> R. Pierce Beaver credits Edwards with being the first to apply Christ’s Great Commission to all church members, rather than only to ministers, and with giving the commission a universal context.<sup>176</sup> Edwards’s *Life*, as we have seen, possessed the same attribute. By means of Brainerd’s spiritual journey, Edwards made his own understanding of true holiness accesible to ordinary Christians. The Scottish revival was as much a movement of ordinary saints as it was of ministers.

The widespread success of the revival gave fresh impetus to postmillennial hopes and kindled an energetic optimism among Scottish evangelicals. Newly awakened individuals looked for ways to participate in the great work that had begun. The United Concert for Prayer offered such persons a avenue to express their activist impulse for the cause of Christ’s kingdom in the world. Edwards’s friends engineered the Concert and Edwards provided the Scriptural and millennial rationale for it in the *Humble Attempt*, informing it with his own theological imprint. By contending that the prayers of the saints were one of the means by which God fulfills his redemptive purposes, Edwards bolstered the movement’s optimistic spirit.

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<sup>174</sup> Piggin, *Making Evangelical Missionaries*, p. 251. *Religious Affections* is meant to be representative of

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> See Davies, “Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord,” p. 21.

Piggin's third quality of synergism points to the catholic attitude fostered by the Scottish revival's transatlantic and interdenominational cooperative enterprise. Correspondence and theological works crossed traditional denominational boundaries, pulpits were opened to those of a different ecclesiastical and theological bent, and prayer was coordinated throughout the transatlantic evangelical community for the sake of the advancement of Christ's kingdom. Edwards's *Humble Attempt* and the Scottish United Concert for Prayer were deliberately designed as means by which to bring about the Millennium through the coordinated effort of God's people. The reach of Scottish evangelical loyalties extended well beyond the pale of the Church of Scotland. The Kirk and Christ's kingdom were not confused. Wherever the Gospel was freely offered and received, there was the kingdom of God. The Scottish missionary enterprise was built upon this vision.

The Scottish evangelical Calvinism that emerged from the revivals had clearly moved away from its old catechising function within a godly commonwealth to a mission oriented role in which true religious faith became essentially a matter for the individual. Although it would be Erskine, Gillespie and others who infused the Scottish evangelicalism of the second half of the eighteenth century with this new Calvinist perspective, it bears repeating that the conception itself was marked with revivalist theology whose primary architect was Edwards. But, second, it must also be kept in mind that even Edwards's creative theological process was greatly aided by his association with his six Scottish correspondents. As stated earlier, the contribution these Scottish ministers made to Edwards's thinking, resources, and spiritual and emotional well-being was substantial. The perpetuation and development of revivalist piety and the Calvinist

evangelical movement following the revivals was clearly a cooperative and creative effort, at whose heart were Edwards and the six Scottish ministers with whom he had the privilege to call friends.

## Conclusion

By utilising the nomenclature and conceptual framework of the Enlightenment, Edwards developed a restatement of orthodox Calvinism in order to meet the new intellectual challenges to its religious tenets. His overriding concerns were the preservation of traditional Reformed theological values, and the practical work of saving souls. He systematically developed an orthodox evangelical Calvinism which bore the indelible marks of the Enlightenment. During the Great Awakening Edwards applied his theology to address the nature of true piety with a precision and thoroughness unrivaled by his contemporaries. He had the courage, says John Smith, “to see a perennial problem in a parochial situation: [and] dared to believe that religious revivals in eighteenth-century New England would pose a problem as old as religion itself.”<sup>1</sup>

The Scottish revival of 1742 benefited from Edwards’s efforts more than any other spiritual awakening during this period, including that of New England. A primary reason for this was the help Edwards received from a coterie of Scottish evangelical ministers who defined their faith in a way similar to his and who shared the same depth of passion for true evangelical piety and the work of saving souls. Between the years 1735 to 1742, their relationship with Edwards was cultivated through their reading of his published work and the revival reports they received from New England. From 1743 until 1758 this relationship was deepened through a correspondence which proved as beneficial for Edwards as for his Scottish counterparts.

