

JONATHAN EDWARDS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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It is hard to imagine that anyone interested in Jonathan Edwards, the great eighteenth-century American theologian, revivalist, and missionary, did not know that 2003 was the 300th anniversary of his birth. This milestone was marked by numerous commemorative conferences, symposia, lecture series, and other events across the country, accompanied by a wealth of publications, including scholarly and popular monographs, special editions of Edwards's writings, collected essays, reference works, commemorative catalogues, and a magisterial biography.¹ However, scholars of Edwards are not unaccustomed to large and diverse amounts of publications on him; indeed, they are spoiled, or glutted, depending on your point of view. The surge in Edwards studies over the past generation has been referred to as a “renaissance” that shows no signs of abating. But the road to that renaissance has been long and circuitous, and is itself a source of some fascination.

This article examines interpretation and appraisal of Edwards primarily within the “academy” over the twentieth century. The “academy” is identified with the rise of professional scholarship as a cultural and class phenomenon and with the modern research university as it emerged in the very late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I also include under this rubric

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¹ Monographs include Robert E. Brown, *Jonathan Edwards and the Bible* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Stephen Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty: The Holy Spirit and the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003); Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Amy Plantinga Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Douglas A. Sweeney, *Nathaniel William Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Avihu Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History: The Reenchantment of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). For selected writings by Edwards, see Richard Bailey and Gregory Wills, eds., *The Salvation of Souls: Nine Previously Unpublished Sermons on the Call of Ministry and the Gospel by Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003); and Michael McMullen, ed., *The Blessing of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons by Jonathan Edwards* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003). Collected essays can be found in Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp, eds., *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian* (London: Ashgate, 2003); and Sang Hyun Lee, ed., *A Companion to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming). For a reference work, see M. X. Lesser, comp., *The Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, forthcoming). A commemorative catalogue is *Jonathan Edwards Tercentennial Exhibition: Selected Objects from the Yale Collection* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003). The latest biography is George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

theological schools and seminaries, many of which predated the advent of the modern “academy” but which, to a greater or lesser degree, have adopted its standards. As such, pastors and other religious writers, products and associates of these theological institutions, also figure here. We can locate the beginning of the appraisal of Edwards within this professional academic culture, thus broadly defined, with the first dissertation done on Edwards in 1899 at the University of Halle, followed closely by the first American dissertation on Edwards written in 1904 at Boston University.²

Table 1 tracks commentary and secondary works on Edwards over the twentieth century. I have registered items devoted wholly or in part to Edwards: books, articles, book chapters or respectable portions thereof, introductions to edited materials, pamphlets, and dissertations; I have excluded book reviews, entries in reference works, newspaper articles, passing references, and reprinted works (though I do digress to take notice of reprints at a couple of points in the discussion below). Some items are category-busters because of their range; in cases like this, I have had to look at factors such as the writer’s discipline, or department, or the place of publication, along with other criteria, before assigning a designation. Table 2 breaks out dissertations on Edwards, and utilizes the same categories in order to allow for comparison with Table 1.³ First, I shall unpack some of the information in these tables, then briefly discuss some current topics in Edwards studies, and finish with a reflection on the relationship of the academy and the church in this endeavor.

I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

From the beginning of the century through the 1930s, the rate of scholarship on Edwards was, frankly, pitiful. These were the decades of the Progressive Era, the Jazz Age, and the Scopes trial, when the stock of things Puritan and Edwardsean was about as low as it has ever been. One writer in 1918 stated that Edwards “believed in the worst God, preached the worst sermons, and had the worst religion of any human being who ever lived on this continent.”⁴ What is more, no one emerged to gainsay this estimation. Edwards was set up as the straw man of repression and snobbery, a medieval relic that had no place in modern America. Culturally, figures such as H. L.

² John Henry McCracken, “Jonathan Edwards Idealism” (Ph.D. diss., University of Halle, 1899); Clement Elton Holmes, “The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards and Its Relation to His Theology” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1904).

³ Sources include M. X. Lesser, *Jonathan Edwards: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981); idem., *Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography, 1979–1993* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994); Sean Michael Lucas, “Jonathan Edwards Between Church and Academy: A Bibliographical Essay,” in D. G. Hart et al., eds., *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) 228–48; America: History and Life Online; ATLA Religion Database; UMI Digital Dissertations; WorldCat; and the *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* archive, Yale Divinity School.

⁴ Marilla M. Ricker, *Jonathan Edwards: The Divine Who Filled the Air with Damnation and Proved the Total Depravity of God* (New York: American Freethought Tract Society, 1918).

Table 1. *Secondary Literature on Jonathan Edwards, 1901–2000*^a

	<i>Homiletics</i>	<i>Revivalism/ Great Awakening</i>	<i>Missiology</i>	<i>Ethics/ Aesthetics</i>	<i>Literature/ Cultural Criticism</i>	<i>Philosophy/ Psychology</i>	<i>History/ Biography</i>	<i>Theology</i>
1901–10 (n=41)	5 (12.2%)	7 (17.0)	-	-	2 (4.9)	14 (34.1)	4 (9.8)	9 (22.0)
1911–20 (n=22)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5)	-	-	4 (18.2)	4 (18.2)	5 (22.8)	7 (31.8)
1921–30 (n=28)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3)	-	-	1 (3.6)	4 (14.3)	10 (35.7)	5 (17.8)
1931–40 (n=54)	4 (7.4%)	4 (7.4)	-	-	9 (16.7)	14 (25.9)	10 (18.5)	13 (24.1)
1941–50 (n=48)	2 (4.2%)	4 (8.3)	5 (10.4)	3 (6.3)	3 (6.3)	11 (22.9)	9 (18.7)	11 (22.9)
1951–60 (n=78)	9 (11.5%)	10 (12.8)	1 (1.3)	3 (3.8)	5 (6.4)	20 (25.7)	14 (18.0)	16 (20.5)
1961–70 (n=152)	1 (0.7%)	11 (7.2)	4 (2.6)	6 (3.9)	31 (20.4)	36 (23.7)	29 (19.1)	34 (22.4)
1971–80 (n=241)	6 (2.5%)	23 (9.6)	2 (0.8)	9 (3.7)	42 (17.4)	40 (16.6)	64 (26.6)	55 (22.8)
1981–90 (n=291)	9 (3.1%)	10 (3.5)	9 (3.1)	26 (8.9)	46 (15.8)	41 (14.1)	81 (27.8)	69 (23.7)
1991–2000 ^b (n=353)	16 (4.5%)	20 (5.7)	12 (3.4)	15 (4.2)	37 (10.5)	36 (10.2)	101 (28.6)	116 (32.9)

^a Includes books, articles, book chapters (or portions of at least 5 pp.), introductions to primary materials, pamphlets, and dissertations (see Table 2). Excludes book reviews, reprints, dictionary/encyclopedia entries, newspaper articles, and passing references.

^b Incomplete data for this decade.

Mencken and Clarence Darrow vied against superstition and ignorance as personified in the pious hypocrisy of Puritanism. Academically, it was the Calvinist-denigrating work of Vernon Parrington that prevailed, in which Edwards was an “anachronism.”⁵ However, a change was in the wind even in the 1920s as Harvard historians Kenneth Murdock and Samuel Eliot

⁵ Clarence Darrow, “The Edwardses and the Jukeses,” *American Mercury* 6 (Oct. 1925) 147–57; Vernon Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. 1, *The Colonial Mind, 1620–1800* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1927) 148–63.

