"Miscellaneous Observations on the Holy Scriptures" is the most unusual manuscript in the entire corpus of Jonathan Edwards' writings. It is distinctive by virtue of its origin, physical makeup, remarkable history, relative obscurity, and centrality to his religious thought. The manuscript is also exceptional among eighteenth-century American religious documents. This large, interleaved biblical commentary is known by the peculiar, if not paradoxical, name given to it by Edwards, who called this manuscript his "Blank Bible." But the "Blank Bible" is anything but blank; it contains more than 5,500 notes and entries by Edwards relating to biblical texts.

Edwards inherited this booklike, leather-bound manuscript, which includes a small, interleaved printed edition of the King James Version of the Bible, from his brother-in-law Benjamin Pierpont, who abandoned an attempt at the Christian ministry in 1730. Edwards subsequently adapted the "Blank Bible" to his own study purposes, coordinating its use with his previously existing manuscripts as well as with his other complementary intellectual activities and professional responsibilities. After his death the manuscript, handed on to his heirs both biological and theological, survived two crossings of the Atlantic before landing eventually in the custody of Yale University Library. Only a few of the entries in the "Blank Bible" have ever appeared in print, none in a critical edition. From this first complete edition it is evident that the "Miscellaneous Observations on the Holy Scriptures" functioned centrally in Edwards' theological program, and it is doubly evident that the Bible was integral to his religious thought and activity as a minister, theologian, and apologist.

The biblical focus of Edwards' religious thought is no new discovery. He shared that scriptural foundational principle with other ministers and theologians in the Reformed tradition and the Protestant world. Earlier volumes in this edition of Edwards' Works have demonstrated the presence and influence of the Bible in his private notebooks, his preaching, and his published treatises. But the scope of his investment in biblical studies and the magnitude of the written evidence documenting his scriptural preoccupation are much more apparent with the publication of the full text of the "Blank Bible" here.

The "Blank Bible" was intended as a complement in function and intention to the previously published "Notes on Scripture." It also intersects directly with "Notes on the Apocalypse," "Images of Divine Things," the "Harmony of the Old and New Testament," the "Types" notebook, the notebook on the Pentateuch, and the extensive entries in the "Miscellanies" that are primarily concerned with biblical exegesis—including "Types of the Messiah," "Prophecies of the Messiah," and Fulfillment of the Prophecies of the Messiah"—as well as indirectly with the expository portions of his more than twelve hundred extant manuscript sermons and the exegetical sections of his published treatises. By contrast with these other manuscripts, the
"Blank Bible" remains a chronological puzzle that has been only partially solved; Edwards wrote the entries

randomly over a period of nearly three decades. When all these writings are taken into account, the immensity of Edwards' intellectual and religious commitment to the task of reading, understanding, and interpreting the Bible becomes even more staggering. In colonial America his exegetical output was perhaps rivaled or exceeded in amount only by that of Cotton Mather, who wrote a massive scriptural commentary entitled "Biblia Americana." Comprising several thousand pages in six large manuscripts, Mather's commentary dealt with all sections of the Bible and also included essays focusing on problems and issues related to interpretation.

This publication of the text of the "Blank Bible" sheds fresh light upon Edwards' larger intellectual and cultural world. The biblical dimension of his activity has too long been overlooked, slighted, or dismissed in many assessments of his life and work. Earlier studies have identified and highlighted Edwards as the perceptive observer of nature, the talented preacher, the erudite philosopher, the godly theologian, and the keen controversialist. Each of these depictions has contributed to his reputation and prominence as a leader in the emerging eighteenth-century evangelical movement. Collectively, they have established his status as one of America's most talented intellectuals. Since the 1990s, new attention has been paid to his interest in the Bible. Although diverse viewpoints inform these scholarly efforts, together they confirm that Edwards immersed himself in what has been called a "concentric tradition of reading" that involved the close study of a primary sacred text, namely the Bible, as well as commentaries on it and related satellite texts. He was consumed with the biblical text and related literature. Failure to understand this preoccupation has led some in the past to ignore, if not dismiss, the scriptural side of Edwards' thought. This publication of the "Blank Bible" promises to assist in rectifying that oversight and to contribute to a reassessment of the place of the Bible in his ministry.

This volume will allow individuals to judge for themselves the nature of Edwards' engagement with and interpretation of the biblical record. His commentary is a clear product of eighteenth-century evangelical religious culture. In the twenty-first century, portions of the text of the "Blank Bible" may have a mixed impact in some circles upon Edwards' reputation as an intellectual and as a religious thinker.

1. MS, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Unless otherwise noted, all MSS referred to here are in the Beinecke Library.
Edwards, 15, Notes on Scripture, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1998). After initial citation, all volumes in the Yale Edition will be referred to as Works with the volume number.


7. See "Apocalypse" (Works, 5, 95–305); "Images of Divine Things" (Works of Jonathan Edwards, 11, ed. Wallace E. Anderson and Mason I. Lowance, Jr., with David Watters, 49–142); "The Harmony of the Genius, Spirit, Doctrines and Rules of the Old Testament and the New" (MS, f. 1210); "Types" (Works, 11, 145–53); "Defense of the Authenticity of the Pentateuch as a Work of Moses" (MS, f. 1204); "Types of the Messiah" (Works, 11, 191–328); "Prophecies of the Messiah" ("Miscellanies," no. 1067, Trask Library, Andover coll.); "Fulfillment of the Prophecies of the Messiah" ("Miscellanies," no. 1068, Trask Library, Andover coll.); and the sermon MSS in both the Yale and Andover collections.

8. For a discussion of the dating of the MS, see below, pp. 104–15.


The Bible in Edwards' Ministry

In 1722, while serving as the minister of a Presbyterian congregation in New York City for nine months, Edwards—young and inexperienced

—penned a personal resolution that anticipated a lifetime of study and attention to the Bible. Fresh from two years of graduate study at Yale College, he "Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same." That statement, one of a series of personal and professional resolutions, documents Edwards' early determination to engage in intensive study of the Bible and to monitor self-reflexively his progress in meeting that goal. What is remarkable is the manner in which that resolution became an actual predictor of Edwards' lifetime of activity and study.

The difficulties Edwards encountered in achieving that resolution, however, became evident early on. In late winter 1723 he chided himself, writing in his diary, "I have lately been negligent as to reading the Scriptures." Two months later, he noted, "I have lost that relish of the
Scriptures and other good books, which I had five or six months ago." 8 Years later, looking back on that period, he recalled, "I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart." He recalled that "every sentence" seemed to communicate "a refreshing ravishing food" such that he "could not get along in reading." 9 It was that kind of reading he hoped to regain and maintain, and he did not give up on his goal. In December 1723, after agreeing to settle as the minister in Bolton, Connecticut, he resolved anew in his diary, "At the end of every month, to examine my behavior, strictly, by some chapter in the New Testament, more especially made up of rules of life. At the end of the year, to examine my behavior by the rules of the New Testament in general, reading many chapters. It would also be convenient, sometime at the end of the year, to read, for this purpose, in the book of Proverbs." 1 The year that closed, 1723, had been a time of an expanding investment by Edwards in biblical study. He wrote the opening pages of a new commentary on the book of Revelation, "Notes on the Apocalypse." He also continued writing entries in the "Miscellanies," many of which focused on scriptural issues. And shortly after the start of the new year, he launched another notebook devoted to general reflections on the Bible, "Notes on Scripture."

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But Edwards was not destined to continue as the minister at Bolton. In May 1724 he was invited to become a tutor at Yale College. In the first week of June he began his responsibilities at the college. That week, he wrote, was "remarkable… with respect to despondencies, fears, perplexities, multitudes of cares and distraction of mind." 2 The following months added new troubles and "crosses" that thrust him "quite below all comforts in religion." He recognized that his circumstances called for "a far stronger, and more permanent faith, hope and love" in order to cope with the challenges he was facing. 3 Yet even during those demanding months, the young tutor spent time at the task of interpreting Scripture. Commenting on the "Difficulties in Religion" in the "Miscellanies," in late 1724 he declared, "I am convinced that there are many things in religion and the Scriptures that are made difficult on purpose to try men, and to exercise their faith and scrutiny, and to hinder the proud and self-sufficient." 4 A few entries later in the same notebook, commenting on the institution of the sabbath in the Old Testament, he asserted that Scripture "is the only rule of our faith and practice." 5 During his years as a tutor Edwards wrote a number of entries in the "Miscellanies" under the title "Christian Religion," many of which hinged on truths he saw expressed in unique ways in the Bible. A typical entry, which evokes the theme of scriptural distinctiveness, is: "And the way of God's holding communion with men that the Christian religion supposes, is the most congruous that can possibly be thought of towards men in a fallen estate and in a wicked world, viz. to have his word written in a volume: where the matter is so various, so exceeding comprehensive and diversified, and suited to every circumstance; the texts having so many different aspects, respects, aptitudes and sense, as beheld in different lights and compared with God's providences or other parts of his Word." 6 But Edwards held no naïve assumptions concerning the ease of understanding the Bible. His statement, in fact, underscored the interpretive challenge facing the minister. For that very reason he continued his intensive study of Scripture.

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In eighteenth-century New England, preoccupation with the study of the Bible was not unique to Edwards. The same year, 1726, in which Edwards moved to Northampton, Massachusetts, and became the colleague of his grandfather Solomon Stoddard (1643–1729), Cotton Mather published his handbook for those aspiring to become ministers, *Manuducio ad Ministerium.* In the volume, published at a point when his own career was coming to a close, Mather gave advice to young men aspiring to the cloth. Among the counsel he offered was guidance concerning the study of the Bible. He asked, "Can a Man be a Thorough *Divine* without *Reading* the SACRED *SCRIPTURES*? No, Verily; Not so much as a Common *Christian.* *Read* them, *Child*; I say, *Read* them, with an Uncommon Assiduity. *To Dig* in these Rich Mines, make it your *Daily Exercise.* Hold on doing so, until you are, *An Eloquent Man,* and *Mighty in the Scriptures.*" He also exhorted young candidates to read the text in a prayerful, devotional manner, searching for the "*Affections of PIETY*" that would stir the soul. The "sanctified Soul," he affirmed, is more important for understanding the Bible than "all the Commentators in the World." Mather counseled his readers on "the *Method* of PREACHING," too. His first demand of the ministerial candidate was that he deliver "none but *Well-Studied Sermons,*" counsel that Edwards, no doubt, considered well when he read Mather's handbook and that he attempted to incorporate into his own ministry. Evidence of the same is apparent in a sermon he preached about a year after he assumed the position of associate minister in Northampton. In late 1727 Edwards preached a three-unit sermon on Isaiah 1:18–20 with the doctrine, "All God's methods of dealing with men are most reasonable," a doctrine he broke into six heads, all joined by the theme of God's reasonableness, whether in decreeing sin or reprobating and punishing sinners. In the sermon Edwards defended the imputing of Adam's sin to his posterity "because they broke the covenant in Adam." This view of original sin—holding the children of Adam "guilty" for the transgression of the first parents—Edwards regarded as reasonable. During this same period in 1727 he wrote several entries on "Original Sin" in the "Miscellanies," parts of which he echoed in the sermon.

Edwards continued the pattern of "well-studied sermons" in the following years. In 1729, several months after he had assumed full responsibility for the congregation at Northampton following his grandfather's death, he preached another example of the same, a three-unit sermon on John 16:8 with the following doctrine: "The work of the Holy Ghost as Christ's messenger is to convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Kenneth P. Minkema has identified the background for this sermon in Edwards' preoccupation with the topic of the Trinity in early 1729. The tripartite theme of the sermon was explicitly developed in no. 134 in "Notes on Scripture," an entry dealing with John 16:8–11, which Edwards wrote in late 1728 or early 1729. Another example of Edwards' drawing sermon materials directly from his biblical notebooks occurs in a sermon preached later in 1729 on Psalms 40:6–8 with the doctrine, "The sacrifice of Christ is the only sacrifice that is upon its own account acceptable to God." In the exposition of the text, he explained the ancient custom in which a master bored the ear of a servant, an action described as a voluntary sacrifice on the part of the servant displaying a desire to serve the master. Earlier Edwards had written entry no. 171 in "Notes on Scriptures" on Psalms 40:6–8, explaining this distinctive and unusual practice. From these examples and
countless others that could be cited, it is clear that scriptural study and homiletical responsibilities were closely linked for Edwards from early on in his ministry. That was also the judgment of his student and first biographer. Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803) declared that Edwards "studied the BIBLE more than all other Books, and more than most other Divines do," a pattern confirmed by his sermons, publications, and manuscripts. Hopkins also credited Edwards' "study and knowledge of the Bible" with being a major factor in his "Eminency as a Preacher."

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Edwards' subsequent rising fortunes as a minister, preacher, and public figure were closely connected to the religious awakening that occurred in Northampton in late 1734 and early 1735. A number of sermons that he preached during the months of that revival were later published under the title *Discourses on Various Important Subjects*. Justification by Faith Alone, the title of the leading sermon, assumed thematic prominence in the revival, which spread through the Connecticut River valley. *Ruth's Resolution*, the shortest of the sermons included in the *Discourses*, was based on Ruth 1:16. In one section of that sermon's textual exposition, Edwards drew heavily on no. 125 in "Notes on Scripture," an entry he wrote in late 1728 or 1729. In a letter to Benjamin Colman describing the Northampton awakening, Edwards itemized the religious phenomena that he regarded as proof of the validity of the work. He described a spiritual change in the community: the townspeople had moved from an "inordinate engagedness after the world" to a preoccupation with "nothing but religion." The people also "seem to have given [to] them a lively conviction of the truth of the Gospel, and the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures," he wrote. "Their esteem of the Holy Scriptures is exceedingly increased. Many of them say the Bible seems to be a new book to them, as though they never read it before."

Edwards found other religious phenomena accompanying the Northampton awakening a bit more remarkable. For example, he noted, "There have been some instances of persons that by only an accidental sight of the Bible, have been as much moved, it seemed to me, as a lover by the sight of his sweetheart." In his published account of the revival, Edwards featured the stories of two unusual awakened persons: Abigail Hutchinson, a young woman who had been ill for some time, and Phebe Bartlett, a religiously precocious four-year-old. Hutchinson, when awakened,

"resolved thoroughly to search the Scriptures," and she set out to read the Bible from beginning to end. But a sense of her own sin caused her to abandon that plan; she turned instead to the New Testament, seeking relief. Her reading of the Bible was instrumental in her emotional change from distress and anxiety to a sense of ease and calm. Edwards described the latter as "a kind of beatific vision of God" involving both a sense of God's glory and "great longings to die, that she might be with Christ." In that mental frame of "admirable sweet composure," he added, Hutchinson died. Edwards described in a very favorable light young Phebe Bartlett's religious preoccupations—her conversation, disciplined prayer, and relentless pursuit of conversion, offering her as a paradigm for others to follow. The Bible, too, figured in her spirituality. Phebe "at some times appears greatly affected, and delighted with texts of Scripture that come to her
mind," Edwards wrote. Both examples, in his view, underscored the positive role that the study of the Bible could play in the process of conversion.

The awakenings in the Connecticut River valley were but a foretaste of the more widespread revivals in New England and elsewhere in the early 1740s, revivals associated in particular with the itinerant preaching of George Whitefield and others. The controversy and debate over the revivals brought forth from Edwards a sustained description and defense of them as "a glorious work of God." A central component of his argument was the notion that if the revivals were "found to be agreeable to the Word of God," then they were God's work. For him, the Bible was to be the "rule of judgment of this work." Many," he noted, "are guilty of not taking the Holy Scriptures as a sufficient and whole rule, whereby to judge of this work." They rely on "their own experiences" rather than on God's "Word" which is "an infallible rule." Yet Edwards also observed that as a result of the revivals, "through the greater part of New England, the Holy Bible is in much greater esteem and use than it used to be," which was further cause for him to affirm the revivals as the work of God. He made that same link between the Bible and the truthfulness of the 1741 revivals explicit in a letter to Dean Moses Lyman, a former parishioner.

Of the revivals Edwards wrote, "If this ben't the work of God, I have all my religion to learn over again, and know not what use to make of the Bible." Edwards' sustained defense of the revivals and the so-called Great Awakening, and his theological attempts to distinguish true piety from rationalistic moralism and emotional enthusiasm, reached classic expression in his Treatise Concerning Religious Affections published in 1746. In it again he turned to the Bible to establish "that genuine religion 'in great part, consists in holy affections.'" In Part III of the treatise, where he set out to show the "Distinguishing Signs of Truly Gracious and Holy Affections," his repeated points of reference are the "sense" and the "language" of Scripture. For example, his critical discussion of the Twelfth Sign, "Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice," rests directly on scriptural argumentation—a fact he asserted in a variety of ways. For example, he affirmed, "That all true saints, all those that do obtain eternal life, do thus persevere in the practice of religion, and the service of God, is a doctrine so abundantly taught in the Scripture, that particularly to rehearse all the texts which imply it would be endless. I shall content myself with referring to some in the margin." Page after page of the treatise includes extensive citation of biblical passages in support of the central place of Christian practice as evidence of grace in the life of the believer.

But the revivals in New England, despite his vigorous defense, subsided before the middle of the 1740s. Writing early in 1744 to a Scottish correspondent, Edwards noted that the religious situation in the region had become "very melancholy," because "the Spirit of God" had withdrawn and "decline" had set in. He did not despair, however, taking comfort in news of continuing religious successes elsewhere, including communications from the other side of the Atlantic and locations in the southern colonies. Edwards was also following closely the international
conflict in Europe, which manifested itself in America as King George's War in 1744–48, and the successes enjoyed by the British over the French. In this mixed religious and political context he joined with evangelicals on the other side of the Atlantic in support of the "concert of prayer" proposal inaugurated by Scottish ministers. The plan called for setting aside particular days on which the members of prayer societies would beseech God to pour out his Spirit and thereby revive and renew the church. The rationale for this undertaking evoked an eschatological framework, for the prayers of the faithful were viewed as a means for hastening the coming of God's kingdom. Edwards joined the cause enthusiastically, and early in 1748, in support of the concert, he published a treatise which employed Zechariah 8:20–22 as a text. In Part III of the treatise, Edwards answered a series of objections against participation in the concert. His arguments hinged directly on exegetical judgments dealing with key passages from the book of Revelation. For example, he addressed the identity of the slain witnesses in Revelation 11 and their significance in the flow of history. He also turned to his own extensive notes on Moses Lowman's commentary on the book of Revelation for additional evidence to support the proposal. And Edwards argued that among the many examples of prayer in the Bible, including the Lord's Prayer and especially the psalms, a great number are "for the deliverance, restoration and prosperity of the church, and the advancement of God's glory and kingdom of grace in the world." He spoke of "the duty of extraordinary united prayer for a general revival of religion."

Edwards' writing projects occupied more and more of his time in the late 1740s. In 1749 his edited version of David Brainerd's diary appeared, casting the biography of the young missionary to the Native Americans in ways that addressed theological issues and spiritual disciplines of concern to Edwards. The Life depicted Brainerd in ways consistent with Edwards' own piety. Brainerd's entry for Thursday, September 9, 1742, reads, "Enjoyed some sweet meditations on some Scriptures." Several years later, when preaching to the Natives in Crossweekung, Brainerd opened his text, Matthew 22:1–13, "in a plain, easy, and familiar manner," with the result that the "Word of God... seemed to fall upon the assembly with a divine power and influence." A few days later while traveling to gather a collection in support of Indian missions, Brainerd reported that his spirit was "refreshed with divine truths" and his heart burned as he traveled because "the Lord opened to him the Scriptures."

