

CHAPTER THREE

Spiritual Epistemology: Knowing God in the Heart

Not only does the heart play a pivotal role in conversion through the work of the Trinity. It also features prominently in Edwards' and Augustine's spiritual epistemology. I mean by that term knowledge of God that is confirmed in the heart as the centre of the interior life. Their inclusion of heart-knowledge in epistemology resonates with an Hebraic concept which sees love as the highest kind of knowledge of God. By way of contrast the Platonist understanding of knowledge is analogous to seeing with a view to grasping the nature of an object, with knowledge of God envisaged primarily as contemplation of the divine reality. Of greater import to both men is the Neoplatonic emphasis on the holiness or beauty of God that is felt in the heart, a perception that is simply lost to nonbelievers. In their appeal to the testimony of the religious affections, the feelings or emotions of love and desire that are directed towards God, they manifest a preoccupation with the will or inclination of the heart as the basis for their spiritual epistemology.

Edwards adopts a tripartite approach to epistemology based on reason, the authority of the Bible that comes through revelation and the knowledge of God that comes through spiritual apprehension in the heart. In this chapter I argue that Edwards fully endorsed Augustine's unification of reason, revelation, and spiritual knowledge in his development of an epistemology that is centred on the responsive heart, thus placing himself squarely in the Augustinian tradition.¹ Edward's account of the prominence of the will and the affections in directing the heart to embrace the triune God reiterates Augustine's insistence on the importance of the relationship between the heart and the Trinitarian being of God.

There are three strands of their spiritual epistemology that receive special attention in this chapter. First, is the importance of the affections and the will in determining the orientation of the heart. Second is their united opposition to the notion of the freedom of the will, and third, their

¹ Such was the strength of the sustained attack upon Edwards' Calvinism, which in his eyes was to be equated with Christian orthodoxy, he was led to exclaim not long before his death that "most of the prevailing errors of the present day" were tending to "the utter subverting of the gospel of Christ." Jonathan Edwards, "Letter to the Trustees of the College of New Jersey," in *Letters and Personal Papers*, Works, 16, p. 727. See Robert E. Brown, *Jonathan Edwards and the Bible*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). Brown argues that much of Edwards' epistemological enterprise was shaped by the challenges to religious thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Brown's main interest is in Edwards' biblical historiography, but he gives an excellent appraisal of Edwards' attempts to counter the "fashionable religion" of the Deists, in particular, their epistemological criticisms of the biblical narratives. (p. 181ff). See "Miscellany," no. 832 (c. 1740), in *Works*, 18, pp. 546-547.

belief that the Holy Spirit confers religious knowledge through divine illumination which has an affective dimension that is experienced in the heart as a sense of “sweetness.”

3.1 Introduction to Spiritual Epistemology

In both Edwards and Augustine, the will is synonymous with love and the affections and is associated with the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.² The will in human beings is the appetitive power in the heart or inner life, the fundamental inclination of the heart. If the intellect knows things, the will is inclined towards them. The divine will in the person of the Holy Spirit is the active, life-giving, wisdom imparting person of the Trinity as well as the love, beauty and holiness of the Trinity in-dwelling the believer’s heart.³ The Holy Spirit is the one who changes the will and unifies the understanding, the will and the affections so that the believer is able to know and love God both affectively and cognitively in a moment of immediate perception.

Underpinning their epistemological endeavors is the belief that an act of volition is an act of love, be it appetitive or aversive. Edwards followed Augustine in completely identifying the will with the affections, which in their extreme version become passions. Like Augustine, Edwards argued that one’s loves and hates, which are the essential movements of the will, are the inward drive behind all behaviour and involuntary. The immediate seat of grace is in the will which left to its own devices is subverted by passions which pervert reason. As voluntarists, they privileged the will over the intellect and linked the will with the affections as the “spring of men’s actions.”⁴ So Edwards writes, “the affections are no other than the more sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul,”⁵ and in almost identical terminology Augustine puts it thus, “The will is engaged in

² “Discourse on the Trinity,” in *Works*, 21, p. 138; *The Trinity*, XV. 31, *WSA*, 1/5, pp. 420-421; XV. 38, pp. 425-426. In the ensuing discussion the term “affections” is used to denote feelings such as love, hate, pity, compassion, sadness, happiness, joy, delight, or fear. The religious affections are those feelings arising from the regenerate heart where love of God is the first of all loves and the basis for all others. The religious affections are preferable to the passions in both Edwards and Augustine because the passions were viewed as uncontrollable or troubling movements or perturbations (*perturbationes*) of the soul or heart. See n. 6, n. 34, below. A useful discussion on the differences between affections and passions is found in Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³ Edwards, “Discourse on the Trinity,” in *Works*, 21, p. 125. “The Scripture seems in many places to speak of love in Christians as if it were the same with the Spirit of God in them, or at least as the prime and most natural breathing and acting of the Spirit in the soul.” *The Trinity*, XV. 41, *WSA*, 1/5, p. 427. “As far as the Holy Spirit is concerned, the only thing I pointed to in this puzzle as seeming to be like him is our will, or love or esteem...”

⁴ *Religious Affections*, *Works*, 2, p. 100.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

all of them [i.e. the affections]; in fact they are all essentially acts of will.”⁶ The heart’s affectional preference is akin to the will, and when coupled with reason, contributes to every act of the will.

The importance of the will and the affections in Edwards’ and Augustine’s Trinitarian epistemology is associated with faculty psychology, a persistent theme in the psychology of the mind that goes back to Aristotle. Briefly, in Augustine’s day, and to a limited extent in Edwards’ era, this view of the interior life split the mind or soul hierarchically into two main faculties, the intellect or reason, and the will, the latter being associated with the feelings or affections.⁷ While this separation of faculties was only nominal in some instances, a common perception was that the intellect was concerned with truth and the will with the good. The old faculty psychology gave priority to reflective reason, while the will was depicted as subject to the pull of the affections or passions, and was often viewed negatively as impotent to order the life of the mind.⁸

The separation of faculties was not endorsed by either Edwards or Augustine. Furthermore, although they warned against succumbing to unbridled passion, neither subscribed to a view of a dispassionate faith and, in fact, evinced a strongly affectional bias in their Trinitarian epistemology.⁹ The crux of the problem in knowing God as they

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 555-6.

⁷ Both men use intellect, reason, knowledge, wisdom, mind and at times, understanding, interchangeably. The context determines the application of a specific meaning. See n. 152. The faculty of reason or understanding is presumed to direct the affections or feelings, (in modern parlance the emotions, although this word is unknown to both men), or their more unruly counterparts, the passions. Augustine uses *motus* (movement), *affectus*, and *passiones* to denote the affections, although these have been rendered as “emotions” in some translations, including Bettenson’s. For a helpful discussion of the development of theories about the use of “passions” and “affections”, see Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Ch. 2, “Passions and Affections in Augustine and Aquinas,” pp. 34, 39-41; on Edwards, pp. 72-81. One of Dixon’s conclusions is that medieval Western Christian theology introduced a distinction between passions, lusts, desires and appetites which were unruly movements of the soul and in need of controlling by reason, and affections which were enlightened acts of the higher will. These distinctions are not to be found in the classical lexicon nor in later discussions on the emotions. (pp. 60-61).

⁸ *The City of God*, IX. 4, p. 348. Augustine writes, “On this showing there is little or no difference between the opinions of Stoics and of other philosophers on the subjects of the disturbances or passions of the soul. Both sides champion the mind and the reason against the tyranny of the passions.” See Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, eds., *The Great Awakening* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1967) xxxv-xliii., and James Hoopes, “Jonathan Edwards Religious Psychology,” in *The Journal of American History*, vol. 69, (1983), p. 856.

⁹ Edwards’ critic Charles Chauncy claimed that “an enlightened mind and not raised affections ought always to be the guide of those who call themselves men; and this in the affairs of religion as well as other things”. Quoted in the “Editor’s Introduction,” to *The Great Awakening, Works*, 4, p. 66. Edwards used his wife Sarah as the exemplar of true piety whose religious affections were to be emulated. “Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain evermore possessed f that happy distemper!” “Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival,” Part 1, in *The Great Awakening, Works*, 4, p. 341. In *The City of*

understood it was the errant will rather than the failing powers of the intellect.¹⁰ Love misdirected is the besetting problem of the heart seeking knowledge of God. Their solution was to see the divine love as the means of spiritual illumination that unites and shapes the understanding, will and affections in attaining knowledge of God, knowledge that once discovered is verified by the affective response of the heart.¹¹ In their conjoint activity, will and intellect are united in an overwhelming desire to love the triune God as a result of grace in the heart.

The artificial distinctions in faculty psychology were modified through their use of the psychological analogy of mind, understanding and will or love to explain the Trinity. Since the Trinity of Father, Son and Spirit acts as one, so too the heart of the believer renewed by grace. Spiritual perception of God is rational and affective. God's initiative of divine love enters the heart and transforms it so that the beauty and glory of God are perceived as an act of the whole heart.¹²

God, XIV. 9, p. 565, Augustine claims, against the Stoics, that love and gladness will be known in heaven: "Moreover, if *apatheia* is the name of the state in which the mind cannot be touched by any emotion whatsoever, who would not judge this insensitivity to be the worst of all moral defects? ... There is therefore nothing absurd in the assertion that the final complete happiness will be exempt from the spasms of fear and from any kind of grief; but only a man utterly cut off from truth would say that love and gladness will have no place there."

¹⁰ Norman Fiering, "Will and Intellect in the New England Mind," in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 29, 4, (Oct. 1972), p. 529. Edwards speaks of "reason" rather than "intellect" when referring to the faculty of knowing or reasoning, whereas Augustine uses both "intellect" and "reason." In both cases, "mind" is used mostly to refer to the reasoning faculty and sometimes for the heart.

¹¹ Edwards endorsed Augustine's analysis of the besetting problem for sinful humanity as that of "the grand principles of iniquity, constantly abiding and reigning," arising from the fact that "a bad will, or an evil disposition of heart, itself is wickedness." Edwards, Letter to Rev. John Erskine, August 3rd, 1757, in *Freedom of the Will*, Works 4, p. 467.

¹² Edwards, "The Mind," no. 31 in *Scientific and Philosophical Papers*, Works, 6, p. 352. "The soul may also be said to be in the heart or the affections, for its immediate operations, are there also." Albrecht Dihle has claimed that Augustine's concept of human will is one of irrational volition, to which Augustine would surely reply that knowledge of God is essential to the healing of the will. Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of the Will in Classical Antiquity*, Sather Classical Lectures, vol. 48., (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), p. 20. For a rebuttal of Dihle's argument see Gerald W. Schlabach, "Augustine's Hermeneutic of Humility," in *Journal of Religious Ethics*, (2001), p. 304. Schlabach finds two major problems in Dihle's assessment of Augustine's understanding of the will: First, that Dihle assumed too great a discontinuity between Augustine's thought and Greek thought, and second, that Dihle did not allow the absence or presence of a particular form of knowledge which might be able to re-orient the will.

JONATHAN EDWARDS

3.2 The Heart, the Affections and the Will in Edwards

Edwards developed his epistemology at a critical time in the post-Enlightenment period.¹³ His intellectual context saw the beginning of the end of the close relationship between philosophy and theology that distinguished Augustine's era. The rise of Deism, the "Enlightenment philosophy of religion"¹⁴ as one commentator puts it, saw attacks on the authority of the Bible, the validity of revelation, the credibility of the Old Testament prophecies and the notion of miracles. Edwards was the most significant Christian thinker at the time to grasp the enormity of the threat and attempt to combat it.¹⁵

Locke's sensationalist epistemology supported the scholastic emphasis on reason. He banished the theory of innate ideas and devolved all knowledge onto the understanding, but his focus on the understanding at the expense of the will or affections was unpalatable to Edwards. The analysis of Edwards' conversion experiences demonstrates that for him there could be no discounting of the deeply felt spiritual confirmation of conversion imparted in the new spiritual sense of the divine love in the heart. The prominence of the emotions or affections in Edwards' own religious experience, the rise of sensationalist epistemology and widespread criticism of the excesses of the revivals cast Edwards in the role of defender of affectivity in epistemology.¹⁶

¹³ Henry F. May, "Introduction," *The Enlightenment in America*, xvi. May has demonstrated that as was the case in Europe, the response to the Enlightenment in America was anything but unified. For the sake of an organizing category May isolates four distinct strands in the American Enlightenment; the moderate or rational (1688-1787); the skeptical (1750-1789); the revolutionary (1776-1800) and the didactic (1800-1815).¹³ He is rightfully cautious about too rigid a periodisation and of course there was overlap. Jonathan Edwards' career came under the umbrella of the first two categories which were dominated by the work of Newton and Locke, but May refuses to categorise Edwards as belonging to any particular party. In fact he suggests that Edwards "was not a man of the moderate, rational, English Enlightenment of his day. Indeed, he was the most powerful enemy of that way of thought." (p. 49). Edwards denied May's two criteria for the Enlightenment as religion: first, a belief that the present age is more advanced than previous ages, and second, nature and humanity are best understood through the use of unaided reason. Edwards' theology was antithetical to the orderly, intelligible and moral world of the eighteenth century rationalists.