Table 2. *Dissertations on Jonathan Edwards, 1890–2000*

	<i>Homiletics</i>	<i>Revivalism/ Great Awakening</i>	<i>Missiology</i>	<i>Ethics/ Aesthetics</i>	<i>Literature/ Cultural Criticism</i>	<i>Philosophy/ Psychology</i>	<i>History/ Biography</i>	<i>Theology</i>
1890–1900 (n=1)	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
1901–10 (n=3)	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-
1911–20 (n=3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
1921–30 (n=3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
1931–40 (n=11)	1	-	-	-	1	2	2	5
1941–50 (n=12)	-	-	-	1	-	3	3	5
1951–60 (n=20)	3	2	-	1	2	5	4	4
1961–70 (n=39)	1	2	1	6	5	10	5	9
1971–80 (n=59)	-	1	-	-	13	15	15	15
1981–90 (n=65)	5	4	1	6	10	7	20	12
1991–2000* (n=70)	2	4	3	6	5	12	13	25

Sources: M. X. Lesser, *Jonathan Edwards: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981); idem., *Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography, 1979–1993* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994); Sean Michael Lucas, “Jonathan Edwards Between Church and Academy: A Bibliographical Essay,” in D. G. Hart et al., eds., *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) 228–48; America: History and Life Online; ATLA Religion Database; UMI Digital Dissertations; WorldCat.

Morison began rehabilitating the Puritans, followed, of course, by Perry Miller with his *New England Mind* and 1949 biography of Edwards.⁶ An-

⁶ Kenneth Murdock, *Increase Mather, the Foremost American Puritan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), and *Handkerchiefs from Paul, being pious and consolatory verses of Puritan*

other valley of inactivity was the early 1940s, not because of a lack of interest in Edwards but because of the interruption presented by World War II and its aftermath. Here, the microcosm of Edwards studies reflected scholarship in the humanities as a whole.

II. HOMILETICS

Now we can turn to discussing each of the categories, beginning with Homiletics, by which I intend studies on Edwards's preaching style, on specific sermons, or on his sermons as a whole. The late eighteenth and the nineteenth century saw a small though consistent number of pieces on the nature of pulpit oratory, the American clergy, and American sermonic literature that either focused on Edwards or in which he figured significantly. As the twentieth century moved on, there was some overlap between this category and others, particularly Literature. More recently, we have seen an upswing caused, we can surmise, by the increasing availability of sermons in the Edwards *Works* and elsewhere. Literary scholars—especially Wilson Kinnach and Helen Westra⁷—have shown the way in mining Edwards's sermons, whether dealing with Edwards's theory of preaching or using sermons as a source for plumbing his thoughts on a particular practice or topic.

I cannot consider preaching without bringing in *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. Studies of "the most famous sermon in American history" form a sub-industry. If we look for new editions of the text itself as well as commentary on it in the first half of the century, we find only occasional reprints, from places like Paducah, Kentucky, or Fort Worth, Texas.⁸ Then,

Massachusetts . . . (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927); Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), and *The Puritan Pronaos: Studies in the Intellectual Life of New England in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1936); Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), and *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Sloane, 1949).

⁷ Wilson H. Kinnach, "Jonathan Edwards's Sermon Mill," *Early American Literature* 10 (Fall 1975) 167–77; "Jonathan Edwards's Early Sermons: New York, 1722–1723," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 55 (1977) 255–56; "The Brazen Trumpet: Jonathan Edwards's Conception of the Sermon," in *Jonathan Edwards: His Life and Influence*, ed. Charles Angoff (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975) 29–44; *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, 10, Sermons and Discourses, 1720–1723* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). For some of the scholarship of Helen P. Westra, see "Jonathan Edwards's Sermons: Search for 'Acceptable Words,'" *American Theological Library Association, Proceedings* 38 (1984) 102–16; *The Minister's Task and Calling in the Sermons of Jonathan Edwards* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1986); "Jonathan Edwards and the Scope of Gospel Ministry," *Calvin Theological Journal* 22 (April 1987) 68–90; "Jonathan Edwards on 'Faithful and Successful Ministers,'" *Early American Literature* 23 (Winter 1988) 281–90; "'Above All Others': Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel Ministry," *American Presbyterians* 67 (Fall 1989) 209–19; "Cornerstones, Cannons, and Covenants," *Pro Rege* 19 (Sept. 1990) 24–31; "Jonathan Edwards and 'What Reason Teaches,'" *JETS* 34 (1991) 495–503.

⁸ The sermon was reprinted under its title by the Baptist Tabernacle of Paducah, KY, c. 1930–39 and by the Presbyterian Board of Publication of Philadelphia, c. 1920–29; *Short Sketches of the Life and Service of Jonathan Edwards, Including His Great Sermon Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* . . . (Fort Worth, TX: A. J. Edwards, 1922).

Edwin Cady published his "Artistry of Jonathan Edwards" in the *New England Quarterly* in 1949,⁹ the same year as Miller's biography. While Miller downplayed *Sinners* because he wanted to suppress the popular fire-and-brimstone image of Edwards, Cady centered on the sermon to show how Edwards masterfully combined images of suspension and suppression. The article was the standard statement for more than two decades.

By the 1960s, *Sinners* was the proxy for Edwards in high school and college textbooks and anthologies. In more recent textbooks, *Sinners* is printed alongside "sweeter" texts, such as *Personal Narrative* or *A Divine and Supernatural Light*. In fact, the newest version of the *Norton Anthology of American Literature* contains precisely these three texts. Carla Mulford's *Early American Writings* has *Sinners*, *Personal Narrative*, and an excerpt from *Distinguishing Marks*, while Andrew Delbanco, in *Writing New England*, keeps *Personal Narrative* but replaces *Sinners* with *The Spider Letter*—apparently we cannot wholly do without Edwards's spiders.¹⁰

In the wider field of publishing, it was not until the beginning of the 1970s that we find a notable increase in the reproduction of *Sinners*, with ten reprintings and commentaries. The number rose to nineteen in the 1980s, and in the last decade rose still further to at least two dozen,¹¹ as small religious presses issued reprints and recommendations, though with some concessions to new generations, as in the "made easier to read" version printed in 1996. But that's a practice that goes back to at least 1826.¹²

III. REVIVALISM

Recommendations and studies of Edwards on Revivalism, on his involvement in the Great Awakening, and on his influence on revivals in subsequent history populate the next category, which, like Homiletics, stretches back to the late eighteenth century. While there was an interesting rise in the number of pieces on this topic in the 1950s and '60s, the '70s saw a doubling of occurrences. We can speculate that the Bicentennial of 1976 was a spur for work in this area, as studies appeared linking the revolution and religion.¹³ Also, we should note the publication of the fourth volume, *The Great Awakening*, in the Edwards Edition in 1972, which both spurred and reflected

⁹ Edwin H. Cady, "The Artistry of Jonathan Edwards," *New England Quarterly* 22 (Mar. 1949) 61–72.

¹⁰ Carla Mulford et al., eds., *Early American Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Andrew Delbanco, *Writing New England: An Anthology from the Puritans to the Present* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2001).