During the years that he was editing Brainerd's diary, Edwards' own ministerial situation in Northampton deteriorated badly. As he reported to a Scottish correspondent in 1749, "I have nothing very comfortable to inform of concerning the present state of religion in this place. A very great difficulty has arisen between me and my people, relating to qualifications for communion at the Lord's Table." Edwards' departure from his grandfather Stoddard's practice of inviting all to the sacrament who were not living a scandalous life, and his restriction of access only to those who qualified, produced a controversy that ultimately cost him his position in Northampton. Before his dismissal was final, however, Edwards sought to defend himself in print. In 1749 he published An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God, Concerning
the Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church, in which he explained his decision to reverse Stoddard's policy of open admission to the sacrament. In his "Preface" he acknowledged that the decision to oppose his grandfather had been difficult: "But the difficulties and uneasiness on my mind increasing, as I became more studied in

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divinity, and as I improved in experience; this brought me to closer diligence and care to search the Scriptures, and more impartially to examine and weigh the arguments of my grandfather, and such other authors as I could get on his side of the question. By which means, after long searching, pondering, viewing and reviewing, I gained satisfaction, became fully settled in the opinion I now maintain."1

A "Preface" signed by four Boston ministers declared that Edwards was "singularly qualified" to write about the communion issue because of "his great acquaintance with the Scriptures" and his "diligent application to the study of them."2 Edwards displayed that biblical learning in his treatise. He argued his position using Hebrew and Greek citations and translations, including Hebrew transliterations as well as Greek characters in the text.3 He based his argument on biblical pericopes that he regarded as relevant to the sacraments, expounding carefully the implications of scriptural terms and phrases. For example, he used the statement in Matthew 20:16, "many are called, but few are chosen," to affirm that the "visibility of saintship" spoken of in the New Testament does not constitute an equivalence between "visible saints" and "real saints, or truly gracious persons." In support of that judgment, he drew subtle distinctions based on the Greek text.4 But Edwards' biblical erudition did not save his pastorate. In June 1750 he was dismissed from the Northampton congregation.

Edwards' defense of his policy on admission to the sacrament evoked multiple responses from those who differed with him, including a rebuke from his cousin Solomon Williams (1700–1776), the minister in Lebanon, Connecticut. In May 1751 Williams published a refutation of Edwards' ideas, a point-by-point rebuttal that included a defense of Stoddard's practice.5 David D. Hall has characterized that publication as a "careful scrutiny" of Edwards' arguments based on Williams's "own biblical exegesis and research."6 It should not be surprising that Edwards, in turn, responded to his cousin's challenge. In 1752, after his departure

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from Northampton, he published Misrepresentations Corrected, and Truth Vindicated.7 Again he argued for his position using biblical materials, including, for example, an elaborate set of comments about what can or cannot be established concerning 'Judas' partaking of the Lord's Supper." He accused Williams of "a remarkable instance of tergiversation" in the case of Judas.8 Edwards also defended his policy on admission in a letter to William Hobby (1707–65), the minister at Reading, Massachusetts, in which he stated that what he "insisted on as a proper profession of godliness" as a prerequisite for access to the sacrament "were truly such things as the Scripture represents as the essentials of true piety."9
Edwards' ministerial situation changed considerably in 1751 when he accepted an invitation to settle as the local pastor and missionary to the Indians in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The change in his circumstances resulted in modifications in his pastoral activities. It has been observed that he spent less time in the preparation of new sermons in Stockbridge, resorting to the reuse of sermons preached previously and to greater use of simple outlines. One new substantial demand on his time and energy involved administrative responsibilities bearing on the mission to the Housatonic Indians. His correspondence during the Stockbridge years reflected on a variety of problems at the mission. He wrote numerous letters, for example, dealing with the education and instruction of the Native American children. Edwards had specific ideas regarding the proper curriculum for the children in the boarding schools, which he spelled out in a letter to Sir William Pepperrell (1696–1759), a prominent Massachusetts merchant and military commander. His proposal on teaching reading called for equal attention to both "words" and "things," the latter involving the substance of the lessons. In that connection he recommended reading selections in the "Psalter, Testament or Bible." He thought that reading the Bible would allow native children to learn both history and prophecy as well as chronology and geography. He urged that the children in the mission schools be given "a short general scheme of the scriptural history," starting with creation and proceeding through subsequent periods of history. In his judgment, the use of stories from the Old and the New Testament offered educational advantages as well as positive reinforcement of religious values. But above all, this learning had as its primary objective "to promote the salvation of the children." He also thought that "good maps of places mentioned in Scriptures" could be useful for the instruction of the children.

Edwards' years in Stockbridge usually receive attention for the fact that the geographical isolation he experienced on the frontier in western Massachusetts resulted in astonishing productivity as a writer. In addition to Misrepresentations Corrected, which was completed early in the Stockbridge period, Edwards wrote two major treatises that immediately raised his reputation as both a theologian and a philosopher—Freedom of the Will, published in 1754, and Original Sin, published in 1758 shortly after his death. During these years Edwards also wrote two important dissertations, The Nature of True Virtue and The End for Which God Created the World, both of which Samuel Hopkins published posthumously in 1765. These works, together with Religious Affections, were the foundation of Edwards' subsequent reputation as a leading intellectual and perhaps the most significant evangelical theologian in American history.

Edwards' reputation as a logician and metaphysician rests in considerable measure on Freedom of the Will, perhaps his most important theological publication of the Stockbridge years. But, as Paul Ramsey has pointed out, "the longest chapters in this book deal with such subjects as the scriptural evidence for God's certain foreknowledge of the volitions of moral agents." Recognition of this scriptural focus does not diminish the significance of Edwards' philosophical analysis, but it does place an appropriate accent on the continuing central role of the Bible in Edwards' ministry during the Stockbridge years. The fact that 306 biblical citations have been identified in the text of Freedom of the Will in the Yale Edition is striking evidence of the same.
It is perhaps less surprising that scriptural issues were central to *Original Sin*, for the full title of the

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volume identified the purpose of Edwards' treatise as a reply to the book by John Taylor. Numerous statements by Edwards like this appear in the text: "That every one of mankind, at least of them that are capable of acting as moral agents, are guilty of sin... is a thing most clearly and abundantly evident from the holy Scriptures." In another formulation, Edwards asserted that "the Scripture represents all mankind, not only as having guilt, but immense guilt," and that "[t]he Scriptures are so very express in it, that all mankind, all flesh, all the world, every man living, are guilty of sin." The extensive nature of Edwards' scriptural argument against the Arminians is evident by the 600 biblical citations that have been identified in the text of *Original Sin*.

The *End of Creation* has an even heavier focus on biblical proof. The second half of the dissertation is entitled "Wherein It Is Inquired, What Is to Be Learned from Holy Scriptures Concerning God's Last End in the Creation of the World. "A total of 577 biblical citations has been identified in Edwards' text and his footnotes in the Yale Edition of the *End of Creation*. The contrast between the three other Stockbridge texts and *True Virtue* is striking. The latter is a philosophical dissertation. In the text of *True Virtue* in the Yale Edition, no biblical citations have been identified. Edwards' correspondence during the Stockbridge years also often addressed exegetical issues. One of the last letters he wrote from western Massachusetts, for example, was an extended exposition of John 10:34–36.

The closing stage in Edwards' ministerial career, short in duration as it was, was consistent with this picture of a ministry devoted to the study, interpretation, and application of the Bible. The evidence bearing on his plans for his presidency at the College of New Jersey is unambiguous. Edwards' letter to the trustees of the college laid out a program of future study and potential publications that centered on the Bible. He contemplated two major projects. The first he depicted as a "great work" to be called *A History of the Work of Redemption*, a body of divinity in an entire new method, being thrown into the form of an history," a history involving the three worlds of heaven, hell, and earth. He intended to examine "successive events and alterations, in each so far as the Scriptures give any light." He was confident that this history, which would explore "the grand design of all God's designs, and the sumnum and ultimum of all the divine operations and degrees," would be highly instructive. A second "great work" he entitled tentatively *The Harmony of the Old and New Testament*. In it he proposed to consider prophecies of the Messiah and their fulfillment, types of the Old Testament and their agreement with New Testament antitypes, and the harmony between the two testaments. He was confident this second work would provide "occasion for an explanation of a very great part of the holy Scripture" in a "most entertaining and profitable" method well suited to understanding "the true spirit, design, life and soul of the Scriptures, as well as their proper use and improvement." There is no ambiguity
regarding the role that biblical exegesis was to play in these contemplated projects. In the letter to the trustees, Edwards also stated his willingness to instruct students at the college in "the Hebrew tongue" because that responsibility would allow him to improve his own facility in the original language of the Old Testament "by instructing others."6

Edwards did not live to fulfill his scholarly plans, and therefore one can only surmise from his notebooks and manuscripts what these writings ultimately might have included.7 But this historical sketch of Edwards' ministry confirms the fulfillment of his early resolution to study the Scriptures "steadily, constantly and frequently."

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5. "Miscellanies," no. 160, in Works, 13, 310. The reference "Old Testament" will be used throughout the Introduction rather than "Hebrew Bible" because that traditional Christian reference was JE's standard designation. When he used "Hebrew Bible," he was pointing to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. For example, his entry on Deuteronomy 6:25 includes the following sentence: "The words aven and gnauvel, etc., which properly signify iniquity, are often put for calamity in the Hebrew Bible, as Proverbs 22:8, Job 5:6 and Job 15:35, Isaiah 59:4–5" (p. 290).
7. Manuductio ad Ministerium: Directions for a Candidate of the Ministry Wherein, First, A Right Foundation is laid for his Future Improvements: And, then, Rules are Offered for such a Management of his Academical & Preparatory Studies; and thereupon, For such a Conduct after his Appearance in the World; as may Render him a Skilful and Useful Minister of the Gospel (Boston, 1726). JE owned a copy of Mather's Manuductio which he cited eight times in his "Catalogue" (MS, Yale coll.), nos. 221, 328–31, 345, 348, and 418.
9. Ibid., p. 82.
2. See "Miscellanies," nos. 300 and 301, Works, 13, 386–89. See also p. 86, n. 7.
5. Works, 14, 441–43.

8. The *Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards, President of the College of New Jersey. Together with a Number of his Sermons on Various important Subjects* (Boston, 1765), pp. 40, 46–47.


1. JE's exposition of the theme of justification appears at various locations in his biblical notebooks. See, for example, "Notes on Scripture," no. 318 (*Works*, 15, 294–96); and below, Romans 5:1–2 (p. 995), 2 Corinthians 3:9 (p. 1069), and James 2:14–26 (p. 1171).


3. JE to Benjamin Colman, May 30, 1735, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards, 4, The Great Awakening*, ed. C. C. Goen (New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1972), 103–4. JE's diary in these increasingly busy years documents the priority he placed on scriptural study. On Jan. 22, 1734, he wrote, "I judge that it is best, when I am in a good frame for divine contemplation, or engaged in reading the Scriptures, or any study of divine subjects, that ordinarily, I will not be interrupted by going to dinner, but will forego my dinner, rather than be broke off" (*Works*, 16, 789).


6. Ibid., 199–205.


1. Ibid., 327.


5. Ibid., 383.

6. Ibid., 388–89. JE's marginal note contains 44 biblical references in support his point. See p. 389, n. 9.


8. JE to Rev. William McCulloch, March 5, 1744 (Works, 16, 134).


3. Ibid., 219–52. 
4. Ibid., 350. There are 633 biblical citations identified in the text of the *Humble Attempt* in the Yale Edition. 
5. JE to William McCulloch, May 20, 1749 (*Works, 16, 271*). 
7. Ibid., 335. 
9. JE to William McCulloch, May 20, 1749 (*Works, 16, 271*). 
2. Ibid., 172. 
3. Ibid., 200–201. 
4. Ibid., 285–86. 
5. The true state of the question concerning the qualifications necessary to lawful communion in the Christian sacraments. Being an answer to the Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards his book intitled, *An humble inquiry into the rules of the Word of God, concerning the qualifications requisite to a compleat standing and full communion in the visible Christian church* (Boston, 1751). 
7. Ibid., 349–503. 
8. Ibid., 478–79. 
1. JE to Sir William Pepperrell, Nov. 28, 1751 (ibid., 406–14). 
4. *Two Dissertations, 1. Concerning the End for which God created the World, II. The Nature of True Virtue*, By the Reverend, Learned and Pious Jonathan Edwards, A. M. President of the
The "Blank Bible": A Synoptic Commentary

The "Blank Bible" is striking documentary evidence of Edwards' lifelong exegetical preoccupation. He began to use the interleaved Bible in 1730, but there is little reason to believe that he had conceptualized fully the place and function it would occupy among his various private notebooks. He already had a manuscript, "Notes on Scripture," in which he was writing general commentary on biblical texts. By 1730 he had written only two hundred of the more than five hundred entries that eventually were part of that series. He also possessed a notebook devoted exclusively to the interpretation of the book of Revelation, "Notes on the Apocalypse." In 1730 it was only a fourth of the size it would become by the close of his life. At the same time he was writing a series of notes, "Images of Divine Things," that played upon analogies...
between the natural and the spiritual worlds, often mirroring scriptural images. In addition, numerous entries in the "Miscellanies," his principal theological notebook, were explicitly biblical in focus and substance. Initially, therefore, he may have conceived the newly acquired interleaved Bible as simply one more notebook among many in support of his ministry.

Although its specific purpose or function may have been unclear when he acquired it, the "Blank Bible" emerged with the passage of time as a pivotal organizing document in Edwards' program of biblical study. On its pages and margins he eventually entered 590 references to "Notes on Scripture," 140 to "Notes on the Apocalypse," nine to "Images and Shadows of Divine Things," and 157 to "Miscellanies." He also used the manuscript to cross-reference relevant sections of his other writings relating to scriptural interpretation, including sermons, small specialized notebooks, and other diverse draft materials. The "Blank Bible" gradually took on the function of a general index to his exegetical reflections.

Edwards also employed the interleaved Bible as a site for cataloguing the judgments of authors he was reading as part of his program of biblical studies. In some instances, he quoted their interpretations verbatim; in others, he summarized their judgments; in still other cases, he simply recorded the bibliographical information that identified the location of materials that interested him. Some of the sources cited he may have possessed in his own library; others he may have had access to only occasionally. In the "Blank Bible" Edwards referenced more than a hundred different publications, many of which were multivolume works.

At the heart of the interleaved Bible, however, are Edwards' own observations on the biblical text as well as information related to the text, its interpretation, and its application. He had been making these kinds of exegetical judgments for several years in the various notebooks he used before 1730. In that respect, the "Blank Bible" is an extension of exegetical patterns already established before he came into possession of his brother-in-law's manuscript volume. Consistency is therefore evident in his approach to Scripture in the interleaved Bible and in his other notebooks.

And yet the "Blank Bible" is more than just another biblical notebook, an exegetical commonplace book, or a general index to Edwards' exegetical writings. As such, it begs for a more descriptive documentary classification. Perhaps the best suggestion for such a category lies in Edwards' own extensive reading of exegetical sources. The "Blank Bible" resembles in significant ways one of the most influential genres of exegetical scholarship in his day. That genre might be identified as the tradition of the "synoptic commentary." Lest there be confusion, here synoptic does not refer narrowly to the Synoptic Gospels but rather takes its meaning from the Greek σύνωπτικός implying a common or general view or a summary. The category of "synoptic commentary" might therefore apply to those publications that attempted a comprehensive approach to the exegesis of the entire Bible, or to one or the other testament. No section or book of the Bible potentially escaped the attention of the synoptic commentator. The content of a synoptic commentary ranged widely across issues related directly or indirectly to the text, and at times even reflected an occasional or highly personal character.
Synoptic commentaries span all or multiple sections of the Bible, examine large organizing themes as well as minute particulars, probe linguistic and syntactical issues, and identify a variety of relevant authorities.

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dealing with one or the other topic. They often include in some printed form or arrangement the complete text of the Bible in the original languages, in translation, in an existing published edition, or in extensive citations from these varied texts. There is no topic or issue automatically excluded from the purview of the exegete. The obvious contrast to this pattern is the commentary focused on one particular book of the Bible, on a limited set of biblical books, or on some scriptural theme. Edwards, of course, was acquainted with such volumes, too. He possessed a number of them and used a variety of such commentaries in his study of the biblical text. In his "Catalogue" of reading he listed examples of the same, several of which he cited in his exegetical notebooks, including the "Blank Bible."

But the "Blank Bible" is not patterned after such focused commentaries. Rather it resembles in form and function the configuration, method, and scope established by several prominent synoptic commentators whose works Edwards knew well and studied closely over many years. The numerical breakdown of the entries in Edwards' commentary in Table 1 illustrates their parallel quality. The three on whom he drew most heavily in the "Blank Bible" are Matthew Poole (1624–79), Matthew Henry (1662–1714), and Philip Doddridge (1702–51). Each of these authors exercised a formative influence on Edwards' exegesis of the Bible.

The three synoptic commentators that Edwards used most extensively in the "Blank Bible" have obvious differences, but they share many features that made them attractive to him. All three displayed an astonishing breadth of interest and wide range of learning. They based many of their judgments on the original languages, and they regularly proposed their own translations of the biblical text. All three drew heavily on diverse earlier scholarship, and they were willing to cite conflicting interpretations as well as their own. Poole, Henry, and Doddridge occupied a somewhat similar theological world, that of Dissenting Anglo-Protestantism, even though their lifetimes spanned a period of more than 125 years during which significant changes did occur in the English religious situation. All three attempted to apply their interpretations of the biblical text to life situations, extracting instruction and edification of a pious and confessional nature.

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The model provided by Poole, Henry, and Doddridge was not lost on Edwards, although there is no evidence that he was consciously imitating them in the "Blank Bible" or that he intended to publish a general commentary on Scripture. In fact, in his letter to the trustees of the College of New Jersey he signaled a very different choice of literary forms for his proposed future projects. Nevertheless, Edwards' "Blank Bible" resembles a synoptic commentary in the making by virtue
of its breadth, range, linguistic interests, scholarly references, and diverse applications of the texts.

8. Works, 15, 44.
1. Works, 11, 40.
3. In the "Blank Bible" JE cross-referenced eighteen of his sermons as well as the following MSS: "Places of the Old Testament which Intimate a Future State, or Naturally and Directly lead One to Expect One" (Andover coll.); "Controversies' Notebook" (Yale coll.); "The Harmony of me Genius Spirit Doctrines & Rules of the Old Testamt & the New" (Yale coll.); "Discourse on the Trinity" (Works of Jonathan Edwards, 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith, ed. Lang Hyun Lee [New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 2003], 109–44); Paper on "Whether any prophecies have respect to more events than one?" (Not located); Notebook on "Faith" (Works, 21, 17–68); and Notebook C relating to the History of Redemption (Yale coll.).
4. Wilson H. Kimnach first pointed out this indexing function of the "Blank Bible" in Works, 10, 102.
5. For more on JE's sources, see below, pp. 59–75.
6. Poole, Synopsis Criticorum aliorumque Sacrae Scripturae Interpretum (4 pts. in 5 vols. London, 1669–76); Henry, An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament; Wherein the Chapters are summ'd up in Contents; the Sacred Text inserted at large, in Paragraphs, or Verses; and each Paragraph, or Verse, reduc'd to its proper Heads; the Sense given, and largely illustrated, with Practical Remarks and Observations (6 vols. London, 1708–10); and Doddridge, The Family Expositor: Or, A Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament: with Critical Notes; and a Practical Improvement of each Section (6 vols. London, 1739–56).

The Contents of the "Blank Bible": A Sampler

As a synoptic commentary, the "Blank Bible" is filled with highly disparate materials bearing on the understanding, interpretation, and application of the biblical text. No simple summary of the contents is possible, for the commentary ranges widely across textual, linguistic, syntactical, historical, theological, polemical, devotional, and personal issues. Some of the entries by Edwards focus sharply on one or another specific topic. Many of the entries touch simultaneously on several concerns without any sense on his part of apparent conflict. The materials garnered from Edwards' reading of other authors are sometimes clear in intention, sometimes not. His marginal references are often frustratingly opaque as to their precise point. In that regard it is important to be reminded that the "Blank Bible" was a working study document for Edwards, not the draft of a potential publication. He intended the contents for his own instruction, reflection, and edification. He brought to the manuscript's use an unspoken sense of purpose that now in many instances can only be surmised at best. Therefore many potential questions about particular entries or comments may never be fully or satisfactorily answered.
This section of the Introduction, intentionally subtitled "A Sampler," selectively but representatively depicts the disparate exegetical materials Edwards included in the "Blank Bible." The concept of a sampler has been chosen because it connotes a device for extracting samples, in this case of Edwards' varied entries. The standard divisions among the books of the Bible provide the logic for the subsections that follow. These divisions include the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the Wisdom Literature,

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and the Prophets in the Old Testament, as well as the Gospels and Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation in the New Testament. The description of the representative entries that follow serves as an invitation to examine in detail the contents of the commentary and to explore the often intricate interpretive webs binding together Edwards' exegetical reflections. In each of the subsections that follow, one emphasis or more will be identified, though it would be a mistake to equate these emphases collectively with a systematic statement concerning the interpretation of Scripture. This sampler, drawn from Edwards' varied, separate, and random entries, reflects the occasional character of his more than 5,500 exegetical entries.

