

## JONATHAN EDWARDS AND THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT

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**Abstract:** *The antislavery movement began in earnest in the antebellum period. Although there were many political and economic reasons for its development, theology was also an important factor. In the procession from the Puritans to the Edwardseans who were actively involved with anti-slavery, this study suggests the possibility that Edwards had an overall positive influence on the anti-slavery movement through his attitude toward slavery and his theology of sanctification. Some may think that Edwards did not have an ethic of anti-slavery since he was a slave owner. However, although he did not oppose the institution of slavery, it is also true that he developed an ethic regarding slavery that is one step closer to what would become the ethics of the anti-slavery movement, including accepting slaves as church members, enlarging the Puritan's understanding of neighbor, and opposing the slave trade. In addition, Edwards's theology of sanctification, emphasizing Christian practice, moral duty, and virtuous benevolence, might have a positive influence on the later anti-slavery movement.*

**Key words:** *Jonathan Edwards, anti-slavery movement, Samuel Hopkins, Edwards's theology of sanctification, disinterested benevolence*

The history of the anti-slavery movement in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America includes many studies on the anti-slavery movement that focus either on the antebellum period, or at best, expand their research to the Revolution as the starting point of the movement's impulse.<sup>1</sup> These studies focus on the social atmosphere and conclude that "ideas associated with the American Revolution began to challenge"<sup>2</sup> the anti-slavery movement.

While many scholars emphasize this cultural influence, not many scholars recognize the significance of the theological roots of the anti-slavery movement. Fortunately, recent studies recognize a proper connection between the theology of Edwardseans during the Revolutionary period and radical Reformers in the later

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight Lowell Dumond, *Antislavery Origins of the Civil War in the United States* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1959), 5. For instance, in Dumond's view, the anti-slavery movement began with the activities of the American Colonization Society, which was established in 1816 to expatriate the free Negro. Also see Young Hwi Yoon, "The Spread of Antislavery Sentiment through Proslavery Tracts in the Transatlantic Evangelical Community, 1740s–1770s," *CH* 81.2 (June 2012): 348–49; Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Larry Tise states, "the forces that gave rise to nascent antislavery did not become apparent until the last third of the eighteenth century when events and ideas associated with the American Revolution began to challenge the future of slavery on a massive scale." Larry Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701–1840* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 13.

antebellum period.<sup>3</sup> Among the former, Samuel Hopkins is the best known.<sup>4</sup> According to Douglas Sweeney, Hopkins was nominated by one historian as “the father of the antislavery movement in America.”<sup>5</sup> David Lovejoy agrees, arguing that Hopkins “enlarged the scope of his generation’s Revolution and became one of the few equalitarians of his day” by acting in line with his religious theology.<sup>6</sup> In addition to Hopkins, according to Kenneth Minkema and Harry Stout, several other Edwardseans including Nathaniel Emmons, Joseph Bellamy, Levi Hart, Jonathan Edwards Jr., and Nathaniel Niles joined the early anti-slavery movement united “by a common religious cause.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, David Brion Davis argues that one cannot overemphasize “the influence of the Andover and New Haven theologies on such radical reformers as Phelps, Parker Pillsbury, Henry Clarke Wright, John Humphrey Noyes, and indirectly on Garrison himself.”<sup>8</sup>

Yet, the questions remain: From where did these Edwardseans get their anti-slavery theology? Was it simply the influence of the social atmosphere at the time of the Revolution? Or did the Revolution agitate the theology they already had? Is there any influence from Edwards on the issue of slavery? To answer these questions, this paper will first explore Edwards’s attitude toward slavery, then examine the influence of Edwards on the Edwardseans regarding the antislavery movement.

## I. UNDERSTANDING EDWARDS’S ATTITUDE TO THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY IN HIS CONTEXT

1. *Understanding Edwards’s view on slavery.* Some may argue that Edwards could not have had a positive influence on the anti-slavery movement since he was himself a slave owner. Indeed, he not only owned slaves but also purchased several.<sup>9</sup> His father, the Reverend Timothy Edwards, owned at least one slave, and others of his relatives owned slaves as well when Edwards bought his first slave at Newport,

<sup>3</sup> According to Kenneth Minkema and Harry Stout, much of the research on the anti-slavery movement has emphasized “evangelical” and “Unitarian” reformers together. Kenneth P. Minkema and Harry S. Stout, “The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865,” *Journal of American History* 92.1 (June 2005): 47. This paper traces the theological roots of evangelical antislavery reformers in America.

<sup>4</sup> In 1770, Samuel Hopkins moved into the First Church in Newport, RI, the center of the North American slave trade. Hopkins preached against the slave trade and the institution of slavery. For him, slavery was “the fruit of a most criminal, contracted selfishness against disinterested benevolence.” Douglas A. Sweeney and Allen C. Guelzo, eds., *The New England Theology: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 151.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas A. Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 39.

<sup>6</sup> David S. Lovejoy, “Samuel Hopkins: Religion, Slavery and the Revolution,” *New England Quarterly* 40.2 (June 1967): 243.

<sup>7</sup> Minkema and Stout, “The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865,” 50–61.

<sup>8</sup> David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 297.

<sup>9</sup> Minkema and Stout, “The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865,” 49. Minkema lists four names of Edwards’s slaves: Joseph, Lee, Venus, and Titus. Kenneth P. Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 54.4 (October 1997): 825.

RI, in 1731.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Minkema argues that Edwards “must have deemed it right and proper for a person of his station to acquire a slave.”<sup>11</sup>

Not only did Edwards own slaves, but he also defended the institution of slavery. In 1997, Minkema discovered a draft of a letter by Edwards on the issue of slavery. This draft shows that Edwards accepted the societal status of persons born into slavery. He did not see slavery as a sin, even though he opposed the slave trade.<sup>12</sup> Given these circumstances, could one make any argument that Edwards had a positive influence on the anti-slavery movement? Before judging too quickly, this paper will consider Edwards’s situation in context.