¹⁴ Avihu Zakai, "The Age of Enlightenment," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 80.

¹⁵ The Arian heresy re-appeared in another guise shortly before Edwards reached his prime. It was recast in Samuel Clarke's *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1712 and was the subject of much debate. See *Sermons and Discourses, Works*, 14, p. 43

¹⁶ See the Editor's Introduction to *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, pp. 2-8, p.3, n. 5. Edwards had known seasons of revival as a child and sporadic revivals in the Connecticut River valley seemed to accompany Edwards' early preaching on the necessity for conversion that was evidently a work of grace in the heart. There was a negative side to revival in that the intense periods of religious revival of the early 1730's and 1740's saw a great outpouring of religious emotion and some bizarre manifestations of spirituality which caused dismay amongst those who abhorred the excesses of religiosity. While significant numbers were converted and the general tone of the community raised, in many cases, piety didn't last. Kenneth P.

Engagement with the best that philosophy could offer was always subsumed to the intention to “challenge the presumptions of the age”¹⁷ by insisting on the centrality of the God of the Bible in human history and experience. In his defence of the Bible as the primary locus for knowledge of God, Edwards emulates Augustine’s devotion to the authority of the scriptures.¹⁸ The Bible took centre stage in their epistemology. Knowledge of God was revealed knowledge for both men but the revelation could only be appropriated by those whose hearts were illuminated with the divine light. Edwards’ principal response to the critique of revelation was to propose a theory of divine illumination which accounted for the spiritually perceptive capacities of the regenerate will. Divine illumination in the form of heart-knowledge confirmed the excellency of the biblical accounts of the divine plan for the salvation of the elect, providing Edwards with an unwavering epistemological certitude.¹⁹

An interest in the heart as a valid source for knowledge of God in Edwards’ epistemology can be traced back to the Westminster Confession (1643-47), which was prefaced with a recommendation of spiritual knowledge that was “not a brain-knowledge, a mere speculation; this may be in the worst of men, nay, in the worst of creatures, the devils themselves. And that in such an eminency, as the best of saints cannot attain to in that list of imperfection; but an inward, a savoury, an heart knowledge, such as was in that martyr, even though she could not dispute for Christ, could die for him.”²⁰ It was that kind of heart knowledge that Edwards had experienced himself and which he applauded. As a fervent Calvinist subscribing to the doctrines of original sin and the sovereignty of God in redemption in an era that championed the power of unaided reason and individual autonomy, the problem for Edwards the apologist was twofold. First he had to explain the

Minkema, “A Theological Life,” in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 6-11. The polarization of New England society into rationalists and enthusiasts saw Edwards in the unenviable position of championing the revivals while at the same time deploring the stance taken by both groups of extremists. Critics such as Charles Chauncy, Minister of the First Church in Boston, castigated the improprieties of the most enthusiastic of the revivalists and blamed Edwards for instigating them. Chauncy’s main objection was that emotion and imagination had overtaken reason and judgment.

¹⁷ George Marsden, “Challenging the Presumptions of the Age,” in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition*, D. G. Hart, S. M. Lucas, S. J. Nichols, eds., (Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Academic, 2003), p. 99.

¹⁸ *Confessions*, IX, 4. 11, p. 162. Augustine could exclaim very soon after his conversion that the Scriptures were words “which drip with the honey of heaven and blaze with your light.”

¹⁹ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, pp. 308-309. Paul Ramsay, in his introduction to *Freedom of the Will*, remarks that Edwards sometimes speaks of the infusion of the Holy Spirit sometimes “in terms of Platonic, Johannine, and Augustine Illuminism” and sometimes uses Locke’s simple idea. *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, p. 43.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

connection between reason, the will and the affections in order to rehabilitate the affections, and second, he had to show that God was sovereign in redemption by demonstrating that the will was not free to accept or reject the offer of divine love.

There was no consistency amongst Puritans regarding the place of the affections in epistemology. Some of Edwards' Reformed and Puritan forebears favoured the scholastic tendency to promote a bifurcation of intellect and will with the intellect ruling the will.²¹ With the heart by-passed, faculty psychology proved wanting in explaining "true religion" as Edwards called it. The affections were often disparaged as more of a hindrance than a help in the religious life, particularly when the more extreme manifestations of revivalist passion in Edwards' day became widely known.²²

Edwards was not alone in favouring affectivity in religious epistemology. Calvin and his *sensus suavitatis* influenced Puritan piety to include the affections as an important component in spiritual epistemology, and Edwards was in firm agreement with Calvin that knowledge of God was verified by the heart in conjunction with the head.²³ Other Puritans regarded faith as more than rational assent to doctrines believing that faith was embedded in the inclination of the will and affections as well as in the intellect. In the words of the English Puritan John Preston, faith is to involve "the whole heart of man," and that necessitates "both the minde and the will."²⁴ It was not quite so easy, however, to explain

²¹ Norman S. Fiering, "Will and Intellect in the New England Mind," p. 522. Fiering quotes William Partridge, a Harvard student in 1686. "Will is a human disposition by which man freely desires the good known by the intellect...the understanding shows to the will, what is to be embraced and what is to be rejected..." Fiering is of the opinion that an Augustinian voluntarism was prevalent in the seventeenth century in both Catholic and Protestant circles. The will came to be "almost synonymous with the inner essence of the whole man...the biblical term "heart" was used almost interchangeably with will in this sense, and the terms "love" and even "soul" itself are also substituted for it." J. Rodney Fulcher nominates the conflict between reason and the passions as one of the besetting problems for the Puritans throughout the seventeenth century. Not until Edwards and his psychology of the religious affections was the tension resolved. "Edwards was successful in maintaining the equilibrium between piety and intellect that an earlier generation of Puritans had upset in their struggles with contentious spirits." "Puritans and the Passions: The Faculty Psychology in American Puritanism," in *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 9, (1973), pp. 123-139, p. 139.

²² Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 252. According to Perry Miller who inaugurated the renaissance of interest in Edwards in the mid-twentieth century, the persistence of faculty psychology amongst Puritan divines meant that some weren't sure how to include the heart in their epistemology. This created a dilemma insofar as reconciling faith and reason went. Somewhat unfairly, he lays the blame for the Puritan dilemma firmly at Calvin's feet, on the grounds that it was Calvin who championed Scholastic faculty psychology and thereby "riveted Calvinism to the medieval doctrine of the faculties." One of the problems as Miller sees it, is that the Puritans were uncertain as to whether knowledge of God is given to the mind through ideas that are supernatural in origin and eternally innate, or whether knowledge of God comes by the senses.

²³ Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I, 7, p. 73. Calvin saw the necessity to meld head and heart, describing religious faith as a kind of knowledge "which the Holy Spirit seals on our hearts."

²⁴ John Preston, *The Breast-Plate of Faith and Love* (London, 1630) Pt. I, p. 55.

the way in which “the whole heart of man” was actually involved in faith, and the tendency was for one faculty to be elevated at the expense of the others.

Thomas Shephard was one Puritan read by Edwards who favoured the “intellect first” model of conversion, claiming that the Gospel first reveals Christ to the mind, and then activates the will so that in the end, “the whole soul comes to Christ.”²⁵ Edwards disagreed with Shepard’s view of conversion by successive acts of the understanding and will. According to Edwards, the two faculties may be distinguished for the sake of analysis, but they need not be opposed nor seen as progressive moments of illumination.²⁶ As John E. Smith has noted, “in Edwards’ view the inclination...involves the will and the mind.” The affections are the “expression of inclination through the mind.”²⁷

The unity of the faculties in Edwards’ religious epistemology is apparent from his early twenties onwards. As early as 1722 he argued that the certainties of faith may be quite agreeable to reason, but that there is no justification for discounting intuition in religious belief.²⁸ Thus he makes a note in *The Mind* that “the Scriptures are ignorant of the philosophic distinction of the understanding and the will, and how the sense of the heart is

²⁵ Thomas Shepard, *Works* I, (Boston: Doctrinal Tract & Book Society, 1853), p. 8. “as the gospel first reveals Christ to the mind, and then offers him to the will, so faith, which runs parallel with the gospel, first sees Christ (there the mind, one part of the soul, goes out,) then receives Christ gladly, (there the other part, the will, goes out,) and so the whole soul comes to Christ.”²⁵

²⁶ Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal*, pp. 15ff. Conrad Cherry argues that it was a commonplace of Puritan theology to teach a tripartite approach to conversion based on the distinction between assent, that is believing the Biblical revelation of God; consent, deliberately accepting these truths; and affiance, emotionally resting in these truths. Edwards departed from this model of conversion, asserting that “The distinction of the several constituent parts or acts of faith, in assent, consent, and affiance, if strictly considered and examined will appear not to be proper and just, to strictly according to the truth and nature of things” because “the parts are not all entirely distinct one from another, and so are in some measure confounded one with another.”²⁶ For Edwards, the whole of the inner life is caught up in the business of coming to a saving knowledge of God and there is no lineal progression from head to heart; it is a simultaneous unification of perception and love which convicts the whole of the soul; the understanding and the will.

²⁷ John E. Smith, “Editor’s Introduction,” to *Religious Affections*, *Works*, 2, pp. 13-14.

²⁸ The “Miscellanies,” aa, “Faith”, (1722), *Works*, 13, p. 177. There may undoubtedly be such a thing as is called the testimony of faith, and a sort of certainty of faith that is different from reason, that is, is different from discourse by a chain of arguments, a certainty that is given by the Holy Spirit; and yet such a belief may be altogether agreeable to reason, agreeable to the exactest rules of philosophy. Such ideas of religion may be in the mind, as a man may feel divinity in them, and so may know they are from God, know that religion is of divine original, that is, is divine truth. Yea, this faith may be to the degree of certainty, for he may certainly intuitively see God and feel him in those ideas; that is, he may certainly see the notion he has of God in them. Edwards reiterates his belief that the two faculties of the mind, the understanding and the will, are not mutually exclusive but are both manifestations of divine communication in “Miscellany,” no. 1340, “Reason and Revelation.” Arguing that God has revealed himself to humanity by both reason and revelation he says “In different senses they (i. e. God’s nature and the system of revelation), are a divine word”, no less than “the voice of God to intelligent creatures,” is “a manifestation and declaration of himself to mankind.” The “Miscellanies,” no. 1340, *Works*, 23, p. 374.

there called knowledge and understanding.”²⁹ True religion, Edwards was to say echoing Augustine, consists in love and joy in Christ. Moral knowledge of God in the heart brings intellectual joy when one possesses a redeemed will. Wilson Kinnach makes the pertinent observation that Edwards discerned that reason alone cannot suffice to deliver true knowledge of God because significant areas of the inner life (i.e. the affections and will) are ignored.³⁰ To reach his congregation Edwards started from the premise that “Our people don’t so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched.”³¹ Edwards reached the same conclusion as Augustine that love of God is the highest kind of knowledge.³²

Edwards was insistent on the validity of felt experience of God in the religious life. His response to critics such as Charles Chauncy who deplored the emotionalism of the revivals was the publication of a number of works that sought to defend the place of the religious affections as the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart.³³ The most explicit of his spiritual criteria were set out in the *Religious Affections* in which his declared intention was “clearly to discern...wherein true religion does consist.”³⁴ Part I is devoted to the thesis that religion is an affair of the “heart” and that it is appropriate to include the affections as a valid form of spiritual knowledge, but they must be tested against authentic criteria which he provides in Parts II and III. There is a distinction in his thinking between ordinary affections and religious affections.

In the *Religious Affections*, Edwards insists that true religion is synonymous with “holiness of heart” which “lies very much in the affection of the heart.”³⁵ Such devotion requires the attention of the whole person, “all the faculties and principles of the human

²⁹ “The Mind,” no. 14, in *Scientific and Philosophical Writings, Works*, 6, p. 389.

³⁰ Wilson H. Kinnach, Editor’s Introduction to *Sermons and Discourses, Works*, 10, p. 201.

³¹ *The Great Awakening, Works*, 4, pp. 387-388.