The Pentateuch

The complexity of Edwards' biblical interpretation is never more evident than in his commentary on the Pentateuch, a section of the Bible that is always among the most revealing for any Christian exegete. Not only have devout believers often regarded the first five books of the Old Testament as foundational for their religious views, but these texts also have been a magnet for scholars preoccupied with the evolution of modern critical approaches to the Bible. Such critical studies were in the early stages of development during the years that Edwards was writing entries in the "Blank Bible." 7

But it is a mistake to focus primary or exclusive attention on the rise of biblical criticism when attempting to understand Edwards as an exegete. That judgment becomes patently clear by examining his approach to the Pentateuch. Even the argument over the correct terminology to use in describing his exegetical approach to the text is of limited value. 8 It is more instructive to examine the entries he wrote in the commentary, the variety of themes that attracted his attention, the sources he was reading, and the applications he thought possible of the texts.

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Edwards' entries on the Pentateuch, which number 888, range across a series of traditional exegetical interests. The Genesis 1-11, the Ur-history, attracted his special attention in much the same manner as that prehistory often does with other exegetes. He also examined closely subsequent stories in the biblical text associated with the patriarchs of ancient Israel as well as the central narrative beginning in Exodus involving the figure of Moses and the children of Israel. The latter dominates the balance of the first five books of the Old Testament. Edwards' curiosity regarding less central figures becomes evident, too. Witness his reflections on the tale of Balaam and the talking ass. He displayed a different kind of curiosity in his examination of the parallels between scriptural accounts and "heathen" fables, a topic of growing interest in the
eighteenth century. Yet the most obvious feature of his commentary on the Pentateuch is its "Christian" character. Edwards read the Pentateuch and the entire Old Testament as essentially a Christian document. He often seemed unable to extract primary meaning without turning immediately to categories foundational to his own theological views.

A striking example of Edwards' Christian hermeneutic is his judgment regarding the opening verse of Genesis. He asserted that the Hebrew *Elohim*, אֳלהִים, signified "the three persons of the Trinity confederated together as to the grand scheme and design of the creation" (p. 123). The grounds for his position appear to be typological; creation was for him typical of redemption. But, in fact, Edwards was reading the type through the antitype; that is, his view of the "eternal covenant of redemption," clarified by New Testament documents, provided a window back into the origins of the world. He had a similarly explicit Christian construction of the creation of humankind. Edwards used "Let us make man" (Genesis 1:26) as evidence of "a consultation of the persons of the Trinity" in that creative process, and he identified respective roles played by the three persons of the Trinity (p. 126). Why Edwards assigned the endowment of the "understanding and reason" to the Son and of the "will and inclination" to the Holy Ghost is less clear. What is clear is how unabashedly Christian Edwards' reading of creation was, both of the physical world and of humankind.

The story of the fall into sin provided Edwards with a rich metaphorical base for reflection on the results of the fall. Tempted by the tree that was the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16), humans became evil, mirroring Satan, who was "a talking, reasoning beast, and an incarnate devil" (p. 136). But the results of the fall were more than spiritual. Adam and Eve also lost bodily luster and beauty. Another effect of eating the fruit, Edwards thought, "was their voiding excrements" for a first time. This "external filthiness" became an image of their "vileness and spiritual filthiness." Now they saw their nakedness. The serpent, too, fell—from "a shining, glorious, harmless creature" that "used to fly," to a creature traveling on its belly and eating dust (p. 137).

Edwards associated the building of the tower of Babel with the "antichristian apostasy." He contrasted bricks made by men with "natural stone made by God." The former were "things of human invention, doctrines, tales, traditions, laws, offices, worship, ceremonies, objects of worship, etc.," by which they falsely hoped "to climb to heaven." The union they sought by building the tower Edwards equated with "an external and carnal union" demanded by the Church of Rome. Their concern with "worldly grandeur" led to God's decision to "confound their language" (pp. 153–54).

The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob held special fascination for Edwards, and he devoted a large number of entries to texts in which they figure prominently. No single incident or comment exhausts the range and variety of his reflections on these three. With respect to the tale of Abraham offering his son Isaac on an altar, Edwards observed an explicit "harmony between the Old and New Testament," for in both cases God provided the sacrifice—the ram and the Lamb—by which his anger was "appeased." Edwards used his reflections on this same account in
Genesis 22:8 to generalize about ancient prophecies: the Holy Ghost often "had respect to those things which the prophets themselves had no thought of" (p. 165). The account of the approach by which Isaac secured Rebecca as his wife provided an opportunity for Edwards to expatiate on the kindness she displayed to Abraham's servant by watering his camels. Rebecca's act of "most extensive condescending charity" became an occasion to assert that the church of Christ is to render "provision, and refreshment, and entertainment for every creature," no matter what its "outward condition." Similar "deeds of charity" are a means whereby individuals "receive spiritual ornaments." The subsequent marriage of Isaac and Rebecca represented for Edwards the union of Christ and the church (p. 166). The story of Jacob's heroic struggle with the angel, whom Edwards identified with God, provided an occasion for a summary judgment: "Wrestling is the employment that Christians must spend their lives in, wrestling with God in seeking of him, and wrestling with their enemies in resisting them" (p. 181). When the struggle ended with Jacob's being blessed, "but yet halting on his thigh," Edwards generalized that "commonly" when God "bestows some extraordinary spiritual blessing and peculiar favor, he also at the same time brings some temporal affliction or difficulty" (p. 183).

The longest entry in the commentary on the Pentateuch focuses on the account of Joseph, who, after being sold into slavery by his brothers, advanced "to be a prince and ruler" over the land of Egypt. In his examination of that success story, Edwards exploited particulars that underscored parallels with the situation of Christ, who went from being a prisoner to being a prince, in Christ's case invested "with the government of the church and the world." Almost no detail in the account escaped the typological scrutiny of Edwards. His summary judgment tying the two figures together reads, "Men were saved by Joseph's word, as we are saved by the word of Christ" (p. 194).

The figure of Moses dominates the text of the last four books of the Pentateuch. From his providential protection as a babe in the Nile to his death near the borders of the land of Canaan, Moses was uniquely intimate with God—at the burning bush in Midian, as the voice of God to Pharaoh, in conversation with God in the wilderness, and in God's presence on Mount Sinai. Despite Moses' intermittent flagging confidence and hesitation, God transformed him into a powerful agent for the accomplishment of divine objectives. He also equipped him with the necessary tools for the tasks at hand. Edwards was especially taken with Moses' rod, an instrument he interpreted as signifying "the word of God," called elsewhere by him "the rod of God's mouth," by "which God smites and breaks the rocky heart." For Edwards, Moses' rod signified "the word of God by Moses," or the law (p. 230). This fascination with Moses' rod is evident elsewhere in two extended entries on the subject in Edwards' "Notes on Scriptures." 2 But even this favored lawgiver and leader of Israel was not permitted to enter the promised land, a divine decision Edwards interpreted as evidence that no one will obtain "heaven or saving blessings" by the law (p. 317).
Moses the lawgiver provided a context for Edwards' consideration of the book of Leviticus and its focus on ceremonial law. There is perhaps no more striking example of Edwards' christological interpretation of the Old Testament than his comments dealing with Jewish ritual. Repeatedly, he asserted that particular religious ceremonies were useless unless framed in the context of Christ and the New Testament. For example, he suggested that "first fruits" were not "fit to be offered to God... unless sanctified by the Spirit of God and dignified by the merits of Christ" (p. 250). In a similar vein, Edwards interpreted the destruction of Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron, on the day of the introduction of the Levitical priesthood as God's way of showing "the insufficiency of the Levitical priesthood at the first setting of it up." Later in the same entry he declared that "they that come to God, and don't trust in the atonement for sin made by Christ's being consumed in the fire of God's wrath, shall be consumed by the fire of God's wrath themselves" (p. 253). For Edwards, all ritual acts fell short of the redemptive power needed to remove sin.

From the standpoint of his primary hermeneutic as a Reformed theologian, Edwards found the book of Deuteronomy more useful theologically than the book of Leviticus, as is evident in his extended comments on the phrase in Deuteronomy 6:25, "And it shall be our righteousness." This passage in Deuteronomy follows Moses' reminders concerning the covenant God made with the Israelites and the giving of the Ten Commandments as well as the benefits of obedience. Edwards suggested that this "Mosaic dispensation" might be understood in either a "legal sense" or an "evangelical sense." The former, according to him, results in the "trial and conviction" of the children of Israel by showing the problems attendant on imperfect obedience to the "covenant of works." The latter provides evidence that "our righteousness" in this text refers to persons "being accepted of God as righteous" as God beholds them "in Christ." For Edwards, therefore, righteousness was righteousness "only as God is pleased of his grace to promise to accept it, and impute it to 'em as such," a formula anticipatory of his reading of Romans 4:2–5, which he cited in the entry (p. 287).

Edwards devoted several entries in the book of Numbers to the narrative involving Balaam the seer, a tale he linked prophetically to multiple events in Christian history. Frightened by invading Israelites, Balak, king of the Moabites, petitioned Balaam to curse the invaders, a request repeatedly thwarted by God. On one occasion when Balaam set forth, the angel of the Lord blocked his path, and Balaam's ass refused to move forward. In anger, Balaam beat the animal repeatedly, at which the ass spoke to him. Edwards wondered why Balaam was not "surprised and astonished" at this phenomenon. The answer was that Balaam, a famous soothsayer and conjurer, "was not unused to extraordinary appearances and voices" sometimes associated with animals (p. 273). Then Balaam prophesied concerning a star rising out of Jacob. Edwards suggested that since Balaam lived "east of the land of Jacob," the "star out of Jacob" must rise "from the western horizon," a star Edwards linked serially to the Wise Men at Christ's birth, to the first light of "the great gospel day" beginning in the west or in America, and to the movement of the Holy Spirit "from west to east" in the latter days of the world (p. 274).
Not all the exegetical moves Edwards made were predictable. Side by side with the Christian assumptions that pervade his interpretation of the Pentateuch is a different strain of interest documented at length, especially in the opening pages of the "Blank Bible." Drawing heavily on works by Theophilus Gale (1628–78), Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Matthew Poole, and Richard Kidder (1633–1703), among others, Edwards developed an argument about comparative religions. He was intrigued by parallels that existed between the Pentateuch and legends or traditions found in various "heathen" sources. For example, from his reading of Gale's *Court of the Gentiles*, he noted an ancient fable of an ass that spoke with a "human voice," thereby terrifying his enemies (p. 272). Numerous entries by Edwards on the opening chapters of Genesis contain references to such fables or classical sources. He cited several tales concerning Saturn that he asserted were "taken from the story of Adam" (p. 126). Others he identified as derived from the account of Noah. Edwards' overriding premise informing these entries was that such "heathen" tales were drawn from the biblical record rather than arising independently.

In his commentary on the Pentateuch, Edwards repeatedly spoke of ancient Israel as the "Jewish church." That expression, which occurs eight times in his entries on the five books of Moses, symbolizes the prevailing direction of his exegesis at the same time that it challenges the uniqueness and integrity of the historic Jewish community by imposing a Christian category on it. That construction also diminishes the historical intention and the original integrity of the Hebrew Bible, the scripture of ancient Israel, by transforming it into the Old Testament whose ultimate purpose and meaning depended essentially on the Christian New Testament. Edwards, of course, would not accept that negative interpretation of his construction. He stood in a long line of Christian exeges who regarded the entire history of the human race, from creation to its final culmination, as in some primary sense a Christian story.

**Historical Books**

Edwards' commentary in the "Blank Bible" on the Historical Books of the Old Testament, which includes 625 entries, moves back and forth across the stories of the heroic figures who fill those books—Joshua and Rahab; Samson; Hannah and Samuel; David, Solomon, and the queen of Sheba; Elijah and Elisha; and Esther—recounting their exploits and at the same time exploring their spiritual significance for subsequent ages. In those tales he often found direct connections with three subsequent time periods: the era of the New Testament, the centuries between the early Christian experience and his own day, and the future eschatological age. He solidified those connections by employing a typological interpretation of the texts.

Much has been written regarding Edwards' use of typology as a way of linking the Old and the New Testaments. The correspondence that exists between a "type" and its "antitype" is the interpretive ground for linking the two. The type, as a historical figure or image, prefigures the future antitype. The creative and imaginative possibilities implicit in the typological interpretation of the Old Testament are infinite. Edwards' commentary on the Historical Books provided numerous opportunities.
for such exegesis and illustrates the variety of uses he made of this interpretive approach.

According to Edwards, all the male figures cited above were types of Christ, each anticipating important aspects of Christ's life, character, and work. As Joshua, for example, led the people of Israel over the River Jordan to "the comforts of Canaan," so Jesus brings his followers "to the possession of Canaan that is his inheritance" (p. 318). As "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily" upon Samson, empowering him to destroy the enemies who roared against him, so Christ "in his last sufferings" destroyed Satan, who roared "upon him as his prey" (p. 336). As Elijah ascended bodily into heaven, so his ascent anticipated typologically Christ's ascension (p. 390). The female figures, too, Edwards often linked to the church in some fashion. Rahab's house Edwards declared "a type of the church… where the righteous dwell in safety" (p. 318). Hannah's song was prophetic of future "great events" (p. 345). And the queen of Sheba was "a remarkable type of the Gentile church" (p. 379).

But the Historical Books also have their share of antiheroes—figures or collective groups who personified evil and sought to destroy the people of Israel. The antiheroes, too, functioned typologically for Edwards. Among the most notorious were the inhabitants of Jericho, the Philistines, Delilah, Goliath, Absalom, Ahithophel, Ahab, and Jezebel. Delilah, for example, represented "beloved sin, or lust, or sinful pleasure." She bewitched Samson, lulling him to sleep. "So men's lusts, under a show of friendship, of entertaining and delighting 'em, do indeed destroy them" (p. 341). This cautionary tale, Edwards asserted, calls for Christians to be watchful (p. 341). From the Scripture Chronology, by Arthur Bedford (1668–1745), Edwards transcribed a lengthy description of Goliath's size and the weight of his armor (pp. 354–55). The practical effect of these details was to magnify the victory of the youthful David over the giant by means of the stones that he chose from the brook, stones that Edwards thought "seem to denote words of the Lord," what might also be called "the sword of the Spirit." The brook out of which they were taken represents the "Spirit of God." All Christians, he asserted, have access to such "stones," to "a variety of apt passages in the Holy Scripture wherewith to resist and fight against Satan" (pp. 356–57).

The longest entry on the Historical Books in the "Blank Bible" is an extended commentary on the rebellion of Absalom against his father, King David. But for Edwards this account recorded in 2 Samuel 15-18 was

no ordinary description of a rebellious son seeking to win away the affections of his father's subjects. The thesis statement in his interpretation reads, "ABSALOM seems to be a type of Antichrist." Edwards then proceeds to identify a variety of ways that the story of Absalom, in his judgment, anticipated in origin, physical appearance, character, pretensions, actions, outcome, and ultimate results the tale of the Pope. Absalom, born of a Gentile wife to David, was similar to the "mixture of Christianity with heathenism" in popery. Admired as "a person of great beauty," Absalom, by his delight with such praise, evoked in Edwards the parallel to the Antichrist's appearances "in exceeding external pomp and glory, decked with gold, and silver,
and precious stones, fine linen, and scarlet." Absalom's abundant hair he equated with "the exceeding policy and subtlety of Antichrist." For Edwards, Antichrist's claims to prerogatives as "lord of the church" paralleled Absalom's pretensions to the throne of David. Absalom's "whoredom with his father's concubines" pointed to the Antichrist's failure to remain "faithful to Christ as his spouse." The ensuing battle between the forces of David and those of Absalom represented the great struggle between the church of Christ and the forces of Antichrist. In the end, Absalom was defeated; his hair proved his destruction in the same manner that Antichrist will be "ruined by his own craftiness." David and his company rejoiced in the victory; so will the church following the "fall of Antichrist" (pp. 365–69).

The closing note to the tale of Absalom reflects themes related to the third time period Edwards featured in many of his comments on the Historical Books: the future eschatological age. He cast the conflict between the Israelites and the city of Jericho, for example, as an anticipation of "the last conflict of the church with her enemies" (p. 319). At the moment immediately before deliverance or victory, "infidelity, libertinism, contempt of the true gospel of Christ, and luxury, and profaneness, and contempt of vital piety" prevail (p. 319). But then victory comes for the church by the drying up of the River Jordan, an event that Edwards linked to the drying up of the River Euphrates when the sixth vial is poured in the Apocalypse (Revelation 16). In sum, the destruction of Jericho is "a remarkable type of the destruction of Satan's kingdom" (p. 321).

Edwards also associated the onset of the eschatological moment with the "little cloud that came out of the west from beyond the sea" when Elijah the prophet prayed for an end to the "great drought." He interpreted the "plentiful showers of rain" from the cloud as evidence that the "great outpouring of the Spirit… in the latter days… will arise in and from America" (p. 385). In 1742, when Edwards published speculation concerning a central eschatological role for America in Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival, he was greeted with scorn on both sides of the Atlantic. This entry corroborates, in his view, the biblical grounds for his judgment about a millennial role for the American continent. For Edwards the "peaceful reign of Solomon," following the conflicts that dominated the rule of his father David, reflected the "proper commencement" in the latter days of the "church's rest, glory, and triumph on earth." Then the "vast increase of the church" will fill the "earth with God's glory" (p. 412).

The book of Esther, the last of the Historical Books, posed an interpretive challenge of a special sort for Edwards. This book had attracted his attention early in his years as a commentator. In his summary judgment he stated, "It appears to me very probable, that this book of Esther is an history that is a shadow of gospel things and times, by the agreement of it with events, and the agreeableness to the manner of other typical histories of the Old Testament." In his earliest reflections he equated the figure of Esther with the church, the spouse of Christ. Therefore Esther's request that the ten sons of Haman "be hanged upon the gallows" raised the question "Why?" Her apparently "revengeful spirit" seemed out of character. Edwards recognized that ethical tension and defended her request. He declared Esther's action to be yet another fulfillment of "the will of God concerning the Amalekitish nation, "a nation cursed by divine command" in Exodus 17:14, Exodus 17:16. According to Edwards' reading, God was to war with the
Amalekites "from generation to generation." Therefore it was "the Spirit of God," not Esther, that called for this vengeful hanging of Haman's sons (p. 425).

History was never just history for Edwards. It was also prophecy and anticipation of the gospel story. His use of typology provided abundant opportunities to interpret historical figures in the Old Testament as clear expressions filled with New Testament meaning.

Wisdom Literature

Edwards took great delight in the study of the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. He wrote 1,142 entries on these books in the "Blank Bible." Poetic in the Hebrew text, emotionally evocative even in English translation, the Wisdom Literature ranges across the full spectrum of human experience and spiritual conditions. These texts provided rich resources for Edwards in the areas of exegetical reflection, theological speculation, and practical advice. One possible reason for his consuming interest in these books was the manner in which they challenged his religious imagination. He also may have seen certain striking parallels to his own life experiences in these books, in particular, in the trials of Job. The psalms were multifaceted documents for him, inviting poetic musing, theological observations, and justification for partisan views. Much of the Wisdom Literature also supported his christological interpretive scheme. The practical side of these books attracted Edwards' attention as he sought counsel and wisdom to share with parents and children, with young and old alike. Finally, he joined the ranks of commentators in earlier centuries of Christian history as he attempted to find meaning in the physical details and erotic images that fill the book of Canticles.

It is tempting to suggest that Edwards may have identified closely with the figure of Job during his years of conflict with the congregation in Northampton. He depicted the trials that afflicted Job as a principal reason the book was inserted into the Old Testament, for God has appointed "that his people should through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven." Job is a "revelation from God" the saints need, according to Edwards. God did not forsake Job, and in like manner God promises to deliver the church from persecution and suffering and bring her to "a state of glorious prosperity." Job was therefore an example for the Christian who experiences "grievous calamity." He did not succumb to Satan and curse God, thereby retaining his integrity and persevering; in this manner "Satan was confounded" (p. 427). Affliction is the lot of human beings. "Sinful man is like a burning coal," wrote Edwards, "full of sin, as fuel that is full of fire, from which affliction proceeds as necessarily as sparks proceed from a fire" (p. 428).

