

CHAPTER III

AFFECTIONS, SIN, AND SALVATION

If Edwards is right, which means that his concept of affection is consistent with biblical principles, it is indeed God's truth about human nature revealed through the Bible. Then why don't we seem to have this kind of affection that unifies human faculties? Why our reason seems so often disconnected from our will or affections? Why do many Christians with rich theological knowledge still live a secular life with nothing to do with God's holiness? In the opening pages of *Religious Affections*, Edwards describes at length the emotional apathy of men to all things spiritual in contrast to their passionate pursuit of worldly things at his time:

“And yet how common is it among mankind that their affections are much more exercised and engaged in other matters than in religion! In things that concern men's worldly interest, their outward delights, their honor and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their desires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent... However, for the salvation and the Gospel that Christ sacrificed Himself on the cross and the great things of another world, “their love is cold, their desires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude small.”¹⁹⁸

It was not just a spiritual problem for people of Edwards's time but also the portraits of many Christians in our day. For the question of why many people often hear the glorious perfections and that holiness of God...particularly of the unspeakable love of God and Christ, and of the great things that Christ has done and suffered....and yet remain as they were before, with no sensible alteration on them, either in heart or practice? Edwards answers that they are not affected by these things of religion. Because “the things of religion take hold of men's souls, no further than they affect them...there never was anything considerable brought to pass in the heart or life of any man living, by the things of religion, that had not his heart deeply affected by those things.”¹⁹⁹ And for why they do not strongly impress, and greatly moved by such things, is undoubted because they are blind.²⁰⁰ In *Religious Affections*, Edwards

¹⁹⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 2.95.

¹⁹⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.101-102.

²⁰⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 2.120-121.

frequently cites the biblical metaphor of “blindness and deafness” to describe man's situation after the fall.²⁰¹ Thus, it is safe to say that Edwards’s ultimate answer to these questions is that we are fallen into sin.

3.1 Edwards’ doctrine of man and sin

For Edwards, what is sin? Edwards believes that “the Scriptures do so frequently place the sin and corruption of the heart in hardness of heart.” “The hardness of heart, and tenderness of heart (which the scriptures called a heart of stone and a heart of flesh), are expressions that relate to the affections of the heart and denote the heart’s being susceptible of, or shut up against, certain affections.”²⁰² And borrow from the view generally agreed by contemporary theologians that “sin radically and fundamentally consists in what is negative, or privative, having its root and foundation in a privation or want of holiness.” Edwards, therefore, developed his unique doctrine of sin: “sin does very much consist in hardness of heart, by the hardness of heart is meant a heart void of (Holy) affections.”²⁰³ As Plantinga understands, Edwards views that “what lies at the bottom of sin is hardness of heart.”²⁰⁴ The hardness of heart is essentially having the wrong affections and failing to have the right ones.²⁰⁵ Up to this point, Edwards seems to have made it clear that our inability to have such holy affections (and the great things of religion cannot easily move our hearts) is because sin hardened our hearts like a stone. So how does sin harden one's heart to keep him from having holy emotions? Why can our hearts not be easily affected by the beauty of Divine things? Is there any relationship between “blindness” and “the hardened heart?” To answer these questions, we need to explore Edwards’s doctrine of man and sin in detail.

²⁰¹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.204, 206, 340.

²⁰² Edwards, *Works*, 2.117-118.

²⁰³ Edwards, *Works*, 2.118.

²⁰⁴ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 296.

²⁰⁵ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 297.

3.1.1 Adam before the fall

Edwards' doctrine of man and sin has been pervasive in his theology and sermons. Let's first look at his related discourse on *Religious Affections*. To understand what we have lost in the fall, we need to examine what Adam had when he was first created. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards refers specifically to men who were created in the image of God. For Edwards, God possesses both "moral and natural attributes." The former are "summed up in God's holiness," that is, the image of God's moral excellency; the latter are "God's strength, knowledge, etc." that constitutes the greatness of God, his natural image. Man as the image of God also reflects this "twofold image of God."²⁰⁶ Waddington points out that "while the broader Christian tradition has historically distinguished between a broader and narrower image, Edwards follows the Calvinistic understanding of the fall and its effects, uniquely spoke of a natural and moral image in man."²⁰⁷

Edwards' distinction between man's *natural* and *moral* image of God can be further found in his famous *Freedom of the Will*. Paul Ramsey reminded us that

"The natural and the spiritual or moral image of God in man are not to be identified but distinguished in Jonathan Edwards's thought. By the natural image of God, man is capable of moral agency. By the spiritual image of God, he was originally endowed with moral excellence in the exercise of that agency."²⁰⁸

Then, what is moral agent? Edwards explains,

"God is, in the most proper sense, a moral agent, the source of all moral ability and agency, the fountain and rule of all virtue and moral good, though by reason of his being supreme overall...The essential qualities of a moral agent are in God, in the greatest possible perfection; such as understanding, to perceive the difference between moral good and evil; a capacity of discerning that moral worthiness and demerit, by which some things are praiseworthy, others deserving of blame and punishment; and also a capacity of choice, and choice guided by understanding, and a power of acting

²⁰⁶ Edwards, *Works*, 2.256.

²⁰⁷ Waddington, *The Unified Operations*, 84.

²⁰⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 1.166.

according to his choice or pleasure, and being capable of doing those things which are in the highest sense praiseworthy.”²⁰⁹

In other words, the natural image of man reflects God as a moral agent consisting of four natural faculties: understanding, discrimination, choice, and action. However, these natural faculties of man must be governed by perfect moral principles (spiritual or moral influences) belonging to God to perform their original functions and purposes, that is, to reflect God's perfect moral qualities.

Then what does Edwards mean by “the natural faculties of man must be governed by God’s perfect moral principles?” What are those moral principles? More explanation about Edwards’ moral and natural images of God can be found in his *Treatise on Original Sin*, his most definitive exposition of the doctrine of man and sin. In *Original Sin*, Edwards further distinguishes between the two natures of man before the fall that reflect the two images of their Creator. He argues that at the beginning of man's creation, God implanted in man’s nature two kinds of principles.