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 2, p. 1.

The effect of the relationship shared between Edwards and his Scottish correspondents helped to usher in a new era of Scottish Calvinism. With their combined abilities, creative vision and enterprising spirit they forged a new evangelical paradigm for Scottish Calvinism. The catalyst for this change was the Scottish revival of 1742 which was inspired by Edwards's *Faithful Narrative*, an account of the spiritual awakening that took place in his parish at Northampton in 1735. The Scottish ministers believed that the revival was the result of the Spirit of God blessing their efforts to foster true religion in their people. They also became the leading figures in the promotion, management and defence of the work. In carrying out this role, they relied heavily on Edwards's *Distinguishing Marks*, imbibing and propagating its theology in their printed missives, religious periodicals and defences of the revival. During the first decade following the revival these ministers took their vision of spreading true religion throughout the world a step further by orchestrating an international enterprise known as the United Concert for Prayer. While Edwards's Scottish counterparts organized the undertaking; he himself supplied the biblical and theological rationale for it in his *Humble Attempt and Life*. One of the most far reaching out-growths of these efforts was the Scottish missionary movement.

In the summary above, I have intentionally emphasized the unified nature of the work, and Edwards's participation in it. In the minds of Edwards and his Scottish colleagues, all stages of the work, from the initial revival to the growth of world-wide missions, were seen as part of a single effort fired by a single vision: the spread of true religion for the advancement of Christ's kingdom and the coming of the Millennium.

Although Edwards was often led to feel that he laboured alone in New England, he never felt that way with his contingent of Scottish friends. The pages of their correspondence reveal the depth of their conviction that, although an ocean separated them, they laboured together in the same glorious work. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the steps taken by the Scottish ministers to make Edwards a son of the Kirk.

At the same time, the study shows that Edwards was in fact the theological architect of the evangelical Calvinism that flowed forth from the revivals and informed the Concert of Prayer and the missionary movement. Thus, to borrow an idea from David Bebbington, Edwards stood at the theological headwaters of modern Scottish evangelical Calvinism.<sup>2</sup> Viewed from this angle, it can be safely said that Edwards contributed to the shape of the eighteenth-century Kirk more than did many of her own sons.

A qualification is in order here, however. There neither exists nor ever has existed, a school of Edwards in Scotland. The depth and breadth of Edwards's evangelical Calvinist theology appears to have transcended a strictly nationalistic application of his thinking. It is worth repeating that Edwards intentionally worked within traditional theological parameters. However, he brought new intellectual tools, drawn from the creative ferment of the Enlightenment, to the old dogma, and with them brought forth not new meaning, but new spiritual understanding and potential. Moreover, Edwards was not alone in the process. He was working within an existing system of Christian thought in which his Scottish counterparts were as well versed in as himself. Like him, many of them brought with them an understanding and appreciation of the new

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<sup>2</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 5.

learning of the Enlightenment. Edwards did not stand alone at the headwaters of Scottish evangelicalism, but together with his six Scottish correspondents.

This study would suggest, further, that preceding them all was Thomas Boston. Under Boston's evangelical ministry, Scottish Calvinism began to break free from its narrow and nationally defined covenantal moorings and took on a new international quality. I suggest that the reason Boston is overlooked in studies of the origin of the evangelical movement is his connection with the Marrow controversy.<sup>3</sup> Philip Ryken has done a masterful job of uncovering Boston's evangelical roots and showing their links with international Calvinism.<sup>4</sup> I am proposing that eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicalism is rooted in part in the preaching of Thomas Boston.