³² Edwards’ line of thinking here parallels that of the Cambridge Platonists Ralph Cudworth and John Smith. See Susan James, *The Emotions in Seventeenth Century Philosophy* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997), Chapter 10, “Knowledge as Emotion” pp. 225-228. Cudworth says, “Though there be never such excellent truths, concerning Christ, and his Gospel, set down in words and letters; yet they will be but unknown Characters to us, until we have a Living spirit within us, that can decipher them: until the same Spirit, by secret Whispers in our hearts, do comment upon them, which did at first endite them.” “A Sermon Preached before the House of Commons,” March 31, 1647 in *The Cambridge Platonists* ed., C. A. Patrides (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 108.

³³ John E. Smith, Editor’s Introduction to *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, pp. 2-8. The works detailing the nature of true religious affections are: *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737), *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741), *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (1742), and the *Religious Affections* (1746).

³⁴ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, p. 89.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

soul,”³⁶ but principally, the religious affections, the chief of which is love.³⁷ Edwards, as did Augustine, insisted that true religion could be comprehended by love because “love is not only one of the affections, but it is the first and chief of the affections and the fountain of all the affections.”³⁸ Only those affections that spring from divine love are valid affections. The orientation of love is instrumental in the acquisition of spiritual knowledge.³⁹ All good actions flow from a right love or will which is founded in “a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent love to God.”⁴⁰

The affective emphasis in Edwards’ epistemology becomes clear in the opening remarks in the *Religious Affections* based on his reading of 1 Peter 1:8. This dedicatory verse “Though you have not seen him, you love him: and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,” turns on two key elements of Edwards’ epistemology, love for Christ and joy in the knowledge of salvation, both essential characteristics of the heart of the redeemed saint, and both tried and, in the case of the early Christians, tested in the fires of persecution. The presence of these two emotions in the redeemed heart verifies true conversion.⁴¹

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-8. The affections for Edwards being a class of “vigorous and sensible exercises of will or inclination,” which were vigorous enough to carry the self beyond indifference to some change in the heart. The affections are signposts indicating the inclination of the heart, towards or away from God. *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, p. 98.

³⁸ *Ibid.* In his Christian psychology the passions do not receive much attention in Edwards’ analysis of the religious affections. It is enough for him to observe that while the affections encompass “all vigorous lively actings of the will or inclination” the passions are more “sudden”, their effects more “violent” and they tend to “overpower” the mind. Edwards does not differentiate between the origins of the affections and passions as does Augustine; there is no “inner” and “outer” man in Edwards’ architecture of the heart. He does, however, acknowledge with Augustine that the affections are less turbulent than the passions, but in the context of religious revival is more concerned to distinguish between genuine and false religious affections than to demonise the passions. Augustine did subsume the passions and affections under the umbrella of love and this unification of the passions and affections under the single principle of love was taken up by Edwards. Edwards equivocated between teaching that passions and affections were movements of the will and that they were faculties of the soul in their own right. At one point Edwards talks of the affections being “moved,” an idea that makes no sense according to the classical view that affections are movements of the will rather than a faculty of their own. (p. 102). There are no discrepancies in their disparagement of the passions, in particular lust and anger drew their opprobrium with both evidencing a deep distrust. Generally speaking, they held the view that before conversion, the passions refuse to defer to reason and tend to dominate the sinful heart, thus guaranteeing that one’s loves will be misdirected and the heart seduced to venture into dangerous places.

³⁹ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, pp. 150-151. So Edwards writes, “The various faculties, principles and affections of the human nature, are as it were many channels from one fountain: if there e sweet water in the fountain, sweet water will from thence flow our into those various channels; but if the water in the fountain be poisonous, then poisonous streams will also flow out into all those channels.”

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95. Of the love to Christ he says of the early Christian martyrs that “they had a supernatural principle of love to something unseen; they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw him spiritually, whom the world

His catalogue of the defining characteristics of true and false religious affections testifies to the importance of the heart in his epistemology since true affections are those which “arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural and divine.”⁴² Holy affections arising in the heart indicate that the believer knows and loves God and ensures full engagement in the business of religion. This understanding of true religion is indispensable he argues, because “God in his word greatly insists on it, that we be in good earnest, fervent in spirit, and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion.”⁴³ It is the heart which is all-important in his spiritual epistemology, but is an inclusive heart that is not devoid of reason.⁴⁴

Contrary to those who rejected the revivals and scorned what they considered excessive emotionalism, Edwards makes the affections which include love, hate, desire, joy, grief, and sorrow an indispensable characteristic of true religion. “True religion,” he says, “in great part, consists in holy affections.” Edwards took up Augustine’s psychological analogy and, accepting that the principal faculties of the soul were the understanding and the will, privileged the will over the understanding insofar as it provided the motivation and impetus for human behaviour. He differentiates between the understanding and will as follows: The former is “The one by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns and judges of things; which is called the understanding,” and the other which “is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers; either is inclined to ‘em, or is disinclined and averse from ‘em;...is sometimes called the inclination: and as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, it is called the will: and the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the heart.”⁴⁵ The will “is that by which the mind chooses anything...an act of will is the same as an act of choosing or choice.”⁴⁶

saw not, and whom they themselves had never seen with bodily eyes.” The foundation of their joy is Christ and it is manifest as “a vastly more pure, sublime and heavenly nature, being something supernatural and truly divine, and so ineffably excellent; the sublimity, and exquisite sweetness of which, there were no words to set forth.” Their minds were filled with “a glorious brightness” which was like the “light of God’s glory, and made ‘em themselves to shine with some communication of that glory.”

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107. “Indeed it cannot be supposed, when this affection of love is here, and in other Scriptures, spoken of as the sum of all religion, that hereby is meant the act exclusive of the habit, or that the exercise of the understanding is excluded, which is implied in all reasonable affection.”

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96

⁴⁶ *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, p. 137.

Edwards appears to be separating understanding and will here, but the distinction is only notional for the purposes of definition. In Edwards' view, the inclination or will or love, is an act of the mind and the heart. The inclination in action is the "will," and when held as an idea in the mind is expressed as the "heart." In practice, the two were virtually indistinguishable. The heart is the mind when faced with a decision based on "liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting."⁴⁷ There is a wide variety of responses to stimuli, but the "more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul"⁴⁸ he calls the affections. In other words, the judgment or inclination of the mind in aversion from or attraction to an object is called the affections. The inclination of the heart is determined by the affections which are "the spring of men's actions."⁴⁹

The will is not an indifferent spectator with regard to what is being viewed; it is either "liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting." In other words, the will is moved beyond indifference by the affections: "in some sense the affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and the will never is in any exercise any further than it is affected." We are driven, attracted, or repulsed by our affections; take away the affections and the world grinds to a halt: "the spring of all this motion would be gone, and the motion itself would cease."⁵⁰ As Wallace E. Anderson remarks, "Edwards wholly rejected the traditional distinction between the will and the affections"⁵¹ something Augustine had done many centuries earlier. Edwards decreed that the genuinely religious affections come from a heart that loves God and they are inseparable from the will.⁵²

The only difference between the will and the affections as far as Edwards and Augustine were concerned is one of degree. Some affections are so feeble that they border on indifference. Strong affections of pleasure incline the will towards love; strongly aversive affections incline the will towards hatred.⁵³ In all cases, the heart, that is the

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.100.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.101. "These affections we see to be the springs that set men agoing, in all the affairs of life..."

⁵¹ Wallace E. Anderson, *Scientific and Philosophical Papers, Works*, 6, p. 129. Edwards intended to include this topic in a later treatise "Subjects to be Handled in the Treatise on the Mind." He writes, "Of the nature of the affections or passions: how only strong and lively exercises of the will; together with the effect on the animal nature." "Subjects," no. 7, p. 388.

⁵² *The Great Awakening, Works*, 4, p. 297. Edwards says, "the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will, as though they were two faculties in the soul. All acts of the affections of the soul are in some sense acts of the will and all acts of the will are acts of the affections."

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-7.

affections and the will, is the prime motivator of human behaviour.⁵⁴ Because the affections involve judgments of the heart in choosing to like or dislike, they are related to ideas in the understanding, so there is no real separation of the faculties in his epistemology. Edwards harmonises knowing God with loving God: "Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge."⁵⁵ Truly gracious affections arise from an enlightened understanding of the "excellent nature of God, and his wonderful perfections" rather than those which arise from seeing someone beautiful, or thinking of a new idea about something.⁵⁶

So firmly does Edwards associate knowing and loving God that he was highly critical of religious affections which did not arise from an understanding of the doctrines of the gospel. "When it is thus" he opined, "it is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high." The only "truly spiritual and gracious affections" are those that "arise from the enlightening of the understanding to understand the things that are taught of God and Christ, in a new manner..."⁵⁷ There had to be an element of instruction in Edwards' vision of gracious affections as for example when Christ "makes the Scripture a means of the heart's burning with gracious affection, 'tis by opening the Scriptures to their understandings."⁵⁸ True spiritual light always gives knowledge of God or Christ to the mind insofar as it reveals something of the excellency of divine things or the truth or mercy of God.⁵⁹

Mere imaginings or speculations were worthless, as were strong feelings which had no foundation in spiritual light. Impressions on the imagination differ from spiritual light in two respects: the object discovered by spiritual light is a spiritual object, that is internal, and as far as his epistemology went "the seat of spiritual light is in the understanding and in

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 266. In the fourth sign of the *Religious Affections*, and basing his argument on 1 John 4:7, Edwards wrote, "Gracious affections do arise from the mind's being enlightened, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things."

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 267-8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ In his sermon "Profitable Hearers of the Word," (1728-29), *Sermons and Discourses, Works*, 14, p. 249. Edwards states that profitable hearers of the Word have a "sensible apprehension of the main things" of God's Word and they believe them. The main things to be understood and believed are: "the glory of God, the excellency and fullness of Jesus Christ, the nature of holiness, and the reason and foundation of duty." See also *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, p. 225. "And so a spiritual application of the promises of Scripture, for the comfort of the saints, consists in enlightening their minds to see the holy excellency and sweetness of the blessings promised..."

the heart...⁶⁰ The whole of the inner life is illuminated by spiritual light in conversion, light which is imparted to the heart by the Holy Spirit as a gift of grace.⁶¹

Edwards' Calvinism taught that knowledge of God came only after God's initiative in warming the heart, but the rising tide of Arminianism seemed to suggest a degree of human autonomy he was not prepared to countenance. In a major treatise written towards the end of his life entitled the *Freedom of the Will*, published in 1754,⁶² Edwards campaigned vigorously against the notion of the free choice of the will in religious epistemology. There is an Augustinian flavour to the author's preface to *Freedom of the Will* in which Edwards remarks that true religion requires knowledge of God and of oneself.⁶³ Such knowledge of oneself consists in having a right appreciation of humanity's two chief faculties, the understanding and the will, and most importantly, the will, because "all virtue and religion have their seat more immediately in the will, consisting more especially in right acts and

⁶⁰ "False Light and True," (1734), *Sermons and Discourses, Works*, 14, p. 135. "But spiritual light don't consist in any impression upon the imagination, but is an exceeding different thing from it...it differs as to the object...and it differs as to the seat of it."

⁶¹ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, pp. 270-271. While people may be affected by "common illuminations of the Spirit of God", that does not constitute true knowledge of God which is "an apprehension or perception, which is in its nature, perfectly diverse from all that natural men have...it consists in the sensations of a new spiritual sense which the saints have given them in regeneration...and the immediate object of it is the supreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things, as they are in themselves."

⁶² Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) had inspired a revolt against the doctrine of predestination in Calvinism, insisting that the will is free to accept or reject God's gracious offer of saving grace. His followers argued that human agents enjoy a kind of freedom that is antideterministic and contingent. Actions had to proceed from a self-determined will in order to be worthy of praise or censure. This understanding of free will is anathema to Calvinists, because it suggests that if humans can choose to reject the offer of salvation, then God's power over the world is limited, or at the very least, his omniscience is threatened. See *The Great Awakening, Works*, 4, pp. 128-29; 147-52. While Calvinist and Arminian are umbrella terms covering a broad spectrum of theological positions within each category, at the heart of the debate is the notion of moral agency: how free or unfree is humanity to choose or reject a course of action? If the universe is determined by the free will of God and everything is preordained including the bias of the will which moves the heart, how is one to apportion praise or blame to any individual action? Arminians argued that this removed responsibility for behaviour and lowered humanity to the status of a beast. The constancy of the debate is highlighted in the following extracts: See Sereno E. Dwight, "Life of President Edwards," vol. I, *Works*, (New York: Converse, 1829), p. 413. In his narrative of 1737 on the "surprising conversions" in Northampton, Edwards writes that about 1734, "began the great noise that was in this part of the country, about Arminianism, which seemed to appear with a very threatening aspect upon the interest of religion here." By 1750, Edwards was to deplore the fact that "Arminianism, and Pelagianism, have made a strange progress within a few years." See also *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, p. 468. In 1757 Edwards wrote a letter to his friend John Erskine concerning the Arminian notion of the "self-determining" will. In the letter he expressed the view that the doctrine of a self-determining will "tends to prevent all dependence" on God and Christ "in the affair of our salvation" because one's righteousness and holiness become dependent on one's own actions.

