

“EVERYONE HAS HAD A PHILOSOPHY OF HIS OWN”: THE TENSION BETWEEN FACULTY PSYCHOLOGY AND THE UNITIVE SELF IN JONATHAN EDWARDS

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“[E]veryone has had a philosophy of his own about the nature and faculties of the soul and their dependence one on another, and have drawn a multitude of consequences from their schemes, and have made as many rules and signs of grace as has been agreeable to their philosophy.”¹

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) wrote these unpublished words in his “Affections Notebook.” The observation is instructive, for Edwards noted the many varying approaches to human “psychology” in his day.² Arguably, he may even be referring to his Reformed forbears, who were not always in lock-step among themselves in how they explained the mysterious workings of the inner person.³ As John E. Smith observed concerning *Religious Affections*, “No other work of Edwards’ is so heavily dotted with footnotes containing long extracts from the works of other theologians and divines.”⁴

Notice again where Edwards said the disagreement lies: over the “the nature and faculties of the soul.” These various thinkers present their theories, they influence each other, and then draw implications for the “rules and signs of grace.” Divines used these schemes then to address the single issue that perhaps most concerned Edwards throughout his career.⁵

Bob Caldwell’s “Quibble”

The genesis of this paper is Robert Caldwell III’s review of *Understanding Affections in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* published in Oxford University Press’s *The Journal of Theological Studies*.⁶ Among his remarks, he offered this “quibble”:

In several places Martin appears to assert that Edwards rejected a unitive understanding of the soul which views the intellect and will as overlapping actions of a single, unitary mind (pp. 98, 174). He rather, says Martin, affirmed ‘some real distinction’ between the

¹ Affections Notebook, “No. 7,” in *Documents on the Trinity, Grace and Faith*, vol. 37, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, ed. Jonathan Edwards Center (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpb9uZXdwGlsby9nZXRvYmpIY3QucGw/Yy4zNT0zLndqZW8> (accessed December 4, 2017).

² By “psychology,” I mean any theory concerning the soul.

³ For example, see Paul Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 79-110.

⁴ “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2, *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 53. Subsequent references to *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* will be abbreviated WJE.

⁵ “The consideration of these things has long engaged me to attend to this matter, with the utmost diligence and care, and exactness of search and inquiry, that I have been capable of: it is a subject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever since I first entered on the study of divinity.” *Religious Affections*, in WJE 2:85.

⁶ Robert W. Caldwell III, Review of *Understanding Affections in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards: ‘The High Exercises of Divine Love,’* by Ryan J. Martin. *The Journal of Theological Studies* (2020).

faculties of intellect and will in the soul, a view similar to the faculty psychology which was prevalent among Edwards's seventeenth-century predecessors (p. 174, n. 51). However, in other places (pp. 108–9, 234) Martin notes that Edwards 'collapsed [the] traditional faculty psychology to stress the unity of the soul', a unity defined as that between intellect and will (p. 109). I may be missing something, but it is difficult to reconcile these diverse statements; the former view (Edwards affirmed faculty psychology) aligns Edwards more closely with his seventeenth-century forefathers, a point that is consistent with Martin's broader thesis. The latter view (Edwards affirmed a unitive psychology) reveals Edwards to be more of a child of his age, though Martin notes that Edwards arrived at his unitive psychology via the Reformed tradition (p. 234). There is, in short, some confusion on this point that could have been further clarified.

This is a fair question, and one for which there should be an answer. How does one understand Edwards's remarks about the unity of the soul over against his apparent use and affirmation of faculty psychology? Or at least (and perhaps better put): how would I square these disparate aspects in my interpretation of Edwards's thought?

Faculty Psychology

According to Perry Miller, faculty psychology holds that "reason, imagination, and will were distinct 'faculties' and the affections a separate and autonomous power."⁷ Paul Helm adds that faculty psychology usually taught that the understanding was chief of the faculties.⁸

The five senses would present intellectual representations or "phantasms" to the mind. With these phantasms and other intellectual activities (like the memory), the mind comes to understand the world and truth. The contemplative intellect uses what it receives to discern truth; the practice intellect uses what it receives to discern what is to be done.

These faculties are part of what it means to be created in the image of God and distinguish human beings from animals.⁹ Helm gives a sense that, after these commonly held beliefs, further explanations are not quite always rigidly identical:

The center of the entire ensemble of the faculties, including the conscience (if that were to be regarded a separate faculty), is variously referred to; but it is more generally referred to as the reason or intellect or understanding or heart. The list of the faculties will sometimes include the intellective faculty and the vegetative faculty, and sometimes not; sometimes the conscience, and sometimes not; sometimes the memory, and sometimes not. In some writers, the term 'faculty' is used sparingly, and in others more generously to encompass what we might call subfunctions of the soul.¹⁰

⁷ Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (1949; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 177.