Ned Landsman has argued that during the 1740s, not one but two movements which were to shape the religious contours of the Church of Scotland during the second half of the eighteenth century, were "coming of age": Moderatism *and* Evangelicalism. Richard Sher has charted the path of the moderates in his fine work on the Edinburgh Literati. Ned Landsman has captured the essence of the "coming of age" of Scottish evangelicals in his study on the evangelical enlightenment in the western part of Scotland.<sup>5</sup> This study supports the Landsman thesis, but places the creative center of the evangelical movement, not as he does with the evangelicals of the second half of the eighteenth century, but with Boston and the revivalists. I would also argue on the basis of

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<sup>3</sup> See the works of the following authors in the bibliography of this thesis, none of which mention Boston in connection with the rise of Scottish evangelicalism: David Bebbington, Michael Crawford, Ned Landsman, and Harry Stout.

<sup>4</sup> Ryken, "Thomas Boston as Preacher of the Fourfold State."

<sup>5</sup> Landsman, "Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland, 1740-1775."

this study that a place be given Edwards in leading Scottish evangelicalism to its “coming of age,” and for two reasons.

The first involves a point developed earlier in the thesis. Edwards’s enlightened conception of true religion encouraged Scottish evangelicalism in its move away from the old didactic Calvinism operating within a godly commonwealth which began with Boston. He did this by arguing that the spiritual condition of an individual’s soul was knowable through discernible and distinguishing signs and placing sanctification rather than salvation as the focus of the Christian’s life. This change in perspective helped redirect the role of faith toward securing the salvation of others, encouraged an enterprising optimism in the believer, and inspired a mission oriented outlook.

Edwards also contributed to the development of Scottish evangelicalism by transcending the tension between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility in his view of true piety. True religion, according to Edwards, was inextricably tied to practical religion. All true religious affections are made manifest in the practice of life. While true holiness essentially consists in holy affections (that is, the heart), holy affections are necessarily expressed in holy living. Thus while God is depended upon for all, genuine piety in the believer results in a life which lives to advance God’s kingdom on earth. The maxim, “God does all and we do all,” holds true for the experimental religion contained in Edwards’s revival works, beginning with his *Faithful Narrative* and finding its fullest expression in *Religious Affections*. This resolution of the tension of divine sovereignty and human responsibility on the level of practical Christianity was further developed by Edwards in the *Humble Attempt* and *Life*. Assured of their saved state, the ordinary

believer was responsible to live a holy and fruitful life, and to actively participate in the work of advancing God's kingdom. Edwards's view became the theological basis for the activism which distinguished eighteenth-century modern British evangelicalism.<sup>6</sup> While Bebbington is correct in recognising the importance of the theoretical resolution of this tension inherent in Calvinism achieved by Edwards in *Freedom of the Will*, published in 1754,<sup>7</sup> this study suggests that it was achieved first and perhaps more influentially in his concept of genuine spirituality as expressed in his revival works, *Religious Affections*, *Humble Attempt*, and *Life*. Thus those Scottish evangelicals who were not convinced by Edwards's theoretical resolution of the tension but followed his brand of piety were to remain his disciples in practice.<sup>8</sup>

Edwards's writings thus provide a key starting point for understanding the theological and spiritual preoccupations of evangelical thought in the second half of the eighteenth century. During that period the majority of Edwards's published works were reprinted in Scotland.<sup>9</sup> Publishing records reveal that he had more titles published in Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century than did any of the moderate clergy. He was also ranked among the three or four evangelicals with most published works in Scotland during the same period.<sup>10</sup> Several of Edwards's books published during this period contain subscriber lists. One in particular from *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards*, published in Glasgow in 1785, shows that Edwards

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<sup>6</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 42-66.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>8</sup> This point is an extension of points made in chapter five.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>10</sup> Information was gathered from the British Library Board, 1992. Thomas Boston out-distanced all others.

continued to attract the interest and respect not only of Scotland's intelligentsia, but also a wide spectrum of ordinary people.<sup>11</sup>

In conclusion, I refer back to a point noted earlier. Susan O'Brien stated that the real significance of the mid-eighteenth-century revivals was the "combining of traditional Puritan practices with fresh evangelical techniques."<sup>12</sup> It was this combination, she says, that played perhaps the most important and creative part in systematically shaping the theological contours of eighteenth-century evangelicalism. At the helm, at least theologically, was Edwards. As he was the theological hub of the revivals, so also, was he the driving theological force within evangelical Calvinism following the revivals. But, as we have seen, Edwards was not alone in this enterprise. In fact, what influence he did exert was in important ways dependent upon the assistance he received from his Scottish correspondents. Put simply, Edwards contribution to Scottish evangelicalism and modern evangelicalism generally cannot be properly understood without an understanding of his relationship with his six Scottish correspondents.