In order to evaluate Edwards’s view of slavery by examining his life and theology, and particularly his letter draft, one should consider several things. First, slavery was completely legal at that time. Second, little could have been done to challenge the institution of slavery.<sup>13</sup> Third, regarding Edwards’s letter draft on the issue of slavery, it should be noted that Edwards wrote the letter in defense of a fellow clergyman, Benjamin Doolittle.<sup>14</sup> Dissidents in Doolittle’s congregation had criticized Doolittle for owning a slave by making the charge that the Northfield pastor “lived in notorious iniquity and indulgence of his lusts.”<sup>15</sup> Edwards was certain that the dissidents’ criticism was intended “only to make disturbances and raise uneasiness among people against their minister to the great wounding of religion.”<sup>16</sup> In this situation, as George Marsden points out, it is notable that Edwards’s position “revealed his deep ambivalence” toward the institution of slavery.<sup>17</sup> Finally, it should be noted that the anti-slavery impulse began growing in the 1770s because of its connection to revolutionary sentiment. When people started struggling “for liberty against Great Britain,” they realized that slavery was “at

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<sup>10</sup> Minkema and Stout, “Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865,” 49.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth P. Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards’ Defense of Slavery,” *Massachusetts Historical Review* 4 (January 2004): 28. Minkema also indicates that during Edwards’s youth, the number of slaves in New England dramatically increased from 400 to 4,000 in the decade and a half after 1700 and purchasing slaves became a trend for Massachusetts ministers.

<sup>12</sup> Minkema and Stout, “Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865,” 49.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Sewall was a notable exception. He issued a short tract entitled “The selling of Joseph: A memorial (1700).” He criticized slaveholding and equated slavery with manstealing. Responding to Sewall’s attack on slavery, John Saffin defended the practice, and Saffin’s pamphlet had the more compelling logic in his day. See Tise, *Proslavery*, 16; Bernard Rosenthal, “Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery,” *New England Quarterly* 46.1 (1973): 68.

<sup>14</sup> Doolittle was an Arminian and Old Light pastor. Thus, Sherard Burns claims that it is interesting that Edwards tried to defend Doolittle since he is “a man who opposed him [Edwards] theologically and who held opposing views with regard to awakenings,” in Sherard Burns, “Trusting The Theology of a Slave Owner,” in *A God Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 147.

<sup>15</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards’ Defense of Slavery,” 31–32.

<sup>16</sup> George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 256.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

worst a sin and, at best, a policy inconsistent” with their own struggle.<sup>18</sup> Edwards, however, never conceived of being liberated from Britain.

Therefore, it is unfair to criticize Edwards’s view on slavery without considering the context of the times. Yet, it is one thing to argue that Edwards’s slaveholding and defense of slavery are understandable, and quite another to assert that he had a positive influence on the anti-slavery movement. To judge whether or not Edwards had such a positive influence, this study will explore two aspects of Edwards: first, his attitude toward slavery, and second, his theology of sanctification.

2. *Edwards’s attitude toward slavery.* Edwards (1703~1758) is usually called the last Puritan. His theology did not emerge out of a vacuum; rather, he inherited the foundations of his theology from the Puritans, although he continued to develop what he inherited. This section will explore what understandings of slavery he inherited from the Puritans and what he developed from that inheritance.

a. *What Edwards inherited from the Puritans.* The Puritan’s notion of “order” included the institution of slavery. Even before the slavery of Africans, based on racial discrimination, was introduced into British society, that society took for granted that those in higher societal ranks would have servants, with even white servants being treated like slaves.<sup>19</sup> New England Puritans accepted this tradition. For instance, John Winthrop, who led the Puritans to New England, stated on the *Arbella* in 1630 that “God almightie in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the Condiçion of mankind, as in all times some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjeccion.”<sup>20</sup> Following this understanding of order, most Puritan ministers believed that “order” is not only for the upper classes but also for the “good of all men.”<sup>21</sup>

Another attitude the Puritans had toward slavery, at least theoretically, was an emphasis on love toward slaves. In the 1660s, for example, British Puritan minister Richard Baxter faulted British slaveholders because they failed to act as the parents of slaves by looking after the spiritual welfare of slaves, which he believed was their responsibility.<sup>22</sup> New England Puritans inherited Baxter’s perspective on the ideal relationship between masters and slaves. Massachusetts law, for instance, required the humane treatment of slaves.<sup>23</sup>

As an endeavor to fulfill the perceived obligation to love slaves, Puritan ministers traditionally urged slaveowners to endeavor to convert their slaves. According to Tise, as early as 1680, Morgan Godwyn wrote an essay on a master’s duty to

<sup>18</sup> Joseph A. Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England between the Great Awakenings* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press: 1981), 127.

<sup>19</sup> Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 256.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Foster, *Their Solitary Way, the Puritan Social Ethic in the First Century of Settlement in New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 13, citing from John Winthrop, “The Model of Christian Charity,” in *Winthrop Papers* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931), 282–83.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Yoon, “The Spread of Antislavery Sentiment through Proslavery Tracts in the Transatlantic Evangelical Community, 1740s–1770s,” 352.