⁸ Helm, *Human Nature*, 79. Also see Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 239–79; Paul Lewis, "'Springs of Motion': Jonathan Edwards on Emotions, Character, and Agency," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22 (1994): 275–97. Ramsey, "Editor's Introduction," in *WJE* 1:48–53; Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-century Harvard: A Discipline in Transition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 104–10; and K. Scott Oliphint, "Jonathan Edwards on Apologetics: Reason and the Noetic Effects of Sin," in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003): 131–35.

⁹ Helm, *Human Nature*, 79.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

Helm also notes that the faculties are not “discrete parts.” These are powers of the soul. Some of these powers are powers of the understanding; others are powers of the will.¹¹

Edwards and Faculty Psychology

There is some Edwards’s scholarship in the background that may be informing Caldwell’s concerns. The groundbreaking scholar Perry Miller insisted that Edwards dispensed with faculty psychology altogether. In Miller’s vision of Edwards, Edwards advanced a “radical and foreign psychology” that he learned from John Locke, with whom he was infatuated.¹² Edwards’s opponent Charles Chauncy was the traditional advocate of dusty old faculty psychology, while Edwards was able to advance the cause of the Great Awakening with his new-fangled Lockean model. This new unitive model viewed man as a living organism, and Edwards used it to collapse the will and affections together. Miller adds that Edwards did this while using the language of faculty of psychology.¹³

Miller’s thesis was and remains explosive, and scholars have taken sides.¹⁴ My conclusion is that the suggestion that Edwards was dependent on Locke’s psychology is untenable. Edwards writings show that he was beholden to the Reformed tradition in his psychology. As a matter of fact, he and Locke were wildly divergent on their explanations of how the soul functioned. As Brad Walton observed, Locke actually denied that the will and the affections were overlapping categories (as Edwards maintained).¹⁵ Locke went so far as to say, “I find the will often confounded with several of the affections, especially desire, and one put for the other.”¹⁶ Edwards memorably said, “The affections are no other, than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul.”¹⁷

As for Edwards, he repeatedly invoked the faculties. In the sermon “Wicked Men’s Slavery to Sin,” he explained how sin blinds the reason to only what the sin wants the reason to see. Not only does sin affect reason, but “the will and affections are given up to sin.”¹⁸ Later in the sermon, Edwards drove the point home:

When you serve sin, you admit him not only into your house, and the best room of it, but into your very hearts, into the inward closet of your soul; and there place him in the throne of your affections where reason, your most excellent [faculty], and religion, which vastly exalts reason, ought to sit, and subject your reason and all those excellent faculties which your Master has given you to him.¹⁹

¹¹ Ibid., 81.

¹² Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 178. For an interpretation of Locke’s view of human faculties that places him much closer to the traditional models, see Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy*, 105-7.

¹³ Ibid., 177-84.

¹⁴ Ryan J. Martin, *Understanding Affections in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 12-14, 99-110.

¹⁵ Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections, and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation, and Heart Religion*, Studies in American Religion 74 (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2002), 208.

¹⁶ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, Great Books of the Western World 35 (Chicago, IL: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1952), §2.21.30 (185).

¹⁷ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, in *WJE* 2:96.

¹⁸ Jonathan Edwards, “Wicked Men’s Slavery to Sin,” in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 10, *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 345.

¹⁹ Ibid., 347.

This kind of preaching was normal for Edwards. A sinful man is an upside-down, driven from below, like the beasts who lack reason.²⁰

Elsewhere, Edwards spoke in ways that insisted on the limits of what the various faculties could do. Reason was incapable of “perceiving ... spiritual beauty.” One might as well use their sense of feeling to see color or their sense of sight to taste food. “It is out of reason’s province to perceive the beauty or loveliness of anything: such a perception don’t belong to that faculty. Reason’s work is to perceive truth, and not excellency.”²¹

Even in Edwards’s later works, the faculties play a role. For example, in *Original Sin* Edwards pointed out that all humanity is plagued by the inordinate power of the passions and animal appetite over the higher faculties. In *The End for which God Created the World*, Edwards explained, “Understanding and will are the highest kind of created existence.”²² In *Freedom of Will*, Edwards seemed to goad his opponent Samuel Clarke for making the understanding and will “the same.”²³ Edwards believed that a right notion of understanding and will were essential for true religion:

Of all kinds of knowledge that we can ever obtain, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves, are the most important. As religion is the great business, for which we are created, and on which our happiness depends; and as religion consists in an intercourse between ourselves and our Maker; and so has its foundation in God’s nature and ours, and in the relation that God and we stand in to each other; therefore a true knowledge of both must be needful in order to true religion. But the knowledge of ourselves consists chiefly in right apprehensions concerning those two chief faculties of our nature, the understanding and will.²⁴

The pastor from Northampton could even go so far to insist that there existed a “vast difference between the understanding and the will.”²⁵

Edwards’s “Unitive Psychology”

Edwards did not only hold that the faculties were distinct. He also believed that there was a sense in the soul was one in its operations, especially in the “sense of the heart.”

Unitive in Operations

Edwards was not novel in cautioning against maintaining a highly strict distinction between understanding and will. For example, Francis Turretin (1623-87) wrote,

²⁰ In a later sermon, Edwards said of Christians, “How much a glorious Lord have they over them than wicked men, who are under the prince of the power of the air, whose hearts are under the dominion of Satan, who have their reason and all their other faculties lorded over by impure lusts and vile affections.” “Glorying in the Savior,” in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 14, *Sermons and Discourses: 1723-1729*, ed. Kenneth P Minkema New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 466.

²¹ *A Divine and Supernatural Light* (1740), in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 17, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, ed. Mark Valeri (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 466.

²² *The End for Which God Created the World*, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 8, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 454.

²³ *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), 223-24.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 133. Edwards goes on to make the point, reminiscent of *Religious Affections*, that religion is primarily seated in the will, and so the study of the will is the most important of these two faculties.

²⁵ “The Mind,” in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 6, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wallace E. Anderson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 387.

It ought not to seem strange that faith is assigned to two faculties of the soul. For besides the fact that not a few unrenowned or mean philosophers acknowledge no real distinction between the intellect and the will, but wish the soul (as understanding and knowing) to be called intellect, but as willing and seeking will; it is no more repugnant for faith to belong to two faculties than either free will or the image of God (which have their seat partly in the intellect, partly in the will). Faith is not a unique and simple habit, but composed and aggregate. Therefore it cannot be comprehended by a single conception, but includes various conceptions subordinate to itself (which are well referred to both faculties)."²⁶

It cannot be stressed highly enough that Turretin appears quite open to diminishing the distinction between the intellect and the will. He made similar remarks elsewhere. When pondering if the beatific vision will be in the intellect or will, Turretin rejected both on the grounds of the unity of the soul: "they divide things that ought to be joined together and hold that happiness is placed separately, either in vision or in love, since it consists conjointly in the vision and the love of God. Thus neither sight without love, nor love without sight constitutes its form."²⁷ In his remarks on faith, Turretin also stressed the faculties as operations or acts. The understanding is the soul understanding; the will is the soul willing. In this sense great high Protestant Scholastic divine Turretin himself in one sense "collapsed" the faculties to stress the unity of the soul.

Turretin was not alone. William Pemble (1591-1623) also wrote in *Vindiciae Gratiae* that faith is an act of understanding *and* will, and that the "subject" of faith "is but one and the same, namely the intellectual Nature."²⁸ Jonathan Edwards's maternal grandfather and pastoral predecessor Solomon Stoddard asserted, "faculties of the same soul, and really one and the same thing."²⁹ Petrus van Mastricht, Jonathan Edwards's favorite theologian of all, argued that saving faith could not be reduced to merely an act of the intellect or will: "saving faith consists neither in the intellect alone nor in the will alone, but in the whole spiritual life of a person—indeed radically in the intellect, but formally in the will and operatively in the remaining faculties of the soul."³⁰ Indeed, in his magisterial *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-Century Harvard*, Norman Fiering argued that even Aquinas himself to some extent held that the faculties were "unified":

In St. Thomas Aquinas, who was very well known in early seventeenth-century philosophy and was cited occasionally in student notebooks that have survived from Harvard in this period, the rational faculties of will and intellect are described in a unified way that might not have failed to satisfy Locke. Will and intellect 'include one another in their acts,' Thomas wrote, 'because the intellect understands that the will

²⁶ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1994), §15.9.13 (2:564).

²⁷ Ibid., *Institutes* §20.8.5 (3:609).