The inferior kind is called natural principles. It is the principles of mere human nature, such as self-love (love for one’s own liberty, honor, and pleasure), with those natural appetites and passions which belong to the nature of man, are what the Scriptures sometimes call flesh. Besides, there were superior principles that were spiritual, holy, and divine, summarily comprehended in divine love, including man's righteousness and true holiness. Those principles are called in Scripture the divine nature.²¹⁰

Edwards points out that this is actually a holy disposition. Adam’s moral image of God involves the possession of a virtuous and holy disposition of heart, including the love of God and the things of God and the desire to be holy as God is holy. And disposition can be a strong inclination toward God, especially God’s holiness.²¹¹ In

²⁰⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 1.165-166.

²¹⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 3.382.

²¹¹ Edwards, *Works*, 3.229-231.

other words, in the Garden, Adam and Eve were created upright. They were not created in a merely neutral position but inclined to the love of God and obey the Word of God. Waddington noticed that, in fact, it is the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in Adam that accounts for his holy disposition. Indeed, it more than accounts for it. The Holy Spirit may actually be the holy disposition itself.²¹² It is the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit within the first couple that accounts for their love of God and obedience to him. In fact, for Edwards, one must possess a given habit or disposition before one can act from that disposition. In other words, acts are the results of dispositions.²¹³ Chapter four will discuss the concepts of habit and disposition in detail.

These divine principles or holy dispositions also can be called supernatural, as they are above those principles that are essentially implied in and inseparably connected with mere human nature. Additionally, these superior principles were given to absolutely dominate the natural principles, to maintain all things in the human heart in excellent order, peace, and beautiful harmony, and in their proper and perfect state.²¹⁴ This proper and perfect state involves the harmonious unity of human faculties, understanding, and will. In Edwards' sermon *East of Eden*, he noted that "and his soul was in a very perfect state, the faculties of it in full strength.... The natural image of God that consists in reason and understanding was then complete."²¹⁵ It means that Adam's faculties were created in perfect harmony. His mind worked properly as it was intended to work, and it worked in an environment conducive to its proper function. And their faculties can operate properly with each other for their sole and original purpose. Then, what is that purpose? In Edwards' dissertation, *Concerning the End for which God Created the World*, he wrote that

"Man was created in the image of God with two faculties (understanding and will) to communicate with him. God communicates Himself to the understanding of the

²¹² Edwards, *Works*, 3.275.

²¹³ Edwards, *Works*, 3.229-230.

²¹⁴ Edwards, *Works*, 3.383.

²¹⁵ Edwards, *Works*, 17.333.

creature, in giving him the knowledge of his glory; and to the will of the creature, in giving him holiness, consisting primarily in the love of God.”²¹⁶

Elsewhere he is more explicit, Adam was perfectly righteous and innocent from the first moment of his existence. As a moral agent, he was capable of “acting immediately under a rule of right action,” and he was obliged as soon as he existed to “act right and to be inclined to act right.”²¹⁷ “Right” means man as the head of creation has to serve his special end given by his creator, to “exercise his faculties toward God.”²¹⁸ Therefore, the result of such properly and harmoniously exercise of the two faculties is that Adam and Eve (in the Garden of Eden) not only had full and harmonious knowledge of God appropriate to the creature, but they also had a full appreciation of love toward God.²¹⁹

To sum, our first parents had a righteous disposition that was holy in nature, with an inclination totally towards God in their hearts and fully integrated faculties in their souls from the first moment of their existence. With these “superadded gifts”²²⁰ that are spiritual in nature, the man was capable of knowing God, valuing his perfections, loving him, and knowing his will and ends.²²¹

However, in *East of Eden*, Edwards noted that Adam not only possesses a positively holy disposition but also created in moral ambivalence or equilibrium.²²² This means that there was both proper function in the Garden of Eden and the possibility for improvement and declension before the fall. Adam and Eve were not immutable in the sense that the saints in heaven are. That is, at the very least, Adam and Eve were “mutable.” Edwards noted that Adam and Eve, even though created “good,” indeed,

²¹⁶ Edwards, *Works*, 8.529.

²¹⁷ Edwards, *Works*, 3.228.

²¹⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 20.102-103.

²¹⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 17.331-348.

²²⁰ Edwards’ doctrine of man has affinity with the doctrine of *donum superadditum* of the scholastics. See more in Jeffrey C. Waddington, *The Unified Operations of the Human Soul: Jonathan Edwards’s Theological Anthropology and Apologetic* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2015), 49-94.

²²¹ Edwards, *Works*, 20.101.

²²² Edwards, *Works*, 17.333-334.

“very good,” we're not in a state of confirmed righteousness. That state was the eschatological blessing implicitly promised to them had they passed the probation,²²³ which means that they had the potential to fall. Edwards confirmed this kind of possibility elsewhere,

“Man is capable of either complying with the will of his Creator or opposing it: he is capable of falling in with God's ends, and what he sees his Creator aims at, and cooperating with him; or of setting himself against the Creator's designs. His will may be contrary.”²²⁴

For the question of “how did Adam, a holy creature, with a holy disposition, fall into sin?” is complicated and far from our discussion. However, it should be noted that Edwards suggests such a fall is the result of the withdrawal of the divine energy and action (the Holy Spirit), just as darkness follows from the withdrawal of the sun.²²⁵ Suppose the alteration of the original situation by such withdrawal makes sin certain. In that case, it is hard to defend Edwards by saying that he has clearly and forcefully explained the question of “God is not the author of sin.” As Waddington pointed out, “Edwards has been trying to protect God from the charge that he is the author of sin. But to avoid that conclusion, the route Edwards has taken lands him in the sorry predicament of suggesting that God is a Creator of defective goods.”²²⁶ But this question need not concern us now and, in any event, are incoherent. In the next section, we will discuss the consequence of the fall in detail.

3.1.2 Adam after the fall

Hence, what is the consequence of man's fall? The first thing to be clear is that Edwards was firmly convinced of the Calvinistic doctrine of the total depravity and corruption of man's nature. In *Freedom of the Will*, Edwards gives a thumbnail definition of depravity: “man's heart is wholly under the power of sin, and he is

²²³ Edwards, *Works*, 17.332.

²²⁴ Edwards, *Works*, 20.101.

²²⁵ Edwards, *Works*, 1.405.

²²⁶ Waddington, *The Unified Operations*, 53.

utterly unable, without the interposition of sovereign grace, savingly to love God, believe in Christ, or do anything that is truly good and acceptable in God's sight.”²²⁷

In a word, Edwards believe that the whole of human nature was infected and affected by the fall. No aspect of human nature was immune to the onslaught of sin. The whole man is overcome with sin.