When Job's "day of prosperity" ended with "all his purposes and hopes broken," his "friends," who had flattered him, now made of him a "byword" (pp. 439 and 437). In those circumstances, Job spoke of the grave as his "home," and "corruption and worms" as his family (p. 439). Yet he was still able to affirm that his "redeemer" lives, and that he, too—Job, that is—will live again, which Edwards translated into the New Testament's
"resurrection of the body" (p. 440). The subsequent discourses Job had with his three friends gave Edwards occasion to comment on "the misery of the wicked" as well as on "the preciousness of wisdom or true godliness" (p. 454). Those discourses also provided an opportunity for him to wax poetic on occasion—for example, in response to Elihu's description of an approaching thunderstorm, which Edwards described as "appearing as arising above the horizon," with the lower part of the storm rooted in the sea (p. 464).

In the dispute between Job and his three friends, the latter were confident "that they were in the right and Job altogether in the wrong." But the final outcome was different: when God appeared, they were condemned and Job justified. From this Edwards concluded, "So now in controversies that are managed in religious matters, doubtless many may be very confident that they are in the right, and think they are strenuously pleading the cause of God, that yet will be condemned when God comes to judge" (p. 473). Perhaps Edwards found a measure of consolation in this story when he was dismissed by his congregation.

The songs of ancient Israel defy easy generalization, and Edwards' commentary on the book of Psalms is similarly complex. If there is a critical center to his exegetical observations on these songs, it is that he regarded a great number of them to be prophetic of Christ—either of Christ himself, or of "Christ mystical," his body, the church. That christological principle gave Edwards immense hermeneutical latitude in his interpretation of the psalms. He found in them, for example, prophetic references to Christ's birth in a stable (p. 465); to his miracles, including stilling the tempest, walking on the water, healing the sick, and "raising the dead" (p. 504); to his physical sufferings during his trial and crucifixion (p. 486); and to his "triumphant ascension into heaven" following victory over his enemies (p. 489).

Edwards also used the psalms to link Christ with a number of central images in the Old Testament. He identified the Shekinah as a manifestation of Christ (p. 477); he declared Christ to be "the true Elohim" (p. 516); and he proclaimed Christ "the Amen," or the "truth round about" the Lord of hosts (p. 519). References to the church, or "Christ mystical," are also abundant in his commentary on the psalms. Edwards noted that Mount Zion was an especially appropriate image of the church, for it was "but a small hill"; yet God exalts the church and makes it high and glorious (p. 504). He linked the church with the "mown grass" on which rain falls; its worldly happiness is cut short, but it is revived again by the "showers of heaven" (p. 508). He associated the vision of the poor who were satisfied with bread with ecclesiastical arrangements involving deacons in apostolic times who cared for the poor, and also with an even greater satisfaction and ultimate fulfillment" in the future glorious times of the church" (p. 536).

Edwards found the book of Psalms full of texts inviting theological speculation. He explained the Psalmist's phrase "a little lower than the angels" as a reference to both the "advancement" of human nature in the creation of humankind and the subsequent uniting of "human nature to the
divine" in the person of Christ (p. 478). He joined a contemporary theological debate about the fate of the souls of saints when they die by rejecting the notion of soul sleep, a view popular among some who posited an intermediate state between death and the final judgment during which the souls of the saints sleep before entering heaven. On the contrary, he affirmed, "the souls of the saints do not die when their bodies die, but are received to a state of happiness in more perfect union and communion with God" (p. 497). When speaking about Psalms 78, Edwards asserted that it, "(as almost all the rest)" of the psalms, "was indited by the Spirit of God," a word that can imply either written or dictated (p. 513). His comment on Psalms 136 anticipated the theme of his posthumously published dissertation in which he affirmed that "an ultimate end of the creation of the world and of all God's works is his goodness, or the communication of his good, to his creatures" (p. 537).

Some of Edwards' comments on the book of Psalms contain a sharp, hateful edge. He identified those "that hasten after another god" with "the corrupt church of the Jews and the Church of Rome," both of which, he charged, trust "in other saviors" and "in their own righteousness" (p. 481). The "wicked," whom the Psalmist describes in devastating terms in Psalms 50:16–22, Edwards equated with "the scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, and… the popish priests afterwards" (p. 499). The violence explicit in the phrase "dashing the 'little ones against the stones,'" according to Edwards, will find its fullest fulfillment in the destruction of "the spiritual Babylon. They indeed will do God's work, and will perform a good work, who shall be God's instrument of the utter overthrow of the Church of Rome" (p. 537). If there is a way to soften these comments,

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it may come in the form of Edwards' judgment that when the Psalmist, or in the case of Psalms 59, David, "seems to pray against his enemies, the enemies that he speaks [of] are not his personal enemies," but rather "enemies of the church of Christ." For Edwards that distinction seemed sufficient justification for the imprecatory psalms (p. 501). He mounted a similar argument in his commentary on Job, suggesting that "imprecations of curses to enemies" are not "expressions of personal resentments," and thereby do not violate the religious injunction against wishing evil on those who work injury, a distinction that seems arbitrary and inconsistent with Edwards' other ethical injunctions (pp. 458–59).

Finally, the psalms gave Edwards an occasion to offer advice of a practical and spiritual nature. He warned, for example, that a "false persecuting tongue" will be punished (p. 532). With an eye toward the benefits of "beloved sleep," he counseled, "Therefore anxious cares are in vain" (p. 534). In a similar vein, he used the Psalmist's reflections on God's providential care of the children of Israel in the wilderness to imply the equivalent "special care of providence" for God's people in every age (p. 526). On a more hortatory note, Edwards employed the observation in Psalms 22:10, "'tis fit that God's people should give up their children to God in infancy," to exhort parents to do it "visible to the public," thereby embracing "infants as some of the covenant people of God" (p. 485).

Edwards declared that the purpose of the book of Proverbs was for parents' use "in instructing their children" (p. 546). For him, however, that view did not reduce the book to simply practical
advice and counsel. On the contrary, he affirmed that the "wisdom" spoken of in this book referred to "holiness or true virtue" (p. 543). The same term—*wisdom*—also referred to "Christ, the eternal word and wisdom of God" (p. 545). That judgment provided Edwards with an opportunity to interpret some of the proverbs in a christological fashion. For example, the saying "And he is a friend that sticks closer than a brother" gave Edwards occasion to assert that Christ is such a "disinterested friend," and Christ may be the subject intended by "the Spirit of God." Nor should it seem strange that some of these proverbs should have respect to him" (p. 566).

Nonetheless, Edwards' commentary on Proverbs is brimful of practical religious and moral advice. For example, he warned that "foolish and sinful talk" will result in punishment (p. 549). He identified the tongue as "the gate or the door of the soul." Leaving it open or unguarded can prove "the death of the soul" (p. 554). Similarly, "evil and corrupt communications" lead to ruin (p. 558). In yet another way, he counseled

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against "wicked words" that result in greater suffering than "the wink of the eye" (p. 549). The contrast to "wicked words," according to Edwards, was the word "fitly spoken" which, following the Wise Man's image of "apples of gold in pictures of silver," he identified as wise, pious, and precious (pp. 572–73). We can only wonder whether Edwards' disciplinary pattern with his own children was evident in his advice, namely, "When the skin or flesh is made black and blue by the stripes of the rod of correction, this cleanses away sin" (p. 567).

Edwards' moral guidance included counsel to be content with "plainness" of dress and "necessities" at home rather than try to cut a "great figure abroad" (p. 552). He cautioned against melancholy, "which destroys health, debilitates and breaks the mind"; a "merry heart" is good "medicine" and "promotes health" (pp. 558–59). He warned that "in a time of calamity" it is better to trust a neighbor than a brother—a rather strange maxim (p. 578). Edwards' characterization of the tyranny of those "advanced to dominion from a low state" as "merciless" seems to reflect his assumptions about class (p. 579). The forces of "ambition and sensuality" that drive "worldly-minded men," who are "mean and hateful" as well as "vile and base," are "dangerous and harmful" and therefore to be avoided (p. 581). Finally, a sage observation: the female servant who commits "criminal intercourse," or adultery, will be "liable to a discovery by some effects that were left in her body" (pp. 581–82).

Edwards' commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes resembles his exegesis on Proverbs in several ways. He attributed the authorship of this book to Solomon "in his old age" (p. 594). As partial grounds for that judgment, Edwards found the Wise Man (or the Preacher) repenting of "the sin which he was led into by his wives and concubines" (p. 595). In addition, various entries focus on the end of things, that is, on "the final issue or event of things" that preoccupies older and wiser persons (p. 593). Death seems to be on the mind of the Wise Man, who says that

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life is always preferable to death, even for the "meanest and most afflicted man" (p. 599). Edwards also underscored the Wise Man's commentary on the benefits derived from "earthly
good," which is fleeting and fails to satisfy (p. 584). Yet Edwards' most extended comment on Ecclesiastes reveals complexity within the passage: "A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth" (pp. 591–92).

Out of these circumstances comes much of the Wise Man's advice that Edwards noted. For example, nothing is obtained by mirth (p. 585). Similarly, Edwards was taken with the condemnation of "the idle and luxurious who waste their money and estates for a few moments' ease and pleasure," arguing that "frugality" and "diligence" instead make one rich (p. 603). Similarly, he counseled, it is good "to lay up" during prosperous times against times of "trouble and calamity" (p. 603). In a larger context, Edwards acknowledged the inscrutability of God's providence. He argued, for example, that charity to the poor may not result in immediate benefits from God; but, he affirmed, "God works in a secret and unsearchable manner…. So God will prosper our deeds of charity" (p. 604).

Perhaps the most interesting entries from the standpoint of Edwards' own biography are his comments on the Wise Man's closing observations contrasting vanity and "the whole duty of man." The latter consists in the command, "Fear God, and keep his commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). "The Wise Man, by an induction of particulars, had shown that all other things were vanity, or nothing" (p. 607). Commenting on Ecclesiastes 12:12, Edwards noted that a person preoccupied with "making many books… and much study" may think that "he is employed in what is truly excellent and is the most substantial good, if he be employed in study, and contemplation, and writing, to acquire for himself and communicate to others great speculative knowledge and understanding. But the Wise Man would suggest that this also is vanity, that it is not true wisdom" (p. 606). In fact, "much study is a weariness to the flesh"—a weariness Edwards himself, no doubt, knew firsthand (p. 606).

In his commentary on Canticles, or the Song of Solomon, Edwards joined the long line of expositors who have addressed the question of the nature of this song. He left no ambiguity in his answer. It is "no common love song or epithalamium," a judgment he also rendered about Psalms 45 (p. 608). On the contrary, he asserted, Canticles is "a song of love between Christ and the church, or the assembly of the saints" who

are "spiritual virgins" (p. 610). Edwards marshaled the variety of comparisons in the text as evidence against the notion that Canticles is a human love song. Comparing the church to a company of horses, for example, fits with Christ's being conveyed on a chariot of truth drawn by the church, especially by "the ministers of the gospel" (p. 611). Christ's love is "as the lily among thorns," or as the "true church among false churches," for persecutors are compared to thorns (p. 613).

No commentator on Canticles can escape discussing the anatomy of the loved one. Edwards took on the task with relish. The hair of the beloved he identified as "the fruit of the head" by which in Scripture is represented "thoughts, understanding, meditations, or the fruits of these meditations." So the hair "may represent the living fruits of ministers' studies" (p. 619). The beloved's teeth, Edwards suggested, may represent the "ministers and teachers" of the church
who prepare the food, "the word of God," by their studies "for the nourishment of the body," as teeth chew "natural food" (p. 619). By "breasts," in a mystical text, Edwards signified the "graces of the spirit" (p. 627). These graces are "sweet and delightful" in Christ's eyes (p. 628). Edwards linked the closing verse of Canticles with the concluding words of the book of Revelation. In both cases the cry sounds somewhat similar: "Make haste, my beloved" (Canticles 8:14), and "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20) (p. 628). He found the poet's plea a fitting conclusion to this mystical song, for Canticles ends on a passionate note of hope for the arrival of the beloved.

There may be debate regarding the proper category for Edwards' approach to the interpretation of the richly evocative, poetic texts in the Wisdom Literature. At times his judgments appear to move beyond typology to allegory. His pursuit of spiritual meaning in the texts knew no bounds. In that respect there can be no debate about the creative imagination he brought to the interpretive task. But these same documents that invited spiritual application to the lives of his parishioners spoke directly to him, too, as he struggled with the conflict in his Northampton congregation as well as with his own responsibilities as a husband and father. Even clearer autobiographical echoes in his exegesis hint of the weariness and potential vanity of his "much study." The "Blank Bible" itself is striking evidence of this.

The Prophets

No section of the Bible is more consonant with Edwards' self-conception and his sense of responsibility as a Christian minister than the prophetic books of the Old Testament. In the "Blank Bible" he wrote 900 entries on texts in the Prophets. His commentary resonates with the dual sense of prophet, namely, one who proclaims the word of the Lord and one who speaks about the unknown future, two vocations evident in his own career. Edwards declared it his own responsibility—and that of other ministers—to be a spokesperson for God. In that capacity he proclaimed both the demands and the threats of God's law and the good news of the saving gospel. He also spent his adult life trying to discover truths and certainties concerning the future. In this latter respect, for him there were multiple futures reflected in the Prophets—the immediate temporal future in ancient Israel, the more remote future in the Christian era, and the distant eschatological age. The Prophets evoked highly diverse commentary from him, ranging from historical to grammatical concerns, from personal to pastoral topics.

Edwards found examples for his own preaching in the Prophets. He noted that Isaiah minced no words in his condemnation of the wicked, calling down woe on those who enriched themselves by "the oppression of others" and on "great men and princes" who were "mighty for nothing but gluttony and drunkenness" (pp. 633–34). He observed that the prophet Jeremiah spoke of the "wantonness" and "unbridled lusts" of Israel being "tamed with sorrow and distress" (p. 698). He recorded the fact that Ezekiel declared without apology the "fury" of God's "destroying angels" sent "to smite and slay utterly without any pity" those who had sinned in the city of Jerusalem, "young and old, and even little children," a passage Edwards glossed as "great evidence that
infants are guilty of sin" (p. 737). Hosea's pronouncement of the "awful judgments" of God upon "the church of Israel" for her harlotry and "idolatry" became an almost matter-of-fact entry in the commentary (p. 773), as did also Amos's identification of sinners in "the house of Israel" who were to be "sifted"—destroyed—as "chaff which the wind drives away" (p. 797). These prophetic threats echoed in Edwards' own ministry.

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But these same prophets proclaimed good news, examples of which Edwards included in his commentary. He took note of the positive results attendant on the destruction of Sennacherib's army described by Isaiah: Israel "shall no longer be under tribute to him" (p. 643). He recorded Jeremiah's assertion that even though God's "sore judgments" were executed on those carried captive, "a remnant" of the Jews would "find favor, and return" to their own land (p. 718). Similarly, the destruction of the wicked described by Zephaniah took on a positive interpretation for Edwards because this "sacrifice" effected a "ransom" for God's people (p. 808). Edwards linked Ezekiel's description of the divine "wisdom, power, justice, and goodness" that direct "the wheels of providence" on behalf of God's people with "the supernatural work of God's Spirit on the hearts of men" (p. 732).

Edwards paid close attention to what the Hebrew prophets spoke concerning the future in all three of its senses. With reference to the prophets' immediate futures, he noted that Isaiah foretold the twofold destruction of the Jews, first by the Chaldeans and then by the Romans (p. 634). Isaiah also foresaw the "army of Assyria" conquering the land of Egypt (p. 658). Edwards found confirmation of the same patterns in Ezekiel's prophecy of three powers that would overcome the Jews between the time of their captivity and the restoration of "the royal line of David"—the Persians, the Syrians, and the Romans (p. 749). Edwards observed that Isaiah foretold in one message the destruction of both "the empire of the Babylonians" in ancient times and the "spiritual Babylon, the great enemy of the Christian church" (p. 645) in the later Christian era. Jeremiah's comments about the execution of God's wrath "on false prophets, and the priests and ministers of the false church, and false ministers of the visible church" Edwards eschatologically tied to the future "glorious day of the church of God" promised in prophecy (p. 717). He read Zechariah's description of a destruction of "a very great part of the inhabitants of the world" to be temporally situated "a little before the introduction of the glorious state of peace and prosperity to the church" (pp. 818–19). And he linked the destruction of the enemies of Israel in the "valley of Jehoshaphat," described by the prophet Joel, to the defeat of the enemies of the church in the battle of Armageddon in the latter days (p. 792).

Edwards paid special attention to the ways the prophets pointed to details in the life of Christ. He stood side by side with other Christian commentators who linked Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin conceiving to "the purity of Christ's conception," contrasting that "spiritual purity" with the "typical defilement in the coition of man and woman" (p. 636). Informed by his reading of Christian history, Edwards connected Isaiah's reference to idols being moved with Eusebius' account of statues falling down when the young child Jesus entered an Egyptian temple (p. 648).
He regarded the messianic hymn of praise in Isaiah 9:6–7 as a direct reference to the "Son of God" rather than to "any mere man" (p. 640). Edwards found Christ's "humility and the meanness of his outward appearance" anticipated in the prophecy concerning a "rod" and "branch" springing out of Jesse as well as in Isaiah's reference to "a tender plant" (pp. 643 and 686–87). The latter he also interpreted as evidence of Christ's voluntarily coming to earth without "pomp and glory," willing to suffer and be exposed to "the malice of foes" (p. 686). Edwards stood with the powerful tradition of Christian exegetes who interpreted Isaiah 53 as a direct prophecy of Christ's imprisonment, arraignment, condemnation, and death, as well as of his subsequent resurrection (pp. 687–88).

Edwards discovered numerous references to the eschatological age in the Prophets. He regarded the "very small remnant" of "believing Jews" as an assurance that "another remnant" of "elect Jews" would be "called in the latter days" (p. 629). He construed Hosea's comments regarding God's mercy on the children of Israel after his rejection of them as similar evidence (p. 775). Edwards linked accounts in Isaiah with "the glory of the New Jerusalem" described at the end of the book of Revelation (p. 689). He interpreted Ezekiel's promise of "glory in the land of the living" as a promise that God would "accomplish glorious things for his church" (p. 752). It is the nature of prophecies of deliverance, wrote Edwards, that they have reference to "things to be brought to pass long after" the reference at hand (p. 757). He took Habbakuk's account of the deliverance of Israel from the Babylonian captivity as an anticipation of the church's deliverance from the spiritual Babylon and her consequent glory, parallel to a description in Revelation 13, after which the earth will be "filled with the knowledge and worship of the true God," an image of the millennial age (p. 805).

At times Edwards used the "Blank Bible" as a theological commonplace book, developing specific religious themes by commenting on series of related passages. For example, his entries on Isaiah 38 focus on the topic of death, triggered by the account of Hezekiah's sickness and his prayer for life. He explained the image of death employed by Hezekiah: the weaver, "when he has finished his piece of cloth cuts off the thread, and cuts out the piece out of the loom, cuts it off from the thrum." So, Edwards stated, death is "an end to the thread and series of all my designs

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and projects" (p. 670). That image does nothing, however, to soften "the last agonies of death, and struggles with the king of terrors," that are "very terrible" (p. 670). Death, he asserted, as it was originally and properly, is "a state of evil without any good." It is "a state of absolute emptiness." This notion of death prevailed until the gospel brought to light "life and immortality" (p. 670). These reflections on death became an occasion for Edwards to formulate a strong argument in the commentary in support of a "future state" (p. 671).

Edwards frequently used individual biblical texts as occasions to state major doctrinal positions. On the basis of Isaiah's comments concerning the insufficiency of Israel's sacrifices to God, Edwards affirmed "the freeness of God's grace" in "his electing love," which was the ground of all blessings. He wrote, "Thus this doctrine of justification by free grace, without the works of the law or our own righteousness, is the doctrine both of the old and new testament" (p. 677). He
linked Ezekiel's vision of the "dry bones" with "doctrinal knowledge, common illumination, and conviction" that was not infused by God's Spirit; and he concluded that "saving grace differs from common grace not only in degree, but in nature and kind" (pp. 756–57). He interpreted God's backing the sun ten degrees on a sundial, a sign to Hezekiah, as "a type of the resurrection of Christ, the Sun of righteousness" (p. 669). Isaiah's reference to the Holy One's inhabiting eternity became an occasion for Edwards to assert that eternity is something infinitely before and infinitely above the whole creation, even above the highest heavens where "the Trinity dwell together" (p. 691).