²⁸ *Vindiciae Gratiae. A Plea for Grace. More Especially the Grace of Faith*. 3d ed. (London, 1625), 111. He continues, "For our purpose, it appears that the Understanding and Will are not distinct faculties that have distinct actions." According to Pemble, "the Understanding essentially includes the Will," and "the Will essentially includes the Understanding." Ibid., 112. See Helm, *Human Nature*, 81-82.

²⁹ *The Safety of Appearing at the Day of Judgment in the Righteousness of Christ, Opened and Applied* (Northampton: Thomas M. Pomroy, 1804), 6-7. See Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 14-15; and Eugene White, *Puritan Rhetoric: The Issue of Emotion in Religion* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 33-40.

³⁰ *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, vol. 2, *Faith in the Triune God*, tran. Todd M. Rester; ed. Joel R. Beeke (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), §1.2.1.XXII (15).

wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand.' Or in different terms, Thomas said, 'Truth and good include one another, for truth is something good, otherwise it would not be desirable; and good is something true, otherwise it would not be intelligible.'" ³¹

As one considers these positions on these matters, Edwards's own position, as stated in *Freedom of Will* sounds very familiar: "When we say, the understanding discerns, we mean the soul in the exercise of that faculty. So when it is said, the will decides or determines, the meaning must be, that the person in the exercise of a power of willing and choosing, or the soul acting voluntarily, determines." ³² In sum, one might say that Edwards emphasized the unity of the soul in such a statement. Yet he still maintained some distinction between these acts, amidst this unity. To be certain, he did not seem to consider the intellect and the will to be distinct "entities" in the soul, but that in itself was not a novel view. ³³

Unitive in "the Sense of the Heart"

When scholars say that Edwards (for instance) "repudiates the separation of the will or the heart from the intellect," they usually have his Awakening writings in view. ³⁴ Nichols argues that Edwards unified the soul "by focusing on the affections," a category that merged the intellect and the will. ³⁵ Certainly, Nichol's view on this specific point can be rejected. Edwards insisted repeatedly that the affections were strictly the will acting with greater vigor.

The unity of the soul is probably best seen in Edwards's view of the "sense of the heart," which was itself age-old Reformed terminology. ³⁶ In his notebook "The Mind," Edwards noted the way the Bible itself spoke of the human soul: "the Scriptures are ignorant of the philosophic distinction of the understanding and the will, and how the sense of the heart is there called knowledge and understanding." ³⁷ Edwards was likely not trying to discard the faculties altogether here, but make Biblical room for the "sense of the heart." ³⁸

Edwards talked about the "sense of the heart" in several places. ³⁹ His earliest deep reflections on the subject can be found in "Miscellany 782." ⁴⁰ He preached on the subject in his 1733 sermon, *A Divine and Supernatural Light*. ⁴¹ He picked up the subject again in *Religious Affections*.

³¹ Fiering, *Moral Philosophy*, 108.

³² *Freedom of Will*, in WJE 1:172.

³³ Fiering reports, "Two Harvard commencement theses from 1675 and 1684, respectively said [that the term *faculties* represent ability or power and no more]: 'The faculties of the rational soul are distinguished from the soul only notionally,' and 'Intellect and will are the soul as understanding and willing.'" *Moral Philosophy*, 107.

³⁴ Stephen J. Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty: The Holy Spirit and the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 56.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁶ See Terrance Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards: Art and the Sense of the Heart* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards*, 181-206.

³⁷ "The Mind," in WJE 6:389.

³⁸ Michael McClymond helpfully summarizes the scholarship on the phrase "sense of the heart" (at least that through the end of the 20th century). Michael J. McClymond, "Spiritual Perception in Jonathan Edwards," *The Journal of Religion* 77 (1997): 195-216.

³⁹ Edwards uses the idea of "sense" analogically in "sense of the heart." He calls it a sense because it is a way of perceiving that is *like* the physical senses. Norma Fiering explains, "Edwards meant by spiritual sense not only a new capacity for being affected by the things of God, but also a new inclination or a new will directed toward those things. The new sense of the heart brought about by the workings of grace is also a new disposition or an infused habit that is identical to holy love or holiness." *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 126.

⁴⁰ See Martin, *Understanding Affections*, 130-35.

⁴¹ WJE 17:406-27.

In *Religious Affections*, Edwards set out to argue, “True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.”⁴² Such holy affections, Edwards agreed, come from the Holy Spirit. In the third part of *Religious Affections*, Edwards argued that gracious affections “arise from the mind’s being enlightened, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things.”⁴³ This is what Edwards called “spiritual understanding.” This is to say, “Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding; some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge.”⁴⁴ Note immediately the conflation of the two faculties implied in this point. For Edwards, affections are the more vigorous exercises of the *will*. But here the *understanding* is also involved.