<sup>23</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards’ Defense of Slavery,” 30.

promote religion among slaves.<sup>24</sup> Samuel Willard, a minister at Boston's Old South Church from 1678–1707, according to Christopher Cameron, insisted that “slaves were part of Massachusetts’ larger familial and religious institutions.”<sup>25</sup> Cameron also demonstrates that Cotton Mather challenged the flawed assumption of his time that black Africans were descendants of Ham, and contended that they had souls. Mather emphasized the reciprocal duties between masters and slaves, saying “masters indeed should be fathers unto their servants, instructing them in piety and knowledge of the Christian religion.”<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Bernard Rosenthal asserts that while the Puritans maintained the institution of slavery, it was also orthodox Puritans who made an effort to protect the rights of slaves.<sup>27</sup>

In sum, the Puritans’ position can be summarized as follows: Masters were expected to “care” for their slaves, while slaves were to submit to societal “order.” Jonathan Edwards’s view of slavery followed this position. According to Mark Valeri, Edwards believed that owning slaves was permissible, since “God instituted social hierarchies as the means to social integration and solidarity.”<sup>28</sup> Yet, Edwards argues that slavery should only be permitted “as long as they were treated humanely and encouraged to become Christians.”<sup>29</sup> In his “Blank Bible” on Job 31:15, Edwards writes, “if I despise my servant’s cause, how much more may God despise me cause? I am God’s servant as they are mine, and much more inferior to God than my servant is to me.”<sup>30</sup> It seems that he wanted to do his best to fulfill his duty to his slaves. This type of defending slaveholding was common in New England.<sup>31</sup> Like Willard and Mather, Edwards “denied that there was any inherent inferiority among different peoples in God’s eye.”<sup>32</sup>

Some scholars believe that this commonplace belief of Puritan could itself be the basis for the later antislavery movement due to love and care for a slave’s soul.<sup>33</sup> However, Edwards not only inherited this view of slavery from the Puritans, but he also developed it one step closer to the views that would later be held by the antislavery movement.

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<sup>24</sup> Tise, *Proslavery*, 19.

<sup>25</sup> Christopher Cameron, “The Puritan Origins of Black Abolitionism in Massachusetts,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 39.1–2 (Summer 2011): 82.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 82–83.

<sup>27</sup> Rosenthal, “Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery,” 62.

<sup>28</sup> Mark Valeri, “Introduction,” in Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 17: *Sermons and Discourses, 1730–1733* (ed. Mark Valeri; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 29.

<sup>29</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade,” 825.

<sup>30</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards’ Defense of Slavery,” 39–40. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 24: *The Blank Bible* (ed. Stephen J. Stein; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 457.

<sup>31</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards’ Defense of Slavery,” 39–40. Not only Edwards but also others such as Belcher and Whitefield shared the same attitudes. They distinguished proper slave owning from improper slave owning. They believed their approach was proper since, for them, slavery was an opportunity for Christian benevolence.

<sup>32</sup> Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 258.

<sup>33</sup> This is the thesis of Cameron’s “The Puritan Origins of Black Abolitionism in Massachusetts,” and Rosenthal’s “Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery.”

b. *What Edwards developed beyond Puritan beliefs.* First, Edwards had a nuanced view of slavery. Although he owned slaves and defended slavery, he did not defend slavery wholeheartedly. Minkema argues that Edwards's letter "acknowledged its inequities and disturbing implications."<sup>34</sup> Marsden also contends that although Edwards had a negative view of slavery, he believed it was necessary to permit a certain amount of evil to maintain society because "the whole economy of New England depended on products produced by African slavery."<sup>35</sup> In this sense, Edwards's attitude toward slavery slightly differs from the Puritans who preceded him.

Second, Edwards acted in line with what he believed about slavery. He was the first minister at Northampton to baptize blacks and admit them into full church membership. Between 1735 and 1741, he baptized eleven blacks and seven of those became full members.<sup>36</sup> While he was not the only clergyman who accepted to do so, nonetheless baptizing and accepting blacks as full church membership were certainly not common. Even by 1772, Ezra Stiles records "there were perhaps 26, and not above 30 professors out of Twelve hundred Negroes in Town."<sup>37</sup>

Third, Edwards enlarged on some of his predecessors' understanding of "neighbor." When Winthrop provided laws for New England Puritans, Winthrop limited the community only to Christians, not simply as "one man to another, as the same fleshe and Image of god" but "as a brother in Christ allsoe, and in the Communion of the same spirit and soe teaches us to put a difference betweene Christians and others."<sup>38</sup> Since Winthrop believed humanity had lost their innocence, he thought that only regenerate people who experienced saving grace could recognize the same gracious principle in other regenerate persons.<sup>39</sup> Edwards took a different position. He defined neighbors as all human beings. He argued that if one defines neighbors narrowly as those of the same religion, it would be permissible to lie to other nations because the law commands, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," and other nations are not neighbors.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Edwards believed the moral law should be applied to the treatment of all nations. This theology resulted in Edwards's belief that European nations had no right to steal people from African nations.

<sup>34</sup> Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade," 824.

<sup>35</sup> Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 258.

<sup>36</sup> Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards' Defense of Slavery," 54.

<sup>37</sup> Rosenthal, "Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery," 67, citing from Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901). Rosenthal also notes, "As late as 1730 there are cases recorded of Negroes *asking* to be baptized ... and being denied permission by their masters" (p. 67). He points out that the attempts to convert slaves was futile because of the resistance of slave owners who were afraid of losing their slaves (see 64–65). On the contrary, Cameron states that conversion of slaves began as early as 1641 and became more widespread in the early eighteenth century ("The Puritan Origins of Black Abolitionism in Massachusetts," 84–85).

<sup>38</sup> Foster, *Their Solitary Way*, 42, citing from Winthrop, "Model of Christian Charity," 283–84.

<sup>39</sup> According to Foster, conforming to Winthrop, Puritans had to expel dissidents such as Gortonists, Hutchinsonians, and followers of Roger Williams, in order to keep this unity of believers, in Foster, *Their Solitary Way*, 52.

<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 16: *Letters and Personal Writings* (ed. George S. Claghorn; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 75.