⁶³ "The Soliloquies," I. 2. 7., in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 26. Edwards' phrase is very reminiscent of Augustine's professed dedication to knowledge of "God and the soul" as the abiding concern of his life.

habits of this faculty.⁶⁴ Edwards' belief that it was not the prerogative of the heart to accept or reject God's offer of salvation; the heart can only know God by divine fiat, finds an earlier exposition in Augustine.

3.3 The Freedom of the Will

In the *Treatise on Religious Affections* Edwards had established that the will was closely tied to the affections and was responsible for the heart's inclination to action. While it was clear that volition was an indispensable characteristic of the heart, many people took exception to Edwards' Calvinist position that God would decide whose heart would be changed. The Calvinist position was that all were sinners, so it was a miracle that God, who needed no-one, decided to save anyone at all. To counter the Arminian perspective on free will, Edwards wrote *Freedom of the Will*. His interest in writing it was decidedly polemical: he wanted to show the difficulties and inconsistencies inherent in "the Arminian notion of liberty of will, consisting in the will's self-determining power."⁶⁵ If he could establish that the will or heart was constrained by sin to only choose lesser goods than God, the Arminian position was completely discredited.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *Freedom of the Will*, Works, 1, p. 133. The central theme of his book "the freedom of the will and moral agency", is found in its title, and this is really the crux of the debate with the Arminians. The full title is *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Vice and Virtue, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame*. Edwards took as his text Romans 9:16, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy." The book is divided into four parts. In the first, Edwards defines terms and deals with topics such as the nature of the will, the determination of the will, natural and moral necessity, inability, and liberty and moral agency; in Part II he critiques the Arminian notion of free will; in the third he considers whether or not free will is essential for moral agency, praise and blame etc...and in the fourth, he continues his analysis of the Arminian position then discusses the divine will with respect to the creation. In his conclusion he outlines probable objections to his Calvinist reading of free will.

⁶⁵ This is the title for Section II, Part I in *Freedom of the Will*. In Eighteenth century New England the Puritan utopia was stoutly Calvinist in temper, but in fact, Arminian ideas had circulated in New England for quite some time. The influence of the Enlightenment, with its catchcry of liberty from tradition and the church had filtered through to Yale but few suspected that apostasy would come from its own rector, Timothy Cutler, who, along with five others, defected to the Anglicans in 1722. Most Anglicans were held to be Arminians, and despite their minority status in the colony, fears of an Anglican take-over were rife. The ensuing uproar heightened fears of a wholesale slide towards Arminian beliefs, and Edwards was quick to enter the lists. His commencement day address of 1723 addressed the evils of Arminianism and he continued to refute its principles throughout his life.

⁶⁶ Conrad Wright believed that Edwards caused immense confusion with his *Freedom of the Will*, mainly because he and his Arminian peers (Locke, Whitby, Watts and Clarke in England, and Dana, and Chauncy in New England), were arguing at cross purposes because they didn't understand each other's terminology. Conrad Wright, "Edwards and the Arminians on Free Will," in *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 35, no. 4, (Oct., 1942), pp. 241-261; 242-251. While agreeing with the Calvinists that humanity is unable to exercise saving faith or to do any good works without regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the Arminians taught that the divine decrees of salvation or damnation were conditional on Christ's foreknowledge of faith in believers. They also argued against the Calvinist position that Christ's atonement was conditional, insisting that the

In many respects, the Arminians resembled the Pelagians with whom Augustine disagreed. The implication of volitional autonomy was that if one was free to choose, then with the assistance of divine grace, one could not only choose salvation but be able to live a morally virtuous life. Neither Edwards nor Augustine supported this view. Fallen humans are incapable of doing anything acceptable in God's sight without grace, that is the love which is the Holy Spirit infused in the heart. The Arminians agreed that grace was indispensable for faith, but it was not irresistible as the Calvinists believed it to be. Paul Ramsey rightly sums up the Calvinist-Arminian debate as one of opposing concepts of grace.⁶⁷

Edwards' position regarding the intractability of the will in the spiritual life can be discerned in some of his earliest writings. The apparent contradiction in the idea that the will was free to choose but only God dispensed grace to enable a choice is summed up in his contention that "Tis entirely in a man's power to submit to Jesus Christ as a Saviour if he will, but the thing is, it never will be that he should will it, except God works it in him."⁶⁸ The only way in which one is able to submit to Christ and so obtain saving grace is by the "almighty power of the Holy Spirit of God" which changes the will's orientation. In an early definition of the will, he introduced an image that was to become a familiar one in the *Religious Affections*; the idea of the will as "the first spring of the voluntary exertions of active power in man, and the cause of it."⁶⁹

At the heart of the discussion of free will are two key issues for Edwards, the sovereignty of God, and the inadmissibility of the Arminian preference for the autonomy of the will. These two propositions also dominate Augustine's doctrine of the will. There are no secondary causes in Edwards' theories of the will, no possible hint of contingency because God is in control of every single moment of existence. That made it easy for

atonement made possible, if not actual, the salvation of all. From an Arminian perspective, it seemed frightful to believe, as the Calvinists did, that God has simply elected some for salvation and others for damnation irrespective of moral virtue. People, so the Arminians argued, retain some natural ability to choose for or against God's gracious offer of salvation in Christ

⁶⁷ Paul Ramsay, "Editor's Introduction," to *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, p. 3. "As irresistibility was the distinguishing mark of Calvinism, so was conditionalism of Arminianism."

⁶⁸ One of his first notes on free will is found in the *Miscellanies*. It was most probably written in the late summer of 1723, when he was twenty years old and about to receive his MA from Yale. His most important ideas on the will are well established in his thinking at this point, and the Trinitarian emphasis is clearly evident. In "Miscellany," no. 71, his first claim is the apparent contradiction that God requires nothing of a person that is not within a person's own power, and yet it is impossible that anyone should do what is necessary for salvation. "Miscellany," no. 71, "Free Will", in *Works*, 13, p. 238. Altogether Edwards has seventeen entries on Free Will in the *Miscellanies*.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

Edwards to link necessity with God's foreknowledge so that he could say that all acts of will have a cause. In philosophical terms, Edwards was a compatibilist, that is he combined freedom and necessity, but as Allen Guelzo remarks, "necessity clearly played the dominant role and liberty served to explain necessity's operations."⁷⁰ The same could be said of Augustine.

Edwards addressed a number of sub-themes in his polemic against Arminianism that stem from his view of the un-free heart as the primary seat of volition. These are motivation, necessity and inability, the notion of infinite regress, indifference and God's foreknowledge. His starting point is the identification of the intellect which chooses with the will which acts. His definition of the will is quite straightforward. The will is "the power or principle of mind by which it is capable of choosing: an act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice."⁷¹ The will does not act as though it were independent of the person in whom it resides; it is simply an expression for a person's power of choosing. The person does the choosing not the will.

There is a close resemblance to Augustine in Edwards' insistence that one only wills what one desires, and that desires involve choice. Before any act, the heart moves from a state of indifference or equilibrium to choose that which it desires most from a number of alternatives.⁷² The heart does what it loves most. This action upon desire is part of Edwards' explanation for the doctrine of election. Since the heart (i.e. the will and the affections), which influences preferment is bent by its attraction to the creation rather than the Creator, it is impossible to will the good. The moral ability to choose is hopelessly compromised by original sin, and even the so-called "good" choices of the unredeemed avail for nought because they are a product of "a bad will, or an evil disposition of heart" which in "itself, is wickedness."⁷³ Edwards is particularly incensed with those who blame their "wicked dispositions of heart" on God himself, or who seek to justify themselves as controlling their own salvation. There can be "no renovation of the heart" according to

⁷⁰ Allen C. Guelzo, "Freedom of the Will," in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed., Sang Hyun Lee (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 126.

⁷¹ *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1. p. 137.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁷³ Letter to John Erskine, August 3, 1757, in "Related Correspondence," in *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, p. 467.

Edwards, "if growing good by a number of self-determined acts, are all that is required, or to be expected."⁷⁴

Repeating the argument he had used in the *Religious Affections*, Edwards re-united the faculties in his view of simple and complex motives that are not to be thought of as exerting an independent influence on actions. All motives must come before the "view or apprehension of the understanding, or perceiving faculty" in order to "induce the mind to will or act something."⁷⁵ The will is part of a larger whole which incorporates the understanding and the affections before the strongest motive is decided upon. The mind or heart, must evaluate or judge which desired action is to be preferred and acted upon; it is not simply an affectional response.

The unitary nature of the mind in willing is apparent in Edwards' explanation of the determined will, which is always determined by the strongest motive. In the end, will and the perceived good are one. Edwards is quite emphatic in his association of willing and what appears to be the most desirable choice when he says "that the Will always is as the greatest apparent good, or as what appears as most agreeable", rather "than to say that the Will is determined by the greatest apparent Good, ...because an appearing most agreeable or pleasing to the Mind, and the Mind's preferring and choosing, seem hardly to be properly and perfectly distinct."⁷⁶ "Good" in this context is the same as "pleasing to the mind"⁷⁷ since "no-one acts contrary to his desire, or desires anything contrary to his will"⁷⁸ That which the mind prefers, it wills.

Edwards postulates three factors that influence the mind's judgment: the object in view, the degree of assent with which the mind judges the probability of a future pleasure, and the state of the mind that views the object. He concludes the section on the determination of the will by reaffirming that an act of willing necessarily involves the understanding; it can in fact be said that "the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding" where the understanding must be seen in a "large sense, as including the

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 470.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144. See also Ryan D. Tweney, "Jonathan Edwards and Determinism," in *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 33, 4, (1997), pp. 365-380. p. 370. Tweney interprets Edwards' psychological account of human action in terms of Newtonian determinism and Lockean theories of the will and the faculties, as opposed to the mechanistic determinism of Leibnitz.

⁷⁷ *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, p. 142.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

whole faculty of perception or apprehension, and not merely what is called reason or judgment.”⁷⁹ It is the whole heart that determines a course of action.

Despite Edwards’ frequent references to necessity, ability and inability with respect to the will there is no sense of compulsion in the illustrations he gives for these terms. No one is deprived of freedom of action. In his discussion on liberty and moral agency, Edwards shows that acts of will or volitions, as he calls them, are the effects of antecedent causes which in turn become causes of further acts of choice. Edwards strongly disagreed with the Arminian claim that the will is self determining; that is acts of the will are determined by choice and this is what makes them free. If the will freely determines itself in all its acts, then each act of will is preceded by another free act. Move behind the surface of the freedom to choose in search of “free-will” and there lurks an infinite regress of fruitless deception; an endless movement to find the cause behind the cause *ad infinitum* until no further causes are left but the first cause which is not self-determined, truly a *reductio ad absurdum*. The will cannot cause itself and acts of will are free only in the sense that what determines choices is what one want to do, and can do; that is, something in our own moral character as opposed to some moral constraint or inability.⁸⁰

For Edwards’ then, freedom is concerned with the relation between willing and its consequences. If every “free” decision is determined by some prior inclination of the heart, then having liberty did not free the will from its dependence on the heart. When we have the freedom to do as we please, when a choice to do an action results in our doing the action, then we have free will but it is limited in scope. Freedom of the will in Edwards’ theology is simply freedom to be physically able to effect the will’s intentions, “being free

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 148. In this case Edwards has included some degree of the affections in the understanding. This is based on his view that “in every act, or going forth of the will, there is some preponderation of the mind, or inclination, one way rather than another.” (p. 140) There is an intimate connection between the understanding and the will. Edwards was not an innovator with respect to viewing the faculties of will and intellect as united. Locke and other Puritans shared that understanding. Some favoured a semi-Augustinian notion of the will and intellect being the one characteristic of the higher soul, reason, that which Augustine called “the inner man.” William Ames, quoted in Norman S. Fiering, “Will and Intellect in the New England Mind,” p. 520. William Ames the celebrated Puritan theologian with whom Edwards was most familiar held that the difference between the intellect and will was only notional: “Will is intellect as external, for the purpose of possessing and asking what it knows. Intellect is will as immanent, for the purpose of understanding.” (Ames, p. 520). Edwards’ Augustinian contribution was to highlight the place of the affections in the will and to subsume the affections and the will with a dash of understanding (perception or apprehension), under the umbrella of “heart.”