Edwards captured both the heart of his epistolary relationship with his Scottish friends and the ethos of the evangelical Calvinist movement which they helped birth in a letter most likely written to John MacLaurin.

The church of God, in all parts of the world, is but one; the distant members are closely united in one glorious Head. This union is very much her beauty; and the mutual friendly correspondence of the various members, in distant parts of the world, is a thing well-becoming this union (at least when employed about the things appertaining to the glory of their common Head, and their common spiritual interest and happiness), and therefore is a thing decent and beautiful, and very profitable.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>12</sup> O'Brien, "Transatlantic Community of Saints, p. 815.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to [MacLaurin], November 20, 1745, *JE(Yale)*, vol. 5, p. 444.

## Appendix A

### JE's Scottish Publications

The # at the end of the reference corresponds to the entry in T.H. Johnson, *The Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758: A Bibliography* (Princeton: P.U.P., 1970).

Library Abbreviations:

- NC - New College, Edinburgh
- NLS - National Library of Scotland
- ML - Mitchell Library, Glasgow
- St.A - University of St. Andrews

#### 1. Faithful Narrative

- a) Published w/ large preface by Dr. Watts & Dr. Guyse, Edinburgh, **1737**, reprint for J. Oswald Book-seller in London; and sold by [4 lines of book-sellers]. Copy at NLS. #6
- b) Edinburgh; printed by Thomas Lumisden & John Robertson, **1738**. Five sermons were added to the 1738, Boston, edition. Though unable to verify, evidence suggests that the Edin. 1738 edition incl. this additional material (see Dwight's *Memoirs* p.L.; J. Erskine acknowledges infl. from these sermons in his Preface to "The People of God considered as Righteous" but refers to Boston ed. Copy at NC. #9
- c) Published w/ introductory essay by John Pye Smith, Homerton, Glasgow, **1829**; printed for Wm. Collins [5 lines of book-sellers]. Printed along with *ST*. Copies at NC and ML. #27

#### Extracts

- d) *Christian Monthly History*, Edinburgh, **1745**, pp. 87-114 in nos. III and IV. #15
- e) John Gillies, *Historical Collections*, vol.II, Glasgow, **1754**, pp.35-44. #17
- f) John Gillies, *Historical Collections*, repr. w/ Preface and Continuation to the Present Time by the Rev. Horatius Bonar, Kelso, **1845**, pp.282-292. #32

#### 2. Distinguishing Marks

- a) Prefixed w/ an epistle to the Scots readers by the Rev. John Willison, Glasgow, **1742**.  
Printed for R. Smith. Copies at ML and NC. #53
- b) Prefixed w/ an epistle by the Rev. John Willison to the Scots readers, Edinburgh, **1742**.  
Printed by T. Lumisden & J. Robertson (Willison epistle dated Dundee, 23 June 1742).  
Copy at NC. #54

### 3. Some Thoughts Concerning the present Revival

- a) Repr. of Boston ed., Edinburgh, **1743**. Printed by T. Lumisden & J. Robertson.  
Copies at NC, NL and ML. #84
- b) With an introductory essay by John Pye Smith, Glasgow, **1829**. Printed along with the FN. Not listed in T. H. Johnson. Copies at NC and ML.

### 4. Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

- a) With preface by the Rev. John Willison, Dundee, Boston repr., Edinburgh, **1745**. Printed  
by T. Lumisden & J. Robertson. Copy at NC. #64
- b) Gaelic trans., Glasgow, **1848**, Duncan Macvean. #78
- c) Gaelic trans., Edinburgh, **1876**.  
Copy at NL. #80

Other editions of SH not listed in T. H. Johnson: **1863**, Edinburgh and **1889**, Edinburgh.  
Copies at NL.