¹¹ Reprints and commentary on *Sinners* by decade: 1890s: 1, 1900s: 0, 1910s: 0, 1920s: 4, 1930s: 1, 1940s: 1, 1950s: 4, 1960s: 2, 1970s: 10, 1980s: 19, 1990s: 24.

¹² John Jeffrey Fanella, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God: Made Easier to Read* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1996); Daniel A. Clark, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. A Sermon, By the Venerated President Edwards, Rewritten, So as to Retain His Thoughts in a Modern Style* (Amherst, 1826).

¹³ For example, Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); *Religion and the American Revolution* (ed. Jerald C. Brauer; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

work in this category. (Incidentally, volumes relating to revival, both *The Great Awakening* and volume 2, *Religious Affections*, together remain the best-selling in the Edition.) Books by historians such as Edwin Gaustad, Cedric Cowing, J. M. Bumsted and John De Wetering, David Lovejoy, and David Harlan, among others, created something of a heyday for studies of the Great Awakening.¹⁴ These more historical approaches to the role of religion in the formation of America were juxtaposed by a smaller, avowedly religious literature recommending Edwards's thought and example as the basis for a new revival, as in magazines such as *Christianity Today* and *Moody Monthly*, and in books and articles by Iain Murray, Martin Lloyd-Jones, and Richard Lovelace.¹⁵

IV. MISSIOLOGY

Studies of Edwards and Missiology—most often relating to his acquaintance with David Brainerd and the publication of his journals—lay dormant for a number of decades. But while *The Life of David Brainerd* has never gone out of print, commentary certainly did. This inactivity stretched back to the 1830s, when hundreds of male and female seminarians flocked to domestic and foreign mission fields, with Edwards and Brainerd as inspirations. Starting in the 1940s, though, there were signs of life, apparently caused by renewed interest in the connection between revivalism and the missionary movement; by the bicentenary in 1948 and 1949, respectively, of the publications of the *Humble Attempt* and *The Life of David Brainerd*; and by a new biography of Brainerd with the titillating title, *Flagellant on Horseback*.¹⁶ Such pieces formed a more traditional counterpoint to the “modern” Edwards of Miller's biography or Cady's essay. Over the past two decades Missiology has attracted increasing attention, due to a number of factors, including Joseph Conforti and Norman Pettit's work on Brainerd and on Edwards's

¹⁴ Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (New York: Harper, 1957; repr. New York, 1972); Cedric B. Cowing, *The Great Awakening and the American Revolution: Colonial Thought in the 18th Century* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971); J. M. Bumsted and John E. Van de Wetering, *What must I do to be saved? The Great Awakening in Colonial America* (Hinsdale, IL: Dryden, 1976); David S. Lovejoy, *Samuel Hopkins: Religion, Slavery, and the Revolution* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976); David C. Harlan, *The Clergy and the Great Awakening in New England* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980).

¹⁵ Lynn Ray Wessell, “Great Awakening: The First American Revolution,” *CT* 17 (Aug. 31, 1973) 11–21; Mark R. Shaw, “The Spirit of 1740,” *CT* 20 (Jan. 2, 1976) 7–8; Howard Whaley, “The First Great Awakening,” *Moody Monthly* 75 (June 1976) 47–49; Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: A Study in Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (London: Banner of Truth, 1971); Martyn D. Lloyd-Jones, “Jonathan Edwards and the Crucial Importance of Revival,” in *The Puritan Experiment in the New World* (Huntington, England: Westminster Conference, 1976) 103–21; Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1979).

¹⁶ John Foster, “The Bicentenary of Jonathan Edwards's ‘Humble Attempt,’” *International Review of Missions* 37 (Oct. 1948) 375–81; Philip E. Howard, Jr., “A Biographical Sketch of the Life and Work of Jonathan Edwards,” in *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* (Chicago: Moody, 1949); Richard Ellsworth Day, *Flagellant on Horseback: The Life Story of David Brainerd* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1950).

publication of his journals; Iain Murray's biography of Edwards, first serialized in *The Banner of Truth*; and Ronald Davies's dissertation on Edwards's missiological thought, the first of its kind.¹⁷

V. ETHICS

When considering studies of Edwards's Ethics and Aesthetics, we initially have the same story as Missiology: goose eggs up through 1940, then a slow rise afterwards with, notably, Clyde Holbrook's dissertation in the 1940s, and Roland Delattre's dissertation and pivotal book, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards*, in the 1960s.¹⁸ In the 1980s came a threefold increase that represented the highest occurrence since the 1850s, which had featured the Yale-Princeton debate over *The Nature of True Virtue* and commentary on the newly published *Charity and Its Fruits*.¹⁹ The 1980s, for its part, featured essays exploring Edwards's aesthetics that picked up on Delattre, such as Terence Erdt's book on *Edwards, Art and the Sense of the Heart*; comparisons of Edwards's ethics with that of Augustine and Niebuhr; and dissertations by Stephen Crocco on Joseph Haroutunian's *Piety vs. Moralism*, a Neo-orthodox study of the rise and decline of the New Divin-

¹⁷ Joseph Conforti, "David Brainerd and the Nineteenth-Century Missionary Movement," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (Fall 1985) 309–29; Conforti, "Jonathan Edwards's Most Popular Work: 'The Life of David Brainerd' and Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Culture," *Church History* 54 (June 1985) 188–201; Norman Pettit, ed., *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 7, *The Life of David Brainerd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Pettit, "Prelude to Mission: Brainerd's Expulsion from Yale," *New England Quarterly* 59 (Mar. 1986) 28–50; Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987); Ronald E. Davies, "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord: The Missiological Thought and Practice of Jonathan Edwards" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1988).

¹⁸ Clyde Amos Holbrook, "The Ethics of Jonathan Edwards: A Critical Exposition and Analysis of the Relation of Morality and Religious Conviction in Edwardean Thought" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1945); see also Holbrook, *The Ethics of Jonathan Edwards* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973). Roland André Delattre, "Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: An Essay in Aesthetics and Ethics" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1966), published as *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: An Essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

¹⁹ Titles from the 1850s relating to Edwards's ethics include Edward Beecher, "Man the Image of God," *BSac* 7 (July 1850) 409–25; William C. Wisner, "The End of God in Creation," in *Lives of Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of America* (New York, 1850) 134–67; Tryon Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*; or, *Christian Love as Manifested in the Heart and Life* (London, 1852); Anonymous, "President Edwards on Charity and Its Fruits," *New Englander* 10 (May 1852) 222–36; Archibald Alexander, *Outlines of Moral Science* (New York, 1852); Anonymous, "Dr. Alexander's Moral Science," *BSac* 10 (April 1853) 390–414; Anonymous, "President Edwards's Dissertation on the Nature of True Virtue," *ibid.* 10 (Oct. 1853) 705–38; Lyman H. Atwater, "Review of *Outlines of Moral Science*, by Archibald Alexander," *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 35 (Jan. 1853) 1–43; Albert T. Bledsoe, *A Theodicy; or, Vindication of the Divine Glory, as Manifested in the Constitution and Government of the Moral World* (New York, 1853); Atwater, "Jonathan Edwards and the Successive Forms of the New Divinity," *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 30 (Oct. 1857) 585–620.

ity, and by Virginia Peacock on problems in interpreting Edwards on true virtue.²⁰

Despite this level of productivity, the 1990s saw a significant drop in this category, for reasons not altogether clear at this close range. Nearly half of the studies on Edwards's ethics and aesthetics completed in this decade were dissertations, the number of which has held constant for three decades. This is usually an indicator of a good showing in the coming decade. Another good indicator has been the interest in Edwards's ethics in connection with the tercentenary: for example, several conference sessions on the theme; the recent issue of the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, devoted entirely to Edwards; and the impending completion of Stephen Wilson's book, *Virtue Reformed: Re-reading Edwards's Ethics*.²¹ Also, as instanced in Louis Mitchell's 1995 Harvard dissertation and in selections in Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp's newly edited collection, *Jonathan Edwards, Philosophical Theologian*,²² the concept of beauty, with implications for aesthetics and ecology, seems to be a topic continuing to attract attention.

