"This is a book about the debates that swirled around the heated question whether New England's Great Awakening was a work of the Holy Spirit. As a work of reception history, it is unparalleled in scope and attention to detail. Employing tools from social science, social history, and theology, Smart explains the terms of debate, shows how Edwards and his critics disagreed with one another, and offers an even-handed assessment of the legacies of their conflict from the 1740s and 1750s to the present. I recommend this volume to anyone interested in the history of revivals in America—but especially to those with an interest in the pneumatological questions most important to Jonathan Edwards and his heirs."

— DOUGLAS A. SWEENEY,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

"Robert Davis Smart provides us with a thorough, impressive, and theologically informed account of one of the great debates in American history. His work will be the point of departure for future discussions of the topic."

— GEORGE MARSDEN,
University of Notre Dame

"Church history is replete with famous and not-so-famous clashes of differing visions of the Christian life: Valentinus and Irenaeus, Pelagius and Augustine, Erasmus and Luther—and Chauncy and Edwards. In the case of the latter, while many Edwardsean studies reference it, none have studied it as exhaustively as this fresh study by Robert Smart. He ably documents the vital importance of the showdown between these two men on the American frontier for the maturing of Edwards's pneumatology and piety. This is a necessary read for anyone interested in the Great Awakening or the shape that Evangelicalism took in the century after Edwards's pen had ceased to write."

— MICHAEL A. G. HAYKIN,
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

JONATHAN EDWARDS'S

APOLOGETIC FOR THE GREAT AWAKENING

JONATHAN EDWARDS'S
APOLOGETIC FOR THE GREAT AWAKENING

with particular attention to
Charles Chauncy's Criticisms

|ROBERT DAVIS SMART|

Foreword by
Kenneth P. Minkema

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To my dear grandchildren

ISAIAH 44:1–5

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|FOREWORD|

Writing to his kinsman Nathaniel Chauncy in 1743, Charles Chauncy gave a preliminary assessment of Jonathan Edwards's most recently published treatise on the controversial awakenings in New England, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival*. "I believe," Chauncy observed with a mix of grudging admiration and barely veiled scorn, that the book "will do much hurt; and I am the rather inclined to think so, because there are some good things in it. Error is much more likely to be propagated, when it is mixed with truth. This hides its deformity and makes it go down the more easily."

Edwards and Chauncy. In the historiography of the Great Awakening, these names have come to represent the two schools of thought on the revivals: Edwards, the Sage of Northampton, defending the New Light position, and Chauncy, the "Old Brick" of Boston, the mouthpiece of the Old Lights. In polite, eighteenth-century fashion, each never directly referred by name to the other in the course of their polemics, except in footnotes. Chauncy, for example, condescendingly described Edwards as "the Gentleman," while Edwards, with more than a hint of irony, called his opponent "a doctor of divinity in New England."

We have biographies of both figures and studies of the Great Awakening galore. Scholars trot out the published debate between Edwards and Chauncy on a regular basis as representative, rehearsing the main arguments and then moving on. More often than not, the focus is social and political. Chauncy worries about preserving the social order in the face of itinerants, lay exhorters, and separatism; Edwards worries about constricting the preaching of the Word.

With Bob Smart's work, we have the first sustained effort devoted to considering the points of debate between Chauncy and Edwards, and to understanding them contextually, hermeneutically, and constructively. This deep dive into the particulars of the polemics reveals that social, cultural, and political concerns were secondary to theological, and, in particular, pneumatological, issues, as both

figures considered the nature of the work of the Holy Ghost. Was the Great Awakening, on balance, a work of the Holy Spirit or not? This key question drove the disputants to different answers and qualifications. Indeed, the Great Awakening, as historian Douglas Winiarski has argued, represented a revival of a theology of the Third Person, after a quiescence of nearly a century.

Even more, this study demonstrates that our two protagonists actually influenced each other. Those reading this study may have to conclude that, without Charles Chauncy, Edwards could not have written *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*. This kind of intellectual and spiritual symbiosis is instructive for those who study the past to address the present, whether in academe, society, or church.