### 5. Religious Affections

S.E. Dwight speaks of a 1746 Scottish edition of *Religious Affections*. Although my efforts failed to uncover one, there is evidence that an edition was published before 1772. See chapter 5.

- a) Edinburgh, **1772**. Printed by John Grey. Copies at NC. #100
- b) Edinburgh, **1789**. Printed for W. Laing, Head of Canongate. Copy at NL. #104
- c) Edinburgh, **1810**. Printed for J. Ogle, Edinburgh and M. Ogle and J. Steven & Co.,  
Glasgow. Copy at St.A. #110
- d) Edinburgh, **1812**. Printed for J. Ogle, Edinburgh and M. Ogle, Glasgow.

Copy at NL. #111

- e) Edinburgh, **1812**. Same as above, yet Johnson notes that the pagination and signature reveal they constitute separate editions. #112
- f) Edinburgh, **1822**. Printed for T. Clark, Parliament Square. Copies at NL and NC. #116
- g) Glasgow, **1822**. Printed for W. Falconer. Copies at NL and NC. #116A
- h) Printed w/ introductory essay by the Rev. David Young, Perth, Glasgow, **1825**. Printed for Chalmers & Collins, Glasgow and Wm. Whyte & Co. and Wm. Oliphant, Edinburgh. Copies at NC and ML. #118
- i) Printed w/ introductory essay by the Rev. David Young, Perth, 2nd edition, Glasgow, **1831**. Printed for Wm. Collins [5 lines of firms]. Appendix: Two letters to Mr. [Thomas] Gillespie, pp. 629-648. #122

**Note:** Several abridged additions of **RA** were published in England and America. However, not one abridged edition appeared in Scotland. Cf. Johnson's note p. 47 on **AB**.

## 6. Humble Attempt...in Extraordinary Prayer

Again Dwight states that an edition of the Humble Attempt was published in Scotland innediately after the 1747 Boston edition. However, there is no extant evidence for the claim.

- a) Edwards's Call to United Extraordinary Prayer & Concert for Prayer of 1746, Renewed Dundee, **1846**. [not included in Johnson]

## 7. Account of Brainerd

Extracts from Brainerd's journal were first published by Wm. Bradford of Philadelphia in 1746 for the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Abridgment...was published in London in 1748. JE, in preparing the *Account*, omitted such portions of the diary as had already been published. Though the Edinburgh 1765 edition of JE's *Account*, incorporated the portions which Edwards had originally omitted, it was not until Dwight brought out the New Haven 1822 edition that the whole was presented in chronological sequence.

Although a 1749 Scottish edition of the Account of Brainerd was not found, John Willison states that one was published in Scotland in that year. See chapter 5.

- a) Edinburgh: printed by John Gray and Gavin Alston, for William Gray in the Front of the Exchange. **1765**. #138
- b) Edinburgh. **1789** (copy at the New College Library, Edinburgh) [not included in Johnson]
- c) Edinburgh: printed by T. MacCleish & Co., for J. Ogle, Parliament Square, and M. Ogle, Glasgow. **1798**. #144
- d) Wesley's abr. ed. Cock's ed., Penryn: Printed by & for W. Cock, and sold by his Agents throughout the Kingdom. **1815**. #149
- e) Edinburgh: printed for H.S. Baynes and Co. **1824**. Also London ed. #154
- f) Edinburgh: pub. by H.S. Baynes, 26 George Str. **1826**. Also London ed. #156
- g) Revised and abridged with An Intro. essay by James Montgomery (author of "The World Before The Flood", "Songs of Zion", "The Christian Psalmist", "The Christian Poet") Glasgow: printed for William Collins [5 lines of firms] **1829**. Select Christian Authors with Intro. essays no. 52. #157 Abridged
- h) Aberdeen - New Edition, Revised. Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 28 St. Nicholas Str. **1845**. Also London ed. #162
- i) With preface by Horatius Bonar, Kelso. Johnstone and Hunder, Edinburgh and London. **1851**. Edinburgh, printed by Johnstone and Hunder, High Str. The Christian's Fireside Library. vol. III. #165  
  
reprint issued 2 years later, identical except date of **1853**. #165A
- j) With Preface by Horatius Bonar, Kelso. London: T. Nelson & Sons, Paternoster Row; Edinburgh; & N.Y. **1858**. #166