Often Edwards' commentary focused on more technical textual issues. In one short entry, for example, he affirmed the "divine authority" of the "books of the prophets" in contrast to some who apparently proposed they were "forged by the Jews" (p. 661). In another he took note of the fact that Isaiah 24 began a new sermonic unit of the book of Isaiah extending for four chapters (p. 652). Grammatical observations, too, were part of the mix of materials. He observed that a "plural verb may be used" when a nominative case is not expressed, or when God, Elohim, is understood (p. 730). He commented on the use of the Hebrew particle אֵלֶּה in conjunction with the prefix ו, and its implications for the phrase in Zechariah 14:7, "Not day, nor night" (p. 818).

Edwards often turned to a concordance to discover the uses and meanings of particular Hebrew terms, as in the case of דְּחָנָת in Isaiah 53:11 (pp. 688–89). These kinds of entries reinforced his repeated hermeneutical observation that the Holy Ghost in "the words of prophecy" often has respect to "two senses or translations entirely different and not dependent or related." Both may be "instructive" (p. 764). Elsewhere, Edwards wrote that the Holy Ghost contrived his words to mean "many things" by "the same expression" (p. 787).

Some of Edwards' exegetical observations probably reflect his personal experiences. For instance, when he discussed "the method of instructing children," he spoke of the adjustments adults make to communicate with them: "[S]peaking to them 'with stammering lips' seems to allude to our way of talking with children wherein we are wont to conform to them, and stammer, or talk brokenly, as they do," a practice he may have employed with his own eleven children (p. 655). He compared Ezekiel's reference to women sewing "pillows to all armholes" to the contemporary maternal practice of sewing pillows to children's clothing at the armpits so that the "leading strings" by which they led their children might not hurt them, a practice Edwards no doubt knew firsthand (p. 741). Edwards used the occasion of Jeremiah's complaint about prophets and priests who dealt falsely with God's people to comment on the actions of "a covetous physician that aims at nothing but his pay, if he can but make his patient believe that he is cured" (p. 704). Whether Edwards had that experience himself is unclear from the entry. What is clear from Edwards' commentary on the Prophets is how centrally these prophetic texts functioned in his professional activities, especially as he carried out his responsibilities as a preacher proclaiming the word of God to his parishioners and as a theologian addressing perennial concerns of every age in his diverse publications.

The Gospels and Acts
Edwards' commentary in the "Blank Bible" on the Gospels and the book of Acts, which includes 754 entries, reflects his concern with the centrality of the life and death of Christ and the growth of the early church. For him these events were the fulfillment of ancient prophecies and the redemptive acts on which eternal salvation rested. In these entries Edwards addressed a variety of traditional topics in Christian thought and experience including the relationship between the Old and New Testament, the family of Jesus, Christ's activities as a teacher and worker of miracles, Christ's passion and death, and the challenges facing the early Christians. The crucifixion and resurrection were the vital center of these accounts. On these Edwards placed his claims for the

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Christian proclamation. In the entries on the Gospels he also gave some attention to critical exegetical issues that were emerging as a product of the Enlightenment, but for him these scholarly debates were subordinate to the theological and ethical reflection he drew from the gospel accounts.

Edwards' commentary on the Gospels, for example, leaves little ambiguity about the relative importance of the New Testament and the Old Testament, or about the relationship between the two. In an extended discussion on John the Baptist as the "greatest" and "most honorable" prophet of the old testament, Edwards declared, "The least of God's people in that glorious dispensation introduced by the Messiah had greater dignity and honor than the greatest under the former low and carnal administration, that was a ministration of the letter and of death, which administration was so much inferior to that of the new that it had no glory in comparison of it" (p. 845).

And yet he asserted "the sweet harmony of the Old and New Testament," and "the union of both old and new testament church in Christ as their common head." Furthermore, the two shall be "one society in heaven." Edwards interpreted the presence of "the two principal old testament prophets, and the three chief disciples of the new testament" together on the Mount of Transfiguration as a "remarkable specimen" of that future heavenly situation (p. 855). Another feature bound together the two testaments for him, namely, the fact that historical "occurrences" in both "represent and shadow forth spiritual things," a judgment Edwards penned across the opening page of the New Testament section in the "Blank Bible" (p. 825). He also tied the two testaments together by the "images and earnest of the glorious things" under the old testament dispensation that became "substance and reality" under the new testament (p. 924).

Edwards paid relatively little attention to the birth narratives and the surrounding stories about the young Jesus. He showed more interest in Jesus' parents. Edwards depicted the Virgin Mary as "a type of the church and of the believing soul"; she was admirable for her purity, humility, and resignation "to the divine care and providence" (pp. 891 and 892). Jesus' father Joseph was praised by Edwards for his "Christian spirit," including his "gentleness" and "kindness," and his "self-denial." Joseph subjected his "inferior appetite and inclination to superior principles," abstaining from sexual relations "out of reverence to that divine conception that she went with" (p. 826). Edwards' interpretation of Herod's massacre of innocents in Bethlehem shifted the onus for that tragic event
onto the "people of Bethlehem" who refused to entertain the infant Jesus and his mother. He concluded, "For this treatment of this divine infant and his mother, God by a terrible judgment destroys their infants, and dreadfully afflicts their mothers"—a cruel punishment justly deserved (p. 827).

Edwards' commentary on Christ as a teacher included observations about "the manner and style in which Christ taught" as well as the content of his teaching. Christ did not teach as the other prophets did, namely, with "Thus saith the Lord," for he was "the Lord himself" (p. 834). In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ set out to correct mistaken notions the Jews had of the kingdom of the Messiah. For example, he refuted the Jewish expectations of military exploits by the Messiah and "fierce revenge" on the Gentile nations (p. 831). By contrast, Christ spoke of peacemakers as blessed (p. 833). Similarly, Edwards disavowed the idea that the Messiah would bring great wealth and worldly pleasure (pp. 831–32). Edwards also took note of the ways Christ used parables to teach his disciples. The case of the "Samaritan's showing kindness to a Jew" provided an opportunity to extend the "rule of loving our neighbor" even to "those that were of another nation and religion" and were "bitter enemies," as were the Jews and Samaritans (pp. 901–2).

Christ the worker of miracles received as much or more attention from Edwards as Christ the teacher. Yet the entries that address miracles were often also the occasion for instruction by Edwards. For example, when Christ, walking on the water, appeared to his disciples tossed about by a "great tempest" on the Sea of Galilee, Edwards affirmed the account as proof of Christ's divinity, for treading on the sea was a property ascribable only to God (pp. 851–52). Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the grave, which Edwards declared "perhaps the greatest of all his miracles," had the effect of greatly increasing the number of his disciples, which set the stage for the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (pp. 915–16). In his commentary on John's account of that miracle, Edwards pointed to it as "a remarkable type of the spiritual resurrection, regeneration, and salvation of a soul." He also generalized from the narrative that "the travail of Christ's soul" was an example of how ministers ought to travail as they "seek the spiritual renovation and salvation of other souls" (p. 947). Edwards suggested a general explanation of the motive behind many of Christ's miracles in his comments on the raising of the young man of Nain from the dead. The reason for that and other miracles, he stated, was that Christ had "compassion" on those suffering from sickness, blindness, hunger, or other infirmities. These actions showed his power as well

as his mercy (p. 896). Edwards also addressed a question frequently asked: Why did Christ forbid his followers to publish abroad the news of his miracles? Edwards' answer was that Christ wanted nothing to prevent his crucifixion because that was the task for which he had come to earth (pp. 882–83). This strategy of concealment was not to be altered "till after his resurrection" (p. 899).

Edwards examined closely the texts detailing the events surrounding the suffering and death of Christ. He commented on the physical aspects of Christ's passion. For instance, when the account
in Luke speaks of Christ sweating "great drops of blood" in the garden (Luke 22:44), Edwards declared that the Greek signified, "not properly drops, but rather clotters," or as he translated ὅροιμβοι, "lumps" (p. 919). But he added that it was not "mere blood," but a "great watery sweat," which he construed as evidence of "the cleansing virtue" of Christ's blood. The fact that Christ was willing "to die for his people," including the very disciples who forsook him at the time of his capture in the garden, Edwards regarded as "the wonderful freeness, strength, and constancy of the love of Christ" (p. 889). The verbal exchanges between Christ and the high priest became the occasion for Edwards to assert "the union of the human and divine nature," associated respectively with the titles "Son of MAN" and "Son of GOD" (p. 873). Edwards' close reading of the texts dealing with Christ's suffering and crucifixion gave him occasion to note differences among the gospel accounts (p. 961). Edwards could not resist commenting on the darkening of the sun "when Christ died," a fit event because the sun was "a type of Christ." Similarly, he suggested, this "was probably one reason why Christ's resurrection was about the time of the rising of the sun" (p. 921). Believers, he affirmed, partake of "the benefit of Christ's resurrection by conversion and justification" (p. 921). They are thereby delivered from "a state of death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal" (p. 877).

Textual issues triggered by conflicting gospel accounts, later known as the "Synoptic Problem," sometimes attracted Edwards' attention. The question for him was how to reconcile differences among the various accounts of the life and activities of Jesus. This issue bears on the question of how best to describe Edwards' approach to Scripture. On one occasion he took note of the discussion by Richard Kidder, the bishop of Bath and Wells, dealing with the "difficulties involved in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke" (p. 894). Other accounts in the Gospels that attracted his notice included conflicting data in Mark and Luke regarding the seating arrangements when Jesus fed the five thousand (p. 881), differences in Matthew and Luke on the dating of the Transfiguration (p. 899), contrasting information in Matthew and Luke about the time of Jesus' departure from Jericho on his trip to Jerusalem (p. 861), and variations among the accounts of the women coming to the sepulcher on Easter morning (p. 877). Edwards ultimately found "no disagreement" among the Gospels (p. 899). On one occasion he resolved textual differences to his satisfaction by positing that the evangelist Luke had recorded similar events happening at different times (p. 900). Edwards was supremely confident that the differences in the accounts were reconcilable and that the inconsistencies were only "seeming inconsistencies" (p. 861).

In his commentary on the Gospels, there are numerous entries that document the ways Edwards used scriptural exegesis to formulate and confirm theological categories he employed in his publications. One example bears on the distinction he drew in his ethical writings between the love of benevolence and the love of complacence. Concerning the statement of Christ in John 10:17, that the Father loved him because he laid down his life, Edwards wrote that the "favor of God" or his "love" was "consequent" on Christ's "obedience" in "laying down his life." The effect was to purchase God's love "for himself" and for all to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed. Edwards concluded his entry: "The love of God is consequent on the righteousness of
Christ in two respects. 1. A love of complacence is consequent. 2. The exercises, and communications, and fruits of a love of benevolence, and manifestation of it" (pp. 945–46).

Edwards developed several specific religious themes with some persistence. One of the most instructive relates to his understanding of the process of conversion. He used the story in the Gospel of Matthew of the disciples' despair on the Sea of Galilee at night, before Christ appeared to them walking on the water, to speak about "sinners under conviction" who experience "great exercise and distress" because of the danger of their circumstances and their own inability to reach a safe haven. Christ's appearance was initially troubling, as are "the first spiritual discoveries that persons have after great awakenings and distresses of conscience." Edwards identified this same pattern in the conversions during the outpouring of the Spirit in Northampton (p. 853). The same narrative in

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the Gospel of Mark gave Edwards occasion to underscore the importance of sinners' earnestly seeking God "in the use of the means that he has prescribed" with the "labor and toil therein" (p. 881). In a different context, commenting on the passage that speaks of the parallel between the kingdom of heaven and the growth of seed in the earth, Edwards editorialized, "Very commonly persons can't trace the footsteps of God in the work of conversion," for the work is "very mysterious" (p. 880). The account of the disciple who cut off the ear of the high priest's servant in the Garden of Gethsemane provided Edwards with an occasion to state, "So in conversion the old, deaf, obstinate ear is cut off, and an hearing, obedient ear given" (p. 919). The description of the healing powers at the pool of Bethesda provoked Edwards' reflections on "gospel ordinances and means of grace" whereby sinners "seek spiritual healing." From that description he derived the counsel that sinners must be "diligent" and "constant" in the use of such means (p. 934). Yet Edwards was not willing to endorse a single pattern for conversion. He used the episode in the book of Acts where the apostles debated about circumcision as an occasion to conclude, "So those that insist such a manner of experience is necessary to godliness that is not necessary are guilty of tempting God" (p. 979).

Occasionally, Edwards addressed theological controversies of his day directly, as in his commentary on Acts dealing with the sermon Stephen delivered before the high priest. The sermon includes a passing reference to the field that Abraham bought in Shechem for a sepulcher. From the fact that the patriarchs were buried there after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, Edwards concluded that "the saints, when they die, go to heaven, the true Canaan, and have rest there." He went on to suggest that his judgment "confutes the notion of the souls of saints not going to heaven when they die, both of those that hold that they sleep till the resurrection, and of those that hold that they go to some other abode, i.e. the Hades, prepared for them" (p. 973). Here again Edwards was rejecting the judgment of those who subscribed to the notion of soul sleep, that the soul of a dead person entered an interim sleeping state of bliss or perdition until the final judgment.

Edwards' entries on the Gospels and the book of Acts underscore a number of the central themes of evangelical Christianity—the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, the necessity of conversion, and the ethical responsibilities of a converted Christian. All of these he derived in some measure
from the story of the life of Christ as manifest in the accounts of his birth, ministry, and
crucifixion. These Gospel texts form the center

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of salvation history for Edwards. The Old Testament, in his judgment, looks forward to these
events, and the balance of the New Testament celebrates the redemption wrought by Christ as the
foundation of the church.

The Epistles

Edwards' commentary on the Epistles, which includes 915 entries, frequently contains judgments
that he developed more fully in his formal theological writings. Among the topics he addressed
were justification by faith, the relationship between faith and works, the unpardonable sin, and
the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Edwards was especially taken with the Pauline
corpus, which in his view included the book of Hebrews. He asserted, "Paul was the principal
minister of the New Testament" in much the same way that "Moses was the principal minister of
the Old." And the "glory of the dispensation that Paul was minister of" so outshone that of which
Moses was the minister that the two are not comparable. Edwards judged the Pauline corpus to
be among the most valuable parts of the Bible by virtue of the explicit theological character of
the letters, for Paul had received his gospel in heaven (pp. 1076–77). On a related note, Edwards
echoed the judgment of several authors that Paul's "thorn in the flesh," which he judged to be
manifested in a nervous condition characterized by paralytic symptoms, stammering, and facial
distortion, may have been the result of that celestial visitation (pp. 1077–78). Edwards was of the
opinion that Paul was the author of the book of Hebrews because its "method, manner, and way
of arguing" were similar, in his judgment, to those of the epistle to the Romans (p. 992).

Edwards' entries on Pauline texts often took on an almost systematic character. For instance, he
enumerated the three benefits of the justification by faith cited by Paul in Romans 5:1–2 as
"peace with God," spiritual blessings in the present life, and the "hope of future blessedness" (p.
995). This quality is also evident in Edwards' construction of the distinctions among the four
things mentioned by the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 1:30; "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification,
and redemption." These he explained as follows: "All our good consists in the good of greatness,
which is wisdom; and in our good of excellency, which is our sanctification or deliverance from
sin, and infusion of holiness; and in our relative good, which is righteousness, or justification, or
being no longer the objects of God's anger, and becoming the objects of his favor and love; and
in our good of enjoyment, or a deliverance from misery, and being brought to

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happiness, joy, and glory or redemption." From this passage Edwards ascribed "dependence on
each person of the Trinity" for all good. The Father has sent the Son into the world and accepts
the benefits procured by Christ, benefits that are received by dependence on the Holy Spirit (pp.
1037–38).
Edwards gave considerable thought to the classic New Testament conundrum, namely, whether "the apostle Paul and the apostle James were of the same mind in the matter of justification," despite their apparently conflicting expressions concerning faith and works. Edwards declared that they were, based on Paul's assertion in Romans 2:13 that "doers of the law shall be justified" (p. 988). In a similar vein, he observed that 1 Thessalonians 1:3, which includes the phrase "work of faith," implies that "[t]he proper evidence of the genuineness of faith is its activity, or its being operative" (p. 1120). But Edwards' commentary on James 2:14–16 was his fullest statement on the issue. He identified three errors the apostle James opposed: equating doctrinal assent to justifying faith, failing to understand "the working nature of faith," and confusing the "first justification" at conversion when one becomes righteous with the "second justification" at judgment when one is proved righteous (p. 1171). The working or active nature of the Christian life is expressed as love, which Edwards declared to be "the nature and essence of saving faith" (p. 1173). He affirmed much the same in his summary judgment on James 2:20: "The apostle Paul, as well as James, held good works to be essential to true faith" (p. 1172).

In an extended commentary on the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit described in Galatians 5:17, Edwards contrasted the "corrupt nature" and the "regenerate nature," the former belonging to the "animal state" of human nature and the latter a "spiritual principle," "supernatural," and "no part of human nature." In the "primitive state," the latter was subordinate to the Spirit; therefore the two did not war against each other. Following the Fall, the animal state prevailed because the Spirit of God departed, leaving only the flesh. Humans became "wholly carnal" and "wholly corrupt," he wrote. When a person subsequently becomes "regenerate," the Spirit is restored to a degree, but not to the point where the flesh is "absolutely and perfectly subject and subordinate." For this reason, therefore, at present the human nature, or flesh, lusts against the regenerate nature, or Spirit. But in the future, Edwards stated, "at the resurrection," the body will be "raised a spiritual body," with all its "faculties and properties… directly suited and subservient to the purposes of the Spirit" (pp. 1085–90).

Edwards devoted a number of entries to an exploration of the "unpardonable sin," which he equated with the "sin against the Holy Ghost." Speaking of Saul's early activities as a persecutor of Christians, Edwards concluded that Saul (who became Paul) had no doubt reviled the Spirit of God, which first had been poured out on the early Christians "in so remarkable a manner" on Pentecost. If Saul had not acted in ignorance and unbelief, "it would have been the unpardonable sin" (p. 1126). Edwards described the contrasting situation in his comments on the book of Hebrews, where he discussed those whom the Apostle describes as having been "enlightened," who "received the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost," including the laying on of hands. Those Christians who then "apostatized, and renounced Christianity," and rejoined the Jews, and became "malignant, spiteful enemies to Christ and all Christians," were guilty of "the sin against the Holy Ghost" (p. 1145). Therefore the unpardonable sin for Edwards was defined as willful apostasy and transgression after "coming to 'the knowledge of the truth'" (p. 1154).
The Pauline epistles were the occasion for Edwards to comment on the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. He interpreted the apostle Paul's analogy between baptism and burial so as to refute the Anabaptist argument for immersion, or being "plunged [into an]d covered with water." Edwards maintained that the Greek συνθάπτω signified only a funeral, or being "entombed, or put into a sepulcher," not "being covered over" (p. 1001). One of the few times in the "Blank Bible" that Edwards addressed the topic of the Lord's Supper occurs in a series of entries on 1 Corinthians 11. He contextualized his observations by noting that "in the primitive church the Lord's Supper was made use of, partly as a feast of charity, to feed the poor and satisfy the hungry," a function that represented well the idea that the gospel feast was intended "for the poorest and meanest." But in the Corinthian church the poor were turned away because they were unable to share the cost of the meal, a practice the Apostle condemned (p. 1050). For that reason Paul instructed the Corinthians to "keep the ordinances" as they had been delivered to them (p. 1050). Edwards judged that "by the bread and wine is represented Christ's body and blood, bruised and spilt in death." Therefore those who condemned and profaned "these signs" were signaling a consent to slighting "the thing signified, viz. the body of Christ, and the crucifying of it," and thereby consenting to his crucifixion. Edwards contrasted "two ways of eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ." One is as "murderers of Christ," and the other is as "true disciples and worthy partakers" (pp. 1050–51). The Apostle warned his readers to conform to "the institution of Christ" rather than follow patterns used in "heathen rites" and "Jewish festivals" (p. 1051). Unworthy eating and drinking, he wrote, leads to "God's judgment and condemnation." Worthy eating and drinking results in "justification and life" (pp. 1051–52).3

The Epistles provided Edwards with polemical materials he employed against a variety of theological opponents. He saw parallels, for example, between those whom the apostle James denounced as perverting "the doctrine of Christian liberty" and unnamed and unidentified "antinomians" in his own day (p. 1169).4 Edwards declared that the enemies of Christ, including "Antichrist, and Mahometanism, and heathenism," would be subdued "before the resurrection and last day," before Christ completes his work "in his mediatorial kingdom" (pp. 1061–62). Of the opponents enumerated by Edwards as enemies of Christ, it is the "Papists" who receive the most attention. He compares them to the Pharisees in his comments on Galatians 6:13, asserting that they did not "care whether they turn men to holiness of life or no, if they can but bring 'em visibly to be of their party, and to comply with what is outward in their religion" (p. 1091). In his comment on 2 Thessalonians 2:4, he noted Philip Doddridge's description of the Pope's setting himself up as God to be "adored" by "his parasites," who "give him divine titles, in some of their licensed authorized works" (p. 1123). Edwards also equated the "spirit of Antichrist" identified in 1 John 4:3 with the Pope, and he sought to document that judgment by reference to the History of Popery, by Henry Care (1648–88), a political writer caught up in the religious controversies in England (p. 1196).5 Edwards found support throughout the Epistles for his own strong polemical interests.