Kenneth P. Minkema
Jonathan Edwards Center
Yale University

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|INTRODUCTION|

Introduction to Edwards's Historical Context

A "great and general awakening," as it was known to its contemporaries,[1] swept the British colonies of North America during the 1730s and 1740s from New England to Virginia. At its height the Great Awakening became "the revival by which churchmen and historians measure all others."[2] Ties forged, not only between supporters of the Great Awakening in both the colonies and Great Britain but also among its opponents, gave this series of local and interrelated revivals a transatlantic magnitude.

A. The New England background

According to George Marsden, his most recent biographer, Jonathan Edwards lived in a transitional period of human history:

> Jonathan Edwards came of age at a time and place that would give him an acute juxtaposition of old and new outlooks. Edwards grew up in a world where many of the ways of seventeenth-century Puritanism were preserved pretty much intact.... A precocious teenage intellectual who immersed himself in the literature of the emerging British Enlightenment,...Edwards was confronted with how hopelessly quaint, dated, and even laughable the provincial world of East Windsor would look to British sophisticates.[3]

1. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 26 volumes to date (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957–2005), Perry Miller, John E. Smith, and Harry S. Stout, gen. eds., 7:154. Cf. Edwin S. Gaustad, "Society and the Great Awakening in New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* 2 (October 1954): 566. Edwards referred to the 1740s Awakening and the Reformation as "great awakenings," Edwards, *Works*, 2:287–288.

2. Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds., *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), xiii.

3. George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 7.

Marsden's words suggest that, to understand Edwards's pneumatological defense of the Great Awakening, one must give due weight to the contextual factors that shaped both him and his generation.

First of all, Edwards was born into a British colony and culture.[4] His father's ancestors were Welsh, and Massachusetts was Old World in character with aristocratic and hierarchical structures in family and society. Clergymen like Edwards still wielded much authority and published more literature than individuals from other professions. Children born into elite, extended families had special privileges. The elitist ruling class included clergy, magistrates, judges, military officers, village squires, and wealthy merchants. Patriarchy held farms, churches, colleges, and homes together. Women, children, hired and indentured servants, and African slaves were all dependent on the men in charge. Paternalism was viewed as a virtue, and order was maintained by stern punishment. Although the Great Awakening would mark a transition away from all this, Edwards was born into a pre-modern, British, patriarchal colonial culture.

Another important factor shaping Edwards and his contemporaries was that life in the first half of the eighteenth century was often hard in many respects. People labored to grow their own crops, fulfill callings that contributed to an agrarian lifestyle, and raise large families. Early death was a common occurrence in one's family, parish, and colony. Colonists were familiar with devastations of epidemic disease, unrelieved pain, and sickness. For example, New England and New York were struck in the mid-1730s by a particularly virulent outbreak of diphtheria and scarlet fever which proved fatal for many, including Edwards's sister.[5] Another epidemic of measles from 1739 to 1741 carried off larger numbers of the population than was typical for this disease.

One major cause of hardship was the continual threat of war. In the eighteenth century, the British colonies, especially those in western New England, experienced frequent warfare between British Protestants, Spanish and French Catholics, and Native Americans for control of North America. When Britain declared war on Spain in October of 1739, the colonists found even the high seas dangerous territory. Writing in 1739, Josiah Cotton of Plymouth noted that "the

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4. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 2. Compare Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 44; Charles H. Lippy, Robert Choquette and Stafford Poole, *Christianity Comes to the Americas, 1492–1776* (New York: Paragon House, 1992), 320–322.

5. Kenneth Minkema, "The Edwardses: A Ministerial Family in Eighteenth-Century New England" (Ph.D. diss., University of Connecticut, 1988), 35.