**8. Humble Inquiry Into The Rules...to Compleat Standing and full Communion (#172)**  
Edinburgh: printed for William Coke, Leith. Anno **1790**. "Advertisement" dated "Edin., May 15, 1790.

**9. True Religion Delineated**

- a) By Joseph Bellamy - Preface by JE. 2nd edition. Edinburgh: printed for M. Gray, Front of the Exchange. Anno 1788. #175

## 10. Freedom of the Will

- a) Glasgow: printed by David Niven; for & sold by James Duncan, Jun. Bookseller, Saltmarket. 1790. #190A  
[appears identical with London 1790 ed. - based on London 1775 ed. #190]
- b) Edinburgh, 1845. Andrew Jach, printer, Niddry Str. [334-46: "Remarks"] [pub. in London as well] #199

Note: London edition as early as 1762. Subsequent to this edition 8 other London editions appeared: 1762, 1768, 1775, 1790 (2 separate editions with a reprinting of the 2nd), 1816, 1818, 1831, 1855. In addition, 2 editions were printed in Liverpool: 1827, 1855.

## 11. Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin

- a) Glasgow: printed by Robert Urie, 1768 - Scots subscribe to Boston ed. 1758. #205
- b) New Edition. Edinburgh: printed and sold by Murray and Cochrane. 1798. #209
- c) Glasgow: Printed in the Concord Office, Bell Str., for John Wylie and Co. Edinburgh: Ogle Allardyce and Thomson. 1819 (Also ed. in London copy at New College, Edin. #211)
- d) New Edition. Edinburgh: pub. by Peter Brown. 1837 Edin.: Balfour & Jack, Printers, Niddry Str.) #215

## 12. Remarks on the Essays...by Lord Kames

- a) In a letter to a Minister of The Church of Scotland, Edinburgh: printed 1758. The letter is signed and dated "Stockbridge, July 25, 1757." #217

Note: The printed letter comes out in 1768 in the 3rd ed. of **Freedom of the Will**. **Freedom of the Will** 1st pub. in Britain were published in London - 1762, 1768. Suggests that Scots received London editions of **Freedom of the Will** of either the 1762 or 1768 editions. The significance is that in all of Edwards's works printed in Britain, if a London edition was issued before a Scottish ed., still the Scots able to acquire them. Here is where a subscribers list would be helpful.

## 13. Life of Edwards with extracts of private writings and diary; and 18 Select Sermons

- a) 2nd ed. Glasgow: printed by David Niven; for James Duncan, Jun. Booksellers and Stationer, Saltmarket; and sold by him and John Brown, Bookseller in Dunce. 1785. Life by Samuel Hopkins - List of Subscribers. #220
- b) Edinburgh: printed for and by Alexander Jardine, Back of Gavin Loch's Land, Forrester's Wynd. 1799. Preface dated Aug. 20, 1764. #222 [not included in Johnson]

#### 14. Sermons on Various Important Subjects

- a) Edinburgh: reprinted (fr. Boston ed.) for M Gray. 1785. (The sermons in the Life were never issued separately,...and are entirely different group of sermons. Those reprinted here at Edin. are those 1st published in Boston in 1738 as **Discourses on Various Important Subjects**, with addition of **Goal Glorified, Sinners in the Hands**, and **A Farewell Sermon**. #226

#### 15. Two Dissertations: Nature of True Virtue/End for Which God Created the World

- a) Edinburgh: printed by William Darling: for W. Lainy, Bookseller, Edinburgh. 1788. #229
- b) In John Brown, ed. Theological Tracts, Selected and Original. Edinburgh, 1853. II., 291-409. #243