Then, what do Adam and Eve exactly lose in their corruption? Firstly, man lost his moral image of God, and his natural principles became corrupted. As we can see previously, Edwards states that prior to the entrance of sin into the world, a man was comprised of a higher and a lower nature which are moral principles and natural principles, represented by God-love and self-love, respectively. Although the higher nature is meant to rule over the lower nature, they exist in harmony. However,

“When man sinned, and broke God's covenant, and fell under his curse, these superior principles left his heart: for indeed God then left him; that communion with God, on which these principles depended, entirely ceased; the Holy Spirit, that divine inhabitant, forsook the house....”²²⁸

Thus, man's original righteousness and holy disposition that consist of God's supernatural image have departed. The departure of those divine or supernatural principles (which the Scripture sometimes calls spirit, in contradistinction to flesh) left only the common natural principles that are purely human nature (self-love, natural appetite, etc.) remain.²²⁹ Without the government of superior divine principles, although human nature would be human nature still, these natural principles of man will undoubtedly be followed by corruption. Edwards describes that the immediate consequence was “a fatal catastrophe, a turning of all things upside down, and the succession of a state of the most odious and dreadful confusion.”²³⁰

²²⁷ Edwards, *Works*, 1.432.

²²⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 3.383.

²²⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 3.381-382.

²³⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 3.383-384.

These inferior principles of self-love and natural appetite were given only to serve, being alone, and left to themselves. But now, they become the absolute masters of man's heart. He immediately set up his private affections and appetites and took the place of God as the supreme object of his love.²³¹ Man is wholly under the power of self-love. He is no longer as entirely subordinate unto love to God and regard to his authority and glory as before. Instead, He is the love to his own honor, separate interest, and private pleasure. They now dispose and impel man to pursue those objects without regard to God's honor or the law; because there is no genuine regard for these divine things left in him.²³² "As a consequence, nothing but war ensues, in a constant course, against God. When a subject has once renounced his lawful sovereign and set up a pretender in his stead, a state of enmity and war against his rightful king necessarily ensues."²³³ In his other sermons, Edwards observes that the understanding, will, and affections are under the influence of enmity against God.²³⁴

"There is such a spirit of enmity in their hearts against God; everything that is in God is disagreeable to them. Their natures are entirely contrary to the nature of God. In the first place, they hate the holiness of God. And then they hate all the other attributes because his holiness does, as it were, influence and actuate all His other attributes, as his power, wisdom, and mercy."²³⁵

Here we can see that the corruption of natural principles means that man's all faculties (reason and will) are inevitably affected by sin. Indeed, in the background of total depravity, Edwards refers specifically to the corruption of human faculties by sin. Both the intellect and the will succumb to sin in terms of his anthropology.²³⁶ In his sermon, *The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners*, Edwards describes that sinful men are "totally corrupt, in every part, in all their faculties; and all the principles of their nature, their understandings, and wills; and in all their dispositions

²³¹ Edwards, *Works*, 3.383.

²³² Edwards, *Works*, 3.384.

²³³ Edwards, *Works*, 3.384.

²³⁴ Edwards, *Works*, 17.410-411.

²³⁵ Edwards, *Works*, 17.49.

²³⁶ Edwards, *Works*, 3.121.

and affections, their heads, their hearts, are totally depraved.”²³⁷ But we should notice that from love God and love oneself to love oneself only and hate God, as well as “a spirit of enmity in their hearts against God.” This is a shift in the direction of the will. Then, can we say that the first thing that happens in the Fall process is the corruption of the will and then the reason? Not necessarily, because the nature of sin is to make everything disorder. However, Edwards seems to be suggesting that the fall of the will is fundamental. For this reason, we will start from here.

From the situation wherein the loss of the moral image of God or supernatural principles, because of the holy inclination man was endowed within the beginning and the support of the divine energy, he was strongly inclined towards God.²³⁸ But now, “all mankind is under the influence of a prevailing effectual tendency in their nature, to that sin and wickedness, which implies their utter and eternal ruin.”²³⁹ Though men also have a tendency to do good, the question is not whether they do more bad deeds or good, but whether the preponderance lies towards innocence and godliness or sin and guilt.²⁴⁰ This indicates a shift in the direction of man's will, from the original tendency toward God's holiness to the current tendency toward sin.

Edwards enlarges on this by a great train of argument from Scripture, history, and observation. A further characteristic of a depraved disposition is that there is a propensity to act contrary to reason. “That disposition of mind which is a propensity to act contrary to reason is a depraved disposition.”²⁴¹ However, the faculty of reason that God has given to humankind is sufficient to discover that even the greatest worldly prosperity and pleasure cannot be competed with the enjoyment of everlasting glory and fortune in all cases and to any degree. Men are still discerning their gains and losses in temporal affairs. They seem very sensible of the uncertainty

²³⁷ Edwards, *Works*, 19.345.

²³⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 3.229-231.

²³⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 3.121.

²⁴⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 3.129.

²⁴¹ Edwards, *Works*, 3.153.

of life and seize any fleeting opportunity to make answerable provisions for the security of their worldly interest.²⁴² Edwards's description of fallen men and their internal inconsistencies in his sermon entitled *Wicked Men are Very Inconsistent with Themselves* (on Matthew 11:16–19) fairly indicates his perspective.²⁴³ Such a view immediately raises a problem: Why do we sometimes, perhaps even usually, perceive excellency or good but fail to choose and act according to it; and perceive deformity and evil, but nevertheless choose it? Once again, we see an inconsistency or disconnection between reason and will, which manifests in the shattering of man's faculties by the Fall. Edwards does not hold that the natural image of God remains fully intact after the fall. After the fall, “Adam lost the vigor and strength of his faculties. His understanding was clouded and broken, and the whole man in all its faculties was but the ruins of what it before was.” In other words, human faculties that were unified as a whole are now “broken, impaired, and weakened and ruined.”²⁴⁴ The natural image of God that was originally complete and consisted of reason and understanding was thus lost.