Spaniards have taken many English vessels this year."[6] International tension grew again when the British sought 3,500 colonists to form a regiment to take part in a major land and sea expedition against Cartegena in Cuba. While war with Spain meant that France might take advantage of England's vulnerability at such a time, the Indian threat along the frontier was ever present. Edwards and his relatives all suffered from the hardships and tragedies of warfare. His wife's family, the Stoddards and the Williamses, remembered the horror inspired by the Indians' sacking of Deerfield, Massachusetts, in 1704. His father saw losses inflicted by the French in Canada during Queen Anne's War (1702–1713) and by the French and Abenakis in Father Rales's War (1724–1725). From the end of the Great Awakening in 1744 until the final phase of King George's War in 1748, hostility between the British and the French continued to fester. In 1745 the French fortress at Louisbourg was captured by a provincial army that included twenty of Northampton's parishioners led by Major Seth Pomeroy and Joseph Hawley III.

Wars took a toll not only on the lives of the people but also upon economic conditions. In the 1730s, for example, adding to international tension in New England were local economic difficulties centering on trade, currency, and taxes. There was a continual shortage of a medium of exchange because of an unfavorable balance of trade. This shortage drained gold and silver from the colonies, resulting in the issuance of paper money, usually bills of credit anticipating provincial tax revenue. As the population grew and needed more land to spread out, colonists generated proposals for currency based upon utilizing land as security. Resulting land-bank agitation prompted a local political crisis in Massachusetts around 1739, coinciding with George Whitefield's arrival, and reached a climax between 1740 and 1741 during the height of the Great Awakening. Some scholars have, therefore, concluded that economic fear was a major factor in the religious revivals.[7]

Economic ferment was accompanied by an influx of new ideas. Natural philosophy was promoted among the British intelligentsia through the famous Royal Society in London. Members' keen observations of scientific minutiae filled the *Philosophical Transactions*. Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) himself presided over the Royal Society, a worldwide network of observers looking out for any natural phenomenon not yet noticed or explained. Influenced by Cambridge Platonist Henry More (1614–1687), Newton offered evidential arguments from natural phenomena to prove the existence of a higher being. Platonic traditions that

6. J. M. Bumstead and John E. Van De Wetering, *What Must I Do to Be Saved? The Great Awakening in Colonial America* (Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1976), 21.

7. Bumstead, *What Must I Do*, 24.

emphasized physical reality as a copy or shadow of a purer spiritual reality existing in the mind of God retained a prominent place in New England thought.[8] The clergy there made the transition from Aristotelian to Newtonian physics by maintaining the doctrine of God's omniscience, holding that God saw every sequence of cause and effect from the vantage point of eternity. God was still viewed as the ultimate cause of all things, while using secondary causes, observed in natural laws, to bring about His purposes.

Controversy arose, however, because of the door the new science left open to more humanistic and heterodox beliefs. When Aristotelian physics was replaced by Newtonian views of nature, motion could no longer be easily explained merely by the intervention of a personal mover without any disruption to the system of physical laws. Newtonians, who included most New England clergy by 1740, viewed the physical universe as a constantly moving system of interlocking mechanisms. Thus, God's personal interventions seemed superfluous. John Locke's disciple, deist John Toland, led the way in popularizing this idea in *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696). According to deism, God designed a universe of laws that operated on its own without any need for miraculous adjustments by divine intervention. Although Newton's conception of gravity retained God's active involvement, his new views of nature encouraged deism, Christian anti-supernaturalism, and the dualistic directions of Cartesian and materialistic philosophies. Since almost all modern thinkers professed and even defended Christianity in a more "reasonable" manner, New England colleges began to readjust their curriculum and stock their libraries accordingly.

In 1719, when Edwards attended classes at Yale under Timothy Cutler, students had access to a whole treasure trove of modern writers in the library's new Dummer collection.[9] Volumes available there challenged the old curriculum built on Aristotelian science, the idea of "encyclopedia," and the "old logic" of Petrus Ramus (1515–1572). Under the Ramist scheme, all knowledge was arranged dichotomously in logically distinct categories that reflected the archetypal logic of the divine mind. This fitted well with the idea of encyclopedia or, literally, a

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8. Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 16; Norman Fiering, "The Rationalist Foundations of Jonathan Edwards's Metaphysics," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience,* ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 84.