⁸⁰ *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, pp. 430-39. At the conclusion of *Freedom of the Will*, Edwards showed how his conception of “natural ability” when linked to “moral necessity” confirmed traditional Calvinist doctrines including the doctrine of efficacious grace.

from hindrance or impediment on the way of doing...as he wills.”⁸¹ It is freedom of action, not free will. The only way to talk about free will is to allow that one is free to do what one wants to do, given that it is only to follow ones’ own strongest inclination without natural hindrances.⁸²

Edwards’ adapted his understanding of the connection between the inevitability of moral cause and effect to explain the inadequacy of the Arminian notion of faith and grace as the consequence of human free will. Original sin decreed that all human choices are flawed; willing to love God and to choose faith is impossible for sinful humanity.⁸³ The Calvinist notion of irresistible grace is the only way that Edwards could conceive of the possibility of faith. His meaning of the irresistibility of grace had nothing to do with resistance from a human point of view. Grace is irresistible in the sense that it abolishes the resistance of the will and inclines the will. Grace does not create opposition in the will and then empower the will to overcome it. “As soon as ever divine grace enters, the man is willing.”⁸⁴ Ultimately, the will is only rescued by grace which is irresistible; to think otherwise, in Edwards’ opinion, is “perfect nonsense,” because once the will is changed by grace to have faith in God, it cannot will against itself to refuse grace.⁸⁵

In Edwards’ understanding of the act of faith, there is a necessary moral connection between grace and act, not as the Arminians suggest by choosing faith, but by receiving grace in the heart as “a new sense of the heart” which enables faith. Edwards concluded that the will is not an independent faculty possessing a liberty of its own. The doctrine of original sin ensures that there is an inherent moral necessity behind sinning and an inherent moral inability to will the good and do it. Moral inability however, doesn’t excuse the failure to do good in Edwards’ eyes.⁸⁶ The choice is either an uncaused will which leads to contingency and chaos, or a divinely appointed will. Thus Edwards was able to commend the Calvinist alternative of efficacious grace and divinely determined faith.⁸⁷ In

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 163–4. Any notion of the irresistibility of the will is “perfect nonsense.” “The very first effect of saving grace that touches the will is to abolish its resistance and to incline the will....Opposition of the will is overcome by divine grace or rather abolished.”

Dihle, *The Theory of the Will in Classical Antiquity*, p. 130 notes: “In a state of sin, perverted will chooses the worse, regardless of whether the owner knows better. Even virtuous deeds are worthless, since they don’t include the neighbour.”

⁸³ *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, p. 160.

⁸⁴ The “Miscellanies,” no. 665 “Irresistible Grace,” *Works*, 13, p. 211

⁸⁵ The “Miscellanies,” no. o, (1722). *Works*, 13, pp. 170–71.

⁸⁶ *Freedom of the Will, Works*, 1, pp. 432–433.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 188–89, 235, 270, 344.

Augustine's words, there is *liberum arbitrium*, but no *libertas*. Without grace, the heart is not free to love God for himself. Conversion of the will results in the saints being given spiritual understanding in the form of a "new spiritual sense" in the heart which enables them to believe and love the doctrines of the Bible concerning sin and salvation through the work of the triune God.

3.4 Divine Illumination and the Sense of the Heart

Like Augustine, Edwards believed that spiritual knowledge of God was entirely a work of God in the heart whereby divine illumination discloses the reality of the triune nature of God and thus overcomes spiritual blindness. Illumination takes the form of a distinctive and unique Christian experience of God's grace in the heart that is identified by a sense of "sweetness." God is immediately present to believers who participate in the divine life, much in the same way as envisaged by Augustine. Then the converted heart knows God's beauty and holiness as a "new spiritual sense," "a new simple idea" or a "sense of the heart," which is qualitatively distinct from other kinds of sensible knowledge.⁸⁸

Some scholars see Edwards' understanding of the new sense not as a sixth sense to the other five mental faculties, but as continuous with what is already known, albeit hidden for a while. Those who favour continuity see the new sense as a question of a deeper insight into spiritual things, rather than an "epistemological cleavage between the regenerate and unregenerate," as did those favouring discontinuity.⁸⁹ From what follows, there seems little doubt that like Augustine, Edwards advocated "an epistemological cleavage" between knowledge of God and knowledge of the sensory world that could only be overcome by an influx of divine love or grace to change the fundamental disposition of the heart.

⁸⁸ Edwards uses all three of these terms for spiritual knowledge of God. Strictly speaking, "a new spiritual sense" best describes his understanding of the supernatural gift of grace in the person of the Holy Spirit who enlightens the mind or heart. The new sense can apply to unregenerate people as well as regenerate. In "Miscellany," no. 782, *Works*, 18, pp. 458-461, Edwards points out that both sinners and saints possess a "sense of the heart" with respect to apprehending ideas as pleasant or unpleasant. He also distinguishes between speculation as in purely head knowledge, and sensible knowledge that involves the will or inclination. Only the Holy Spirit of God can impart true spiritual knowledge to the heart. See also *Religious Affections*, *Works*, 2, pp. 208-230. With respect to Edwards' new spiritual sense, John E. Smith, in his Introduction to the Yale edition of *Religious Affections*, suggests that "no idea in all of Edwards' works is more original and no doctrine was more far reaching in its influence upon the course of Puritan piety." John E. Smith, "Editor's Introduction," *Works*, 2, p. 30.

⁸⁹ Michael J. McClymond, *Encounters With God*, p. 9.

Perry Miller was among the first to see some of John Locke's epistemological theories surfacing in Edwards, but he failed to see that Edwards' approach to metaphysics used Locke's sensationalist psychological terminology to present radically different ideas from Locke.⁹⁰ Edwards agreed to talk about religious knowledge in the language of Locke's "new simple ideas," but insisted that religious knowledge is of an entirely different order than sensationalist psychology suggested, and needed another sense to apprehend it. True knowledge of God was to be found in the heart. Natural people can understand new simple ideas, but natural people cannot of their own volition or reasoning understand religious knowledge which is the product of a divine infusion of grace into the heart of a believer.⁹¹ In adopting Locke's sensationalist psychology Edwards used it to prove that knowledge of God could be, was in fact, a direct intuition or experience of God's love in the heart that changed the perception of God's beauty and excellency and altered the understanding to enable belief in the teachings of the Bible.

Although impressed with Locke's use of empiricism to talk about ideas in the language of sensationalism, the problem in religious epistemology for Edwards was to explain the supernatural occurrence that he believed conversion to be in the terminology of Lockean empiricism. Their differing emphases are seen in their definitions of epistemology. Locke defines knowledge as "the perception of the connection of and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas."⁹² Further distancing himself from Locke, Edwards definition of knowledge is not the perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas but rather "the perception of the union or disunion of ideas, or the perceiving whether two or more ideas belong to one another."⁹³ Edwards anchored his spiritual epistemology in concepts such as union, agreement, consent, and harmony, concepts which tend towards a more aesthetic appreciation of knowledge.

⁹⁰ Perry Miller, "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart," in *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 41, no. 2, (1949), pp. 123-145. Miller notes "how complete was his conversion to the empirical, sensational psychology of John Locke." (p. 124).

⁹¹ The "Miscellanies," no. 782, "Ideas, Sense of the Heart, Spiritual Knowledge or Conviction, Faith," in *Works*, 18, p. 461. "but the exciting a sense of things pertaining to our eternal interest, is a thing that we are so far from, and so unable to attain of ourselves, by reason of the alienation of the inclination and natural dispositions of the soul from those things as they are, and the sinking of our intellectual powers, and the great subjection of the soul in its fallen state to the external senses, that a due sense of those things is never attained without immediate divine assistance. 'Tis in this that the ordinary work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men consists, ..."

⁹² John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk 4, 1, ed., Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 562.

⁹³ "The Mind," no. 71, in *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, *Works*, 6, p. 385.

Edwards' definition also allowed for more latitude in the area of perception: Ideas did not have to be identical for knowledge to be accessible and he applied this logic to knowledge of God which is verified by the heart.

His notion that religious knowledge located in the heart could hold sway over an idea in the understanding seemed preposterous to many of his contemporaries. What most of his detractors failed to grasp was that he regarded spiritual understanding, his new spiritual sense, as an idea rather than a feeling. That meant the experience of spiritual regeneration could be regarded as similar to other ideas in the mind that are sensible to the understanding, but in Edwards' epistemology, were experienced in the heart as a new conception of holiness.⁹⁴ The difference between Locke's new simple idea and Edwards' use of the new spiritual idea was the latter's supernatural origin, but according to Edwards' explanation, it was no less valid than an ordinary idea in the mind and could not therefore be dismissed as mere emotionalism.

He set out his initial insights into the nature of true religious experience and knowledge as a matter of the heart in a long entry in "Miscellany" no. 782.⁹⁵ There are two ways of thinking about ideas in Edwards' spiritual epistemology; the first is purely cognitive and based on signs "without any proper apprehension of the things thought of."⁹⁶ The second is that "more nearly called apprehension, wherein the mind has a direct ideal view, or contemplation of the thing thought of."⁹⁷ This direct view of the ideas is either of "things that pertain to the understanding, that is discerning, judging or speculation"; or it pertains to "the other faculty of the will, or what is figuratively called the heart, whereby things are pleasing or displeasing, including all agreeableness and disagreeableness, all beauty and deformity, all pleasure and pain, and all those sensations, exercises and passions of the mind that arise from either of those."⁹⁸ The "ideal apprehension or view" of the idea that includes the affections is what Edwards terms a "sense" and it is found in the heart.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, pp. 271. "For if there be in the saints a kind of apprehension or perception, which is in its nature, perfectly diverse from all that natural men have, or that it is possible they should have, till they have anew nature; it must consist in their having a certain kind of ideas or sensations of mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men."

⁹⁵ The "Miscellanies," no. 782, in *Works*, 18, pp. 452-466.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 459-460.

Starting from a distinction between speculative and sensible or practical knowledge, the former being head knowledge and the latter consisting in a sense of the heart,¹⁰⁰ Edwards argues that there is no influence of the will or feeling of the heart in speculative knowledge, be it ideal apprehension or not.¹⁰¹ There is no suggestion, however, that either Edwards or Augustine disparaged the understanding. In a sermon from 1739 Edwards insists that without speculative knowledge there can be no sensible knowledge. “Neither of these is intended in the doctrine exclusively of the other: but it is intended that we should seek the former in order to the latter.”¹⁰²

Understanding that does involve a sense of the heart is not merely speculative but is sensible knowledge and incorporates the affections or the will, that is the heart. In fact, Edwards argues that the only objects worthy to be known are those known by the heart with respect to good and evil and human happiness. He adds as a caveat, that not all sensible heart knowledge is saving knowledge of God.¹⁰³ Again, the notion of a new kind of knowledge of God imparted by grace is paralleled in Augustine’s division of the knowledge accessible to the inner man through *sapientia*, into that which includes knowledge of the intelligible world and divine illumination imparting knowledge of God.¹⁰⁴

There is a further sub-division in Edwards’ discussion of sensible knowledge into natural and Spirit influenced knowledge. Natural knowledge pertains to the mundane, while Spiritual knowledge relates to ideas about God. Edwards goes a step further than Augustine in making a distinction in the work of the Holy Spirit between imparting ordinary and extraordinary knowledge of God. The work of ordinary knowledge of God consists in “giving a sense of spiritual and eternal things, or things that appertain to the business of

¹⁰⁰ *The Trinity*, “Forward to Books IX-XIV,” *WSA*, 1/5, p. 263. This division is faintly analogous to Augustine’s notion of knowledge accessible to the outer and inner man

¹⁰¹ The “Miscellanies,” no. 782, in *Works*, 18, p. 459.

¹⁰² “The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth,” in *Sermons and Discourses*, *Works*, 22, pp.87-89. To re-iterate his point about the need for speculative as well as sensible knowledge of God, Edwards uses a similar argument to Augustine’s in Book 8 of *The Trinity*, namely that one cannot love what one does not know. There must be some intellectual knowledge of God before there is any possibility of faith and love. *The Trinity*, VIII. 6-9, *WSA*, 1/ 5, pp. 245-248.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, In Edwards’ epistemology speculative understanding is that without “any ideal apprehension or view, or all understanding of mental things of either faculty that is only by signs...or appertain only to the faculty of understanding.” All knowledge that comes from a new sense of the heart is related to the good or evil that the sensible knowledge of these things involves, and nothing can be called sensible knowledge unless it include “the sense, or kind of inward tasting or feeling, of sweetness or pleasure, bitterness or pain, that is implied in it, or arises from it.”