In the background of total depravity, it is inevitable that sin not only changes the direction of the will but also defiles his intellect. How, then, does sin defile human reason? Interestingly, in his sermon *True Grace, Distinguished From The Experience Of Devils*, Edwards argues that sin destroys spiritual principles but not against God's natural faculties. Otherwise, the capacity of their souls would have significantly diminished in a future state.²⁴⁵ Instead of destroying or reducing their natural faculties, the nature of sin or moral corruption greatly enhanced them. Especially in terms of understanding or Intellect: “their capacities are greatly enlarged, and that their actual knowledge is vastly increased; and that even with respect to the divine being, and the things of religion and the great concerns of the immortal souls of men.”

²⁴² Edwards, *Works*, 3.153-154.

²⁴³ Edwards, *Works*, 8.320-354..

²⁴⁴ Edwards, *Works*, 17.333-334.

²⁴⁵ Edwards, *Works*, 25.613-614.

Just like “the eyes of wicked men are opened; and they, in some respects, emerge out of darkness into clear light” after the fall.²⁴⁶

Due to this, if sin does not destroy man's rational function, what is the effect of sin on the rational aspect? As mentioned before, sinful man can know many things about God. Drawing from the scripture, Edwards believes that Man knows God in the manner expositied by Paul in Romans 1:18ff. A man knows that there is a God who possesses many divine excellencies. Edwards even believed that man knew that God was Trinitarian from nature and Scripture.²⁴⁷ However, Edwards specifically mentions the limitations of the light of nature in his sermon *The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth*. In our fallen state, “there are many truths concerning God, and our duty to him, which are evident by the light of nature. But Christian divinity, properly so-called, is not evident by the light of nature; it depends on revelation.”²⁴⁸ Edwards wrote in his *Religious Affections*,

“But in many persons those apprehensions or conceptions that they have, wherewith they are affected, have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them.... persons become never the wiser by such things, or more knowing about God, or a mediator between God and man, or the way of salvation by Christ, or anything contained in any of the doctrines of the gospel. Persons by these external ideas have no further acquaintance with God, as to any of the attributes or perfections of his nature; nor have they any further understanding of his word, or any of his ways or works.”²⁴⁹

Back to the question, what exactly are the effects of sin on human reason? Edwards answers that sin simply prevents their proper exercise in understanding the things of divine.²⁵⁰ To understand the noetic effects of sin in Edwards’ thought, it is crucial to consider the distinction he has made in man’s knowledge. As noted previously in Chapter 2, Edwards distinguished between speculative or notional knowledge and

²⁴⁶ Edwards, *Works*, 25.615.

²⁴⁷ Edwards, *Works*, 13.257.

²⁴⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 22.87.

²⁴⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.267.

²⁵⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 25.614.

spiritual knowledge or understanding in his doctrine of “the sense of heart.”²⁵¹ One could have a notional or speculative understanding of God and his Word without being attracted to them. What accounts for the difference between speculative and spiritual knowledge in Edwards’ thinking is the attraction or repulsion of the will to the knowledge possessed or to the object of the knowledge. The sinner knows God and hates him. As mentioned above, the depravity of the will is accompanied by a disposition inclined to sin. A fallen man can know true things about God, but he does not love God and the things of God. The sinner is repelled by God’s holiness in particular. (The saint knows God and loves him.) Here we can see man’s rebellion against God on the intellectual level was dominated by the corruption of the will. The will seems to become the master of reason.

Therefore, this knowledge acquired from the natural light is not enough to save anyone, as these notions only give rise to man’s repulsion and rebellion against God. There is no sense in which Edwards thinks there are people in the world somewhere somehow who have no awareness or knowledge of the God of the Bible.²⁵² Yes, they may resist that knowledge. They may repress it and allow it to come out in idolatrous forms, but know God, all men most certainly do. Paul notes in Romans 1 that a man knows enough about God to be without excuse when brought before the righteous bar of divine judgment. Edwards believes that fallen man has true knowledge of God from various media and can potentially hold erroneous concepts of God or possess true notions of him and is repulsed from God. Sinful man hates God. He hates God’s power, knowledge, and holiness. He hates all God’s attributes and excellencies. Edwards says that fallen men can know true things about God but that these true notions by themselves cannot do him one iota of good.²⁵³

²⁵¹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.272.

²⁵² Edwards, *Works*, 23.244.

²⁵³ Edwards, *Works*, 17.49.

If so, what does man know after the fall? Can the reason of fallen man really have a true knowledge of God? Edwards's answer is definitely no. It should not be assumed that because Edwards thought a sinful man could have true knowledge of God and the things of God and all the while hate them, he thought the evil man had a cognitive grasp of the fullness and actual nature of God and the things of God. Quite the contrary, because he suppresses the truth in unrighteousness (per Paul in Romans 1), a sinful man has a contorted and darkened intellectual apprehension even of those things he knows in some sense indeed. In other words, sinful man does not know the truth rightly.²⁵⁴

What does it mean by “does not know the truth rightly?” Recall Adam and Eve's state before the fall in the Garden of Eden. They knew God in a state of integrity and innocence. And such knowledge of God, which Adam and Eve possessed, reflected their overall condition and relationship with God, which is love for each other.²⁵⁵ At the same time, we need to remember what we discussed in Chapter 2. For Edwards, all spiritual knowledge or the knowledge of God comes into the human mind with a relationship with God. It is God himself, the Holy Spirit as the mediator of such a relationship. And again, spiritual knowledge ultimately leads the saints to “sense” God's beauty of Holiness. Therefore, in *Religious Affections*, Edwards wrote,

“And many men can explain these types, who have no spiritual knowledge. 'Tis possible that a man might know how to interpret all the types, parables, enigmas, and allegories in the Bible and not have one beam of spiritual light in his mind; because he may not have the least degree of that spiritual sense of the holy beauty of divine things which has been spoken of, and may see nothing of this kind of glory in anything contained in any of these mysteries, or any other part of the Scripture.”²⁵⁶

Edwards does not only think the difference between fallen and regenerate men's spiritual understanding was that the saint loved God and the sinner hated him.

²⁵⁴ Edwards, *Works*, 2.120-121.

²⁵⁵ Edwards, *Works*, 17.334-335.

²⁵⁶ Edwards, *Works*, 2.278.

Edwards suggests that man's conceptual knowledge could be skewed due to this hatred. In his treatise on *The Nature of True Virtue*, Edwards waxes long and eloquently on how a man can exercise a truncated virtue due to not taking God into view when thinking about the world. A man and his thinking and morals can be cramped if he fails to reckon with the reality of God's existence and how that existence impinges on human morality and thinking.²⁵⁷ Therefore, if the knowledge of God has no relationship with God, that knowledge is not what knowledge is. For Edwards, the nature of knowledge of God consists of two essential elements: the genuine notions of God in the understanding and the obedience to God in the will, that is, a "correct" relationship with God, or to say, love to God rather than hate.