9. Jeremiah Dummer was commissioned to solicit more free books from England. Since most donors were Anglican, the collection contained the controversy regarding conformity to the Church of England. These books were, in part, responsible for the defection of Timothy Cutler and some of his tutors to Anglicanism.

"circle of learning": the goal of learning was to see how all ideas and discoveries are related in the circle of relationships. By 1719, the college began to introduce modern writers into the curriculum, resulting in intellectual, theological, and spiritual ferment.

Partly because of the British Enlightenment and the religious fervor of the Great Awakening, new colleges would be established to meet the diversity of educational desires borne out of the changing times. The "Log College" would train Presbyterian leaders to promote revivals of religion and would eventually evolve into the College of New Jersey, later known as Princeton. Edwards's last days were spent as president of this college.[10] The "Shepherd's Tent" in New London was founded by an extremist group of Congregationalist "New Lights," influenced by James Davenport, who were favorable to more sensational revival phenomena. Colleges like Princeton (Presbyterian), Dartmouth (Congregational), Brown (Baptist), and Rutgers (Dutch Reformed) were denominationally founded in the period of the Great Awakening. The Mather family, having already lost influence at Harvard, helped establish Yale at New Haven in 1718 from two smaller branches of the Collegiate School of Connecticut started back in 1701—a transition occurring in Edwards's sophomore year.[11] Education would continue to experience dramatic changes into the nineteenth century, losing much of its religious beginnings, clerical control, and integration of its Christian worldview.

Religion in the colonies was shaped initially by theology and spirituality inherited from Puritanism, an international Calvinistic reform movement. New England's clergy, however, were increasingly influenced by ideological changes in England and Scotland. By the early eighteenth century, intellectual reaction to the tendentious debate about the role of religion pushed Anglican theology in a rationalistic direction. John Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures* (1696) set forth the new disposition of British intellectuals, who were to view the affectional elements of the Great Awakening as "enthusiastic" and fanatical. Since scholars have argued that the central question for British culture in the first half of the eighteenth century was how a religion that claims universal

10. Stephen D. Crocco, "Jonathan Edwards and Princeton," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 24, no. 3, new series (2003): 328–341.

11. Richard Warch, *School of the Prophets: Yale College, 1701–1740* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Brooks M. Kelley, *Yale: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Roland H. Bainton, *Yale and the Ministry: A History of Education for the Christian Ministry at Yale from the Founding in 1701* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957).

and exclusive truth could fit into the emerging pluralistic environment,[12] and that the influence of Enlightenment thought was, in part, a reaction to the absolutist claims of the preceding era of religious wars,[13] the challenge to defend the Great Awakening as a true work of the Holy Spirit was no small matter.

Edwards was positively shaped by all these factors, as is seen especially in his unique ability to hold in tension old and new outlooks while at the same time cultivating syntheses that would transcend polarization and crises. As a clerical member of the social elite, he highlighted both the dignity and legitimacy of the Spirit's work among women, girls, and slaves. His familiarity with life's hardships would enable him to suffer the loss of his Northampton lifestyle, teach Native Americans in Stockbridge, overcome the loss of family members, and serve Britain's war efforts. Amid growing educational demands and changes wrought in New England's spirituality, he proved able to sustain his inherited theology and spirituality by using contemporary language to defend them, and he finished his career as the president of one of the recently founded colleges in New Jersey.