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, XII. 25, *WSA*, 1/5, p. 336.

religion and our eternal interest.”¹⁰⁵ This assists the “natural principles” of the heart to comprehend a sense of natural good and evil, “without infusing something supernatural.”¹⁰⁶ It is possible to have a sense of the heart concerning things of religion that is dependent on sensible knowledge but is not indicative of a redemptive work of the Spirit of God. In redemption the “extraordinary influence of the Spirit of God...imparts speculative knowledge to the soul” so that “sensible knowledge of the things of religion with respect to their spiritual good or evil” becomes the saint’s possession.¹⁰⁷

In Edwards’ terms, spiritual good includes all moral good, all moral beauty and excellency and “that sense of the heart that relates to it” by virtue of desire, relish, delight and happiness. The latter come only by immediate divine assistance because of the “alienation of the inclination and natural dispositions of the soul from those things as they are.” Any spiritual influence on the hearts of the saints is “wholly and entirely a work of the Spirit of God, not merely assisting and co-working with natural principles, but as infusing something above nature.”¹⁰⁸ The truth of divine revelation is imparted immediately as a divine intuition or idea in the heart giving “an absolute sort of certainty; and the knowledge is in a sense intuitive much in the same manner as faith and spiritual knowledge of the truth of religion.”¹⁰⁹

In the Scriptural citations used to substantiate his depiction of the new sense of the heart, Edwards insists that knowledge of God must be “entirely different in nature and kind” for the saints who have “knowledge of God, and a sight of God, and of Jesus Christ,” than that granted to the ungodly.¹¹⁰ The giving of knowledge is an arbitrary gift of God,

¹⁰⁵ The “Miscellanies,” no. 782, *Works* 18, p. 462.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 464.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ “Miscellany,” no. 782, *Works*, 18, p. 463. Edwards transformed Locke’s assertion that the mind is furnished with a great number of simple ideas conveyed in by the senses as they are found in external things, by suggesting that the whole of reality exists as an “idea” in the mind of God. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II. 23, p. 295. See “The Mind” nos. 27; 34; 61 and “Things to be Considered and Written fully about” in *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, *Works*, 6, no. 44, pp. 350; 353; 376-80; and 238 resp. The whole world is an ideal world. The reality, solidity, and permanence of created things exist only in the mind of God, and in fact “substance” belongs only to God, not to the material world; all else is an idea in God’s mind. Only God can give reality and meaning to the universe. Sensation is the apprehension of the ideas God is pleased to communicate to humanity, and truth, is nothing less than the “consistency and agreement of our ideas with the ideas of God.” See “The Mind,” no. 10, in *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, *Works*, 6, pp. 341-342.

¹⁰⁹ The Mind,” no. 28, in *Works*, 6, p. 346.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* Edwards cites 1 John 3:6; 3 John 11; John 14:19 and John 17:3 in support of his point that knowledge of God involves a new vision of God. In a sermon on John 15:5 Edwards says that Christ “is the fountain of spiritual knowledge. Tis his office to teach and instruct us in divine things... Tis because Christ is the original

imparted by the Son Jesus Christ as his sole prerogative: "True faith arises from a spiritual sight of Christ," which for Edwards is synonymous with seeing Christ's divine glory in a more profound way than disclosed in the Transfiguration.¹¹¹

Edwards revised the whole notion of spiritual epistemology by including the affections of the heart in a new and valid category for knowing God, but in so doing, he was only repeating what Augustine had discovered many centuries earlier. Cognition and volition interact in the reception of faith which is discerned in the heart as the gift of the Holy Spirit. The influx of grace enlightens the heart of the sinner to see God's glory and renews the understanding so that it can discern the truth of rational arguments for belief. This is effected in two ways: by removing prejudices and by assisting the mind to grasp the basic tenets of the faith.

That spiritual light that is let into the soul by the Spirit of God discovering the excellency and glory of divine things, it not only directly evidences the truth of religion to the mind, as this divine glory is an evident stamp of divinity and truth; but it sanctifies the reasoning faculty and assists it to see the clear evidence there is of the truth of religion in rational arguments, and that two ways, viz., as it removes prejudices and ...as it positively enlightens and assists it to see the clear evidence there is of the truth of religion in rational arguments.¹¹²

The whole person is engaged in the simultaneous movement of passionate reason and intellectual affection in the business of coming to a saving knowledge of God. There is no lineal progression from head to heart; it is a simultaneous unification of perception and love that comes from a new heart.¹¹³

of this spiritual light that he is called the sun of righteousness." Unpublished sermon on John 15: 5, Jonathan Edwards Centre, Yale Divinity School, pp. 9-10.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 418. His proof text is 2 Cor. 4:6. Parallel to the recognition of Christ's glory is believing the truths of religion. Two other sermons in which Edwards dealt with the topic of divine illumination are "Christ the Light of the World", Works, 14, pp. 535-546, and "False Light and True", in Works, 14, pp. 122-142.

¹¹² The "Miscellanies," no. 628, "Spiritual Knowledge. Faith," in Works, 18, pp. 156-157.

¹¹³ Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, p. 167. The "Miscellanies," no. 1340, "Reason and Revelation," in Works, vol. 23, pp. 359-376. Edwards expands on his view of the relationship between the faculties in *Miscellany* 1340. In this *Miscellany* written in response to the Deist Matthew Tindal, he argues that the two faculties of the mind, the understanding and the will, are not mutually exclusive but are both manifestations of divine communication. "In different senses," he says, "they are a divine word," no less than "the voice of God to intelligent creatures" is "a manifestation and declaration of himself to mankind." In this "Miscellany" *Reason and Revelation*, written in response to the Deist Matthew Tindal, Edwards defines Reason as "that power or faculty an intelligent being has to judge of the truth of propositions, either immediately, by only looking on the propositions, which is judging by intuition and self-evidence; or by putting together several propositions which are already evident by intuition, or at least whose evidence is originally derived from intuition." Edwards does allow that reason can discern and sometimes even prove

The content of Edward's "new simple idea" was holiness. Believers were given a completely new idea of God's Trinitarian being as holiness and love when they received the Holy Spirit into the heart at conversion. In effect, Edwards said that believers perceived spiritual truths as "sensible" ideas in the heart that could be known as readily as a person knows honey to be sweet.¹¹⁴ His thinking on the unitive nature of the "new spiritual sense" is set out in a fairly lengthy passage in his account of the fourth of the distinguishing signs of religious affection. The emphasis is both aesthetic and intellectual in his articulation of the new sense of the heart as an idea of "the holiness of moral perfection of divine things" that is associated with a sensuous sweetness and delight that is felt in the heart.

Spiritual understanding consists primarily in a sense of heart of that spiritual beauty. I say, a sense of heart; for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding: nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will as acting distinctly and separately, in this matter. When the mind is sensible of the sweet beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensibleness of sweetness and delight in the presence of the idea of it: and this sensibleness of the amiableness or delightfulness of beauty, carries in the very nature of it, the sense of the heart; or an effect and impression the soul is the subject of, as a substance possessed of taste, inclination and will.¹¹⁵

His summary of the new sense of the heart is that "The mind "don't only speculate and behold, but relishes and feels."¹¹⁶ "Relishing and feeling" were part of the language of his spiritual epistemology as indeed they were for Augustine who spoke of "tasting" God in the "palate of the heart" (*palatum cordis*).¹¹⁷ This new kind of knowledge is not that of the sciences or mathematics which is purely speculative; it is heart or soul knowledge involving both the aversative or appetitive affections. Edwards likens the heart knowledge of spiritual things with the knowledge of the taste of honey. There is an added dimension,

natural truths about God, e.g. God's existence, but these are not saving truths. If people are not "led by revelation and direct teaching into a right way of using their reason, in arguing from effects to causes, ...they would remain forever in the most woeful doubt and uncertainty concerning the nature and the very being of God."

¹¹⁴ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, p. 272.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ "Psalm 61. 1," in *WSA*, III/17, p. 202. "All the utterances of God are to us a delight. The sweetness that we find in his word is to us an inducement to speak, and to you an incentive to listen, so that with the help of him who grants us such exquisite enjoyment, our land may yield its fruit. I can see that you do not find it tedious to listen, for the palate of your heart is a discerning one..."

“the nature of instruction” for the one who has tasted honey as well as looked at it or felt it.¹¹⁸

The new sense of divine love in the heart is referred to as “a holy and divine principle in the heart.” In Chapter three of his *Treatise on Grace* (1739-43). Edwards notes that it is not only from the Spirit of God but is in itself a “spiritual” principle “of the nature of God.” This spiritual principle is the divine nature which is communicated to the believer upon conversion, and it is a form of knowledge which enlightens the heart. He elaborates on the significance of “spiritual” in pointing out that in Col. 1:9, saving knowledge is called “spiritual understanding.” It is spiritual because it pertains to the Spirit of God, and being understanding, is a form of knowledge. Since all “understanding has its seat in the soul,” this new understanding is not to be confused with the knowledge of God available to the unregenerate. Many people have some knowledge of God or profess to have knowledge of God, but this falls under the rubric of “common grace,” and it is not saving grace.¹¹⁹ The natural human faculties operate alongside the divine light but “as the subject and not the cause.”¹²⁰

In his classic sermon on Matthew 16:17, *A Divine and Supernatural Light*.¹²¹ (1733) Edwards develops his main epistemological assertion that a saving knowledge of God is beyond the faculty of understanding and is dependent on divine illumination. It must evoke a response of the heart to be valid. In the context of Peter’s recognition that Jesus is the Christ, Edwards suggests that Peter is doubly blessed. First, because he knows who Christ is, and second, because his knowledge is of a supernatural kind. Peter’s new found knowledge comes by way of an immediate impartation of spiritual knowledge to the heart, quite unlike other forms of knowledge which come through intermediaries.¹²²

In his section on doctrine in the sermon, Edwards outlines what the divine light is, how it is given by God and not by natural means, and lastly demonstrates the truth of the doctrine. Common grace, that which is natural, gives only natural light “to assist natural

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* The Cambridge Platonist John Smith expresses similar thinking in his reaction to Psalm 34.8 “Taste and see how good the Lord is.” Knowledge of God is a “Spiritual sensation,” and the “best and truest knowledge of God “is that “which is kindled within us by an heavenly warmth in our hearts.” See “The True Way or Method of Attaining to Divine Knowledge,” in *The Cambridge Platonists*, pp. 128-129.

¹¹⁹ “Treatise on Grace,” in *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, in *Works*, 21, p. 178.

¹²⁰ “A Divine and Supernatural Light,” in *Sermons and Discourses*, *Works*, 17, p. 416.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 405-426.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 409.

principles, and not as infusing any new principles.”¹²³ In conversion, however, “those things are wrought in the soul that are above nature...principles are restored that were utterly destroyed by the fall.”¹²⁴ The Spirit of God acts upon the saints as “an indwelling, vital principle” going so far as to “unite himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new, supernatural principle of life and action.”¹²⁵ The way in which the Holy Spirit who “operates in the mind of the godly” achieves this “new supernatural principle” is by “living in them, and exerting his own nature in the exercise of their faculties.”¹²⁶ The spiritual and divine light is not to be confused with the imagination, or new truths; its only function is to give a “real sense and apprehension of the divine excellency of things revealed in the Word of God.”¹²⁷ Those possessing this new sense of divine excellency have “the sense of the heart: as when there is a sense of the beauty, amiableness, or sweetness of a thing; so that the heart is sensible of pleasure and delight in the presence of the idea of it.”¹²⁸

Edwards’ spiritual epistemology displays a strong aesthetic component. True knowledge of God has to do with a new simple idea of the “beauty, amiableness and sweetness” of God as well as familiarity with doctrinal propositions. There is no “either-or” dichotomy. Heart knowledge complements “speculative or notional” knowledge of God. The cognitive aspect in Edwards’ use of “heart” is expressed in terms of “sense” as it pertains to physical sensation or the apprehension of divine realities. The difference between knowing God in the understanding and knowing God in the heart is similar to the difference between knowing that honey is sweet and tasting its sweetness, or knowing that someone is beautiful by hearsay, and then seeing them.¹²⁹ Both ideas are true, but the new sense of the heart of the *Religious Affections* combines both kinds of knowledge and is qualitatively different from all affections that arise in the heart of a natural person.