We can conclude that man's proper relationship with God was lost after the fall. Although the fallen mind can know the things of God, this knowledge is distorted by the rebel will against God, especially the hatred of God's holiness. They have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them because it is a kind of distorted knowledge acquired from the reason that fails to include God in the picture of the world.

However, it suggests that the corruption of the will determines man's rebellion against God on the intellectual level. The will seems to become the master of understanding. But appearances are always deceiving. Can we say that sin is fundamentally a distortion of the will, and the reason is only indirectly affected by the corrupt will? The answer is no. The idea of indirect noetic effects of sin suggests that the intellect is untouched, in and of itself, by the fall but is infected by means of a corrupt will. The intelligence functions generally after the fall, as it was created to govern the rest of the faculties but is overpowered by the will to act out of its proper sphere. When we start to place the faculties of the soul in a hierarchy, we have already fallen into the trap of the hierarchical faculty psychology that tends to treat each power as a self-

²⁵⁷ Edwards, *Works*, 8.541.

contained agent. “This was exactly the idea that Edwards was trying to stay away from in his time.”²⁵⁸

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Edwards fellow John Locke’s concept of the unitary account of the human soul that it is a specific unified person that thinks, wills, and feels. There are not three persons-in-miniature vying for control internally in the mind of a man or woman. We should always see the two faculties (reason and will) as a whole. It is either a regenerate man or an unregenerate man who thinks, wills, or feels as he does. The fall infected every power or faculty of the human soul. The different faculties of man were originally consented with one another and integrated as a unity. However, with the corruption of human nature, both the intellect and they will succumb to sin.²⁵⁹ Just as Archibald Alexander holds that “the soul is not depraved or holy by departments; the disease affects it, as a soul.”²⁶⁰

Now we know it is sin that hardens one’s heart so as to fail to have holy affections. However, all of these things happened under the sovereignty of God. Edwards says explicitly by quoting bible verses (Rom. 9:18, John 12:40): “God’s leaving men to the power of the sin and corruption of the heart, is often expressed by God’s hardening their hearts.”²⁶¹ Satan subtlety misleads people by falling into two extremes: to esteem and admires all religious affections without distinction, on the other hand, to reject and discard all without distinction. The former “delude and eternally ruin many souls, and greatly to wound religion in the saints, entangle them in a dreadful wilderness, and by and by, to bring all religion into disrepute.” The latter, the manner of slighting all religious affections, “is the way exceedingly to harden the hearts of men, and to encourage ’em in their stupidity and senselessness, and to keep ’em in a state of spiritual death as long as they live, and bring ’em at last to death eternal.”²⁶²

²⁵⁸ Waddington, *The Unified Operations*, 152-153.

²⁵⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 3.121.

²⁶⁰ Archibald Alexander, *Thoughts on Religious Experience* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998), 63.

²⁶¹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.117.

²⁶² Edwards, *Works*, 2.119-121.

However, the story is not over yet. The great work of God in conversion, which consists in delivering a person from the power of sin, and mortifying corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God's taking away the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh.²⁶³ For Edwards, conversion is the work of God in which delivering a person from the power of sin and mortifying corruption once and again by God's taking away the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh.²⁶⁴

It can be said that such spiritual affections can only be attained when a man's fallen reason and will have been restored. The fall affected man's intellect, and will and redemption restored both. For Edwards, let's see how God restore men's fallen reason and will that have been defiled by sin.

3.2 Salvation on the intellect and the will

3.2.1 The primacy of the intellect and will

Any consideration of Edwards on the relationship between the intellect and will needs to consider the meticulous examination of the subject presented by the distinguished Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga, who perhaps offers one of the best considerations on this subject in his *Warranted Christian Belief*.²⁶⁵ In this groundbreaking work, there is a question proposed by him: for Edwards, how exactly is such spiritual affection supposed to work? What is the relation between affection and belief here, will and intellect? In the work of affections, reason, and will, which is primary?²⁶⁶ But first, why is this important? Why does the question of "which comes first, reason or will" matter? Because it's about how we practice and cultivate these spiritual affections as saved and reborn believers (Chapter 4). Whether a saint first sees God's greatness and mercy before he loves Him, or the opposite? Where shall we start to practice our affections, from the reason (knowledge) or from the will? Now, let's see how Plantinga answers the question.

²⁶³ Edwards, *Works*, 2.117.

²⁶⁴ Edwards, *Works*, 2.117.

²⁶⁵ Waddington, *The Unified Operations*, 150.

²⁶⁶ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 295.

At first, Plantinga thought Edwards had made it clear that the knowledge of God is before the love for God, and intellect is prior to will. That is, “one first perceives the beauty and loveliness of the Lord, first comes to this experiential knowledge, and then come to develop the right loves and hates: love for the Lord, for the great truths of the gospel, hatred for sin.”²⁶⁷ Edwards clearly pointed out the primacy of knowledge or reason in acquiring Holy affections. From the beginning of his *Religious Affections*, Edwards' definition of affections²⁶⁸ seems to imply a chronological priority of the intellect. The will must be “informed” by the mind first and so is attracted to or repulsed by the intellect's object. In other words, the will cannot act blindly in order for the will to either approve or reject something; that something must be held as an object in mind for consideration. And so, the intellect has priority over the will in this sense, at least. In fact, there is plenty of evidence for this intellectual primacy in the works of Edwards, but we will mention only a few of them in *Religious Affections*: “All gracious affections do arise from some instruction or enlightening of the understanding”²⁶⁹ Elsewhere, he is more explicit,

“Knowledge is the key that first opens the hard heart and enlarges the affections, and so opens the way for men into the kingdom of heaven. Truly spiritual and gracious affections . . . arise from the enlightening of the understanding to understand the things that are taught of God and Christ, in a new manner . . . that appertain to the way of salvation by Christ, whereby he now sees how it is and understands those divine and spiritual doctrines which once were foolishness to him”²⁷⁰

One thing is for sure Edwards highly praises the necessity of knowledge to acquire affection.