B. Edwards's family and early life

It was within this context of tension between continuity and change that Jonathan Edwards was born in East Windsor, Connecticut, on October 5, 1703. His family moved among the elite, an aristocratic family by New England standards. His father, Timothy, was a clergyman well known for his oratorical skill and study of the nature of conversion. Although Timothy's mother, Elizabeth, was a social disgrace, he had been raised by a loving and financially successful father, Richard.[14] Timothy climbed socially by marriage to Esther Stoddard in 1694. Esther's father was the highly respected Solomon Stoddard, and her mother was the daughter of Rev. John Warham of Windsor. When Timothy Edwards's cousin William Williams married Christian Stoddard after the death of his first wife in

12. See, for example, Ernest Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England, 1688–1791* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 5–206; Jeremy Gregory, "The Eighteenth-Century Reformation: The Pastoral Task of Anglican Clergy after 1689," in *The Church of England, c. 1689 – c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon, and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 67–85, 127–42; Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1, *From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 221–393.

13. Noll, *America's God*, 8 and 455 no. 14.

14. Richard's marriage to Elizabeth Tuthill proved unsuccessful. Discovered to be pregnant by another man, she was given to repeated infidelities. In her childhood, her brother and sister both murdered siblings (Ola Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards, 1703–1758: A Biography* [New York: Macmillan, 1940], 20–25. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 22).

1698, a "politically incestuous tangle of Connecticut River families" came to rule that valley and other parts of the colony.[15] Edwards's grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, as pastor of Northampton parish, was widely regarded as the "pope" of the Connecticut Valley. He authored twenty-three published works and effectively debated the Mathers to a stalemate over his novel view that the Lord's Supper was a converting ordinance.[16]

Timothy rose from being the last of eight in his Harvard class to becoming the son-in-law of Stoddard and pastor of East Windsor, Connecticut. Jonathan's mother, Esther, brought Timothy the social grace and status lacking in his own mother. Having attended a finishing school in Boston for elite women, she was described by East Windsor villagers as "tall, dignified and commanding in appearance" yet "affable and gentle in her manners." As depicted by Victorian writer Increase Tarbox, she brought to the parsonage "a culture and refinement rare in those days."[17]

It was into this social environment of upper-class respectability that Jonathan Edwards was born, after four sisters and before six more, as the only son of Timothy and Esther. It was a household of women or, as his father would say, "sixty feet of daughters." The Edwards family farmed a number of acres of land to supplement their income. They used part of the land for orchards and some for crops such as flax, which women could make into linen yarn, and they kept a number of cattle. Hospitality was a treasured privilege, so the crowded household often included guests. Until Esther Edwards reached her nineties, women of East Windsor regularly came to afternoon sessions in the old parlor-school room for Bible readings and theology "punctuated by her acute commentary."[18]

Warfare touched their family when Timothy was called away in the Queen's service to serve as a chaplain to Canada during Jonathan's eighth year. In his father's library Jonathan may have read *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* by his uncle, John Williams of Deerfield, which vividly recounted the horrors of the Indian attack, in which he lost his wife and two children, and his long captivity

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15. Kevin Michael Sweeney, "River Gods and Related Minor Deities: The Williams Family and the Connecticut River Valley, 1637–1790" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1986), 733–755; Philip F. Gura, *Jonathan Edwards: America's Evangelical* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005) 18–19.

16. Paul Lucas, *Valley of Discord: Church and Society Along the Connecticut River, 1636–1725* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1976), 23–59. Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 13–42.

17. Iain Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 7.

18. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards,* 19.

among the Indians and French in Canada. Timothy Edwards's letters to Esther while away in 1711 provide insight into his patriarchy, family hardships, and the children's home-schooling. In the first letter, Jonathan's education topped Timothy's list of admonitions: "I desire you to take care that Jonathan don't lose what he learned.... I would also have the girls keep what they have learned of the grammar, and by heart as far as Jonathan has learned."[19] This educational emphasis prevailed until Jonathan prepared to leave for college in the summer of 1716. His eldest sister, Esther, was then twenty-one, and that same year the youngest and last child in the household, Martha, was born.