Sometimes Edwards' interpretation of the biblical text related directly to the circumstances of his day. He read, for example, the exhortation of the author of Hebrews as speaking to the problem
of lay exhorters during the awakenings. Commenting on Hebrews 10:25, which urges attending to regular worship and "exhorting one another daily," Edwards asserted that this text cannot be used as an "argument… in favor of lay-men's

public exhorting in the manner of many in these days." That responsibility is reserved for those who are "ordinary officers or pastors" or "extraordinary officers in the church" (pp. 1152–53).

Edwards' exegetical procedures included the regular use of a concordance. For instance, his comments on the meaning of the phrase in Romans 8:20, "made subject to vanity," draw on the volume by Alexander Cruden (1701–70). After an extended discussion of the ways in which all parts of the "visible creation" are the subject of sin through abuse by humans, Edwards commented on the situation of the church. The church is at present in a "suffering state… subjected to the sin and corruption of mankind." God allows this situation in the short run rather than disturb "the course of nature," even though the bondage is not willing. Sin and corruption, he asserted, are the meaning of "vanity," as is evident from "innumerable texts," listed in the concordance, in both the Old Testament and the New (pp. 1014–17).

But for Edwards words alone are not sufficient. Many of his entries are premised on a notion of the power of the Word of God. It was that power he attached to the assertion in Hebrews concerning the word "dividing the soul from the spirit" (Hebrews 4:12). He wrote, "The word in its powerful efficacy in mortification and conversion, emptying the soul of itself, and parting it from sin, and weaning it from the world, and bringing to a thorough self-denial or self-renunciation, does as it were cut the soul asunder" (p. 1143). It was that power he saw at work in the word of Scripture.

The Book of Revelation

Despite the fact that Edwards had a separate manuscript notebook devoted exclusively to the interpretation of the Apocalypse and numerous additional entries on it in his "Notes on Scripture" and "Miscellanies," the section on the book of Revelation in the "Blank Bible" is one of the largest, containing 282 separate entries. This book of the Bible was a lifelong preoccupation of Edwards; he never exhausted his interest in it. His entries on the Apocalypse in the "Blank Bible" range across technical matters, theological issues, polemical topics, and classic eschatological concerns. They are of a piece with entries in the three other manuscripts mentioned above.

Among the technical matters confronting virtually all commentators

on the Apocalypse of John are the authority, the canonicity, and the method of the book. Edwards devoted entry no. 291 in "Notes on Scripture" to a discussion of the church fathers who accepted the authority of the book. In the "Blank Bible," as a complement to that earlier entry, he cited Doddridge's judgment regarding the universal acceptance of the Apocalypse in the first
two centuries of the Christian era (p. 1203). On the canonical status of the book, Edwards cited Jeremiah Jones, who maintained that the existence of so many counterfeit apocalypses ascribed to other writers in the first centuries was evidence by indirection of the "great value and authority" attached to "some book that the Christian Catholic church had in possession under the name of the Revelation, or the Apocalypse" (p. 1203). In Edwards' eyes there was no ambiguity regarding the canonical status of the book. With respect to the method of the visions and prophecies" of Revelation, Edwards referenced his own earlier discussion in his "Notes on the Apocalypse" (p. 1204). There he wrote, "For the method of these visions is first, to give a more general representation of things, and then afterwards, a more distinct description of the particular changes and revolutions that are the subjects of them." In a similar vein, Edwards referenced his evaluation in the same manuscript of Moses Lowman's judgments concerning "synchronisms" in the book of Revelation, defined as "resumings of things before prophesied of more generally."

The theological issues that Edwards addressed in his commentary on the Apocalypse in the "Blank Bible" included specific reflections on the nature of God. He found evidence of a Trinitarian God in the rich symbolism of the text. For example, when commenting on the heavenly throne scene involving twenty-four elders in Revelation 4, he interpreted the "holy, holy, holy" proclaimed by the four beasts as signifying not only "God's superlative holiness," but also "the three persons in the Trinity" (p. 1213). Edwards' explanation of the "glory of God" lighting the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:23 was another occasion for comment on the trinitarian nature of God. He described God's glory as manifest under both testaments as well as "in the face of Jesus Christ," in both "heaven and the resurrection world." Edwards then explained that manifestation as follows: "The glory of God is compared to the sun, and is spoken of as rising as a sun (Isaiah 60:1). The visible bright disk of the sun is a natural image of the second person of the Trinity, as the substance of the sun is of the Father, and the heat and light of the Holy Ghost." This, he declared, referred to "one light," not more (pp. 1244–45). The same God, "Alpha and Omega," is "the beginning, and end, and the sum total, of all the things that are written of in this book" (p. 1204).

Polemical topics are the dominant element in the exposition of the book of Revelation. Consistent with comments elsewhere, Edwards identified the Church of Rome and the Pope as the enemies intended by the figures of the Antichrist, Babylon, and the beast. He filled the commentary with references to entries in his "Notes on the Apocalypse" confirming these associations, including, for example, the link between the "antichristian church" and Babylon (p. 1230). He identified the Church of Rome with she who "sits on seven mountains." He took note of diverse explanations for the "number of the beast," including the judgment of Irenaeus (c. 130–c. 200) that 666 was contained in and signified by Latinos, and the calculation of Isaac Newton (1642–1727) that the numerical values of the letters of λατεινος and רומײה, identifying "the man of Latium, or of Rome," total 666 (p. 1229). Similarly, Edwards interpreted the inscription "Mysterium" on the Pope's mitre as evidence that the Church of Rome was the "mother of idolatry" responsible for the spread of "superstition and false worship" (p. 1235).
Edwards discovered references to other antichristian elements he associated with Roman Catholicism in the Apocalypse. He linked, for example, multiple historical events to the slaying of the witnesses in Revelation 11:7, including "the death of Andrew Pallicka, the last Bohemian martyr," "the victory of Charles V over the Protestants" in 1547, and the killing of Protestants in England by Queen Mary (p. 1222). He declared that the images of the crucified Christ displayed in Roman churches were signs of Catholics "from age to age crucifying him afresh" (p. 1223). Citing Doddridge, Edwards condemned the worship directed "to the saints and angels" in "Romish ritual" (p. 1227). To the list of institutions and practices he condemned, he added "canon law" and religious orders, especially the Jesuits, whom he linked to the "image of the beast" (p. 1227). He also denounced Roman Catholic sacraments, describing them as "superstitious and idolatrous rites" associated with the beast (p. 1228). He equated the "merchants of the earth" in Revelation 18:3 with the "clergy or teachers" of spiritual Babylon (p. 1236). Virtually no aspect of the Catholic church—its hierarchy, institutions, personnel, and rituals—escaped Edwards' condemnation. He was heir to the content of Reformation and post-Reformation religious polemics. The eighteenth-century colonial world he inhabited also fueled these traditional animosities, adding political, imperial, and cultural conflict to the anti-Catholic mix for fervent Protestants such as Edwards.3

The polemical topics that occupied so much of Edwards' attention in his commentary relate directly to classic eschatological concerns for which the book of Revelation was the primary source. He was confident that the Apocalypse foretold "a terrible destruction of Papists at the time of the downfall of Antichrist," an overthrow to be accomplished by "spiritual weapons" (p. 1227). However, "the precise time of Antichrist's fall" will not be known until it is accomplished (p. 1218). Although in his judgment there was no ambiguity about the final outcome of the conflict between the church and her enemies, the time of that deliverance had been shut up and sealed (pp. 1218–19).

Following the fall of mystical Babylon and the execution of God's wrath upon the enemies of the church, according to Edwards, the saints will live and reign with Christ in his kingdom, enjoying prosperity and happiness on earth (pp. 1230–31). In an entry on Revelation 20:2, Edwards referenced ten separate entries in his "Notes on the Apocalypse" dealing with the time when the millennium or "thousand years" might begin (p. 1240). Subsequent to the earthly millennial kingdom will be "the end of the world," when God shall have finished writing the scroll. "In this writing God is Alpha and Omega," proclaimed Edwards, "the first and last letter in the alphabet" (pp. 1214–15).

Edwards' commentary on the last book of the Bible is the clearest reflection of the conflicted religious world he inhabited, a post-Reformation Christianity divided between diverse Protestants and Roman Catholics. He inherited an intense polemical spirit from earlier generations of Reformed thinkers and the English Puritans, both of whom denounced Roman Catholicism in absolute terms as antichristian. But he also nurtured and cultivated that hostility throughout his career, supporting his enmity with exegetical arguments.
As an exegete, Edwards approached the whole of the Bible as a Christian document. He often interpreted the Old Testament by means of typology, declaring it an anticipation of events and details in the life of Christ and of the church. In the biblical text he also found prescriptions for both his personal and professional life. For him the heart of the scriptures was the Gospel accounts of the life and death of Christ. They, in turn, became the grounds for gathering the faithful into the church, a community of believers who were likely to encounter hardship and conflict as well as peace and prosperity before the end of the ages.


8. See, for example, Brown, Jonathan Edwards and the Bible, pp. xvii–xviii.  

9. For an instructive set of essays dealing with the impact of Christian Hebraism in early America, see Shalom Goldman, ed., Hebrew and the Bible in America: The First Two Centuries (Hanover, N. H., Univ. Press of New England, 1993). Goldman's summary judgment reads, "In both Europe and America, Christian Hebraism was an attempt to claim the heritage of Israel for Christianity" (p. xii).  

1. JE was confirmed in his reading of Elohim as designating "a plurality of persons in the Godhead" by his reading of Arthur Bedford, The Scripture Chronology Demonstrated by Astronomical Calculations, and also by the Year of Jubilee, and the Sabbatical Year among the Jews: or, An Account of Time, from the Creation of the World, to the Destruction of Jerusalem; as it may be proved from the Writings of the Old and New Testament (London, 1730). See JE's entry on Genesis 3:22 (pp. 139–40).  

2. See nos. 193 and 473, Works, 15, 106–8 and 569–71. See also other references to Moses' rod cited in the index to ibid.  

3. Gale, The Court of the Gentiles: Or A Discourse touching the Original of Human Literature, both Philologie and Philosophie, From the Scripture & Jewish Church (2nd ed., 4 vols, in 2, Oxford, 1672–78); Grotius, The Truth of the Christian Religion in Six Books by Hugo Grotius, Corrected and Illustrated by Mr. Le Clerc. To which is added a Seventh Book Concerning this Question, What Christian Church we ought to join our selves to; By the said Mr. Le Clerc. The Second Edition with Additions. Done into English by John Clarke, D.D. and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty (London, 1719); Poole, Synopsis Criticorum; and Kidder, A Demonstration of the Messias. In which the Truth of the Christian Religion is Proved, against all
the Enemies thereof; But especially against the Jews. In Three Parts (2nd ed. corr., London, 1726).


6. See Works, 15, 2, n. 7.

7. Scripture Chronology, p. 535.

8. For JE's extended commentary on the drying up of the River Euphrates by the sixth vial, see Works, 5, 140, 147, 184–91, 200–201, 208–10, and 298–305.


1. See Works, 15, 60.


3. JE wrote, "In the Book of Psalms in general, the Psalmist speaks either in the name of Christ or in the name of the church. And this is to be observed concerning a very great part of this book" ("Miscellanies," no. 1068, "Supplement to Prophecies of the Messiah," [MS, Andover coll.], p. 1).


5. Philip Greven concludes from very limited descriptions of the child-rearing practices in the Edwards household that "corporal punishments began in infancy, and thus pain was encountered" early in life (Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 20–21.

6. It is tempting to contextualize this maxim within the ecclesiastical conflicts that JE experienced with the Williams clan, who were his "brothers" by marriage, members of his extended family.

7. JE's observation regarding the possibility of an adulterous maid being discovered relates to the likelihood of a pregnancy. The fact that he offered the observation perhaps suggests the frequency of the problem in New England society.

8. For centuries Jewish and Christian commentators have interpreted Canticles allegorically, the former declaring it a tale of love between Yahweh and Israel, the latter between Christ and the church. Origen, Jerome, Athanasius, and Augustine were some of the earliest prominent commentators. Later interpreters included Bernard of Clairvaux and Martin Luther as well as the Puritans Richard Sibbs and John Cotton. The rich erotic imagery in the text invited more than one level of interpretation.

9. See Wallace E. Anderson's helpful discussion of the juxtaposition of the literal and historical interpretations of Scripture which existed side by side with the prophetic, typological and allegorical interpretations of Scripture in eighteenth-century New England (Works, 11, 4–6). See also JE's early definition of "types" as "lively pictures of the things of the gospel," in "Miscellanies," no. 119 (Works, 13, 284).
1. On "leading strings," see Works, 15, 28, 278.

2. For more on "the love of benevolence," see JE's Charity and Its Fruits, Works, 8, 212–13. For a discussion of the contrast between "love of complacence" and "love of benevolence," see Paul Ramsey's Introduction to ibid., especially pp. 51 and 73.

3. The diverse handwriting and the scattered locations of JE's entries on the Lord's Supper and its interpretation suggest that he wrote reflections on the sacrament over a period of years, not simply in one concentrated time.

4. JE equated "enthusiasts" in his time with a variety of sectarian groups and figures in both Europe and America in the period following the Reformation. See Religious Affections (Works, 2, 287).

5. Care, The History of Popery: With such Alternations of Phrase, as may be more suitable to the Taste of the Age; and such Additions, as may Improve the History, Strengthen the Argument, and better Accommodate it to the present State of Popery in Great-Britain. By Several Gentlemen (2 vols. London, 1735–36).


7. See "Notes on the Apocalypse" (Works, 5, 1–305).

8. See Works, 15, 249–51.

9. Jones, A New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament. Wherein All the antient Testimonies concerning this Argument are produced; the several Apocryphal Books, which have been thought canonical by any Writers, collected, with an English Translation of each of them; together with a particular Proof that none of them were ever admitted into the Canon, and a full Answer to those, who have endeavoured to recommend them as such (3 vols. London, 1726–27).

1. Works, 5, 106.

2. Ibid., 251–52.

3. For more details on the ways in which JE's lifelong animosity toward Roman Catholicism was expressed, see "Notes on the Apocalypse" and "Humble Attempt" (Works, 5, 95–436). See also JE's early defense of the link between the Church of Rome and the Antichrist in "Miscellanies," no. hh (Works, 13, 185–86).

Edwards' Sources

Between 1730 and 1758 Edwards cited 109 different publications in the "Blank Bible," many of which consisted of multiple volumes. Some of the volumes he possessed in his own library; others he may have borrowed from friends or colleagues, from his father Timothy, or from the library of the Hampshire Association of Ministers. The large number of entries in the interleaved Bible that cite published sources is dramatic evidence of the significance of Edwards' reading in his program of biblical studies. In some instances Edwards quoted the authors' interpretations and judgments verbatim, in others he summarized their views, and in still other cases he simply recorded the bibliographical information that identified the location of the specific materials that interested him.
In the interleaved Bible, the three most significant authors for Edwards in terms of the sheer number of citations are the three synoptic commentators mentioned above, Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, and Philip Doddridge. Table 2 provides a summary of the number of Edwards' references to these three commentators in the respective sections of the Bible. In some books of the Bible it is apparent that he worked systematically through the biblical text with one or another of these sources directly at hand. Each of these authors requires special comment because of the prominence they occupy in the "Blank Bible."

Matthew Poole

Table 2. Citations of Synoptic Commentators in the "Blank Bible"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poole</th>
<th>Henry</th>
<th>Doddridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pentateuch</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Books</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom Literature</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophets</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospels &amp; Acts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apocalypse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Matthew Poole, the earliest of the three, was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge University. During the English Civil War, he sided with the parliamentary presbyterian party and served as the minister in St. Michael-le-Querne rectory in London. After the restoration of the monarchy and the passage of the Act of Uniformity of 1662, he left the ministry and within a few years began work on the *Synopsis Criticorum aliorumque Sacrae Scripturæ Interpretum*. The first edition of this huge commentary appeared in five folios between 1669 and 1676. A remarkable compilation of materials in Latin bearing on the interpretation of the entire Bible, the *Synopsis Criticorum*, which Edwards referenced most frequently by the abbreviation "SSS," had gone through five editions by the second decade of the eighteenth century. The citations by Edwards correspond to pagination in the London and Utrecht editions. Poole's volumes were noted for the range of the materials included, which was not limited to Protestant commentators, and for the succinct character of his observations. Following completion of the *Synopsis Criticorum*, Poole began a series of biblical annotations in English, which was completed by others after his death and published in two volumes, a work apparently owned by Edwards' father Timothy. A vigorous opponent of Roman Catholicism, Poole published several anti-Catholic tracts, one of which was entitled *The Nullity of the Romish Faith.*

In the "Blank Bible," Edwards cited the *Synopsis Criticorum* 792 times, by far the largest number of citations to any one source. But these are not uniformly distributed over the entire
Bible. All but nineteen of the citations occur in the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, or the Wisdom Literature. Edwards obviously spent concentrated periods of time with Poole's volumes in hand, studying and writing commentary on these sections of the Bible.

Most of the references to the Synopsis Criticorum are citations consisting merely of the abbreviation "SSS" written on the margins of the small printed Bible adjacent to a given text, or the same abbreviation with a single canonical reference or multiple references written on the interleaved foolscap pages. A few of the references include an additional annotation pointing to the marginal markings in Edwards' own copy of the Synopsis Criticorum, implying ownership or possession of the same. Since his copy of Poole has not been found, the precise location of his marks remains uncertain, though it is usually not difficult to identify the passage he intended.

Edwards' use of the abbreviation "SSS" in different ways is illustrated in his entries on Genesis 30 (p. 178). In the margin of the KJV at verse 14 he wrote, "+SSS." In the printed text of verse 14 preceding the word mandrakes is "+." Edwards' intention is to flag Poole's comments on the phrase "mandrakes in the field." In the margin adjacent to verse 39 is "v 39 SSS." This notation signals an intention to consult Poole on Genesis 30:39. Edwards' more discursive uses of Poole are illustrated in some entries on the book of Judges. His entry on Judges 10:6 points to Poole as a source for "the reason why the children of Israel were so prone to idolatry" (p. 334). Edwards' entry on Judges 11:39 references Poole's discussion of "fables of the heathen" derived from the story of Jephthah's offering his daughter as a sacrifice (p. 334). An example of a more integral discussion of a citation from Poole occurs in Edwards' comments on Canticles 4:8 where he draws on Poole's christological interpretation of the Song of Solomon in which Christ "invites his spouse away from sin and the world," symbolized by the wilderness, to a "pleasant and delightful" abode (pp. 620–21).