Fourth, Edwards opposed the slave trade. Regarding the purchase of slaves, Edwards followed the Puritan tradition and Massachusetts law. Edwards limited purchasable slaves to “war captives, debtors, and children of slaves.”<sup>41</sup> Other than these sources for new slaves, he strongly opposed the slave trade. He asked, “whether or no other nations have any power or business to disfranchise all the nations of Africa?”<sup>42</sup> Even though Edwards did not oppose slavery because he could not find any alternatives for already-existing African slaves for the slavery plantations, he believed no country had the right to take Africans from their countries.<sup>43</sup> Some supported the slave trade because they believed it provide an “opportunity to Christianize,” but Edwards claimed that the slave trade “actually decreased the chance to spread the gospel elsewhere.”<sup>44</sup>

Here, it is notable that Edwards himself seems to have changed his attitude toward the slave trade.<sup>45</sup> For example, when Edwards purchased his first slave in 1731, he went to Newport. Since Newport was the place to buy slaves through the African slave trade, Minkema assumes that at that time Edwards probably had “no qualms about the African slave trade.”<sup>46</sup> However, when Edwards wrote the letter draft in 1741 referring to the slave trade, he was against it. What made Edwards change his mind? This is only a matter of speculation, but his change was quite probably the result of the Great Awakening. Young Hwi Yoon argues that the Great Awakening “enhanced the religiosity of religious people,” thus helping them to “recognize the inconsistency between evangelical doctrines and slavery.”<sup>47</sup> In documenting the change the Great Awakening had on society, Yoon also refers to how the increasing numbers of Africans being converted influenced New England society’s view on slavery.<sup>48</sup> Edwards, indeed, in his *Faithful Narrative*, reported on the results of the revivals, stating “many of the poor Negroes also have been in like manner wrought upon and changed.”<sup>49</sup>

The Great Awakening may have also strengthened Edwards’s millennial vision. Although most Puritans held a postmillennial view, the Great Revival ushered in an even more robust sense of progress that many believed would last until the

<sup>41</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade,” 829. Edwards reasoned that it was permissible to purchase the children of slaves because of a Massachusetts law of 1670 that established that “a child’s condition was determined by that of its mother.”

<sup>42</sup> *WJE* 16:73.

<sup>43</sup> Young Hwi Yoon, “Jonathan Edwards’ Thoughts on Slavery: 1730–1780,” *Korean Journal of American History* 38 (2013): 18.

<sup>44</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade,” 829. Although there was no evidence Edwards knew of Sewall’s writing, Edwards’s and Sewall’s arguments seem to be very similar. See Rosenthal, “Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery,” 68–69.

<sup>45</sup> Some scholars do not consider this difference not as a change but as a contradiction. For instance, Burns argues that “to condemn the trade and at the same time to participate in the selling and buying of slaves was a glaring contradiction” (Burns, “Trusting The Theology of a Slave Owner,” 153).

<sup>46</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards’ Defense of Slavery,” 42.

<sup>47</sup> Yoon, “Spread of Antislavery Sentiment through Proslavery Tracts in the Transatlantic Evangelical Community, 1740s–1770s,” 354.

<sup>48</sup> Yoon, “Jonathan Edwards’ Thoughts on Slavery: 1730–1780,” 8–10.

<sup>49</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade,” 829.

end of time. Davis indicates that the Great Awakening aroused new faith that “Americans stood within reach of Christ’s millennial kingdom.”<sup>50</sup> Edwards assuredly anticipated the day when slavery would end. For the time being, however, he believed slavery was still a part of the fallen world’s order, because “things were not yet settled in peace.”<sup>51</sup>

In conclusion, Edwards held a more negative view of slavery than did the Puritans, accepted slaves as church members, enlarged the Puritan’s understanding of neighbor, and strongly opposed the slave trade. His attitude toward the slave trade changed as a result of the Great Awakening, and that shift can be attributed to an increase in the number of conversions among Africans, and a strengthened millennial vision. It is true that none of these beliefs was unique to Edwards. Nevertheless, as an influential leader of the Great Awakening and a theologian, it is possible that his view on slavery after the revival positively influenced, albeit indirectly, his followers on their journey toward the antislavery movement.

## II. EDWARDS’S THEOLOGY OF SANCTIFICATION

While Edwards’s attitude toward slavery could not have directly influenced his followers to a great extent because he did not leave writings regarding slavery other than his letter draft, which was only discovered recently, it is probable that his theology more directly influenced his followers. Recently, scholars have begun to acknowledge the influence of Edwards on the anti-slavery impulse. However, these scholars take different approaches. On the one hand, Minkema and Stout argue that Edwards’s concept of true virtue or benevolence was a crucial theological root for the anti-slavery movement because Edwards’s disciples “refined” this concept of benevolence to the “disinterested benevolence” of Samuel Hopkins, which was crucial for anti-slavery.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, Joseph Conforti insists that it was Hopkins’s “innovation” of true virtue, not Edwards’s own theology, which opened the door for social action.<sup>53</sup> Both “refinement” and “innovation” connote that the origin of Hopkins’s theology was Edwards.<sup>54</sup> However, these nuances differ in how much emphasis they lend to the importance of Edwards’s theology.

For Conforti, the position of social action in Edwards’s theology is “equivocal” whereas Hopkins brought it to the forefront.<sup>55</sup> Conforti contrasts Edwards

<sup>50</sup> Davis, *Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823*, 289.

<sup>51</sup> Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade,” 828.

<sup>52</sup> Minkema and Stout, “Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865,” 48.

<sup>53</sup> Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 121.

<sup>54</sup> Conforti also admits that Hopkins’s theology basically came from Edwards, saying that Hopkins’s critique of “the interconnection of selfishness, commerce, and slavery in late-eighteenth-century Newport” was inspired by Edwards. Joseph A. Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition & American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 97.