However, Plantinga argues Edwards's primacy of reason apparently fits less with his characteristic doctrine of sin: “what lies at the bottom of sin is hardness of heart—

²⁶⁷ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 301.

²⁶⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 2.96.

²⁶⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.268.

²⁷⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 2.266-267.

which is a matter of lacking holy affections.” From Plantinga’s perspective, Edwards suggests that “sin is not a failure of knowledge, but the will. It is less a failure to see something than to feel something.”²⁷¹ “Given our sinful inclinations to hate God and neighbor, we might perceive God’s moral qualities and nonetheless continue to hold him at arm’s length, refusing to love him. The real problem, then, is a matter of will.”²⁷² He goes even further to say that “with respect to faith, even though what needs repair is, at the bottom, will rather than intellect.”²⁷³

Obviously, Plantinga’s interpretation of Edwards’s thought on the relationship between reason and will ignores the basic premise of Edwards’s unity of human faculties with affections at its core. To read Edwards as a more or less straightforward intellectualist.²⁷⁴ For the question of “whether Edwards’ doctrine of sin fit less with his conception of priority of knowledge?” Billy Kristanto rightly views that the prior order of knowledge before affection does not necessarily apply in the process of sinning. After all, “the nature of sin always makes everything disorder.”²⁷⁵ In the following part of Plantinga’s *Warranted*, he also acknowledges that his answer to “intellect or will, which is prior in faith and regeneration?” is “neither or there’s no saying.”²⁷⁶

On this issue, I think we need to clarify here. There is unnecessary to discuss the question of “which is primary?” in the process of sinning and even in regeneration. However, we are discussing whether there is an order in the workings of the spiritual affections for the reborn and saved believers. We should never forget an essential premise of Edwards’ thought of religious affections: as the only spring of holy affections, those “spiritual gifts” (a new spiritual sense, new simple idea,

²⁷¹ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 296.

²⁷² Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 302-303.

²⁷³ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 297.

²⁷⁴ Waddington, *The Unified Operations*, 170.

²⁷⁵ Kristanto, Billy. “The Human Spirit in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards, in G. Etzelmüller/H. Springhart (Hrsg.), *Gottes Geist Und Menschlicher Geist*.” Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2013.

²⁷⁶ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 303.

enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, spiritual understanding or the sense of heart) is the saving instruction of the Holy Spirit given only to the regenerated saints, whose disorder of faculties has already been corrected in regeneration, and they already functional properly and can be working harmoniously with each other (to some extent). So, there may be a proper order to follow (of intellect and will) in the conversion process, to practice, strengthen, and cultivate the spiritual affections we have gained in regeneration.

In fact, Plantinga or Edwards has already given us the answer to this question.

“Perhaps, the structure of (regenerated) will and intellect is a spiral, dialectical process: heightened affections enable us to see more of God’s beauty and glory; being able to see more of God’s beauty and glory and majesty in turn leads to heightened affections. There are certain things you won’t know unless you love or have the right affections; there are certain affections you won’t have without perceiving some of God’s moral qualities; neither perceiving nor affection can be said to be prior to the other.”²⁷⁷

Edwards also confirmed this dependency relation between the acts of intellect and will. The exercises of true and holy love in the saints arise in this way: The saints first see that God is lovely and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their hearts are first captivated with this view, and the exercises of their love are wont from time to time to begin here and to arise primarily from these views; and then, consequentially, they see God’s love; and great favor to them.²⁷⁸ Although the order here is seeing first, then loving, then seeing more, and loving more. However, later in his concept of the spiritual understanding or the sense of heart, Edwards seems to suggest that neither intellect nor will is prior.²⁷⁹

In fact, it is unnecessary to discuss which comes first, reason or will because the suggestion that one of these faculties can override the others is precisely the

²⁷⁷ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 304.

²⁷⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 2.246.

²⁷⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.272.

hierarchical faculty psychology that Edwards was strongly opposed to in his day.²⁸⁰ There is no priority in the structure of reason and will. Given Edwards' insistence on the principle of "the unity of human soul," even for reborn Christians, it is a misunderstanding of Edwards to raise such a question. Because all the time, Edwards strongly emphasizes a balance and unity of both intellect and will. If our interpretation is so far correct, it would appear that, for Edwards, the reason and the will were both fallen by sin and restored by salvation at the same time.

3.2.2 The restoration of reason and will by salvation

According to Edwards, we can now return to the question that occasioned this detour: how does God restore man's fallen reason and will that have been defiled by sin? In *Religious Affections*, Edwards has used a series of original concepts (new spiritual sense, new simple ideas, divine and supernatural light, spiritual understanding, or the sense of heart) to describe how people acquire spiritual affections through the active grace of God by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Edwards seems to believe that the first thing sinners are restored is the sensible ability of the divine things. He claims that "in the fall into sin, we human beings lost a certain cognitive ability: the ability to apprehend God's moral qualities."²⁸¹ As mentioned previously, the trouble with man is not with his natural faculties, but there is brutish blindness in the things of religion. It is a principle of the heart of such a blinding nature that "it hinders the exercises of his faculties about the things of religion; exercises for which God has made him well capable." This brutish blindness in the things of religion is "what the Apostle calls it. Well, therefore may the Scripture represent those who are destitute of that spiritual sense, by which is perceived the beauty of holiness, as totally blind, deaf and senseless, yea dead." With conversion comes regeneration; part of the latter is the regeneration (to a greater or lesser extent)

²⁸⁰ See, Edwards on "the Intellect and Will in the Great Awakening", Waddington, *The Unified Operations*, 154.

²⁸¹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.271.

of this cognitive ability to grasp or apprehend the beauty, sweetness, and amiability of the Lord himself and of the whole scheme of salvation.²⁸²

For Edwards, this restoration of cognitive abilities is accomplished through God's implantation of a new spiritual sense into the human soul. Regeneration, however, through which a divine, spiritual sense is given to the soul by the Creator, may "be represented as opening the blind eyes."²⁸³ In his related sermon on this subject, *The Divine and the Supernatural Light*, he says it most clearly, "a divine and supernatural light is immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature than any that is obtained by natural means."²⁸⁴ It reveals no new truth but gives a lively perception of what is taught in the Word of God. It is "a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the Word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising."²⁸⁵

But we must not think that this restoration of cognitive ability is only rational. As we mentioned in Chapter two, the concept of "sense" was borrowed from the idea of Locke, and for Edwards, "sense" is the simultaneous exercise of both the faculties of reason and will. So far, we have seen how human reason is restored by salvation, but what about the will? Let's first see an exciting question Plantinga posed in his book to answer this question. Must people be affected when they perceive the moral qualities of God?