In addition to being the paramount indicator of true conversion, this new sense in the heart assists the understanding to apprehend the truth of rational arguments supporting the

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 410. “Common grace only assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully which they do by nature” Common grace enhances that which is already there following the habitual pattern of behaviour.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 414. A similar illustration appears in the first sign of a truly religious affection in *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, p. 208.

biblical revelation.¹³⁰ Only the immediate intuition or apprehension of the superlative beauty and excellency of the truth of God's words convinces believers of their veracity and gives them cause to "see divinity in them."¹³¹ Edwards is not saying that the word of Scripture itself causes the light to bring knowledge to the mind. Reason cannot give that sense of divine beauty or excellency because its provenance is "truth and not excellency."¹³² The "sense of the heart" that comes with conversion is indicative of the simultaneous, interdependent action of the cognitional and volitional activities in understanding spiritual realities.¹³³ It is the decisive foundation for religious certainty because it is testament to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart who enlightens the understanding.¹³⁴ Rather than acting as the cause of the enlightenment of the heart, the understanding is acted upon as the subject, just as the eyes are enabled to see things by the light of the sun. In that instance, the eyes don't cause the light but see things by it.¹³⁵

The greatness of God's gift of an immediate apprehension of the divine beauty, excellency and glory of God in the face of Christ is borne out by Edwards' observation that even the unlearned can know God in this way, something that Augustine had remarked upon immediately prior to his own conversion.¹³⁶ Edwards is convinced that it is reasonable to suppose that God gives knowledge of these spiritual truths immediately to the heart rather than using natural means. Since spiritual wisdom and grace are the highest gifts of God, are "so much of God, of his nature, so much a participation of the Deity: 'tis a kind of emanation of God's beauty, and is related to God as the light is to the sun,"¹³⁷ they should be given immediately as opposed to the secondary causation which operates in the

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* "The powers of the soul are more awakened, and enlivened to employ themselves in the contemplation of them, and exert themselves more fully and much more to purpose." Edwards sees the understanding of difficult doctrines after conversion as evidence of growth in holiness in a sermon on 1 Peter 2:2-3. "his Reason is become more Entirely subject to divine Revelation than it used to be. He can more Entirely acquiesce in the truth of these doctrines that are most mysterious and that treat of things most beyond sense and Reason." Jonathan Edwards Centre, Yale Divinity School, p. 42.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 415. "The powers of the soul are more awakened, and enlivened to employ themselves in the contemplation of them, and exert themselves more fully and much more to purpose."

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 423.

¹³³ *Religious Affections. Works*, 2, p. 272. "I say sense of the heart; for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding: not can there be a clear distinction made between the faculties of understanding and will as acting distinctly and separately in this matter."

¹³⁴ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, pp. 205-208, 417. "the notions that are the subject matter of this light, are conveyed to the mind by the Word of God; but that due sense of the heart, wherein this light formally consists, is immediately by the Spirit of God."

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 416.

¹³⁶ See Ch. One, n. 266, p. 44.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

natural world. The immediate sense of God's presence in the heart is a sense of "sweetness."

In the *Religious Affections*, Edwards gives four good reasons why seekers after knowledge of God should pursue conversion, the fourth being that knowledge of God brings a sense of "sweetness" to the heart.¹³⁸ This concept of a spiritual sense of "sweetness" is derived from a devotional tradition going back to the Song of Solomon, or the Canticles as the Puritans called it, and was evidence of spiritual knowledge of God.¹³⁹ Edwards vocabulary of "sweetness" is commonplace throughout his works, and especially so in his conversion account where "sweet" or its cognates occurs 55 times.¹⁴⁰ Divine knowledge helps the saints to "relish or taste the sweetness of the divine relation"¹⁴¹ in the heart. In the *Personal Narrative*, it is the Spirit of God who gives Edwards a glorious vision of God the Father as "an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul: pouring forth itself in sweet communications, like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life."¹⁴²

The "sweet communications" of the Holy Spirit constitute spiritual understanding and help to validate true religion in Edwards' spiritual epistemology. Divine light reveals the glory, excellency and beauty of God before the saints contemplate any benefits to be gained from union with God. Their first experience of joy from the sense of the heart is that they "have their hearts filled with sweetness" and then they rejoice that "so excellent a Savior" is theirs.¹⁴³ True piety depends upon the "heart's consent" to the covenant God has

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 424. Spiritual knowledge of God is the most excellent and divine wisdom, greater than any man made wisdom; it is sweet and joyful because the knowledge given by "the divine light shining into the soul" brings "the dawning of the light of glory in the heart"; true light influences the inclination and changes the nature of the soul by assimilating human nature to the divine nature, at the same time changing the soul into an image of the same glory that is beheld; and lastly, such knowledge brings sweetness and joy and confers a universal holiness of life on believers.

¹³⁹ Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁴⁰ See Hambrick-Stowe, "The 'Inward, Sweet Sense' of Christ in Jonathan Edwards," pp. 79-95. Hambrick-Stowe notes that the Puritan journals and autobiographies of New England commonly used the language used by Edwards in his efforts to portray the intensely personal and affective character of the spirituality of evangelical Calvinists (pp. 88-89). For a valuable exposition of the influence of Puritanism on Edwards' reading of the religious affections see Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation, and Heart Religion*, p. 1. Walton argues convincingly that Edwards is heavily indebted to his Puritan forbears for his analysis of the religious affections. The major difference between Edwards and his Puritan predecessors lies in his more rigorous philosophical presentation, which Walton claims is not based on Lockean epistemology but is expressed in Puritan categories of heart-religion.

¹⁴¹ "Treatise on Grace," in *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith, Works*, 21, p. 174.

¹⁴² "Personal Narrative," in *Works* 16, p. 801.

¹⁴³ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, p. 250.

inaugurated with believers such that there is a reciprocity between God and the saints that is as close as the marriage bond.¹⁴⁴

In summary then, a deep aesthetic sense of the loveliness, beauty and excellency of God accompanies intellectual understanding of the truth. The “beauty of every part of the gospel scheme” is experienced when the divine light enters the heart.¹⁴⁵ Edwards’ definition of spiritual knowledge incorporates both intellectual and experiential knowledge which “primarily consists in a taste or relish of the amiableness and beauty of that which is truly good and holy: this holy relish is a thing that discerns and distinguishes between good and evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the trouble of a train of reasoning.”¹⁴⁶ The “train of reasoning” which Edwards appears to disparage should not be taken to suggest that he abjures reason. “This holy relish,” is that which “discerns and distinguishes between good and evil” so there is clearly a quality of judgment or discernment in religious knowing as well as a sense of the beauty of God’s holiness.¹⁴⁷ What is required to guarantee the authenticity of the religious affections and hence true spiritual knowledge is “not only that the belief which their affections arise from, should be a reasonable, but also a spiritual belief or conviction.”¹⁴⁸ Reason and spiritual conviction are intertwined in Edwards’ epistemology, but as Terence Erdt argues, it is not as Miller suggests that an affectional response in the will is joined to an idea in the understanding; the affection itself becomes the “new simple idea” as a product of both understanding and will.¹⁴⁹

Edwards’ interest in the role of the affections and the will in spiritual epistemology, the freedom of the will, and divine illumination as a work of the Holy Spirit in the heart are key themes in Augustine’s spiritual epistemology that will be shown in what follows.

¹⁴⁴ “An Humble Inquiry,” in *Ecclesiastical Writings, Works*, 12, pp. 205-207.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

¹⁴⁷ The idea that spiritual epistemology involves both reason and the affections is confirmed in his fifth sign of a religious affection in which Edwards explains that a “reasonable and spiritual conviction” is one “founded on real evidence, or upon that which is a good reason, or just ground of conviction.” *Religious Affections, Works* 2, pp. 291, 295. He continues, “Truly gracious affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the judgment of the reality and certainty of divine things.”

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Terence Erdt, “The Calvinist Psychology of the Heart and the “Sense” of Jonathan Edwards,” in *Early American Literature*, Vol. XIII, (1978), p. 167.

AUGUSTINE

3.5 Introduction to Augustine's Spiritual Epistemology

Three significant elements in Edwards' spiritual epistemology of the heart outlined above were first articulated by Augustine. They are the priority of the inclination of the heart (the affections and the will) in obtaining knowledge of God, the fact that the sovereignty of God precludes the freedom of the will, and the belief that the unification of the understanding and the affections in conversion initiates a new experience of religious truth that is felt in the heart as a sense or taste of sweetness.

Despite the Platonic overtones to Augustine's spiritual epistemology,¹⁵⁰ long before Edwards, Augustine perceived that knowledge itself has an aesthetic as well as an intellectual component. He records that his adolescent longing for the "immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardour in my heart"¹⁵¹ led him on a wayward route to God, but it was the love of knowledge that inspired his search for wisdom.¹⁵²

Edwards' later insight that the will is the decisive power or faculty in the human heart that might be the main hindrance to conversion can be traced back to Augustine who perceived contradictions in the unregenerate heart caused by sin such that it was torn between competing loves. Throughout his long search for wisdom, driven to theology because of philosophical perplexities as Hannah Arendt suggests,¹⁵³ like Edwards, Augustine identified the will and the affections with the heart, which he regarded as the

¹⁵⁰ See Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptised*, Ch. 3, "Certainty, Belief and Understanding," (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 41-91. Rist points out that Augustine distinguishes between belief, knowledge and understanding, and argued for a "justified belief" given sufficient authority, where first hand experience was unavailable. pp. 60-63.

¹⁵¹ *Confessions*, III. 4. 7, p. 39. The literature on Augustine's epistemology is extensive. Among many excellent works, that of Ronald H. Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1969) and Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* trans. L. E. M. Lynch, (New York: Random House, 1960) provide helpful insights.

¹⁵² As with several key terms in Augustine's lexicon, knowledge, wisdom and understanding are at times used interchangeably and at other times appear to have a discrete meaning. In *De trinitate*, wisdom, (*sapientia*), is used to refer to the highest knowledge of God in the inner man, while knowledge (*scientia*) is knowledge of the sensible world. Wisdom is also used to refer to Christ who is the power and Wisdom of God. In his Exposition of Psalm 135.8, Augustine says that "wisdom resides in knowing and loving he who abides eternally beyond all change," while knowledge is "to conduct oneself prudently and with circumspection in the night of this world." Augustine's unification of understanding and love in the acquisition of spiritual wisdom mirrors the psychological analogy and is paralleled in Edwards' spiritual epistemology. "Psalm 135," in *WSA*, III/20, p. 220.

¹⁵³ Hannah Arendt, "Willing," in *The Life of the Mind*, (USA: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1978) p. 84.

main protagonist inhibiting knowledge of God.¹⁵⁴ His own search for knowledge of God and the soul gave grounds for believing that the unaided reason is an inadequate source for knowledge of God. *Desiderium* is the constant impetus which motivates the heart to pursue truth and Augustine assumes that the longing for truth will encourage the mind to desire more than what is already known.¹⁵⁵ As a young man Augustine hoped that philosophical investigation might lead to discoveries of divine truths, but in the *Confessions* he admits that “we were too weak to discover the truth by pure reasoning and therefore needed the authority of the sacred books.”¹⁵⁶ Faith comes by first believing, and unless knowledge is accompanied by faith and the consent of divine love in the heart, one cannot have true knowledge of God. Without divine love, “it will be impossible for our hearts to be purified and become fit and worthy to see him.”¹⁵⁷

Love is the foundation of his spiritual epistemology as it was for Edwards. Loving, knowing and possessing are intertwined when the heart loves God with the love that comes from God. Love itself ought to be loved but it is the object of love that is all important. God is the only worthy object of knowing and loving because his eternal love as revealed in the salvation of the elect is the only love that cannot be lost.¹⁵⁸ If desire (which is a kind of love) “is in accord with the mind and reason, it will be possible for the mind to contemplate what is eternal in great peace and tranquility.”¹⁵⁹ He continues this line of thinking in *The Trinity* where he elaborates on the close connection between love and knowledge. In the case of a perceived good for example, one cannot fully have or know the good without also loving it. It is impossible to appreciate how great any particular good is without enjoying it,

¹⁵⁴ *Confessions*, VIII. 8. 19, p.147. The power of the errant will to overcome the desire for good is discussed in the conversion narrative of Book VIII of the *Confessions*. Here, Augustine depicts his will as one that is “half-wounded, struggling with one part rising up and the other part falling down.” (CCSL 27, 126).

¹⁵⁵ *The Trinity*, X. 2, WSA, 1/5, p. 287. “the more a thing is known without being fully known, the more does the intelligence desire to know what remains.”

¹⁵⁶ *Confessions*, VI.5.8, p. 96.