<sup>55</sup> Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 121. In the footnote, Conforti quotes Heimert as saying he rightly detects such a trend toward activism in the thought of Edwards’s followers. However, Conforti does not agree with Heimert’s argument that “the changing emphasis reflected the shift in focus from the heart to the will implicit in the *Religious Affections*.” Alan Heimert, *Religion and the*

and Hopkins, claiming “where Edwards saw true virtue as essentially a matter of right affections, Hopkins viewed it as right actions.”<sup>56</sup> Also, Conforti believes that Hopkins’s “disinterested benevolence” is different from Edwards’s virtuous benevolence. Conforti argues that Hopkins’s disinterested benevolence based on self-denial made social action possible. As a result, Conforti argues that the Edwardseans’ social action was possible because Hopkins’s theology “superseded” Edwards’s “mystical quietism.”<sup>57</sup> The remaining section will examine whether Conforti’s argument is legitimate based on Edwards’s doctrine of sanctification.

1. *The importance of Christian practice in Edwards’s theology of sanctification*

a. *Edwards’s understanding of practice.* For Conforti, *Religious Affections* does not prove that Edwards’s social interest was sufficient for action. In fact, Conforti argues that Edwards’s quietism and activism were in conflict in *Religious Affections*. He calls attention to the fact that “holy action is the last of the twelve distinguishing signs of conversion that he discusses in *Religious Affections*,” while “many of the other marks of God’s grace are existential states and aesthetic perceptions.” Accordingly, he concludes that Edwards’s emphasis on the aesthetic side of thought became an obstacle to social activism.<sup>58</sup>

However, Conforti misunderstood the importance of practice and holy action in Edwards’s theology of sanctification and in his ethics. As Conforti points out, in *Religious Affections*, Edwards asserts that “True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.”<sup>59</sup> And holy affections involve the will, inclination, mind, and heart. Thus, some might think that “practice,” as an outward action, is not important in Edwards’s theology of sanctification. Yet this is not the case for Edwards. Throughout his corpus, Edwards emphasizes both heart and practice. In his notebook on “Signs of Godliness,” Edwards observes that “godliness consists not in an *heart* to purpose to fulfill God’s commandments, but in an *heart* actually to do it.”<sup>60</sup> In his sermon, “Striving after Perfection,” Edwards claims, “the best and safest way, and most agreeable to the Scriptures, for persons to take in such things, is to examine not only what they feel with in themselves, but to take that and their practice together.”<sup>61</sup>

For Edwards, Christian practice is the principal sign of godliness, not just one of twelve signs as Conforti argues. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards writes, “the tendency of grace in the heart to holy practice, is very direct, and the connection most

*American Mind, from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 311. Conforti argues such a shift was a result of Hopkinsianism, and not from Edwards.

<sup>56</sup> Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 121.

<sup>57</sup> Conforti contends that, “whereas Edwards had located true virtue in exalted consciousness, Hopkins placed it in elevated social behavior. Consequently, evangelical activism superseded mystical quietism,” in Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 117.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>59</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2: *Religious Affections* (ed. John Smith; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 95.

<sup>60</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 21: *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith* (ed. Sang Hyun Lee; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 476.

<sup>61</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 19: *Sermons and Discourses, 1734–1738* (ed. M. X. Lesser; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 701.

natural close and necessary.”<sup>62</sup> He also argues that “Christian practice or a holy life is a great and distinguishing sign of true and saving grace” and goes on to say, “it is the chief of all the signs of grace, both as an evidence of the sincerity of professors unto others, and also to their own consciences.”<sup>63</sup> Thus, it is safe to say that, in Edwards’s understanding, practice is a significant sign that shows whether one’s faith is genuine or not.

What is “practice” in Edwards’s thought? In his lists of “being universal in their obedience to Christ’s commands,” Edwards includes not only duty toward God, that is, “the duties of the first table, manifesting the fear and love of God,” but also duties “universal in fulfilling rules of love to men, love to saints, and love to enemies.”<sup>64</sup> These arguments show Edwards’s understanding of practice as being balanced between duties to God and duties to one’s fellow human being.

This balance also can be found in his description of an ideal sanctified person. In *Some Thoughts Concerning The Revival*, Edwards describes his wife’s religious experiences.<sup>65</sup> On the one hand, Edwards regards her close relation to God as evidence of true sanctification. Her soul has been “as it were perfectly overwhelmed, and swallowed up with light and love and a sweet solace, rest and joy of soul, that was altogether unspeakable,” and she deeply meditated upon “the infinite beauty and amiableness of Christ’s person, and the heavenly sweetness of his excellent and transcendent love.”<sup>66</sup> Yet, what Edwards felt remarkable are these two things. First, she changed her attitude toward others. She “had been felt a disposition to censure and condemn others.” After the religious experience, she had a “sensible aversion to a judging others.”<sup>67</sup> Second, she has “a very great sense of the importance of moral social duties, and how great a part of religion lay in them: there was such a new sense and conviction of this, beyond what had been before, that it seemed to be as it were a clear discovery then made to the soul.”<sup>68</sup> The continued description includes

a deep concern for the good of others’ souls; a melting compassion to those that looked on themselves as in a state of nature, and to saints under darkness, so as to cause the body to faint: an universal benevolence to mankind, with a longing as it were to embrace the whole world in the arms of pity and love; ideas of suffering from enemies the utmost conceivable rage and cruelty, with a disposition felt to fervent love and pity in such a case ... a great sense often expressed, of

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<sup>62</sup> *WJE* 2:398.

<sup>63</sup> *WJE* 2:406.

<sup>64</sup> *WJE* 2:419.

<sup>65</sup> In the introduction, Goen indicates that Edwards asked Sarah to write down her recent experience and that Edwards composed *Some Thoughts* later that year. Edwards changed “each personal pronoun to ‘the person’” and carefully suppressed “every indication of identity.” C. C. Goen, “Introduction,” in Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 4: *Great Awakening* (ed. C. C. Goen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 69–70.