In the autumn of 1716, Jonathan joined the Collegiate School of Connecticut, which was founded "to promote the power and purity of religion, and the best edification of these New-England Churches." In general, this four-year course of training emphasized languages in the first year (Latin, Greek, and Hebrew), logic in the second, natural science in the third, and arithmetic, geometry, and some astronomy in the final senior year, when the whole course was also reviewed. Without a fixed location the college met from place to place. Jonathan and about ten other students attended the branch at Wethersfield ten miles from East Windsor under the principal tutor, Elisha Williams (a half-cousin of the Williams-Stoddard clan). By Jonathan's third year the branch at New Haven began to prevail in the complex regional rivalry over the ultimate location of the college. When Cotton Mather secured a gift from Elihu Yale, the Wethersfield group was ordered to move to New Haven. They were reluctant to move if it meant learning under the poor tutelage of Samuel Johnson. Jonathan looked back on Johnson's influence as "nothing but scholastic cobwebs of a few little English and Dutch systems" and recalled rumors of Johnson's taste for the "new philosophy." Johnson confessed by 1715, "I was wholly changed to the New Learning." Jonathan moved more willingly to New Haven after Samuel Johnson was replaced by Timothy Cutler.[20]

There Jonathan learned the epistemology of John Locke, accepted the affectional emphasis of the new moral philosophy, and marveled at the lofty writings of Newton's science. By his senior year he had been stretched by his study of the British Enlightenment, disturbed by regional and institutional politics at the college, and tried by the social environment of his fellow students. Commenting on his falling-out with roommate and cousin Elisha Mix (son of Wethersfield's pastor), Marsden declares that Edwards was "living like a young monk seeking

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19. Timothy Edwards to Esther Edwards, August 7, 1711, as transcribed in Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards,* 40–41; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards,* 17–18.

20. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards,* 35–36; Murray, *Jonathan Edwards,* 28.

sainthood in a school of rowdy boys."[21] Jonathan's struggles reached a climax in his senior year when he developed pleurisy and testified that "God shook me over the pit of hell."[22]

The combination of exposure to Yale's Dummer collection of modern controversial books, a change in tutors, and failing health tested his theology and spirituality. Jonathan began to cry out in desperate prayer for salvation: "I was brought to seek salvation, in a manner that I never was before."[23] His educational experience gave him a new sense of delight in the formerly disagreeable doctrine of God's sovereignty in election and warm appreciation of Puritan spirituality, both of which would consistently mark his leadership role in defending the Great Awakening as a genuine work of the Spirit of God.

Although Edwards's spirituality was conditioned by his Puritan heritage and "seasons of the pouring out of the Spirit," he found that his serious attempts to pray and seek genuine conversion to Christ lacked any new sense of spiritual things. He recalled two revival seasons, occurring between 1710 and 1716, by which he may have been misled into thinking that he had been converted: "I had two more remarkable seasons of awakening before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things."[24] During the first one, he joined friends in building "a booth in a swamp" as a place to retire for prayer. "I used to retire by myself, and was from time to time much affected," he recalled. Parishioners were expected to respond appropriately to a "season of outpouring," yet this kind of spirituality often proved hollow and bereft of any inward change in disposition.

His former responses to revival became suspect to Edwards after "that change" by which he came to "a new sense" of God and spiritual reality. "I am ready to think many are deceived with such affections, and such kind of delight as I then had in religion," he reflected, "and mistake it for grace."[25] He also questioned sickbed religious experiences. During his own illness the year prior to his conversion, he had "felt a spirit to part with all things in the world, for an interest in Christ."[26] Soon after recovery, however, he lapsed into the same "miserable seeking" as before. For true conversion, he believed, one must experience a genuine and lasting change

21. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards,* 39.

22. Edwards, "Personal Narrative," *Works,* 16:791.

23. Edwards, "Personal Narrative," *Works,* 16:791.

24. Sereno E. Dwight, "Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards," in Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards,* ed. Edward Hickman (1834; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1990), 1: xii–xiv.