Plantinga sees Edwards's answer as Yes, it's impossible not to be affected. "One simply can't perceive the moral qualities of God and fail to love him, to be attracted by him, to find him marvelously delightful and fascinating." And dubious about this statement.²⁸⁶ However, I think Plantinga seems to have misunderstood Edwards here.

²⁸² Edwards, *Works*, 2.271.

²⁸³ Edwards, *Works*, 2.275.

²⁸⁴ Edwards, *Works*, 17.411.

²⁸⁵ Edwards, *Works*, 17.414.

²⁸⁶ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 303.

The key is what does Plantinga mean by “perceive”? Does it refer to the intellectual understanding that involves reason alone or what Edwards calls the sensible experience of the knowledge that exercises the two faculties? From Plantinga’s discussion below, he means the former. Then it is not quite what Edwards meant.

Edwards himself did mention something similar: For it is human nature, “if the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart.”²⁸⁷ The key, however, is that Edwards’ premise here is to “be rightly understood.” What does Edwards mean by “rightly understood” is “to understand the things that are taught of God and Christ, in a new manner, then coming to a new understanding of the excellent nature of God, and his wonderful perfections, some new view of Christ in his spiritual excellencies and fullness, or things opened to him in a new manner, that appertain to the way of salvation by Christ, whereby he now sees how it is and understands those divine and spiritual doctrines which once were foolishness to him.”²⁸⁸ Here we see that “understanding the things of divine in a new manner” means to “go from seeing them as foolishness to seeing them as divine.” From foolishness to divine, so it seems to Edwards that a proper understanding of spiritual knowledge requires a reversal of the fallen will to have “a right reason.”

Regarding “the right reason,” Edwards clarifies in another sermon, *The End for Which God Created the World*. The right reason is reason cleansed and restored in conjunction with a restored will or affections. God’s ultimate end in creation is his own glorification because reason has been restored and functions appropriately.²⁸⁹ Obviously, the restoration of the will is necessary for the right reason. Therefore, what Edwards understands as “right reason” is not mere intellectualism, as Plantinga interprets, but understands reason within the unity of the human soul.

²⁸⁷ Edwards, *Works*, 2.120.

²⁸⁸ Edwards, *Works*, 2.267-268.

²⁸⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 8.406-463.

In addition, just as significantly, Edwards' understanding of "right reason" is associated with the Word of God: "reason cannot function autonomously or neutrally, true reason must be subject to God and his Word."²⁹⁰ Evidence from *Religious Affections* is that the spiritual taste of saints itself in general "is subject to the rule of God's Word, and must be tried by that, and a right reasoning upon it." As a consequence, the right reason with a spiritual taste of soul will "naturally leads the thoughts in the right channel, casts a light on the Word of God and causes the true meaning, most naturally to come to mind, through the harmony there is between the disposition and relish of a sanctified soul and the true meaning of the rules of God's Word."²⁹¹ That is, the right reason is the reason that governing and guiding by the Word of God, accompanied by a strong tendency towards the holiness of God. This is also the obedience of the will to the sovereignty of God. It can be said that Edwards is optimistic about human reasoning powers because God created them for the purpose of glorifying God himself and, when regenerated, can begin to fulfill that purpose. And reason does not function independently but is an integral part of a dispositional complex that exhibits an orientation bent in on itself or bent away from itself towards God.

Edwards further pointed out that such right reason or right understanding of spiritual knowledge comes from the right enlightenment of the Holy Spirit: "Gracious affections do arise from the mind's being enlightened, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things."²⁹² As mentioned earlier, for Edwards, spiritual enlightenment of the Holy Spirit consists of two major tasks: giving a new spiritual sense and enabling one to understand spiritual knowledge through such a new sense. Both of these works of the Holy Spirit have the effect of removing sinners' prejudices about spiritual things. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards explicitly mentions these two points, "a spiritual sense or taste of soul" (serves as "the receiver" of spiritual knowledge) mightily "helps the soul, in its reasonings on the Word of God,

²⁹⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 8.557-561.

²⁹¹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.284-285.

²⁹² Edwards, *Works*, 2.266.

and judging of the true meaning of its rules; as it removes the prejudices of a depraved appetite...”²⁹³ And later, in the fifth sign of true holy affections, Edwards pointed out that the sense of “the excellency of Christ and his doctrine destroys man’s natural enmity against the gospel, removes the prejudices, sanctifies the reason, and causes it to be open and free.”²⁹⁴ We already know that at the heart of this spiritual knowledge is God’s moral or holy beauty. Therefore, not only the spiritual senses can directly eliminate the sinner’s prejudice against divine things, but this effect can also be produced by the spiritual knowledge received by such a new sense. The spiritual sense corrects sinners’ will by removing their prejudices of a depraved appetite and making the fallen reason to be “the right reason,” which is the ability to understand spiritual knowledge correctly. And spiritual knowledge, especially the sense of divine beauty, further eliminates the influence of their enmity against God.

Obviously, the right enlightenment is spiritual enlightenment, and it is a saving instruction of the Holy Spirit which is given to the saints, compared to the common influences of the spirit of God on the hearts of natural men. The essential difference lies between these two is that the former primarily most essentially lies in “beholding the holy beauty that is in divine things; which is the only true moral good, and which the soul of fallen man is by nature totally blind to.” The latter consists only in “a further understanding, through the assistance of natural principles, of those things which men may know, in some measure, by the alone ordinary exercise of their faculties.” Such as “the natural knowledge of those things pertaining to religion.” The main reason for this difference lies in the distinction between the Holy Spirit’s common operations and his saving operations. Edwards talks about the Holy Spirit “working *on* an individual and working *in* an individual.” The one is temporary and the other abiding. ²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Edwards, *Works*, 2.285.

²⁹⁴ Edwards, *Works*, 2.307-308.

²⁹⁵ Edwards, *Works*, 2.275-276.