<sup>66</sup> *WJE* 4:332.

<sup>67</sup> *WJE* 4:335.

<sup>68</sup> *WJE* 4:336.

the importance of the duty of charity to the poor, and how much the generality of Christians come short in the practice of it.<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, Edwards was convinced that Sarah's experience was genuine not only because of her close relation to God but also her changed attitude toward people and her acknowledgment of social duties.<sup>70</sup>

In addition, in *The Diary of David Brainerd*, Edwards presents Brainerd as an example of the kind of holy life described in *Religious Affections*. In *The Diary of David Brainerd*, Edwards praises his friend Brainerd for finding assurance of saving faith in its "evidence" in his sanctified life rather than in the immediate whisperings of the Holy Spirit.<sup>71</sup> As indicated in *Religious Affections*, "assurance is not to be obtained so much by self-examination, as by action."<sup>72</sup>

In sum, the significance of the last sign of holy affections should not be counted as merely one of twelve. In Edwards's understanding, practice is a reasonable sign that reveals whether a heart is genuine or not. Edwards believed that practice is the foremost fruit and evidence of sanctification. Hence, quietism and activism for Edwards were integrated rather than in conflict with one another. Also, Edwards's theology of holy affections encourages holy action rather than putting up obstacles in the way of action.

b. *The scope of charity in sanctification.* Regarding Edwards's theology of social action, the next question would be the scope of moral duty or charity: how far it should be applied.<sup>73</sup> Edwards finds in human nature the reason for the possibly similar scope of charity for both the regenerate and the unregenerate. In *True Virtue*, Edwards contends that every intelligent being is "some way related to Being in general, and is a part of the universal system of existence," and "stands in connection with the whole."<sup>74</sup> Not only the regenerate, Edwards argues, but all human beings are related to Being in general and are therefore a part of the universal system.<sup>75</sup> Thus, Valeri argues that since for Edwards all human beings bear the image of God and have one blood "to deny them alms was inhumane—and inhuman."<sup>76</sup>

<sup>69</sup> *WJE* 4:338–39.

<sup>70</sup> Compared to Edwards's description of Sarah's experience in *Some Thoughts*, her supernatural experience was more emphasized in her original description. This is based on an unpublished manuscript that Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale received recently. Thanks to Kenneth P. Minkema for this information.

<sup>71</sup> Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1966), 144.

<sup>72</sup> *WJE* 2:195.

<sup>73</sup> In "The Duty of Charity to the Poor," Edwards contends that "loving our neighbor as ourselves is the sum of the moral law respecting our fellow creatures, and helping of them and contributing to their relief is the most natural expression of this love" (*WJE* 17:376). Edwards explains charity thus: "the word properly signifies love, or that disposition or affection by which one is dear to another," and "charity in the New Testament is the very same as Christian love," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 8: *Ethical Writings* (ed. Paul Ramsey; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 129. Thus, hereafter, charity will be used as the word for the sum of moral duty for Edwards.

<sup>74</sup> *WJE* 8:541.

<sup>75</sup> Some scholars explain this relationship with the concept of God's disposition. Sang Hyun Lee claims that, in Edwards's belief, God uses the world "in space and time to exercise his dispositional

In fact, Edwards contended in several places that every human being is subject to this duty of love. In “The Duty of Charity to the Poor,” Edwards argued,

For men are made in the image of God, and are worthy of our love upon this account. And then, we are all nearly allied one to another by nature: we have all the same nature, like faculties, like dispositions, like desires of good, like needs, like aversion to misery, and are made of one blood. And we are made to subsist by society and union, one with another, and God has made us with such a nature that we can't subsist without the help one of another. Mankind in this respect are as the members of the natural body, are one, can't subsist alone without an union with and the help of the rest.<sup>77</sup>

Human beings are allied by the same nature. They share one blood. Edwards believed that this one nature and one blood is sufficient reason to provide charity for each other. They should depend on another.

In his sermon “Living Peaceably One With Another (1723),” Edwards quoted Acts 17:26, where it is written, “And hath made of one blood all nations of men,” and argued that “we are all made of the same blood. We are all descendants of the same heavenly Father who has made us all, and all from the same earthly father and mother; so that we are all brethren, of whatever nation, religion or opinion.”<sup>78</sup> As Story contends, “Edwards elaborated the ideas of blood ties, resemblance to God, and mutual dependence in many works.”<sup>79</sup>

If every human being is related to all others and is designed for mutual help, and the scope of charity by both the regenerate and the unregenerate can be extended to the same extent, what is the difference between them? On the one hand, it is easier for the regenerate to love all human beings than it is for the unregenerate because of the result of sanctification. In the seventh sermon of *Charity and Its Fruits*, Edwards argued that “a Christian spirit as exercised toward our fellow creatures is opposite to a selfish spirit,” and “a Christian spirit is contrary to a selfish

essence outside of his own internal being,” and contends that “intelligent beings are created so that through their acts of knowing and loving true beauty, God’s internal Trinitarian knowing and loving may be repeated in time and space.” Sang Hyun Lee, “God’s Relation to the World,” in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards* (ed. Sang Hyun Lee; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 64–68. In the same manner, McDermott argues that, for Edwards, “God’s essence is a constantly exercised inclination to repeat his already perfect actuality through further exercises. Human being, since it is patterned after divine being, is also relational and able to add to its own being by relating to other beings,” in Gerald R. McDermott, *One Holy and Happy Society: The Public Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1992), 97. McDermott points out that his argument is heavily indebted to Sang Hyun Lee’s *Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

<sup>76</sup> WJE 17:32.

<sup>77</sup> WJE 17:376.