As Edwards developed this point, he struggled to explain the way the mind works together. “Spiritual understanding . . . consists in a sense of the heart, of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, that depends upon, and flows from such a sense.”

For Edwards, the true spirituality behind gracious affections has a union of the will (sensing the beauty of holiness) and the understanding (knowing divine truth). Edwards continued:

Spiritual understanding consists primarily in a sense of the heart of that spiritual beauty. I say, a sense of the heart; for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding: nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this matter. When the mind is sensible of the sweet beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensibleness of sweetness and delight in the presence of the idea of it: and this sensibleness of the amiableness or delightfulness of beauty, carries in the very nature of it, the sense of the heart; or an effect and impression the soul is the subject of, as a substance possessed of taste, inclination and will.⁴⁵

For Edwards, mere notional understanding must be distinguished from this “sense of the heart,” where the understanding also “relishes and feels.”⁴⁶ It includes instruction, but it is an instruction that brings the soul delight. Only the Holy Spirit can bring this kind of sense.

The bottom line is that as Edwards explained his doctrine of “the sense of the heart,” he did seem to lose the ability to keep the understanding and will strictly separate.

Reconciliation

To this point, I have shown that Edwards maintained the distinction between the faculties in his thought and writings. I have also shown that at times Edwards also believed the distinction could not be maintained. Now I will attempt to bring some clarification.

First, Caldwell noted that Edwards’s adherence to some semblance of faculty psychology placed him in line with traditional Reformed anthropologies. This is true. Caldwell also observed that Edwards’s unification of the faculties “reveals Edwards to be more of a child of his age.” Here I respectfully disagree. Though Miller cited Edwards’s “unitive” approach to the soul as proof of his disposal of traditional Reformed anthropology, the truth is that many in the

⁴² *Religious Affections*, in WJE 2:95.

⁴³ WJE 2:266.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ WJE 2:272.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Reformed tradition (like Turretin, Pemble, Stoddard, and Mastricht, cited above) similarly cautioned against maintaining the philosophical, speculative distinctions of the soul too stringently over against what Scripture reveals. In fact, Caldwell noted of my book, “Martin notes that Edwards ‘collapsed [the] traditional faculty psychology to stress the unity of the soul’, a unity defined as that between intellect and will (p. 109).” The original quote was actually the following: “*Other Reformed authors before Edwards collapsed traditional faculty psychology to stress the unity of the soul*” (emphasis mine).⁴⁷

Second, Edwards ran into the same problem earlier divines like Turretin ran into. At times it is extremely difficult to explain the operations of the human soul. Mere speculative knowledge is not sufficient in spiritual matters. If speculative knowledge is inadequate, how does one then keep the intellect and volition strictly isolated? As much as human philosophy might pursue certainty, mysteries remain concerning the cosmos, the human being (Prov 30:18-23), and even the Triune God (Rom 11:34; 2 Cor 2:11). The words of Edwards scolding his Great Awakening opponents might be applicable here: “Some make philosophy instead of the Holy Scriptures their rule.”⁴⁸

Third, Edwards believed that the soul of humankind reflected the image of God.⁴⁹ God has perfect understanding and perfect will.⁵⁰ Edwards said that God’s perfect understanding was really a perfect understanding of himself; his perfect will (love) was really a perfect inclination or love for himself.⁵¹ Edwards famously drew these into his explanation of the Trinity. God’s perfect understanding of himself was the logos, or Son. His perfect love for the logos, his idea of himself, was the Spirit.

Without venturing too far into Edwards’s Trinitarian theology, these themes to help make sense of the tension between Edwards’s adherence to faculties while insisting on the unity of the soul. As Edwards explained concerning the Trinity,

[T]he whole divine essence is supposed truly and properly to subsist in these three—viz. God, and his understanding, and love—and that there is such a wonderful union between them that they are after an ineffable and inconceivable manner one in another; so that one hath another, and they have communion in one another, and are as it were predicable one of another.⁵²

⁴⁷ Martin, *Understanding Affections*, 109.

⁴⁸ *Some Thoughts concerning the Revival*, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 4, *The Great Awakening*, ed. C. C. Goen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 297.