#### 16. History of the Work of Redemption

- a) Edinburgh: printed for W. Gray, Edinburgh (also London edition) 1774 "Advertisement" concluding w/... "...whether the publisher shall favour The World w/and more of these valuable remains, will probably in a good measure depend on the encouragement this work meets with." Advertisement by J. Erskine dated "Edin. April 29, 1774," stating that the younger Edwards had entrusted the manuscripts to him for editing. #243
- b) Edinburgh Printed. 1782  
As 1st edition. [note: this ed. reprinted in Boston, note Britain receives before America; note implication of interest. #245
- c) Edinburgh: printed for M. Gray, Edin., 1788; same as 1st ed. [also printed sim. in London] #247
- d) London ed. issued in 1788 and again 1791 to which are added, "Notes - Historical, critical, theological," w/ Life and experience of the author. #248  
\*Check out notes and life. Also check series #259-259E, 1831-1841, London

- e) Fourth Edition. Edinburgh: Printed for M. Gray, Edinburgh. 1793 (also issued in London) - note same year, 1793, Observations pub. \*Check for notes from 1788 London ed. #251
- f) Second edition. Edinburgh: printed for and by Alexander Jardine and Edmund Whitehead. 1799. #252  
note: all subsequent ed.'s for M. Gray.
- g) w/acct. of the Authors Life and Writings (J. Erskine, Bellany,?). Edinburgh: printed and sold by John Walker, Foot of Lady Stairs' Close, Lawnmarket. 1808. Adv. and Preface, Erskine, JE Jr. respectively. #253
- h) issued in Edinburgh, identical throughout except imprint (London). 1808 #253A
- i) Edinburgh: printed for John Ogle, James Robertson, and James Souter, Parliament Square; and M. Ogle, Glasgow. 1816 #256  
[also issued London, Dublin]
- j) by James Brownlee, Esq. Advocate. Edinburgh: printed for Stirling and Kenney. printed by James Clark and company, w/ note by editor dated "Edinburgh, Dec. 1831." (also issued in London & Dublin). #260
- k) Edinburgh: pub. by Thomas Nelson. 1844. #264

Note: #261 - American Tract Society ed. of IWR. The Evangelical Family Library. This edition is a reprint from the standard ed. of JE's Works row generally circulated in Great Britain and The U.S. and has been ef. w/ the 1st American ed. publ. at Worcester in 1808. First published by the American Tract Society in 1838, 60,100 copies of the History were distributed up to 1875.

## 17. Conversion of JE

- a) London: Printed for J. Mathews, No. 18, Strand - 1780 #270

Note: Price Two Pence/or 14s per 100 to those who give them away. Acct. of JE's conversion 1st printed in Hopkins, Life of JE, Boston, 1765. 1st ed. pub. separately in London - not U.S. no Scot. edition.

## 18. Excellency of Christ

- a) Select sermons (no.11) The Excellency... London: printed for the Religious Tract Society. sold at the Depository, 56, Paternoster Row, and by other booksellers. pp. 1-20 Select Sermons, vol. I. Printed probably 2nd qtr. of 19th cent. #278
- b) London: Religious Tract Society. Date same as above. Copy reported at British Museum (ck. New College). #279

### 19. The Eternity of Hell Torments

- a) London: printed by W. Justins, for R. Thomson (7 lines of booksellers) 1788 Revised and corrected by C.E. DeCoetlogon. (what kind of corrections, etc.?) [Some say "Where may be had, The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners".] #281
- b) London: printed by W. Justins - for R. Thomson. Also sold by Mathews. 1789. #282

### 20. Punishment of the Wicked Eternal

[this is listed under the above "Eternity of Hell Torments"] reprinted in a slightly abridged form fr. the Edition pub. at Edinburgh - 1789 "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" text. Bristol and London. 1864 (Copy reported in British Museum) No record in Johnson of Edin. printing of this sermon in 1789.