<sup>78</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 14: *Sermons and Discourses 1723–1729* (ed. Kenneth P. Minkema; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 129. The same logic can be found in Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 15: *Notes on Scripture* (ed. Stephen J. Stein; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 369.

<sup>79</sup> Ronald Story, *Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel of Love* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 80. Story argues that Edwards’s understanding of moral duty, that is, “doing good not only to our kinsmen, neighbors, and fellow colonists but also to ‘men’ and ‘mankind,’” is consistent from the 1720s when he was a young pastor (84).

spirit as it disposes persons to be public spirited.” Edwards believed that the regenerate have a different spirit than the unregenerate. The spirit of the regenerate is not “a narrow, private spirit,” but “a more enlarged spirit.”<sup>80</sup> That is because while every human being is relational and is made in God’s image, the regenerate human being is, as McDermott argues, “even more disposed to relations because its disposition is actually God’s disposition infused into it.”<sup>81</sup> Thus, it is natural and easier for the regenerate to love all human beings.

On the other hand, the sanctified do charity for different reasons than the unregenerate. Despite having an enlarged spirit, Edwards earnestly exhorted believers to do the duty of charity. In “The Duty of Charity,” Edwards provided two reasons for Christians to undertake the duty of charity. First, Christ commands believers to love their neighbors as themselves. The scope of who constitutes one’s neighbor should be extended as widely as possible since Christ “teaches that our enemies, those that abuse and injure us, are our neighbors.”<sup>82</sup> Second, believers must follow the example of Christ’s love. Edwards contended that “Christ loved us, and was kind to us, and was willing to relieve us, though we were very hateful persons, of an evil disposition, not deserving any good, but deserving only to be hated, and treated with indignation.”<sup>83</sup> Thus, if believers follow Christ, they “should be willing to be kind to those that are an ill sort of person, of a hateful disposition, and that are very undeserving,”<sup>84</sup> because Christ loved them when they were not deserving. For the same reason, in his sermon “Living Peaceably One With Another,” Edwards also urged believers to endeavor to live in peace with “unjust and sinful men as well as with those who are to appearances true Christians and the fearers of God,” “those who are of different opinions from us,” and “those who have injured, wronged and abused us.”<sup>85</sup> This universal scope of charity is another reason why Edwards believed that the piety of Brainerd was genuine. For Edwards, Brainerd’s action was “a great and universal benevolence to all mankind, reaching all sorts of persons without distinction,”<sup>86</sup> which scope is precisely identical with Edwards’s theology of sanctification.

In sum, it is possible for the scope of the unregenerate’s charity to be extended nearly as far as true virtue extends. This is because of human nature being made in God’s image.<sup>87</sup> Yet, for the sanctified, it is easier to love all human beings than it is for the unregenerate, though the sanctified still need to be exhorted by the word

<sup>80</sup> *WJE* 8:260–61.

<sup>81</sup> McDermott, *One Holy and Happy Society*, 100.

<sup>82</sup> *WJE* 17:395.

<sup>83</sup> *WJE* 17:397.

<sup>84</sup> *WJE* 17:397.

<sup>85</sup> *WJE* 14:121–23.

<sup>86</sup> Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, 314.

<sup>87</sup> Because of this commonality, McDermott argues that Edwards provides a theological basis for Christians to work together with non-Christians for the good of the whole community. McDermott claims that “since Edwards’ system of universal being can be used to construct a common moral vision for religious and non-religious, it also provides a theoretical basis for the cooperation of Christians with non-Christians in social projects with moral ends,” in Gerald R. McDermott, “Poverty, Patriotism, and National Covenant: Jonathan Edwards and Public Life,” *JRE* 31.2 (2003): 234.

of God and the example of Christ. Thus, having a universal scope of charity is strong evidence of true sanctification for Edwards. Therefore, it is a reasonable inference that Edwards's disciples were influenced by Edwards's thought on social action, based on his strong emphasis on Christian practice and its universal scope.

2. *Convergent theology of benevolence for Edwards and Hopkins.* It is undeniable that Hopkins held different views from Edwards in some aspects of theology. This is especially true, as Conforti indicates, of Hopkins's important refashioning of Edwards's definition of true virtue into "disinterested benevolence" based on self-denial as being the opposite to self-love.<sup>88</sup> While Edwards followed the *eudaemonism* of the Augustinian tradition, which combines the "ends of self-love and the love of God," Hopkins followed rigorism, which interpreted "pure love for God as a self-denying social ethic."<sup>89</sup> Yet, although it is true that they held different views on certain aspects, it does not necessarily follow that Hopkins's anti-slavery activity was possible only because he changed Edwards's theology. In contrast, Edwards's view of virtuous benevolence and Hopkins's view of disinterested benevolence have more in common than difference.

Hopkins first articulated the notion of "disinterested benevolence" as an alternative to self-love or selfishness in *An inquiry into the Nature of True Holiness* (1773). This book was written to respond to William Hart's criticism of Edwards's theory of virtue.<sup>90</sup> Edwards had argued "the nature of true virtue consists in a disposition to benevolence toward Being in general," and that from this virtue may "arise exercises of love to particular beings."<sup>91</sup> Hart argued that Edwards's view would be an obstacle to moral living due to its abstract and metaphysical facets. In his reaction to this charge, Hopkins changed Edwards's terminology of "virtue" to "holiness" and "Being in general" to "God and neighbor."<sup>92</sup> Therefore, as Peter Jauhiainen claims, Hopkins's substitution does not intend to oppose but instead complement Edwards's theology.<sup>93</sup> Hopkins criticized self-love not because he believed one should exclude oneself as an object of love, but because he defined self-love as

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>89</sup> Stephen Garrard Post, *Christian Love and Self-Denial: An Historical and Normative Study of Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, and American Theological Ethics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 38–44, and Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 115–16. Hopkins was a rigorist along with Martin Luther and John Calvin as well as most other early American Protestants such as Cotton Mather, whereas Edwards was a eudaemonist along with St. Augustine and St. Thomas as well as Samuel Willard and Solomon Stoddard. See also E. H. Gillett, "Hopkinsianism before Hopkins," *The American Presbyterian Review* n.s. 2 (October 1870): 687–99. While Edwards Park attributes Hopkins's "disinterested submission" to Mrs. Edwards, Gillett shows that this theology was extensively accepted by Hopkinsians before Hopkins including Hooker and Shepard.