VI. LITERARY AND CULTURAL CRITICISM

In Literature, Edwards studies suffered the same degradation as other areas through the 1930s, while in Cultural Criticism Edwards figured as a bogeyman, blamed, among other things, for the violent gangsterism of the

²⁰ Terrence Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards, Art and the Sense of the Heart* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); James M. Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective: Theology and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); John M. Guret, "Introduction to the History of Paul's Aesthetic," in *The New Testament Student and His Field* (ed. John H. Skilton and Curtiss A. Ladley; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1982); William C. Spohn, "The Reasoning Heart: An American Approach to Christian Discernment," *Theological Studies* 44 (Mar. 1983) 30–52; Thomas A. Byrnes, "H. Richard Niebuhr's Reconstruction of Jonathan Edwards's Moral Theology," in *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (ed. Alan B. Anderson; Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1986) 33–55; Stephen D. Crocco, "American Theocentric Ethics: A Study in the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1986); Virginia A. Peacock, "Problems in the Interpretations of Jonathan Edwards's *Nature of True Virtue*" (Ph.D. diss., St. Michael's College, 1987), published in Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990.

²¹ See Stephen A. Wilson, "The Virtue of the Saints: Jonathan Edwards on the Nature of Christian Ethics" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1998).

²² See the Summer 2003 issue of *The Journal of Religious Ethics* with articles by Stephen A. Wilson, Gerald R. McDermott, William C. Spohn, Roland A. Delattre, and Philip L. Quinn. Louis J. Mitchell, "The Experience of Beauty in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards" (Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1995; recently published in *Studies in Reformed Theology and History* 9 [2003]); Sam Storms, "Joy's Eternal Increase: Edwards on the Beauty of Heaven," unpublished paper, Oct. 2003 conference, "A God-Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards," Minneapolis, MN; Philip L. Quinn, "The Master Argument of *The Nature of True Virtue*," in Helm and Crisp, eds., *Jonathan Edwards, Philosophical Theologian* 79–97. On eco-theology, Belden Lane of St. Louis University is working on a project tentatively entitled *Nature as a School of Desire: Spirituality and Ecology in the Reformed Tradition* that includes Edwards on beauty, desire, and the sensory world. For an earlier work on environmental theology also incorporating Edwards, see Richard C. Austin, *Beauty of the Lord: Awakening the Senses* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988).

Prohibition Era.²³ Nonetheless, Edwards remained a constant in overviews of American literature, and comparison with Benjamin Franklin was a sub-theme stretching back to Carl Van Doren and Van Wyck Brooks.²⁴ But there were important literary scholars renovating Edwards's reputation, including Thomas H. Johnson, who completed his dissertation during the '30s and, with Clarence Faust, published *Representative Selections of the Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, the anthology that was the standard for six decades. Through the 1940s and '50s, the Harvard group dominated Puritan and Edwards studies, through Miller, with *Images and Shadows of Divine Things*, and then his students, such as Edmund S. Morgan and Alan Heimert, the latter completing his dissertation in 1960.²⁵

For literary scholars, the 1960s were a boom time. The number of studies in this category increased sixfold over the previous decade, and the relative percentage was never higher. The poetry of Edward Taylor was published; a new journal, *Early American Literature*, was begun; and it was the golden age of the study of typology. Heimert published his monumental, and monumentally misunderstood book, *Religion and the American Mind*, while dissertators such as Daniel Shea, Mason Lowance, and Thomas Davis focused on Edwards in their considerations of American self-disclosure, millennialism, and typology.²⁶ In the 1970s, the number of dissertations on Edwards in this area peaked as students followed their mentors into the Edwards vineyard. However, new literary theorists, structuralists, post-structuralists, and deconstructionists have found less appeal in Edwards; significantly, it took a philosopher, Stephen Daniel, to bring Foucault and Derrida to Edwards.²⁷

By the 1980s, literary scholars were treating Edwards as a cultural icon. Donald Weber and David Laurence published essays on his literary reputation over the previous two centuries, while Max Lesser compiled the first of

²³ Struthers Burt, "Jonathan Edwards and the Gunman," *North American Review* 227 (June 1929) 712–28.

²⁴ Carl Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards: Selections from Their Writings* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920); Van Wyck Brooks, *America's Coming-of-Age* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1915).

²⁵ Thomas H. Johnson, "Jonathan Edwards as a Man of Letters" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1934); Clarence H. Faust and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., *Jonathan Edwards: Representative Selections* (New York: American Book Co., 1935); Perry Miller, *Images or Shadows of Divine Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948); Miller, "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart," *HTR* 41 (Apr. 1948) 123–45; Miller, "Jonathan Edwards's Sociology of the Great Awakening," *New England Quarterly* 21 (Mar. 1948) 50–77; Alan E. Heimert, "American Oratory: From the Great Awakening to the Election of Jefferson" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1960).

²⁶ Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Daniel B. Shea, Jr., "Spiritual Autobiography in Early America" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1966); Mason I. Lowance, Jr., "Images and Shadows of Divine Things: Puritan Typology in New England from 1600 to 1750" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1967); Thomas M. Davis, "The Traditions of Puritan Typology" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1968).

²⁷ Stephen H. Daniel, *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards: A Study in Divine Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

his two bibliographies.²⁸ Many recent literary studies on Edwards examine him as a spiritual biographer and autobiographer (particularly as reflected in the *Personal Narrative*). We also see some crossover between Literature and Homiletics, especially, again, with *Sinners*; for instance, the June 2000 issue of the *New England Quarterly* contained two articles on the one sermon.²⁹ Over the past three decades, Literary and Cultural Criticism of Edwards had been slowly languishing, and there is little indication this trend will reverse anytime soon.

VII. PHILOSOPHY

After the customary doldrums of the 1910s and '20s, philosophical consideration of Edwards rose and remained dominant in Edwards studies (though not by much) from the 1930s to the 1960s. The effort to treat Edwards philosophically stemmed very much from the attitude of leading lights in Edwards studies, such as Miller, to win respect for Edwards by downplaying his Christianity, to detach his philosophy from his theology, and make him appear more modern. Miller, as the founding general editor of the *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, was against publishing Edwards's sermons and scriptural commentary in favor of the philosophical treatises. Besides Miller, with his paradigm-setting essays such as "From Edwards to Emerson," key figures in this area were Rufus Suter treating Edwards on morality and on the "problem of evil"; Harvey Townsend and his *Philosophy of Edwards*, the first work to make wide use of the "Miscellanies," Edwards's private notebooks; Clarence Faust on Edwards and human nature; John E. Smith, linking Edwards to pragmatism; and Douglas Elwood, who published *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* in 1960, at the turning of the tide.³⁰ Numerically, studies in

²⁸ Donald L. Weber, "The Image of Jonathan Edwards in American Culture" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1978); Weber, "The Figure of Jonathan Edwards," *American Quarterly* 35 (Winter 1983) 556-64; David Laurence, "Jonathan Edwards as a Figure in Literary History," in Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout, eds., *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 226-45; Lesser, *Jonathan Edwards: A Reference Guide*.