25. Dwight, "Memoirs," in Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards,* ed. Hickman, 1: xii - xiv.

26. Dwight, "Memoirs," in Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards,* ed. Hickman, 1: xii - xiv.

not conditioned by religious environment or illness but agreeable to reasoned orthodoxy and suitable to affectionate spirituality.

What surfaced in his last year of college was his resistance to the reasoned orthodoxy of his parents. He could not accept with any delight the doctrine of God's total sovereignty, the foundation of Calvinistic teaching. He had been "full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whomever he would to eternal life, and rejecting whomever he please; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear, like a horrible doctrine to me."[27] This obstacle, though formidable, was removed suddenly as he became convinced that God is justified in "eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure." The mystery of how this change took place puzzled Edwards, but his mind "put an end to all those cavils and objections" that had stayed with him all those previous years. "I could never give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced," he mused, "not in the least imagining in the timing of it, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it: but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it."[28]

After this reasonable objection had been answered, his soul was ravished as he read 1 Timothy 1:17, "Now unto the King eternal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen." "There came into my soul," he recalled, "and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the divine being; a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before." He was overwhelmed with a new happiness and enjoyment of God as he kept repeating the verse "and singing over these words of Scripture…and prayed in a manner quite different" and unaccustomed, "with a new sort of affection." Although he would still suspect whether this experience had been salvific, his new sense of things would become evident as a "sweet burning of the heart" time and time again. He would later acknowledge, aided by the counsel of his father, that this experience did indeed mark his conversion. "After this," records his spiritual autobiography, "my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything altered."[29]

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27. Edwards, *Works,* 16:791–792.

28. Edwards, *Works,* 16:791–792.

29. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards,* 42; Edwards, "Personal Narrative," *Works*, 16: 790–793. It is important, however, to state the intention of his "personal narrative," and the context in which he wrote it. It was written by him, as a well-known preacher in the Great Awakening, to a young admirer. He taught from his experience and presented a model of spirituality for his reader. Taking basic information from his diary, he couched it within his theological framework. From this

Over the next few years his affectionate spirituality and Calvinistic theology progressively deepened and confirmed his call and desire to serve as a minister. Marsden argues that, "By the time of the electrifying ecstasies of his conversion experience in the spring of his first graduate year, he was enthralled by a sense of a special calling."[30] Although he was still an MA student at Yale, he enjoyed serving, at age eighteen, as an unordained "supply" pastor to a small Presbyterian church in New York City for eight months, from August 1722 to May 1723. He completed his master's thesis while residing at home in the summer of 1723 and served as pastor of a church in nearby Bolton from November 1723 to May 1724. After returning to Yale as a tutor for two years (1724–1726), he was called as a minister to Northampton in 1726, where he married Sarah Pierpont in 1727 and assisted Solomon Stoddard. In 1729, following Stoddard's death, Jonathan Edwards, at age twenty-six, became sole pastor of the Northampton congregation.

As chapter 1 will demonstrate, the foregoing historical and contextual factors shaped Edwards in such a way that he emerged as the leading interpreter of revival for his generation even before the actual "Great Awakening" arose. How, then, did this occur? How did the revival become known as the "Great Awakening"? How did Edwards influence both the extent of the Great Awakening and the response of its other leaders? These are the questions the next chapter seeks to answer.

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narrative and from his earliest sermons preached in preparation for ministry, one can begin to see the formation of the spirituality that would characterize the rest of his life. He enjoyed spiritual solitude and eschatological discussions of missions and current events, while struggling to maintain high levels of spiritual fervor and holiness. He framed a set of resolutions to discipline himself. He added new entries as needed with some regularity at first, then more sporadically over the next three years. He may have started recording these resolutions in the late fall of 1722 and keeping his spiritual diary in December of 1722.

30. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 63; Edwards, *Works*, 14:7. Avihu Zakai argues that Edwards's conversion experience in the summer of 1721 supplies the key to understanding his theology, calling, and view of history (Avihu Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003], 58–59).