<sup>90</sup> Peter Jauhiainen, "Samuel Hopkins and Hopkinsianism," in Oliver Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds., *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 113.

<sup>91</sup> *WJE* 8:541.

<sup>92</sup> Jauhiainen, "Samuel Hopkins and Hopkinsianism," 113.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

selfishness.<sup>94</sup> What he wanted to deny was selfishness, which Edwards denied, too. As Jauhainen argues, Hopkins's definition of holiness can be summarized as "love to God and our neighbors including ourselves,"<sup>95</sup> which is similar to Edwards's view.

It should be noted that Edwards distinguished between "some things which are truly virtuous," and "others which only seem to be virtuous."<sup>96</sup> If someone had true virtue from loving the Being in general, he or she should be more inclined to have a love for particular persons as well.<sup>97</sup> Thus, for Edwards, love for God and love for neighbor are not separated in true virtue. Edwards also argued "it [benevolence] will seek the good of every individual being unless it be conceived as not consistent with the highest good of Being in general."<sup>98</sup> Only when there is no conflict between love for God and love for neighbor, one may love oneself as well as one's neighbors. When self-love conflicts with love for God, one should take the position of "self-denial," which anticipated Hopkins's view.

Therefore, although their approaches were different from each other, represented by "self-denial" for Hopkins and "self-love" for Edwards, the admonishment to love one's neighbor through actions remained the same. For Edwards, virtuous benevolence made the act of loving others to be for the sake of one's own happiness, while for Hopkins, disinterested benevolence made loving others to be for the sake of the others' happiness. However, both Edwards and Hopkins encouraged benevolence and, accordingly, doing good deeds for others. Therefore, if Hopkins can be called the father of the anti-slavery movement in America and other Edwardseans enjoined this movement, the origin of the anti-slavery movement should be traced to Edwards's theology of sanctification.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, if Conforti's argument is correct, that is, Hopkins's innovation was a "shift away from the equivocal theological legacy of Edwards on the issue of worldly action,"<sup>100</sup> and only this innovation was the proper ground of social action, then we should expect that only Hopkinsians would have actively become involved in antislavery activities, or at least, other New Divinity adherents should have first adopted Hopkins's theology prior to joining the antislavery movement. On the contrary, some New Divinity leaders such as Jonathan Edwards Jr. and Timothy Dwight, "opposed the rigoristic extremes of the Hopkinsians,"<sup>101</sup> while at the same

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 114. Thus, James Byrd argues that Hopkins's disinterested benevolence "implied a healthy love of self" and "did not contradict the Edwardsian zeal for benevolence," in James Byrd, "We Can If We Will: Regeneration and Benevolence," in Crisp and Sweeney, *After Jonathan Edwards*, 74.

<sup>95</sup> Jauhainen, "Samuel Hopkins and Hopkinsianism," 114.

<sup>96</sup> *WJE* 8:539–40.

<sup>97</sup> *WJE* 8:540–42.

<sup>98</sup> *WJE* 8:545.

<sup>99</sup> McDermott also proposes the possibility that Edwards's students' social and political thinking was influenced by Edwards's unpublished sermons and private notebooks, in which, according to McDermott, a large portion of Edwards's social thought is buried, although he admits that "this is only circumstantial evidence for Edwards's influence on American political thinking" (*One Holy and Happy Society*, 173).

<sup>100</sup> Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 121.

<sup>101</sup> Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 226.

time strongly supporting the anti-slavery movement.<sup>102</sup> Since non-Hopkinsians did join the ranks of anti-slavery, this suggests the possibility that Edwards's theology could be the ground for both Hopkinsians and non-Hopkinsians to adopt anti-slavery convictions.

### III. CONCLUSION

The anti-slavery movement began in earnest in the antebellum period. Although there were many political and economic reasons for its development, theology was also an important factor. This study has traced the trajectory of the movement's theological roots from the theology of Jonathan Edwards. In the procession from the Puritans to the Edwardseans who were actively involved with anti-slavery, this paper suggested the possibility that Edwards had an overall positive influence on the anti-slavery movement through his attitude toward slavery and his theology of sanctification.

On the one hand, neither Edwards nor his theology was perfect. He himself was not a proponent of anti-slavery. As Minkema and Stout argue, it was not Edwards but Hopkins who was so far ahead of his times that "our own is barely catching up."<sup>103</sup> In fact, Edwards's theology on the slavery issue might not have been clear enough for his later adherents, which resulted in them being divided into conservatives, moderates, and immediatists.<sup>104</sup>

Nevertheless, on the other hand, it is possible that Edwards and his theology had a positive influence on his immediate adherents in their involvement with anti-slavery activity. Compared to the Puritans who preceded him, Edwards showed a more progressive view on slavery. Also, his theology of sanctification has many commonalities with his adherents including Samuel Hopkins, who was called the father of the anti-slavery movement in America.

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<sup>102</sup> According to Sean Michael Lucas, one of the reasons that southern Presbyterian theologians distanced themselves from Edwardseanism was "its relationship to abolitionism," in Sean Michael Lucas, "He Cuts Up Edwardsism by the Roots," in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition* (ed. D. G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, and Stephen J. Nichols; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 202. See also Burns, "Trusting The Theology of a Slave Owner," 165.

<sup>103</sup> Minkema and Stout, "Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865," 72.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 63–72.