Edwards' heavy citation of Poole is evidence of his high regard for the Synopsis Criticorum. But because the majority of his references to Poole include no indication of the particular content that stimulated his interest, it is often impossible to identify the specific reason for the references. There are, however, enough unambiguous citations to Poole to give an indication of the kinds of materials that typically drew Edwards' attention. The entry on Genesis 1:1, for example, includes, "See reasons why we should suppose that the world was created in September, SSS on Exodus 12:2" (p. 121). Poole's commentary on that Exodus passage discusses ancient times for the beginning of the year. Edwards' entry on Exodus 12:14 is a translation of Poole's Latin citation drawn from Peter Martyr (1499–1562), "Et in eadem die, videlicet quintadecima die mensis Nisan, (scil. Martii,) redimendus est Israel in diebus Messiæ" (pp. 220–21). The "Blank Bible" entry on Leviticus 4-6 references Poole's account of the difference between the Latin peccatum, which is a fault or error of commission, and delictum, which is a fault or error of omission (p. 251), a technical discussion that draws on a variety of authors including Josephus and Philo. Josephus is also a point of reference in Edwards' citation of Poole at Numbers 11:31, where the question involves reconciling two different accounts of the direction from which the winds brought the quail that fed the Israelites in the desert (p. 264). Edwards turned to Poole for technical, historical, cultural, and linguistic information related to the biblical texts. By this
means also he gained access to the large number of documentary sources on which Poole based much of the *Synopsis Criticorum.*

Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry, the son of a Nonconformist divine who was ejected from his parish by the Act of Uniformity, was educated at the Islington Academy. He subsequently studied law at Gray's Inn before beginning to preach in private homes. After being invited to settle as a minister in Chester in 1687, he was ordained privately, serving as a Presbyterian minister in Chester from 1687 to 1712. While caring for his congregation and several others in nearby areas, he pursued a variety of writing projects, the most notable of which was his *Exposition of the Old and New Testament,* begun in 1704. Five volumes dealing with the Old Testament and the Gospels were published before his death. Colleagues completed a sixth volume, adding materials on the Epistles and the book of Revelation to Henry's draft text on Acts. The *Exposition,* described as both practical and devotional, reflects the pastoral context in which Henry found himself and the demands he faced weekly for expository preaching. His other publications, which include a catechism, a collection of hymns, and sermons, were also nurtured by this vocational context.

In the interleaved Bible, Edwards cited Henry's *Exposition* a total of 205 times, all but one reference being to the Old Testament. By contrast with the use that he made of the *Synopsis Criticorum,* the majority of the entries based on Henry are not merely bibliographical references. Edwards used the *Exposition* as a major resource for his understanding of the Old Testament. He copied verbatim from Henry a large number of citations, entries which range across a variety of interpretive issues. Edwards, for example, quoted at length Henry's explanation of the curses pronounced by Moses as impending on the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 28:45–68, linking them sequentially to the Babylonian captivity, the conquest by the Romans, and the forced worship of images "put upon the Jews in popish countries" (pp. 301–3). He copied Henry's comment on 2 Kings 4:23 dealing with the Israelites' resorting to "private meetings at the prophets' houses" when they had no safe access to the temple or altar, an obvious model for persons who found themselves in a Dissenting or Nonconformist position (p. 393). Edwards culled from Henry a variety of moral injunctions and pious sayings that he recorded in the "Blank Bible." With respect to the warning in Proverbs 6:29 against adultery, for example, he quoted Henry's counsel, "The fire of lust kindles the fire of hell" (p. 544). Edwards copied from Henry another such proverb stated by the Wise Man: "They that contrive to live comfortably and plentifully at home are to be preferred to those that affect to appear splendid abroad" (p. 552).

Henry's *Exposition* frequently underscored the pastoral or devotional side to the biblical text, a feature of his work that was attractive to Edwards. Like Edwards, he read the Old Testament as containing explicitly Christian references. The "rod" and "branch" in Isaiah 11:1, which Henry equated with a "weak" and "small" twig, Edwards interpreted as a reference to Christ's "humility" and mean "outward appearance" (p. 643). The reference in Isaiah 31:5 to God's preservation of Jerusalem by "passing
Edwards read this passage and Henry's exposition of it as also referring to the future deliverance of the "Christian church" (p. 663). Edwards recorded Henry's judgment that Isaiah 40-66 "were designed for a prophetical summary of the New Testament" (p. 692). The pastoral side of Edwards' appropriation of Henry is evident in an entry on Jeremiah 33:20–21 where he noted Henry's statement that even though the situation of the church may be "clouded" by adversity, corruption, and persecution, yet in time it will "recover its luster" (p. 721). Edwards found much in Henry's commentary that he could use in his ministry. The two shared a practical approach to the interpretation of the Bible.

Philip Doddridge

Philip Doddridge, the third synoptic commentator whose work Edwards knew well, was Edwards' virtual contemporary. Like Henry, Doddridge was a Nonconformist divine. Educated in Dissenting academies, by 1722 he had begun preaching; a year later he began ministering to a congregation at Kibworth, England. By late 1729, after several other appointments, he relocated to Northampton, where he led an academy and served a Dissenting congregation. In his ministry Doddridge attempted to forge a broad coalition, reaching out to Calvinists, evangelicals, and even Anglicans. He worked on behalf of the cause of education, charity schools, and foreign missions. He was a prolific writer of hymns. But it was primarily through The Family Expositor: Or, A Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament, a six-volume commentary on the New Testament published between 1739 and 1756, and described as a didactic commentary, that Edwards engaged Doddridge's exegetical ideas. The sixth and final volume of the commentary appeared posthumously. Doddridge's other published works ranged across the full spectrum of ministerial activities and occasions.

Edwards cited the Family Expositor extensively in the "Blank Bible." The number of references to Doddridge is second only to those to Poole. But his engagement with Doddridge is more explicit in content than his use of Poole. Most of the 303 references to Doddridge—all but six of which occur in the context of the New Testament—are substantive notes or entries rather than simple references. For example, when explaining the physical punishment doled out to the wicked servant in Matthew 18:34, Edwards took note of the information Doddridge supplied about the cruel nature of imprisonment "in the Eastern parts of the world" (p. 857). In his entry on 1 Corinthians 10:20, he observed closely Doddridge's citation of various sources on sacrifices and rituals, including the Dutch commentator Jakob Eisner (1692–1750) and the Jewish medieval philosopher Maimonides (1135–1204) (p. 1047). Edwards frequently recorded alternative translations of biblical texts proposed by Doddridge. A case in point is a phrase in Galatians 4:12, which Doddridge rendered "I was as ye are," rather than "I am as ye are," the translation in the KJV (p. 1084). He often found Doddridge's religious perspective compatible with his own views. In commenting on 2 Thessalonians 2:4, for example, he quoted Doddridge's description of the Pope sitting "on a high throne" on festival days in order
to be "adored" by "his parasites," who "boast that he is God" (p. 1123). Edwards also quoted at length Doddridge's discussion of the canonical authority of the book of Revelation (p. 1203).

Edwards made heavy use of Doddridge's commentary in his interpretation of several Pauline epistles. There are, for example, eight references to the Family Expositor in the section of the "Blank Bible" dealing with Ephesians. Collectively, these references illustrate the variety of ways Edwards used Doddridge. Three of Edwards' entries focus on the translation of the Greek text. Doddridge rendered the phrase ἀθεοὶ ἐν κόσμῳ in Ephesians 2:12, as "atheists in the world"; he translated the particle ἐπὶ in Ephesians 6:16, as "upon" rather than "above," as it appears in the KJV. In the former instance, Doddridge cited Daniel Whitby (1638–1726), a prominent Anglican divine and commentator, in support of his translation; in the latter, he argued that the logic of a shield required this translation. Edwards' entry from Doddridge on Ephesians 6:12 quotes John Locke's paraphrase of τὰ πνευματικά τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουράνιοις, translated as "the spiritual managers of the opposition to the kingdom of God" (p. 1105).

Syntax was another topic of attention. In his entry on Ephesians 2:1, Edwards took note of Doddridge's observation concerning Paul's use of a "very long parenthesis" in the midst of a sentence (p. 1096). Two citations from Doddridge on Ephesians deal with ancient cultural practices. The metaphor of "sealing" in Ephesians 4:30 Doddridge linked to the commercial practice by which merchants marked their ownership of commodities (p. 1102). Doddridge associated the allusion to Christ's cleansing the church by the "washing of water by the word" in Ephesians 5:26 with the purification of virgins before they were presented to the king "in Eastern countries" (p. 1104). Edwards also recorded Doddridge's explanation of Ephesians 2:13, which hinged on an understanding of the ancient ceremonial law of the Jews (pp. 1097–98). The longest entry from Doddridge in the section on Ephesians, a note on Ephesians 2:19, combines concern with the translation of several terms, allusions to the privileges of Jewish proselytes, reference to the activities of the Jewish priests in the temple, and the "great intimacy" Christians have with God as members of his "household" (p. 1099). The Family Expositor was a major resource for Edwards in his understanding and interpretation of the New Testament.

Other Sources

During the years of his ministry, Edwards became acquainted with a variety of commentators who focused their attention exclusively on one particular book of the Bible or another. He referred to two volumes he owned on the book of Hebrews written by John Owen (1616–83), a Puritan divine and one-time, short-term member of Parliament under Cromwell.3 His references to Owen are brief and point to the marked margins of his own copies of the volumes. The references address a variety of issues, ranging from matters of translation to concerns involving ancient culture and theological interpretation. Among Edwards' entries on the epistle of James are three references to the commentary on the epistle by Thomas Manton (1620–77), a Presbyterian who took part in the Westminster Assembly but also worked unsuccessfully for reconciliation after the Restoration.4 In his comments on the book of Romans, Edwards referred a dozen times to the commentary on that epistle by John Taylor (1694–1761), an English
Dissenting divine and noted Hebrew scholar. Edwards' citation of this work may seem surprising since he regarded Taylor as the major theological opponent in his treatise on *Original Sin*. Taylor's work on that topic, which moved away from Dissenting orthodoxy, represented an attack on the foundations of Calvinism.

Edwards' entries from Taylor's commentary on Romans, however, are not negative. In the section in the "Blank Bible" on the book of Revelation, Edwards has sixteen references to the commentary by Moses Lowman (1680–1752). Lowman, who studied at the University of Leyden before assuming responsibilities as a Presbyterian minister in Clapham, England, a position he held for more than four decades, exercised a major influence on Edwards' interpretation of the Apocalypse. This is evident in Edwards' private notebooks, his published works, and the "Blank Bible." Edwards studied Lowman's volume carefully shortly after its publication in 1737, an investment documented in his "Extracts from Lowman" recorded in "Notes on the Apocalypse." A majority of the references to Lowman in the "Blank Bible" point back to those "Extracts."

Perhaps the most prominent author to be cited in the "Blank Bible" is John Locke (1632–1704), the British philosopher whose *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690) Perry Miller declared a pivotal intellectual influence on the young Edwards. Miller, however, did not appear to be aware of or interested in the fact that Edwards cited extensively from Locke's commentaries on the epistles of Paul in his biblical notebooks. These commentaries, written by Locke in his last years, were published posthumously. The citations by Edwards occur without apparent caveat regarding the role that Locke ascribed to reason in the interpretation of Scripture. Edwards found Locke's notes, which he frequently cited verbatim, highly instructive.

In his study of Scripture, Edwards continually sought aids to assist with the task of translating and interpreting the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old and New Testament. The "Blank Bible" documents his pursuit and use of lexicons, concordances, and dictionaries. Among the concordances he utilized at different times were well-established volumes by such distinguished scholars as Johann Buxtorf (1564–1629) and Abraham Trommius (1633–1719). Buxtorf, an Orientalist and student of rabbincs who taught at the University of Basel, was well-known for his defense of the Hebrew text as superior to the Vulgate and the Septuagint. Edwards took note of the Dutch scholar Trommius's Greek concordance because it was mentioned positively by Alexander Cruden (1701–70), a Scot who migrated to London and worked as a proofreader before publishing a biblical concordance himself. Edwards' annotation in the "Catalogue" noted that Cruden's volume, which he also cited in the "Blank Bible," was "said to be more useful than any book of this kind hitherto published." Additional concordances noted in the "Catalogue" include volumes by Erasmus Schmid (1570–1637) and Christian Nold (1626–83). Edwards also made use of the "dictionary" published by Thomas Wilson (1563–1622), an Anglican divine who
ministered at Canterbury. His publication was one of the earliest attempts at a concordance of the English Bible.

Edwards watched for the appearance of new resources. One such item was The Hebrew Concordance, Adapted to the English Bible; Disposed after the Manner of Buxtorf, by John Taylor, the same John Taylor whose other works Edwards knew well. Edwards profited from consulting general dictionaries, including the Cyclopaedia by Ephraim Chambers (c. 1680–1740). He used Chambers, for example, to identify the proper color of the sapphire stone mentioned in Exodus 24:10; from the description of that color he then derived a typological link to the heavenly sphere (p. 240).

We know that Edwards acquired Chambers' volumes no earlier than late summer 1737, for in August of that year he wrote a Boston merchant requesting that he secure the publication for him from England.

Edwards also sought works that addressed issues of geography and chronology in his effort to understand and interpret the biblical text. In the "Blank Bible," for example, he has references to two volumes by Edward Wells (1667–1727), an Anglican divine and geographer whose publications relating to the two Testaments were valuable aids to him. Edwards also consulted the work of Herman Moll (d. 1732), a Dutch mapmaker and geographer who came to London near the end of the seventeenth century. In one instance he drew upon Moll's description of the height of a palm tree in his interpretation of the spouse in Canticles (p. 625). Biblical exegesis often intersected with the study of the chronology of the ancient world. Chronology was a preoccupation of many writers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Edwards was especially beholden to the work of Arthur Bedford (1668–1745), an Anglican divine who served as chaplain to the Prince of Wales. In his Scripture Chronology, Bedford defended the reliability and authority of the biblical record against a growing number of critics. Edwards learned of Bedford's volume while reading an issue of the Republick of Letters.

In the world of eighteenth-century biblical scholarship, chronology and history were close companions. Authors who published on one or the other topic often viewed the two as related. Edwards spent a lifetime reading books on history as part of his study of Scripture. The historical works he cited in the "Blank Bible" range across human history from ancient times to his own century. He sought historical information on the ancient world, biblical Israel, early Christianity, the Christian church in the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church in the modern period, and contemporary religious developments in America and the rest of the world. And he was successful in securing publications that addressed most of these topics.

Among the historians Edwards cited in the "Blank Bible" was Henry Winder (1693–1752), a Dissenting divine who served congregations in
Liverpool and wrote on the history of the Bible. One example of Edwards' use of Winder involved citations from a variety of ancient sources, including the works of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (37–95) and the Roman writer Varro (116–27 B.C.E.), in an attempt to understand the judgment in Genesis 5 that ancients lived nearly a thousand years (p. 144). Samuel Shuckford (c. 1694–1754), an Anglican, was another contemporary of Edwards whose work focused on both sacred and secular history between the time of creation and the end of the Jewish kingdoms. On one occasion Edwards cited Shuckford's comment regarding the role of hunting in training the potential leaders in ancient Persia (p. 153). Edwards read closely the historical work of Humphrey Prideaux (1648–1724), an Anglican who achieved prominence in the realm of both scholarship and the established church's hierarchy, rising to the position of Dean of Norwich in 1702. In his publications Prideaux defended Anglican orders, attacked the deists, and attempted to resolve chronological difficulties in biblical history, focusing his attention especially on the transitional period between the two Testaments. Edwards cited Prideaux's *Connection* seventy-one times in the "Blank Bible." He may have learned of this work through Cotton Mather's *Manuductio*, which recommended it as occasional reading.

Edwards turned to the work of William Reading (1674–1744), an Anglican and the librarian at Sion College, for details related to the early life of Christ. In one instance Edwards took note of the tradition conveyed by Eusebius (c. 260–c. 340) and others that when the infant Jesus was carried into a temple in Egypt, all the idols fell down (p. 649). Another historian Edwards cited was Nathaniel Lardner (1684–1768), a Nonconforming divine trained on the continent who gained a reputation as a conservative Christian apologist. His principal work set out to confirm the reliability of the internal evidence for the historical character of the New Testament. In his work Lardner addressed a range of issues related to dating and authorship. Lardner also used history to support his belief in trinitarianism and the miraculous. On one occasion Edwards quoted from Lardner the description of a heretic derived from the third-century church father Cyprian (d. 258) (p. 1135). Edwards turned to the volumes of the historian Robert Millar (d. 1752) for information bearing on the expansion of Christianity in the period after the New Testament. One reference by Edwards to Millar points to a discussion of pagan practices involving processions, images, and feasts in different cultures, including ancient Israel (p. 794).

There are other kinds of historical resources in the "Blank Bible." Edwards cited several historians whose works are narrowly defined. He referred, for example, to historical studies of the Jews, infant baptism, and the papacy. He has references to ancient writers, both pagan and Christian. Several historical sources that Edwards turned to frequently in the "Blank Bible" defy easy categorization. For example, *The Court of the Gentiles*, by Theophilus Gale (1628–78), an English Nonconformist divine and scholar, provided Edwards with information on a wide variety of topics related to the ancient world and especially to religious traditions in those times. One such reference contains a pagan account of creation involving the emergence of the universe out of chaos (pp. 124–25). Another
such work that does not classify easily is *The Divine Legation of Moses*, by William Warburton (1698–1779), an Anglican divine who became the Bishop of Gloucester in 1759. Warburton's career brought both prominence and controversy. He supported both the Anglican establishment and toleration of Dissenters and defended Mosaic law against criticisms from the deists. Late in his career he attacked the enthusiasm of Methodism. One example of Edwards' use of Warburton involves the latter's suggestion that God taught Adam to speak by directing him to name the animals (p. 134).

There are several works cited in the "Blank Bible" that reflect specific interpretive interests of Edwards. Typology, an interpretive method that linked the Old and New Testaments by the identification of "types" in the former and "antitypes" or fulfillments in the latter, was a lifelong concern for him and an approach he used repeatedly to understand and interpret biblical texts and to apply them to the world he knew firsthand. His commentary "Notes on Scripture" also illustrates the centrality of this interpretive approach for him. His notebook on "Types" is even more striking evidence of the same. In the "Blank Bible" Edwards cited *The Figures and Types of the Old Testament*, by Samuel Mather (1626–71), an English Nonconforming divine.

Issues related to the canonicity of the books in the New Testament were also a concern of Edwards. He turned to the work of the Welsh minister and biblical scholar Jeremiah Jones (1693–1724) for historical details on the reception of the biblical writings in the early Christian church. Prophecy and its relationship to eschatology were additional issues of primary interest to Edwards over many years. Among the sources addressing those concerns directly was *The Use and Intent of Prophecy*, by Thomas Sherlock (1678–1761), an Anglican educator and subsequently a bishop in various dioceses, including London, beginning in 1748.

Another publication Edwards consulted dealing with some of the same eschatological concerns was written by Samuel Collett. Apologetics was also a category much in use in Edwards' day as theologians defended their views against opponents.
Edwards' commentary was never far removed from life circumstances or the application of biblical ideas and principles to life situations. It is not surprising, therefore, that among his sources in the "Blank Bible" are individual sermons and collections of sermons by contemporaries or distinguished preachers. The close association between exegesis and preaching was a given in Protestant theology. There are also works cited in the interleaved Bible that might be described as devotional or meditational, inviting personal contemplation and application of the biblical text to the Christian life.

Finally, among the sources cited by Edwards are a number of examples of collected works by distinguished authors. Such collections, usually leather-bound, multiple volumes in folio, are among the most impressive publications from the eighteenth century and earlier. Such collections offered diverse resources. In the "Blank Bible" Edwards cited the collected works of Isaac Barrow (1630–77), Joseph Mede (1586–1638), John Glas (1695–1773), Stephen Charnock (1628–80), John Lightfoot (1602–75), John Tillotson (1630–94), Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), Isaac Watts (1674–1748), John Locke, and John Owen. It is not difficult to imagine that Edwards may have contemplated that someday his own writings would appear in such an edition.

Three closing observations regarding the sources discussed above and others cited in the "Blank Bible" are appropriate. First, it is striking that the authors Edwards was reading did not belong exclusively to one religious party or faction but rather spanned a wide range of theological views, including Anglicans and Puritans, Calvinists and Arminians, evangelicals and free-thinkers—even Roman Catholics. He does not seem to have paid primary attention to religious affiliations. Second, it is remarkable that Edwards was able to gain physical access to such a diverse set of published materials, especially after he relocated from Northampton to Stockbridge, on the frontier of western Massachusetts. His success in securing these publications is relevant for the study of the diffusion of print culture in early America. Finally, despite the wealth of scholarship devoted to Edwards, the study of certain aspects of his religious thought is only beginning. This is certainly the case with respect to the exegetical dimension of his theology. The juxtaposition of newly edited texts in this edition with the sources he read makes possible a new round of research into the influence of particular authors on his interpretation and application of the Bible.