### 21. Practical Sermons, never before published.

- a) Edinburgh: printed for M. Gray. Front of the exchange 1788. Advertisement. some dated. (ct. #316 Pardon for Sinners; ct. #327 Great Guilt) #284

### 22. Twenty Sermons on Various Subjects

- a) Edinburgh: printed for M. Gray...1789. Preface by JE Jr. - Many Sermons dated. Note: Twenty Sermons is in fact a republication of the 15 sermons which first appeared as "Sermons on the Following Subjects", Hartford, 1780, but with the edition of five which had previously been issued separately: A Divine and Supernatural Light, The Church's Marriage, True Saints, A Strong Rod Broken (Here called God's Awful Judgment), and True Grace # 285
- b) (Fr. an Edinburgh ed.) Carlisle: printed by George Kline, 1803 #286
- c) Edinburgh; printed by Alex, Lawrie and Co., for John Fairbairn and Ogle and Aikman; and W. Coke, Leith. 1804. #286

**23. Misc. Observations**

- a) Edinburgh: Printed for M. Gray, Edinburgh. 1793 (Also London ed.) Preface by Erskine, Edin. Sept. 30, 1793. #288

**24. Remarks on Important Theological Controversies**

Edinburgh: printed for J. Galbraith & Arch. Constable. 1796 (Also London ed.)

**25. Jesus Christ Gloriously Exalted Above all Evil In the Work of Redemption**

- a) Providence: Brown & Danforth, printers, 1824.  
(the same was published in a volume at Glasgow in 1785, and it is now reprinted at the expense of an individual, for gratuitous distribution, to serve the cause of religion). First published in Sermons on Various Important Subjects, Boston, 1765. #315

**26. Select Sermons**

- a) London: Religious Tract Society (inst. 1799). Sold at the Depository, 56, Paternoster Row & by the Booksellers, 1834. #319

**27. Selection from the Unpublished Writings of JE**

- a) Ed. with Intro. Alexander B. Grosart, Kinross, 300 copies. Printed for private circulation. 1865. (Ballantyne & Co., printers, Edinburgh.) #320

**28. Charity and Its Fruit**

- a) London: James Nisbet & Co., 21 Berners Str. 1752 Ballantyne, Printer, Edinburgh. Ed. Tyron Edwards. #330

## Appendix B Occupation List

The following occupations were represented by the 806 subscribers to the Scottish edition of, *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Learned, and Pious Mr. Jonathan Edwards,...together with Extracts from his Sermons on Various Important Subjects*, 2nd ed. (Glasgow, 1785)

Of the 806 subscribers, 38 were female. Also a total of 884 copies were subscribed for.

baker  
bankhead  
barber  
bleacher  
boatman  
bookseller  
brushmaker  
captain  
candlemaker  
carpenter  
carter?  
clerk  
coal-hewer  
cooper  
couper (dealer in horses and cattle)  
customs-house, Port-Glasgow  
dyer  
engraver  
excise officer  
farmer  
feuar (one who holds a feu, i.e. grants land on perpetual lease for a fixed rent)  
flesher (one who fleshes hides and pelts w/ a fleshing knife)  
founder  
gardener  
glover (one who makes or sells gloves)  
grocer  
hammerman  
heel-maker  
hillman  
right honorables  
ironmonger  
jeweller  
junior  
labourer  
linen-printer

lintmill  
mason  
mason and wright  
merchant  
miller  
mill-wright  
minister  
minister of the gospel  
nailer  
paper-maker  
plaisterer  
portioner  
potter  
printer  
printer and cutter  
quarrier (one who works in a stone quarry)  
Rev. doctor  
ropemaker  
sailor  
sawyer  
saltmarket  
school master  
senior  
servant  
shoemaker  
shopkeeper  
smith  
soap-maker  
spinner  
spirit dealer  
staymaker  
stocking-maker  
student  
student of divinity  
student of philosophy  
tallow chandler (maker/seller of candles, soaps, lubricants)  
taylor  
tenant  
thread-maker  
turner  
undertaker  
weaver  
wigmaker  
wood-cutter, wood merchant, wright

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