²⁹ Edward J. Gallagher, "'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God': Some Unfinished Business," and Christopher Lukasik, "Felling the Force of Certainty: The Divine Science, Newtonianism, and Jonathan Edwards's 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,'" *New England Quarterly* 73 (June 2000) 202-21, 222-45.

³⁰ Miller, "From Edwards to Emerson," *New England Quarterly* 13 (Dec. 1940) 589-617; Rufus O. Suter, Jr., "The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1932); Suter, "The Concept of Morality in the Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards," *Journal of Religion* 14 (July 1934) 265-72; Suter, "The Problem of Evil in the Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards," *Monist* 44 (July 1934) 280-95; Suter, "An American Pascal: Jonathan Edwards," *Scientific Monthly* 68 (May 1949) 338-42; Harvey G. Townsend, ed., *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards from His Private Notebooks* (Eugene: Oregon University Press, 1955); Clarence H. Faust, "Jonathan Edwards's View of Human Nature" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1935); John E. Smith, ed., *Works of Jonathan Edwards, volume 2, Religious Affections* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959); Douglas J. Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).

philosophy have been going up slightly since then, with a bit of a tailing off in 1990s. However, the relative percentage of this category has fallen from one quarter of the field in the 1950s to only one-tenth in the last decade.

VIII. HISTORY

The precipitous drop in Philosophy leads us to our final categories. It is clear that the two disciplinary groups that are dominating Edwards in the academy today are History and Theology. I characterize historical commentary by a secular or undisclosed religious approach to Edwards that considers him strictly in context, with an intended audience of other professional historians and scholars in related fields, usually applying a historical method or typology, most often traditional intellectual history or some form of social history, but also extending to studies of Edwards from post-modern perspectives such as feminist studies or body theory. Theology takes in the constructive, polemical, pastoral, and ecclesiological, usually with an obvious presentist or commendatory approach or disclosed religious intent, aimed primarily though not exclusively at religious or churchly audiences. Some works in this category are based on criteria such as the writer's educational background, institutional and denominational affiliation, or the issuing journal or press. There is obviously some overlap, some cross-fertilization, between these two categories, which is encouraging because it is the relationship between these two groups, I gather, that will set the course of Edwards Studies for the near future.

For historical interpretation of Edwards, the 1960s was a period of doubled numerical growth over the previous decade. But the most significant increase was from the '60s to the '70s, when historiography for the first time outpaced Theology and Philosophy, climbing from one-fifth in relative percentage to over one quarter. The historiographical juggernaut was fueled by revolutionary, revisionist methods: the New Social history, family studies, ethnography, cliometrics, and the long train of hyphenated histories. The 1980s continued this trend, with the publication of landmark books such as Patricia Tracy's *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor* and Norman Fiering's *Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context*.³¹ This period also saw a spate of dissertations and monographs on a range of Edwardsean and neo-Edwardsean topics by Ava Chamberlain, Allen Guelzo, Jack Fitzmier, Mark Valeri,³² and a generation

³¹ Patricia J. Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor: Religion and Society in Eighteenth-Century Northampton* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1980); Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

³² Mary Ava Chamberlain, "Jonathan Edwards Against the Antinomians and Arminians" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1990); Allen C. Guelzo, "The Unanswered Question: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards's *Freedom of the Will* in Early American Religious Philosophy" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1986), published as *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1989); John R. Fitzmier, "The Godly Federalism of Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817: Society, Doctrine, and Religion in the Life of New England's 'Moral Legislator'" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1986), published as *New England's Moral Legislator: Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Mark

of younger scholars who have been pumping out books and articles on an ever-increasing range of topics and disciplines, from ethnicity and race to gender and sexual mores to the life cycle and speech patterns.

Influences on Edwards are an important topic among historians, but not as important as Edwards's legacies. Since the 1980s and the work of Mark Noll, William Breitenbach, and Joseph Conforti,³³ an interest in reassessing the nature and evolution of the New Divinity through the nineteenth century has led to a burgeoning literature that includes Conforti's more recent work; Bruce Kuklick's New-Divinity centered canon of American philosophy from Edwards to Dewey; Genevieve McCoy on the Oregon Mission; David Kling on Edwardsean and Hopkinsian revivals in northwestern Connecticut; Amanda Porterfield on Mary Lyon and Mt. Holyoke Seminary; and Douglas Sweeney on Nathaniel William Taylor.³⁴

IX. THEOLOGY

Even during the height of Philosophy in the 1930s, there were significant Neo-orthodox theological works that used Edwards, such as H. Richard Niebuhr's *Kingdom of God in America*, or Haroutunian's on the "ossification"

R. Valeri, "Joseph Bellamy: Conversion, Social Ethics, and Politics in the Thought of an Eighteenth-Century Calvinist" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1985), published as *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³³ Mark A. Noll, "Moses Mather (Old Calvinist) and the Evolution of Edwardseanism," *Church History* 49 (Sept. 1979) 273–85; Noll, "Jonathan Edwards and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy," in Hatch and Stout, eds., *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience* 260–87; Noll, "The Contested Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in Antebellum Calvinism: Theological Conflict and the Evolution of Thought in America," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 19 (Summer 1988) 149–64; William Breitenbach, "Unregenerate Doings: Selflessness and Selfishness in New Divinity Theology," *American Quarterly* 34 (Winter 1982) 479–502; Breitenbach, "The Consistent Calvinism of the New Divinity Movement," *William and Mary Quarterly* 41 (Apr. 1984) 241–64; Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity," in Hatch and Stout, eds., *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience* 177–204; Joseph A. Conforti, "Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity: Theology, Ethics, and Social Reform in Eighteenth-Century New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* 34 (Oct. 1977) 572–89; Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England between the Great Awakenings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981).

³⁴ Conforti, "Mary Lyon, the Founding of Mount Holyoke College, and the Cultural Revival of Jonathan Edwards," *Religion and American Culture* 3 (Winter 1993) 69–89; Conforti, "The Invention of the Great Awakening," *Early American Literature* 26 (Fall 1991) 99–118; Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Genevieve E. McCoy, "Sanctifying the Self and Saving the Savage: The Failure of the ABCFM Oregon Mission and the Conflicted Language of Calvinism" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1991); David W. Kling, *A Field of Divine Wonders: The New Divinity and Village Revivals in Northwestern Connecticut, 1792–1822* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1993); Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Douglas A. Sweeney, *Nathaniel William Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*.

of the New Divinity.³⁵ Yet theological considerations of Edwards languished over the next two decades as the philosophers continued to dominate. In the 1970s, Theology finally overtook Philosophy and continued to increase, second only to History.