5. Works, 15, 127, n. 3.

6. Annotations upon the. Holy Bible. Wherein the sacred text is inserted, and various readings annex'd, together with the parallel Scriptures, the more difficult terms in each verse are

7. The Nullity of the Romish Faith. Or, A blow at the root of the Romish Church, being an examination of that fundamental doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning the Churches infallibility, and of all those several methods which their most famous and approved writers have used for the defence thereof (Oxford, 1666).


9. In the English context Nonconformity refers to the unwillingness to conform to the doctrinal positions and governmental processes of the established Anglican church. The Act of Uniformity of 1662 required public assent to the Book of Common Prayer for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Nonconformists, also referred to as Protestant "Dissenters," separated themselves from the Church of England.

1. For more on Henry, see Works, 5, 61–63.


5. A Paraphrase with Notes on the Epistle to the Romans. To which is Prefix'd, A Key to the Apostolic Writings, or an Essay to explain the Gospel Scheme, and the Principal Words and Phrases the Apostles have used in describing it (Dublin, 1741). Taylor's work is not cited in JE's "Catalogue."


9. Miller declared JE's reading of Locke's essay "the central and decisive event in his intellectual life" (Jonathan Edwards, 52).


2. See, for example, entries on Romans 5:15, Romans 6:19; 1 Corinthians 4:9, 1 Corinthians 7:37; and Galatians 1:10; Galatians 3:15.


5. Schmid, *Novi Testamenti Iesu Christi graeci, hoc est, originalis linguæ tameion, aliis concordantiae* (Gothae et Lipsiae, 1717), and Nold, *Concordantiae particularum ebreo chaldaicarum: in quibus, partium indeclinabilium, quae occurrunt in fontibus, & hactenus non exposita sunt in lexicis aut concordantis, natura & sensum varietas osteditur* (Hafniæ, 1679). JE's references to Schmid and Nold are "Catalogue," nos. 473 and 546. In both cases he came upon mention of these concordances in his reading.


9. JE to Jacob Wendell, Aug. 8, 1737 (*Works*, 16, 70).


3. For example, Ovid and Tertullian.


9. *The Use and Intent of Prophecy, in the Several Ages of the World: In Six Discourses, Delivered at the Temple Church, in April and May 1724... to which are added Four Dissertations and an Appendix* (5th ed., London, 1749). JE mentioned Sherlock's work multiple times in the "Catalogue" (e.g. 469).

1. *A Treatise of the Future Restoration of the Jews and Israelites to Their Own Land. With some Account of the Goodness of the Country, and their Happy Condition there, till they shall be invaded by the Turks: With Their Deliverance from all their Enemies, when the Messiah will establish his Kingdom at Jerusalem, and bring in the last Glorious Ages. Addressed to the Jews* (London, 1747). JE does not mention Collett's work in the "Catalogue." He does, however, have a candid judgment about it in a letter to John Erskine, June 28, 1751 (*Works, 16*, 375–76).


Edwards' Reputation Through the Ages

The call for additional research on Jonathan Edwards as an exegete needs to be set against the evolution of his reputation over the past 250 years. Edwards' eminence as a preacher has been secure ever since the 1730s, when he emerged publicly on the colonial scene in New England. His first Boston sermon in 1731 was published almost immediately. Subsequent sermons confirmed that he was both a powerful and a skilled homiletician. Edwards' prestige as an evangelical supporter of religious awakenings has been widespread ever since the mid-1730s and the early 1740s, when he described and celebrated the religious stirrings in Northampton and then defended and analyzed the revivals in New England. His publications brought him prominence throughout the American colonies as well as in the larger transatlantic world. Edwards' stature as a Reformed theologian rose incrementally during the last twelve years of his life with the appearance sequentially of publications in which he identified the marks of true religion or genuine piety, defined a proper ecclesiology and understanding of the sacraments, defended the classic Calvinist position on the bondage of the human will against Arminian notions, and maintained the universality of depravity and its transmission to new generations.

In the years after his death in 1758, a steady stream of posthumous publications expanded his reputation further, both in America and abroad. The two dissertations published by Samuel Hopkins in 1765 demonstrated that Edwards was not simply following in the footsteps of earlier thinkers but breaking new ground. Similarly, in 1774 the appearance in Scotland of an edition of his sermons on the history of redemption confirmed that he had been engaged in a creative search for new ways to do theology and that his international reputation was continuing to expand. The publication by Jonathan Edwards, Jr., of selections from his father's sermons and private notebooks in the closing decades of the eighteenth century evidenced further the growing interest in the writings of Edwards, Sr.

In the nineteenth century the appearance of multiple multivolume editions of Edwards' *Works*, beginning in 1806 with the first volume of the Leeds edition and extending through 1881 with the last reprint of the Worcester revised edition, confirmed the stature Edwards enjoyed during that century as a Protestant theologian and ranking figure in the evangelical world. These editions also demonstrated the presence of a
ready market for his writings. In addition, several previously unpublished texts appeared, including volumes edited by Tryon Edwards (1809–94) and Alexander B. Grosart (1827–99). Edwards' life of David Brainerd (1718–47), the most popular of all his works during the nineteenth century, established him as an advocate of Christian missions, a growing concern. By 1900 his stature among many was unquestioned. Even William James, who did not share his judgments on religious experience, acknowledged Edwards' prominence in the history of American religious life and thought.

It was perhaps inevitable that dissenting judgments would appear side by side with the positive accounts of Edwards' life and writings. From the beginning, individuals who did not share his theological or philosophical perspectives criticized rather than celebrated him. In the eighteenth century religious opponents attacked his support of ecstatic activity in the revivals. In the nineteenth, philosophically-minded critics challenged his metaphysical and moral assumptions. In the twentieth century, scholars repulsed by Calvinism dismissed him as preoccupied with issues from the past. Prominent public figures with little ear for the concerns that drove Edwards sometimes denounced him in vigorous prose.

Adjectives like "antiquated" and "tragic" were often applied to Edwards and his career. The scholar Vernon L. Parrington, for example, declared Edwards "an anachronism," his "great powers baffled and wasted," in effect dismissing his significance for the development of the subsequent American republic. Others, even those more sympathetic to Edwards' thought, branded his ideas "impractical" and "absurd." These opposing views of Edwards have existed side by side continuously.

In the years near the mid-twentieth century, a strong new current of interest and admiration pulsed among those who attempted a fuller recovery of Edwards' context, biography, writings, and significance. Three scholars deserve special mention because of their prominence and their diverse motivations. In 1937 H. Richard Niebuhr featured Edwards' understanding of the sovereignty of God as an anticipation of Neo-Orthodox theology in his classic study of American Christianity. In 1940 Ola Elizabeth Winslow wrote a prize-winning biography of Edwards, depicting him as a man of immense interest and complexity. And in 1949, in perhaps the most significant study of Edwards ever written, Perry Miller declared him a gifted and perceptive intellectual, a modern thinker whose ideas shaped the American experience. These three thinkers contributed to the rising wave of interest in Edwards during the second half of the twentieth century, a scholarly surge that cut across theological, intellectual, disciplinary, and interpretive lines. This new scholarship found expression in journals, dissertations, monographs, biographies, and thematic studies as well as in the volumes of the Yale Edition of The Works of Jonathan Edwards, launched in 1957. Nearly half a century later, in 2003—the tercentenary of Edwards' birth—this surge of interest showed little sign of abating.
Despite the astonishing volume and diversity of publications, to date only a modest amount of attention has been paid to Edwards' biblical interests. Much research remains to be done. Resources are newly available to assist with that task. But even now, many of his writings that feature biblical issues are not available in published or critical format, including more than twelve hundred manuscript sermons, a score or more of thematic notebooks, and the "Miscellanies" entries dealing with "Prophecies of the Messiah" and "Fulfillment of Prophecies of the Messiah." Widespread access to these materials awaits the completion of an electronic edition of Edwards' Works. When that planned enterprise becomes a reality, more definitive judgments will be possible regarding Edwards the exegete.

In the meantime, steps need to be taken to rectify the oversight of Edwards' exegetical writings. Several clusters of his writings require fresh examination with an eye toward the role that biblical interpretation plays in them. In an order of descending public prominence, these materials include major treatises published during his lifetime and posthumously; sermons, both those published before and after his death and those still in manuscript; private notebooks, published and unpublished; and other incidental or personal writings, some of which have been published in whole or in part and some of which remain in manuscript.

It would be impossible to identify two more important treatises published during Edwards' lifetime than Freedom of the Will and Religious Affections. Both have appeared in critical editions in the Yale Edition, volumes 1 and 2, edited by the distinguished scholars Paul Ramsey and John E. Smith. Despite his acknowledgement that biblical evidence for God's foreknowledge formed a major part of Edwards' argument against the Arminian notion of freedom of the will, Ramsey barely touched on the scriptural aspect of the subject. The more than three hundred biblical citations in the treatise therefore invite examination with respect to the manner in which Edwards used them as proof texts in support of the concept of necessity. For example, in the treatise he cited Luke 19:41 in support of the judgment that God "foretold the future moral conduct of nations and people" when Christ spoke prophetically of his deliverance into the hands of his enemies. The "Blank Bible" entry on Luke 19:41, however, is drawn from Doddridge, no advocate of Calvinist orthodoxy or of necessity (p. 916). In Freedom of the Will, Edwards also argued for foreknowledge on the basis of predictions regarding the martyrdom of some of Christ's disciples, including Peter. The entry in the "Blank Bible" on John 21:19 offers a way of understanding that martyrdom as consistent with Christ's will (p. 966). By contrast with Ramsey's introduction to Freedom of the Will, Smith's introduction to Religious Affections devoted more attention to the biblical basis for the thesis of the treatise, namely, "True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections." And the more than eleven hundred biblical citations figure in Smith's analysis of the argument. Edwards' support, for example, of the Twelth Sign—"Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice"—makes use of extensive biblical argumentation. One contrast to Christian practice is "slothfulness," which Edwards condemned, using the account in Matthew 25 of the wicked servant who hid his talent in the ground. The "Blank Bible" entry on Matthew 25:24–27 asserts that the unfaithful servant "ought to have made what gain he could of the talent that he had" (p. 871). Hundreds of biblical passages related to the argument in
Religious Affections invite similar examination. The outcome of such research is likely to reorient the standard depiction of the argument of this important treatise.

Edwards' extant sermons, numbering nearly 1,250, represent a huge cache of writings that contain large sections devoted to the exposition and citation of biblical materials. His standard sermon outline included an initial exposition of the scriptural text on which the sermon was based, followed by a statement of doctrine and its elaboration, and then a section which improved or applied the doctrine to life circumstances. Although the central place of the Bible has been recognized in Edwards'

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sermons, there has been only limited examination of the use of Scripture. Relatively little of that research has been correlated with his exegetical notebooks.\(^8\) One example will suffice to suggest what can be undertaken with potentially profitable results. In May 1739 Edwards preached a sermon on Malachi 4:1–2 entitled Christ the Spiritual Sun. The exposition of the text identified Malachi as the last of the prophets in the Old Testament canon who, in a period of spiritual darkness, wrote about a coming time of "gospel light." That light was to come from the rising of the Sun of righteousness who will bring both "light and heat," comfort to the righteous and fire to the wicked.\(^9\) Edwards' exposition of the text in Malachi and his development of the sermon's doctrine—"That same spiritual Sun, whose beams are most comfortable and beneficial to believers, will burn and destroy unbelievers"—drew on exegetical entries that he had written in both "Notes on Scripture" and the "Blank Bible."\(^1\) His sermon and the related exegetical entries demonstrate in striking fashion the impact of his private study of Scripture on the public side of his ministry. They also document the creative homilectical use he made of scriptural metaphor and typology. Close textual study of the relationships among his exegetical notebooks and the texts of his sermons will dramatically enhance our understanding of the role of the Bible in his ministry. Hundreds of Edwards' sermons await such examination.

Edwards' private notebooks hold great promise for the further study of his exegesis. Four volumes of "Miscellanies," three scriptural notebooks, two sets of notes on "Types," and a variety of topical notebooks have been published in the Yale Edition. Other unpublished manuscripts include "Harmony of the Old and New Testaments," "Prophecies of the Messiah" and "Fulfillment of the Prophecies of the Messiah," notebooks on the "History of Redemption," the "Catalogue" of reading, and the "Account Book." All of these in different ways shed light on the centrality of the Bible in Edwards' life and thought. Individually, these documents cast light on his study and interpretation of particular biblical texts. Many of these manuscripts also intersect thematically. The full extent

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of such intersections has yet to be discovered. As a result, only a limited sense of the relative importance of the Bible and its interpretation for Edwards' thought and ministry is possible at this moment. Much research remains to be done.
It is possible to suggest that as an exegete Edwards was probably without peer in America in the middle of the eighteenth century. He did not, however, achieve widespread prestige in this field during his lifetime. His prominence came as an advocate and defender of evangelical awakenings, as a successful preacher, and as a theologian in the Reformed tradition. It is at best speculative to suggest that had Edwards lived another decade he might have gained a reputation as a learned exegete. Nonetheless, some summary observations concerning Edwards as an exegete are appropriate now, based on the materials available in this edition of the "Blank Bible" and contextualized within the wider framework of his published commentaries and notebooks as well as his other publications in the Yale Edition.

Edwards' exegetical interests are highly traditional, reflected in the topics and issues he addressed in the "Blank Bible." He stood firmly within the tradition of Protestant exegesis stretching back to the Reformation. For example, he considered the patriarchs of ancient Israel models for the devout life and believed that the circumstances of the children of Israel anticipated those of the Christian church, that the Hebrew prophets' proclamations were saturated with gospel imagery, and that the apostles gave explicit voice to Reformed theological concerns such as justification by faith and predestination. Edwards was not the first to articulate these scriptural motifs. In that respect it is inappropriate to declare his observations uniquely insightful into the meaning, interpretation, or application of the Bible. The fact that he drew so heavily on the commentaries of Matthew Poole, Matthew Henry, and Philip Doddridge, among others, is further evidence that he stood firmly in a long tradition.

Despite the traditional character of his exegetical observations, Edwards did not restrict himself to any one interpretive approach to the biblical text. In that respect it is possible to describe him as a creative and imaginative exegete whose interpretations of particular passages ranged across a variety of ways of understanding them. He drew on the force of the original Hebrew and Greek texts, employing lexicons and concordances in his quest for clear translation and precise meaning. He probed the historical circumstances and cultural contexts of the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean world, turning to works that featured the chronology of events and the geography of places related to the biblical accounts. He found anticipations of his own era by reading evangelical religion—conversions and revivals—back into the biblical text. He discovered the rationale for contemporary social arrangements, including ministerial authority, patriarchal responsibility, and racial slavery, in particular biblical passages. He thought that his own life circumstances were addressed in various ways in the text. For example, he repeatedly detected scriptural injunctions that called for parishioners to provide adequate salaries for ministers of the gospel. Likewise, his capacity for uncovering symbolical or figurative associations within the biblical text seems infinite. And finally, some of his commentary is simply the product of random thoughts. Edwards gave none of these approaches priority in the "Blank Bible." They all appear at different times and in diverse combinations.

The task of the exegete varies from moment to moment, and for that reason it is often impossible to determine the compelling reason for Edwards' observations on a particular biblical text. The contexts surrounding his exegetical activities varied immensely. He was responsible for
preparing sermons on a weekly basis, a task which called for him to explain and proclaim scriptural truths to his auditors. In that role theological abstractions were of less value than clear practical applications. But he also spent a large amount of time and energy during his lifetime writing theological treatises for publication. In that context the clear exposition of Scripture became a primary line of support for his various theological arguments. He also read the Bible as an act of personal devotion and for spiritual edification. What he saw in the biblical text at those moments therefore depended in part on his mood and interior state. On the basis of the written commentary alone, it is often—in fact, usually—impossible to determine his precise circumstances when he wrote a particular entry.

Edwards was a convinced Protestant theologian, and therefore he viewed the Bible as the authoritative source of Christian theology and the inspired Word of God. He brought this high view of the scriptural text to his activity as a commentator. That does not mean that he ascribed only one meaning to any given text. In fact, what is most striking about the "Blank Bible" is the variety of meanings he discovered in the biblical passages. He was also aware of the contested quality of the interpretation of Scripture in his day, an issue of rising religious significance during his lifetime. The impact of the new scholarship deriving from the Enlightenment was mixed on him, as he often drew insights from commentators who contested vigorously his theological positions, but whose insights he found useful. At the same time, he consistently rejected the radical implications of the new emerging historical criticism. Therefore it is inaccurate and inappropriate to construe Edwards as either a modern critical exegete or a fundamentalist hermeneut. His approach to the biblical text was eclectic and often dictated by circumstance. Yet there was no ambiguity in his mind regarding the authority of the Bible for his religious judgments. It is that role of the Bible which has not been sufficiently acknowledged in many of the accounts of Edwards' religious thought.

Finally, the entries in Edwards' "Blank Bible" confirm the richness of the Christian exegetical tradition, the various appropriations Edwards made of that tradition, and his creative adaptations and applications of scriptural insights. But it is also apparent from the "Blank Bible" how often Edwards used the scriptural accounts to assert and support his hostility toward—even hatred of—other religious traditions and theological positions. Edwards was deeply prejudiced against Roman Catholics and especially the papacy, and he continually verbalized that enmity, cloaking his antagonism in the language of Scripture and sanctioning it with various theological rationalizations. Edwards denied ultimate legitimacy to Judaism as a religion by casting it in a framework that found its sole ultimate meaning in its anticipation of Christianity. Edwards paid less attention to Islam in the "Blank Bible," but his references to it are consistently negative and virulent. These unattractive dimensions of Edwards' exegesis cannot be overlooked or rationalized. They are, in fact, repulsive and reflect negatively on his understanding of the Christian tradition of which he was a part. Unfortunately, they represent a significant element in his cultural and theological legacy.

9. Religious Affections (Works, 2), An Humble Inquiry and Misrepresentations Corrected (Works, 12), Freedom of the Will (Works, 1), and Original Sin (Works, 3).

1. Two Dissertations. See Works, 8, 399–627.
3. Practical Sermons, Never Before Published. By the late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards (Edinburgh, 1788); Miscellaneous Observations on Important Theological Subjects, Original and Collected (Edinburgh, 1793); and Remarks on Important Theological Controversies (Edinburgh, 1796).
5. Tryon Edwards, ed., Charity and Its Fruits; Or, Christian Love as Manifested in the Heart and Life (London, 1852); see Works, 8, 123–397.
7. See Works, 7.
9. Charles Chauncy (1705–87), for example, responded to JE's Some Thoughts as follows: "A noted Writer [i.e. JE] on the Times Seems to have been at a pritty Deal of Pains to collect Instances: But how few has he been able to produce, though he had the whole Christian World before him, for more than Seventeen Hundred Years" (Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England [Boston, 1743], 81).
1. Henry Philip Tappan (1805–81), a theologically trained philosopher who became the president of the University of Michigan in 1852, more than a decade earlier published three volumes attacking JE's philosophical assumptions: A Review of Edwards's "Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will" (New York, 1839); The Doctrine of the Will, Determined by an Appeal to Consciousness (New York, 1840); and The Doctrine of the Will, Applied to Moral Agency and Responsibility (New York, 1841).
2. Carl Van Doren declared that JE was committed to a lost cause and spent his time speaking "of forgotten issues in a forgotten dialect" (Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards: Selections from Their Writings [New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920], ix).

1. Two publications in the tricentennial year illustrated the strength and diverse perspectives involved with contemporary Edwards scholarship. The American religious historian George M. Marsden's major biography renewed the claims for JE's Calvinist Christian message (*Jonathan Edwards: A Life* [New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 2003]). The Israeli scholar Avihu Zakai's account of JE's views on history accented the importance of situating him in the wider eighteenth-century intellectual context (*Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History*). The two studies are likely predictors of the continuing diversity of approaches to JE in the future. 
3. *Works, 1*, 242, 244. 
4. Ibid., 245. 
6. Ibid., 383. 
7. Ibid., 388. 
1. See *Works, 15*, 302–4; and entry on Malachi 4:2, below, p. 820.