⁴⁹ Edwards wrote, “The Almighty’s knowledge is not so different from ours, but that ours is the image of [it].” *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 13, *The “Miscellanies”* (entry nos. a-500), ed. Thomas A. Schafer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), “Misc.” no. 94, 257. Also see Jonathan Edwards, “Discourse on the Trinity,” in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 21, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 113.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Edwards, “Discourse on the Trinity,” in *WJE* 21:114.

⁵¹ “As the sum of God’s understanding is his having an idea of himself, so the sum of his will or inclination consists in his loving himself, as we have already observed.” *Ibid.*, 21:131. Edwards believes that all the attributes of God can be subsumed into these two.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 21:133. Edwards continues, “Even in creatures there is consciousness included in the very nature of the will or act of the soul; and though perhaps not so that it can be so properly said that it is a seeing or understanding will, yet it may truly and properly [be] said so in God by reason of God’s infinitely more perfect manner of acting, so that the whole divine essence flows out and subsists in this act. The Son is in the Holy Spirit, though it don’t proceed from him, by reason that the understanding must be considered as prior in the order of nature to the will or love or act, both in the creature and in the Creator. The understanding is so in the Spirit, that the Spirit may be said to know, as the Spirit of God is truly and properly said to know and to “search all things, even the

Edwards was quite cautious with these views. He said he still believes that the Trinity is a great mystery, and he did not believe he fully solve the problem of one God in three persons: "there are still left many things pertaining to it incomprehensible."⁵³ The point in raising Edwards's Trinitarian theology here is that it illumines some of how he could look at the human soul has having faculties, and yet believe that at times the absolute separation of the faculties could not be well maintained.⁵⁴

Similar features are found with Edwards's understanding the glory of God (a subject very closely related to his Trinitarian theology). God's love for his own glory (his "internal glory") pertains both to God's understanding and God's will. God's understanding perfectly knows the infinite glory or fullness of himself. His will perfectly loves and rejoices in his own infinite excellency and holiness.⁵⁵ God then communicates or shares that glory with his sentient creatures. Since humanity bears his image, God shares that glory with humanity's "distinct faculties," the understanding and the will:

God communicates himself to the understanding of the 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: and in giving the creature happiness, chiefly consisting in the joy of God. These are the sum of that emanation of divine fullness called in Scripture, "the glory of God." The first part of this glory is called "truth," the latter, "grace." John 1:14, "We beheld is glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of *grace* and *truth*."⁵⁶

For Edwards, again, the glory of God (which includes communicating the glory of God to the creatures) is God's great end for creating the world. Edwards elsewhere connects the communication of God's glory to the understanding (truth) particularly to the Son, and the communication of God's glory to the will (grace) particularly to the Spirit. This chief end "is indeed but *one*; and this *one* end is most properly and comprehensively called, 'the glory of God.'"⁵⁷

Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to resolve the tension Caldwell noticed in my synthesis of Edwards's understanding of human psychology. We have seen that Edwards did indeed affirmed the faculties of the soul. At the most basic level, the soul was capable of understanding (intellect) and will (volition). He did not deny these faculties at any point in his corpus. At the same time, there were occasions where Edwards found the strict divisions between understanding and will incapable of satisfying the testimony of Scripture concerning the inner person.

deep things of God." Ibid., 21:133-4.

⁵³ Ibid., 21:134.

⁵⁴ Stephen R. Holmes also makes this connection: "An attempt to connect the intellectual and volitional aspects of conversion, then, could be regarded as a form of Trinitarian theology." *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 180-1. Compare Nichols, *Certainty*, 28-9.

⁵⁵ Jonathan Edwards, *The End for Which God Created the World*, in WJE 8:526-29.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 8:529-30 (emphasis original).

⁵⁷ Ibid., 8:530.

Yet in having considered all these themes, in retrospect, I wish I had not used the word “collapsed.” It seems a bit misleading and too strong. Yet the tension has been there. Edwards did not introduce that tension. He simply carried it forward into his own theology.

In pursuit of reconciling these apparently unresolvable truths, I offered three solutions. First, Edwards was not novel among the Reformed tradition in holding to something of a unitive perspective. Second, Edwards resorted to the unitive view because the immaterial soul is mysterious, and he was more interested in maintaining the rule of Scriptures than some strict philosophical system (even though he never abandoned the general rubric of traditional faculties). Third, Edwards’s theology of Trinity provided a more than ample precedent for holding together distinct faculties (understanding and will) and the unity of the self.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ I alluded to this third point in my book in a footnote. See Martin, *Understanding Affections*, 174n51.