But behold the 1990s when there was nearly double the output over the previous decade, surpassing even History for the first time in thirty years. One major influential study to come out in the late 1980s, which helped to spur this movement, was Sang Hyun Lee's *Philosophical Theology of Edwards*, with its identification of Edwards's dispositional ontology.³⁶ Another important figure in the study of Edwards's theology produced on a grand scale during this period: John Gerstner published his three-volume *Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, culminating a string of articles and small books.³⁷ Scholars and religious leaders who benefited from works like these, and from the increasing availability of Edwards's own writings, included Michael McClymond, Gerry McDermott, Anri Morimoto, Amy Plantinga Pauw, John Piper, and Richard Sproul.³⁸ Meanwhile, comparative studies returned: familiar couplings like Edwards and Wesley or Berkeley, but also Edwards and Loyola, Bonaventura, van Balthazar, and Schleiermacher that ranged over time, topic, and theological tradition.³⁹ Semi-systematic studies and considerations of single doctrines, such as the Trinity, justification, atonement, and hell, figured significantly—continued today, for example, in Steve Nichols's dissertation-cum-monograph on Edwards on the Holy

³⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937); Joseph G. Haroutunian, *Piety Versus Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932).

³⁶ Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988; repr. 2000).

³⁷ John H. Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (3 vols.; Orlando, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 1991–93). See also *Steps to Salvation: The Evangelistic Message of Jonathan Edwards* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), reprinted as *Jonathan Edwards: Evangelist* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995); *Jonathan Edwards on Heaven and Hell* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), reprinted Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1998); *Jonathan Edwards: A Mini-Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1987).

³⁸ Michael J. McClymond, *Encounters With God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Gerald R. McDermott, *One Holy and Happy Society: The Public Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992); McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Anri Morimoto, *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Amy Plantinga Pauw, "The Supreme Harmony of All: Jonathan Edwards and the Trinity" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1990); John Piper, *God's Passion for His Glory: With the Complete Text from "The End for Which God Created the World" by Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998); Richard C. Sproul and Archie Parrish, *The Spirit of Revival: Discovering the Wisdom of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000).

³⁹ William C. Spohn, "Jonathan Edwards and Ignatius Loyola," in *Finding God in All Things: Essays in Honor of Michael J. Buckley* (ed. Michael J. Himes and Stephen J. Pope; New York: Crossroad, 1996); Nicola Anne Hoggard-Creegan, "The Grammar of Freedom: Edwards and Schleiermacher" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1992); Matthew T. Mathews, "Toward a Holistic Theological Anthropology: Jonathan Edwards and Friedrich Schleiermacher on Religious Affections" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2000).

Spirit.⁴⁰ And studies of Edwards on the nature of the church—ecclesiology, sacraments, and psalmody—were also evident as never before.⁴¹

In the late 1980s and through the 1990s, Edwards was “appropriated” for constructive theology and church growth on an unprecedented scale. Robert Jenson’s *America’s Theologian* of 1988 was suggestively subtitled *A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards*—a recommendation from a Lutheran, no less. A sampling of more recent titles will further illustrate the point: one dissertation claimed him “as a resource for current evangelical discussion,” the author of an article looked to him for lessons for “the future of Reformed theology,” while a 1996 conference in Philadelphia and the ensuing book of essays was entitled *Edwards in Our Time*.⁴² Th.Ds, Ph.Ds, articles, and handbooks, oriented to pastor and church leaders, treat Edwards as a model for preaching, as an expert on the signs of grace and revival, on delineating gender roles in the church, on family issues, and on Christian education.⁴³

⁴⁰ Stephen R. Holmes, “The Justice of Hell and the Display of God’s Glory in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards,” *Pro Ecclesia* 9 (Fall 2000) 389–403; John E. Colwell, “The Glory of God’s Justice and the Glory of God’s Grace: Contemporary Reflections on the Doctrine of Hell in the Teaching of Jonathan Edwards,” *EQ* 67 (Oct. 1995); Bruce W. Davidson, “Reasonable Damnation: How Jonathan Edwards Argued for the Rationality of Hell,” *JETS* 38 (Mar. 1995) 47–56; Bruce M. Stephens, “An Appeal to the Universe: The Doctrine of the Atonement in American Protestant Thought from Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park,” *Encounter* 60 (Winter 1999) 55–72; Kevin W. Kang, “Justified by Faith in Christ: Jonathan Edwards’s Doctrine of Justification in Light of Union with Christ” (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2003); Stephen Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty*. See also Robert W. Caldwell, “The Holy Spirit as the Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2003).

⁴¹ David Rightmire, “The Sacramental Theology of Jonathan Edwards in the Context of Controversy,” *Fides et Historia* 21 (Jan. 1989) 50–60; Richard A. S. Hall, *The Neglected Northampton Text of Jonathan Edwards: Edwards on Society and Politics* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990); Rowena R. Jones, “Edwards, Dickinson, and the Sacramentality of Nature,” *Studies in Puritan American Spirituality* 1 (Dec. 1990) 225–53; “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Works of Jonathan Edwards, volume 12, Ecclesiastical Writings* (ed. David D. Hall; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); William J. Danaher, Jr., “By Sensible Signs Represented: Jonathan Edwards’s Sermons on the Lord’s Supper,” *Pro Ecclesia* 7 (Summer 1998) 261–87; Mark F. Williams, “The Lord’s Supper and New Divinity: Post-Edwardsean Theology and Practice in the Context of the Colonial Puritan Tradition of New England” (Ph.D. diss., 1999).

⁴² Robert Jenson, *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Brandon G. Withrow, “Jonathan Edwards as a Resource for Current Evangelical Discussion Over the Language of the Doctrine of Justification” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1999); Amy Plantinga Pauw, “The Future of Reformed Theology: Some Lessons From Jonathan Edwards,” in David Willis-Watkins and Michael Welker, *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology: Tasks, Topics, Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1999) 456–69; Sang H. Lee and Allen C. Guelzo, eds., *Edwards in Our Time: Jonathan Edwards and the Shaping of American Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

⁴³ F. Allan Story, “Promoting Revival: Jonathan Edwards and Preparation for Revival” (Ph.D. diss., 1994); Gary Benfold et al., *God at Work? Signs of True Revival* (London: Grace Pub. Trust, 1995); Young H. Lee, “The Matter of Past Great Awakenings in American and Future Awakening: Renewed Preacher and Renewed Preaching” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Theological Seminary, 1995); Robert W. Caldwell, “Pastoral Care for the Converting: Jonathan Edwards’s Pastoral Cure of Soul in Light of the Puritan Doctrine of Preparation” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1997); Mark A. Shady, “Testing Revival Experience: The Nature of Sign of the Work of God’s Spirit as Expressed in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards” (Ph.D. diss., Denver Seminary, 1997);

Relatedly, polemical use of Edwards returned in a way not seen since the nineteenth century, as leaders of charismatic movements such as the Toronto Blessing used Edwards to legitimate their claims, while critics used Edwards to discredit them.⁴⁴

X. RECENT AREAS OF INTEREST AND AREAS TO BE ENCOURAGED

Next, I would like to touch on just a few topics that seem to be attracting attention today. I have already attempted a prognosis for ethics. A salient topic is Edwards's trinitarianism, epitomized by Amy Plantinga Pauw's 2002 monograph, *The Supreme Harmony of One*, really the first full-length consideration of Edwards on the Trinity since the days of George Park Fisher. Virtually coincident with the appearance of this book, however, were no less than three new dissertations on the same theme, as well as an article in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*.⁴⁵ This concentration of studies, along with related research, seems to presage interest in Edwards's doctrine of God.