Edwards' distinction between speculative and spiritual knowledge seems to further bear out this point. Speculative knowledge, primarily acquired, is the basis on which spiritual knowledge is given. Such knowledge is only a "sign" of an idea, in the words of Edwards, "the form of knowledge, and of the truth." And spiritual knowledge is the knowledge that is the idea's entity to which the sign refers. It is "often represented by relishing, smelling, or tasting" in the Bible.²⁹⁶ However, speculative knowledge of divine things is the only knowledge that natural men can possess because the universal work of the Holy Spirit has not restored their enmity against God. And spiritual knowledge belongs only to the saints because their broken relationship with God has been restored in salvation. Therefore, speculative knowledge is not enough for understanding the things of divine. It should be supplemented and corrected by spiritual knowledge. What is corrected is the will of sinners to the things of divine (in fact, God himself), from hatred to love. What is supplemented is the sinner's sensation of spiritual things, a taste of its spiritual beauty like never before. All of this can only be achieved based on a re-established harmonious relationship between the sinner and God. The redemptive work of the Holy Spirit restores the relationship between the fallen and God so that the saved saints can have an actual knowledge of the divine things, the spiritual knowledge in the full sense of the term. It can be said, such knowledge is "the right knowledge" of the divine things.

Thus, Edwards argues that a "right understanding" of God's Word requires "the right reason" and that this right reason requires "the right enlightenment of the Holy Spirit," that is, the illuminating light of redemption, to restore man's fallen cognitive faculties (i.e., to give a new sense) to understand "the right knowledge," namely spiritual knowledge or sensible knowledge. What the Holy Spirit fundamentally restored was man's fallen will against God. Edwards believes that the essence of true religion was authentic religious affections. True religious affections involve truth held with approbation and delight. And spiritual understanding arises because of the internal work of the Holy Spirit, causing the intellect to embrace truth taught in God's

²⁹⁶ Edwards, *Works*, 2.272.

Word and the will to delight in God and the things of God. Salvation not only restores human reason but also heals the human will. Spiritual affections are indeed the result of the unified operation of regenerated reason and will. This principle runs through the entire *Religious Affections*.

Back to the question, must a person be affected when they perceive the moral qualities of God? Obviously, for Edwards, the answer is no. For Edwards, we must make it clear that only saints can “taste” and be affected by the divine beauty, thus producing spiritual affections. Natural men only have natural knowledge about God’s moral attributes and “have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them.”²⁹⁷ So they can't be affected because they simply don't have the right understanding of the things of divine. Plantinga, therefore, misunderstands Edwards on this point, at least. Edwards not simply say that only the speculative understanding of God's moral qualities can affect the heart. Again, the unitary operation of the human soul with affections as its core stands at the heart of Plantinga’s misunderstanding of the relation of the intellect and will in Edwards’s thought. However, Plantinga correctly observes,

“When intellect and will function properly and are appropriately tuned to each other, we will delight in what we see to be delightful, love what we see to be amiable. A chief component of sin, however, just is dysfunction of the affections...the gift of faith and consequent regeneration isn’t just a matter of restoring the intellect to a pristine condition in which we can once again perceive God and his glories and beauties; it also, and essentially, requires curing that madness of the will.”²⁹⁸

As it turns out, this is what Edwards meant. Finally, by answering Plantinga’s question, we already know how the fallen will is restored by salvation. That is, through the redemptive illumination of the Holy Spirit, the new spiritual sense given to the saints and the spiritual knowledge that is received depends on this new sense.

²⁹⁷ Edwards, *Works*, 2.267.

²⁹⁸ Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 303.

3.3 Conclusion

To sum up, the reason why don't we have such spiritual affections that unified the human faculties as a whole is because our reason and will, the whole soul has fallen in Sin. The mind is darkened and the will is perverted. However, what we are fallen in Adam and restored in Christ. In regeneration, by the saving work of the Holy Spirit, the intellect is enlightened and the will is renewed. By the new spiritual sense given by God, the sinful mind now sees rightly what before it apprehended but did not fully grasp. Now the mind is enlightened and the will is made to love the object it now properly sees. Finally, our heart can be affected by God's Holiness and moral beauty. Then, spiritual affections naturally arise from this. This kind of holy affections requires a unified operation of human soul. Man or woman as one individual not only things, feels, but also acts. Spiritual affections unite reason and will, aligning what we know and what we do.

On the relationship between reason and will in the work of affections, Plantinga's reading is consistent with Edwards' thinking that there is a dependency relation among the acts of intellect and will. The structure of (regenerated) will and intellect is a spiral, dialectical process. But Plantinga ignores Edwards' emphasize on the unity of human faculties with affections at its core. Thus, misinterpreting Edwards as a more or less straightforward rationalist. Infected, Edwards's primacy of reason did not fit less with his characteristic doctrine of sin. And Edwards did not simply claim that only "perceive" (speculatively understand) the moral qualities of God can affect sinful man's heart.

Such affections are the gift given only to the saints in regeneration. Therefore, whether or not a person is able to attain spiritual affections depends entirely on God's sovereignty. However, questions naturally arise. If we already have this kind of amazing gift, why are we so weak to transform theological knowledge into a life of piety? What are men's responsibilities after having such affections? Shall we practice

and how do we practice this kind of God's grace? We will discuss these questions in the next Chapter.

Chapter IV

Affections and Practices

In this chapter, I will analyze in more depth the fundamental reasons why affections have the ability to produce actions in Edwards' thinking. It will mainly focus on his idea of disposition and habit. Then there is a brief discussion of some practices relating to affections Edwards proposes in *Religious Affections*.

4.1 The mixed affections of saints

Since the saints have received this precious grace, why is there often a disconnect between reason and action? In other words, why are people so often indifferent to the great things of religion yet enthusiastic about things that are closely related to their secular interests? Edwards says that "this arises from our having so little true religion."²⁹⁹ Since Edwards repeatedly points out that "true religion, in great part, consists in holy affections." Therefore, what he means here is that we have too few truly spiritual affections.

Edwards states that the purest and most perfect true religion (spiritual affections) exists only in heaven.³⁰⁰ Religion (spiritual affections) on earth is defected and mixed.³⁰¹ Not all affection in the true saints is from grace, but much from nature.³⁰² Compared to the future state of the saints in heaven, they are the only spiritual children on earth today. The gracious affections they possess are only a foretaste of

²⁹⁹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.122.

³⁰⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 2.113.

³⁰¹ Edwards, *Works*, 2.114.

³⁰² Edwards, *Works*, 2.118.