Another area is Edwards's view of "history," or teleology, as enunciated especially in *A History of the Work of Redemption*. Robert E. Brown's *Jonathan Edwards and the Bible*, despite the title, is very much about Edwards's engagement with historical criticism. Avi Zakai, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, has written a monograph on *Edwards's Philosophy of History* that treats Edwards's views of time and space. In the introduction to volume 22 of the *Edwards Works*, and in a collection of essays on *The Legacy of Edwards*, Harry Stout has pointed to the *History of the Work of Redemption* as

E. M. Hartman, "Seeking in the Evangelism of Jonathan Edwards" (Th.M. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1998); Doreen Moore, "Jonathan Edwards: Ministry and the Life of the Family," *Reformation & Revival* 4 (Summer 1995) 99–120; Beth A. McDermott, "Jonathan Edwards and the Redefinition of American Masculinity: From the Power of Fathers to the Power of Men" (M.A. thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1998); B. Edwards, *Men, Women, and Authority: Serving Together in the Church* (Bromley, Kent: Day One, 1996); T. M. Moore, "A Brief Introduction to an Edwardsean View of Christian Instruction," *Presbyterion* 25 (Spring 1999) 21–31.

⁴⁴ Bruce Hindmarsh, "The 'Toronto Blessing' and the Protestant Evangelical Awakening of the Eighteenth Century Compared," *Crux* (Dec. 1995) 3–13; James A. Beverly, *Revival Wars: A Critique of Counterfeit Revival* (Pickering, Canada: Evangelical Research Ministries, 1997); John D. Hannah, "Jonathan Edwards, the Toronto Blessing, and the Spiritual Gifts: Are the Extraordinary Ones Actually the Ordinary Ones?" *TJ* 17 (Fall 1996) 167–89.

⁴⁵ Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards*; Rachel S. Stahle, "The Trinitarian Spirit of Jonathan Edwards's Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Gordon-Conwell Seminary, 1999); Richard M. Webber, "The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards: An Investigation of Charges Against Its Orthodoxy," *JETS* 44 (June 2001) 297–318; William J. Danaher, Jr., "The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2002); Steven M. Studebaker, "Jonathan Edwards's Social Augustinian Trinitarianism: A Criticism of and an Alternative to Recent Interpretations" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 2003); Allen R. Baird, "The 'Psychological Analogy' of the Doctrine of the Trinity: A Comparative Study" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University of Belfast, 2001).

Edwards's intended *magnum opus* in which he would have thrown systematic theology into the form of a "tri-world" narrative. And at conferences this year Michael McClymond and Sang Hyun Lee addressed related themes.⁴⁶

Still another area is exegesis or scriptural commentary. In 2001 alone, at least two seminary students completed their dissertations on some aspect of Edwards's exegetical method.⁴⁷ Here we need to mention Bob Brown's excellent book again, as well as Douglas Sweeney's new work-in-progress on "Edwards the Exegete." The spring 2003 conference at Princeton included a session on exegesis featuring Brown, Sweeney, and of course Stephen J. Stein, who has done the most to make Edwards's body of commentary available. Not only has he edited "Notes on the Apocalypse" and "Notes on Scripture," but he has just completed the draft of the "Interleaved Bible" that amounts to almost 2,500 pages in typescript—a huge repository of largely untapped scriptural exposition.⁴⁸

There are also a couple of areas that beg further exploration. The first is Edwards's sojourn at Stockbridge, his efforts to make the mission succeed, and his interaction with the Mahicans, Mohawks, and Iroquois.⁴⁹ With the publication of Edwards's collected letters in the *Edwards Works*,⁵⁰ the increasing availability of sermons, and the growing number of studies in the larger field, this period of Edwards's career can be approached in different ways. Most recently, the surge of interest in Euro-Indian contact, negotiated identity, and geographical and cultural "middle grounds" has helped to draw scholars to Edwards, for example, in studies of the missiology of the "Interleaved Bible" and on Edwardsean spirituality in the nineteenth-century mission to

⁴⁶ Brown, *Jonathan Edwards and the Bible*; Avihu Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History; Works of Jonathan Edwards, volume 22, Sermons and Discourses, 1738–1743* (ed. Harry S. Stout and Nathan O. Hatch; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 3–47; Stout, "Jonathan Edwards's Tri-World Vision," in D. G. Hart et al., eds., *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition 27–46*; Michael McClymond, "A Different Legacy? The Cultural Turn in Edwards's Later Notebooks and the Unwritten *History of the Work of Redemption*," unpublished paper, "Edwards the Theologian" conference, Princeton, April 2003; Sang Hyun Lee, "Does History Matter to God? Edwards's Dynamic Reconception of God's Relation to the World," unpublished paper, "Edwards at 300" conference, Washington, DC, Oct. 2003. See also David E. Clark, "'Leveling Mountains, Drying Up Rivers': Jonathan Edwards's Historiography Applied" (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2001); Michael D. Peters, "Jonathan Edwards's Politicization of Millennialism" (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 2000).

⁴⁷ John Ayabe, "A Search for Meaning: Principles of Literal and Spiritual Exegesis in Jonathan Edwards's 'Notes on Scriptures'" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2001); Glenn Kreider, "Jonathan Edwards's Interpretation of Rev. 4:1–8:1" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2001).

⁴⁸ *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, volume 5, Apocalyptic Writings*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); *ibid.*, volume 5, *Notes on Scripture* (1998); *ibid.*, volume 24, *The Blank Bible* (forthcoming).

⁴⁹ See Lyon Miles, "The Red Man Dispossessed: The Williams Family and the Alienation of Indian Land in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 1736–1818," *New England Quarterly* 67 (Mar. 1994) 46–76.

⁵⁰ *Works of Jonathan Edwards, volume 16, Letters and Personal Writings* (ed. George S. Claghorn; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

the Nez Perce.⁵¹ Rachel Wheeler, in her Yale dissertation comparing the English and Moravian missions, for the first time systematically utilized Edwards's Indian sermons; she has since set Edwards's treatise on *Original Sin* in relation to his labors with native peoples.⁵² Finally, in his new biography George Marsden has utilized Edwards's extant letters—some two-thirds of which date from the Stockbridge period—to give us a fuller picture.

But there is still much to be done with the Stockbridge period, as with other periods. In this vein, let us consider sermons a little further. The sixth and last sermon volume in the Edwards *Works*, soon to be completed, will include Indian sermons as well as, for example, military sermons and a number of ordination sermons that, as editor Wilson Kinnach describes them, show Edwards forming a “heroic” view of the ministry.⁵³ Other sermons on the ministry can be found in *Salvation of Souls*, edited by Richard Bailey and Gregory Wills. This collection is but one among several new collections of Edwards sermons, many previously unpublished, that have come out over the past couple of years, such as the ones edited by Bill Nichols, Michael McMullen, and Don Kistler.⁵⁴ Together, these promise a continuing interest in Edwards the preacher. But there's more. Even as dozens of sermons have become available in print, the Edwards *Works* is moving into a new phase to produce an online, comprehensive edition of Edwards's writings, including the texts of the letterpress series and all of our unpublished transcripts, the bulk of which are the rest of Edwards's 1,250 extant sermons.

XI. HISTORY VS. THEOLOGY, HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

In closing, I would like to return to the two current leaders of the pack, Theology and History, or, to use my somewhat clumsy working terms, the

⁵¹ Keely E. McCarthy, “Reducing Them to Civilitie’: Religious Conversions and Cultural Transformations in Protestant Missionary Narratives, 1690–1790” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2000); Francis D. White, “The Reformation Roots and Edwardsean Fruits of the Missiology of Jonathan Edwards's Interleaved Bible” (M.A. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1991); Genevieve McCoy, “The Women of the ABCFM Oregon Mission and the Conflicted Language of Calvinism,” *Church History* 64 (Mar. 1995) 62–82; Ronald E. Davies, *Jonathan Edwards and His Influence on the Development of the Missionary Movement from Britain* (Cambridge: Currents in World Christianity Project, 1996).

⁵² Rachel Wheeler, “Living Upon Hope: Mahicans and Missionaries, 1730–1760” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1998); Wheeler, “Lessons From Stockbridge: Jonathan Edwards's Indian Sermons,” unpublished paper, “Edwards at 300” conference, Washington, DC, Oct. 2003; Wheeler, “Friends to Your Souls: Jonathan Edwards's Indian Pastorate and the Doctrine of Original Sin,” *Church History* 72 (Dec. 2003) 736–65.

⁵³ *Works of Jonathan Edwards, volume 26, Sermons and Discourses, 1743–1758* (ed. Wilson H. Kinnach; New Haven: Yale University Press, forthcoming).

⁵⁴ Bailey and Wills, eds., *The Salvation of Souls: Nine Previously Unpublished Sermons on the Call of Ministry and the Gospel by Jonathan Edwards*; William C. Nichols, ed., *Seeking God: Jonathan Edwards's Evangelism Contrasted with Modern Methodologies* (Ames, IA: International Outreach, 2001); Nichols, ed., *Knowing the Heart: Jonathan Edwards on True and False Conversion* (Ames, IA: International Outreach, 2003); McMullen, ed., *The Blessing of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*; Don Kistler, ed., *Our Great and Glorious God: Jonathan Edwards, 1703–1758* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2003); Kistler, ed., *To All the Saints of God: Addresses to the Church, Jonathan Edwards, 1703–1758* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2003).

“theologizers” and the “historicists.” There are many constituents of the two groups who have a foot in both camps, but between others at the extremes there is a divide. Some historicists look down on theologizers as partisan apologists, hagiographers, even whitewashers; some theologizers resent historicists for secularizing Edwards, for reducing him to a tool in their “humanist agendas.” Both of these views are caricatures, but caricatures that endure.

Evangelical scholars, seminarians, pastors, and religious leaders have taken up Edwards as a theologian, preacher, and revivalist in a way not seen since before the Civil War. During the '90s, fully one-third of all printed commentary on Edwards was theological in nature, the highest in more than a century. Even more, *over half* of these theological considerations of Edwards appeared in evangelical publications. Until recently, major theological pieces on Edwards had been confined largely to mainline journals like the *Harvard Theological Review*, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, or the *Journal of Religion*. Now, however, interpretive essays are regularly found in the *Southern Baptist Theological Journal*, *Evangelical Quarterly*, *Fides et Historia*, *Reformation and Revival*, *Trinity Journal*, *Westminster Theological Journal*, or the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*.⁵⁵ Likewise, religious presses of all sizes have been churning out new editions of Edwards's writings as well as monographs: from large houses such as InterVarsity and the Dutch trinity of Eerdmans, Baker, and Zondervan, to smaller ones like Banner of Truth, Bethany House, Crossway, Presbyterian and Reformed, and Soli Deo Gloria. Reformed, evangelicals, and charismatics—the “new evangelicals” from across a broad (white) spectrum—have embraced Edwards like never before.

Historicists, meanwhile, continue the search for the “historical Edwards,” primarily seeking to situate and understand him as a product and reflection of his time. For historians, Edwards's “modernity” is now not as much a concern as are his Puritan heritage and his New England and Enlightenment contexts. But something interesting has emerged from this turn away from Edwards's supposed “modernity,” the notion that thrived at mid-century that Edwards was actually a proto-naturalist, or a Lockean empiricist, or a promising scientist forced to settle on a clerical career. Edwards undeniably had time-bound beliefs and practices that make him alien to today in many respects. But as Doug Sweeney writes in the latest issue of *Books and Culture*, the Edwards of history, the Edwards that the historicists have been painstakingly uncovering for some time now, is proving to be a supernaturalist, a thoroughgoing theist, a tireless student of Scripture, a parish pastor with an evangelical passion. Yet, Sweeney continues, Edwards's genius for

⁵⁵ For example, a survey of journal articles on Edwards published during the 1990s shows, of 105 articles tallied, the following breakdown among types of journals: Evangelical: 64 (61.0%); Mainline: 7 (6.7%); Non-religious: 34 (32.3%). An indication that this trend will continue is that, of 32 dissertations on Edwards from 2001–2003, 14 were completed at state or secular private universities, while 18 were completed at seminaries, schools of theology, or religiously affiliated institutions. Within this latter group, it is interesting to note that the two institutions supporting the most graduate work on Edwards (3 dissertations each) within these three years were Westminster Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) and Marquette University (Jesuit).

yesterday and today “is best understood in relation to that very context” in which he lived and worked.⁵⁶

It seems that, ironically and unawares, many historicists and theologizers, while eyeing each other suspiciously and perhaps condescendingly, have been working towards similar ends for some time. The *motives* and *audiences* may be different, but the pictures that are emerging from each side are remarkably similar. I might also add that the very porousness of the boundaries between historical and theological considerations of Edwards is another indication of the similarity of perspectives and approaches among a core group of writers in these two groups. Another thing they share in common is that, whereas scholars in categories in decline, such as Literature and Philosophy, tend to rely on traditional texts, writers in History and Theology are making best use of the wealth of new texts that have become available. No one subgroup may ever be able to “claim” Edwards. But, given what we know about the ebb and flow of interest in Edwards within different circles over the past 100 years, that may be a good thing.

Last year a conference held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was entitled “Edwards and the Future of Evangelicalism: A Conference *Bringing Together* the Church and the Academy.” Not Church *vs.* Academy, but Church *and* Academy. That’s the kind of conjunction we need to see more often, because it recognizes that scholars and practitioners in the two spheres can and should learn from each other. The number of secondary publications on Edwards fast approaches 4,000, making him one of the most studied figures in Christian thought and *the* most studied American intellectual figure before 1800. Those who would do serious, responsible interpretation on him face the increasingly daunting but necessary task of navigating that literature. The recent tomes by Noll on *America’s God: From Edwards to Lincoln*, or Brooks Holifield’s *Theology in America*⁵⁷—in which Edwards is the only figure who warrants his own chapter—not to mention Marsden’s synthetic new biography of Edwards, provide different, commendable models for approaching Edwards. Commentators need to combine a rigor in and sensitivity to the disciplines and nuances of both history and theology, and to strive to present a judicious, rounded view of the positive *and* negative aspects of Edwards’s life, thought, and legacy—an Edwards for the twenty-first century.

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⁵⁷ Mark A. Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*; E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought in America from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

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