¹⁵⁷ In Book VIII of *The Trinity*, Augustine poses the problem of loving what we do not know, which is impossible. The solution is to love by faith. *The Trinity*, VIII. 6, p. 246. D. J. Hoitenga, Jr., *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga An Introduction to Reformed Epistemology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 57. Hoitenga claims that Augustine was the first Christian thinker to bring together an epistemological synthesis of the biblical concept of faith with Greek concepts of knowledge and belief.

¹⁵⁸ *Eighty-Three Different Questions*, no. 35 “What Ought to be Loved” in *FC* vol. 70, pp. 63-67.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

and we do not enjoy what we do not love.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, if one loves rightly, that is with divine love, then true knowledge of God enters the heart.¹⁶¹

The Trinitarian foundation to Augustine's spiritual epistemology is borne out in *The Trinity* with his use of the psychological analogy to probe the mystery of God who is triune. The unity of love and understanding that leads to knowledge of God is also evident in the triad of memory, understanding and will which both Edwards and Augustine compare with the relations within the immanent Trinity.¹⁶² Using the concept of appropriation Augustine identifies the Son as Word with understanding, and the Spirit as charity with the will. As shown in Chapter Two the whole Trinity acts inseparably in the work of redemption. The doctrine of divine simplicity ensures that the divine persons are inseparable and each possess all for which the other is chiefly known. Similarly, he is in no doubt that the human will has "its own kind of knowledge and this cannot exist without memory or understanding,"¹⁶³ otherwise it would not know what to choose or reject. In a faintly analogous way to the operation of the Trinity, human love joins understanding and memory together thus unifying the heart which then determines a course of action, but until the human will is aligned with the divine will, no right choices or actions eventuate.¹⁶⁴ Augustine's affirmation that it is only when the mind remembers, understands and loves God that it becomes wise is indicative of his insistence that loving faith is the prerequisite for knowledge of God in the heart.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ *The Trinity*, VIII. 6 p. 246

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, VIII. 7, p. 247. Augustine argues that knowledge of God's loving humility as exemplified in Christ's sacrificial death is known in the heart and should be kept firm there. (CCSL 50, 276). "Secundum hanc notitiam cogitatio nostra informatur cum credimus pro nobis deum hominem factum ad humilitatis exemplum et ad demonstrandam erga nos dilectionem dei. Hoc enim nobis prodest credere et firmum atque inconcussum corde retinere,..."

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, IV. 30, pp. 175-176. Augustine asserts that with respect to memory, understanding and will, "each name refers to a single thing, and yet each of these single names is the product of all three" so that "when I name my memory, understanding, and will, each name refers to a single thing, and yet each of these single names is the product of all three; there is no one of these three names which my memory and understanding and will have not produced together. So too the trinity together produced both the Father's voice and the Son's flesh and the Holy Spirit's dove, though each of these single things has reference to a single person." Augustine also sees the unity of knowledge and love in the fact that they are "not three lives but one life, not three minds but one mind." *The Trinity*, X. 18., p. 298.

¹⁶³ *The Trinity*, XV. 41, in *WSA*, 1/5, p. 427.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, XV. 43, p. 428; VIII. 5, p. 245. Augustine states that the will turns the soul towards the good from which it was made, but the will, in turning away from that good, can forfeit it.

¹⁶⁵ *The Trinity*, XV. 12, *WSA*, 1/5, p. 404. "who will say there is any wisdom where there is no love?"

3.6 The Heart, the Affections, and the Will

In Augustine's historical context two contrasting views of the affections prevailed. Aristotle held that most affections are useful in moderation, (*metriopatheia*), while the Stoics believed that most affections were detrimental to human well being and should be eradicated (*apatheia*).¹⁶⁶ Augustine's position endorsed neither the Aristotelian view nor the Stoic. Instead, he identifies the will with the affections and like Edwards, classifies love as the dominant affection in the heart. We are not what we believe, nor what we know, but what we love, and the object of one's loves is the all important factor in categorizing the affections as either good or bad.¹⁶⁷ Augustine's fervent belief that "if the Creator is truly loved" then love will be ordered¹⁶⁸ was repeated thirteen centuries later in Edwards' observation that only the love of God is sufficient to order all other loves.¹⁶⁹ The power of love to motivate human behaviour is almost axiomatic in Augustine's theology: "Every love has its own force; and it cannot lie idle in the soul of the lover. Love must draw the soul on. Do you then, wish to know the character of a love? See where it leads."¹⁷⁰ So in *The City of God* he identifies "two cities created by two kinds of love" one founded on self-love; one on love of God.¹⁷¹

Augustine's identification of the affections as the impetus behind the movements of the heart comes as the middle term of three conditions for willing to which he turns his attention in an extended discussion on the demerits of the Stoic view of the affections in Book Fourteen of *The City of God* written sometime in the early 420s. There is no permanent dichotomy between the heart and head insofar as the affections are concerned in Augustine's spiritual epistemology, the whole heart is consumed with desire, be it for God

¹⁶⁶ Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 7.

¹⁶⁷ James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 15. One suggestion Wetzel offers for Augustine's concentration on the affections is the failure of the Platonists and Stoics to solve the dilemmas of the psychology of moral struggle.

¹⁶⁸ *The City of God*, XV. 22, p. 637. In Book XV, Augustine writes, "But if the Creator is truly loved, that is, if he himself is loved, and not something else in his stead, then he cannot be wrongly loved....Hence, as it seems to me, a brief and true definition of virtue is "rightly ordered love." (CCSL 40, p. 488). "Creator autem si ueraciter ametur, hoc est si ipse, non aliud pro illo quod non est ipse, ametur, male amari non potest."

¹⁶⁹ Edwards, "The Pure in Heart Blessed," in *Sermons and Discourses, Works*, 17, p. 67. "The love of so glorious a Being is infinitely valuable, and the discoveries of it are capable of ravishing the soul above all other loves. "See also "Charity and Its Fruits" Sermon One, in *Ethical Writings, Works* 8, p. 33. Love to God is the foundation of a gracious love to men." See also, *Religious Affections Works*, 2, p. 15. "The piety which God requires, is one which engages the heart and inclines the self as a whole towards the divine glory in a love which is unmixd." He continues, "What is needed is the soul must be "moved" and filled with the love of God which ultimately leads to right conduct."

¹⁷⁰ "Psalm 121.1," in *WSA*, III/20, p. 13.

¹⁷¹ *The City of God*, XIV. 28, p. 593.

or self. One cannot exercise the will without the affections or reason to inform it, but prior to conversion, reason is at the mercy of distorted affections and cannot encounter God within the heart.

Reason is a vital component of humanity made in the image of God. Animals, as distinct from humans, do not possess a will and cannot experience human affections or passions because they do not have the capacity to reason.¹⁷² Since affections are movements of the will, the *voluntas*, an aspect of the intellectual self and potentially informed by reason, it follows that affections are often in agreement with reason. When informed by right reason and directed to truth, goodness and God, they are right or holy affections.¹⁷³

The passions on the other hand are not so easily contained. While the Stoics and Platonists believe that reason should control the passions, Augustine holds that grace is needed to restrain what is virtually autonomous in the human psyche.¹⁷⁴ In his view, the passions are involuntary movements of the lower part of the soul that emerge independently of the rational mind (i.e. will and understanding).¹⁷⁵ They are not intrinsically evil, however, and can be devolved into different expressions of love.¹⁷⁶ Passions may become unruly and overcome reason but considered with respect to God, they can “offer a training in virtue” when Christians submit the mind to God for “direction and assistance.” Of greater import is the reason for the strong affections or passions, not

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, VIII. 17, p. 323.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, XIV. 9, p. 563. “But since these feelings are the consequence of right reason when they are exhibited in the proper situation, who would then venture to call them morbid or disordered passions.” (CCSL 48, 427). “Sed cum rectam rationem sequantur istae affectiones quando ubi oportet adhibentur, qui eas tunc morbos seu uitiosas passiones audeat dicere?” Thomas Dixon calls right affections “emotions of the rational mind.” Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, p. 54-55.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, XIV. 19, p. 581.

¹⁷⁵ Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, pp. 50-51. This somewhat bifurcated approach is modified by Augustine’s acceptance of Cicero’s four basic classifications of the passions as desire, fear, joy and sorrow, which he then subsumes under the single principle of love. Love is then tied to the will, with the result that the heart acts as one, with love and desire determining the inclination of the will to act. Sometimes Augustine disparages the passions and use words such as *perturbationes*, *libido* and *morbos* in a perjorative sense, while *affectus*, *motus* and *affectiones* are used approvingly of the more gentle affections. See *The City of God*, VIII. 17, pp. 323-324, where Augustine warns that Christians should abjure those “movements of the heart, (*motus cordis*) all those agitations of the mind (*salum mentis*), all those storms and tempests of the soul (*turbelas et temperstates animi*) which in the demons make a raging sea of passion (*aestuarie atque fluctuare*).” (CCSL 47, 235).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, XIV. 555-556. For what is desire or joy but an act of will in agreement with what we wish for? And what is fear or grief but an act of will in disagreement with what we reject?

the passions *per se*. Like Edwards, Augustine views the affections and passions as appropriate when they “are in conformity to the Holy Scriptures and doctrine.”¹⁷⁷

The inseparability of love and knowledge in the heart is explained as follows. All knowledge, according to Augustine arises as a word or idea within the heart or mind. It is conceived out of love either for the creature (*cupiditas*), or the creator (*caritas*). A word that is related to the love of a spiritual truth such as justice is “knowledge with love” and it is a true word. In this case the “will rests in the act of knowing.” Love joins the knowledge of the word arising in the heart with the understanding and the two faculties act inseparably.¹⁷⁸ A right heart is needed for knowledge of God and since a right heart is a right will, it is more in one’s interest “to be bound to the almighty by a devout and dutiful will than by his own will.”¹⁷⁹ Divine illumination is needed if one is to know truth and see God, and as with Edwards, the seeing and knowing occur through the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart.¹⁸⁰ The loveliness of knowledge is understood in the mind and when love attaches itself to such knowledge, the whole heart knows truth. A right love or will is defined as one that aims “to live rightly and honorably and to reach the highest wisdom,”¹⁸¹ that is to love the eternal things of God rather than the temporal things of the present age.

In the very first piece of Christian writing begun after his conversion in 386 and before his baptism in 387, Augustine introduces his lifelong belief regarding the intimate interconnection of love and will. In *On Music* he explains that “delight is a kind of weight in the soul” which tends to order our loves and our hearts: “Where delight, there the treasure; where the heart, there happiness or misery.” It all depends on the object of one’s

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, IX. 4-5, pp. 345-349. In this passage, Augustine does not differentiate clearly between the affections and passions, noting that the philosophers call emotions “disturbances (or affections or passions).” (346). This unification of the passions and affections under the single principle of love was taken up by Edwards. In the converted heart, the divine love controls the passions that are inappropriate.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, IX 9-16 pp. 276-280. “So when the mind knows and loves itself, its word is joined to it with love. And since it loves knowledge and knows love the word is in the love and the love in the word and both in the lover and the utterer.”

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, VIII. 11, WSA, 1/5, p. 252.

¹⁸⁰ Phillip Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 72. Cary suggests that Augustine’s epistemology is primarily intellectual in orientation and that “insight” is the best characterization to interpret it. I think he is being a trifle reductionist here, although he does allow that there are subjective as well as objective elements to Augustine’s moment of insight. As I argue in this chapter, religious certitude is very much a subjective experience for Augustine. Like Wesley and Edwards, it is hAugustine’s heart that is “strangely warmed” with true knowledge of God.

¹⁸¹ “On Free Will,” in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 129. A good will aims “to live rightly and honourably and to reach the highest wisdom, that is to love the eternal things of God rather than the temporal things of the present age.”

loves. He urges his readers to look to “the beautiful thing divine Providence purposes for us” lest we be like the one who has been made “vicious by will” and become less than “the whole he who obeyed God’s precepts possessed.”¹⁸²

The will’s turning inwards towards itself after the fall resulted in its disintegration into conflicting affections or appetites. As the driving force behind all actions, the will is weak or fallen, a condition known as *akrasia*.¹⁸³ From insights into his own fragmented heart, Augustine concluded that the unconverted will is a *libido dominandi*, more powerful than the mind which cannot hold in abeyance those affections that are contrary to reason. It is possible to know the good, but not do it. Although one might long to know and love God, pride in one’s own self-will and the desire for independence make it impossible to fully will to know and love God. As the will is, so the heart is, so much so that a will divided against itself is a heart divided against itself.¹⁸⁴ Well aware from years of the pervasive role in his own psychology of the involuntary nature of overwhelming sexual desire (*cupiditas*), he laments in the *Confessions* that of his own volition he could not act from a united will to choose rightly. Before conversion, he saw himself “neither wholly willing nor wholly unwilling,” caught between opposing poles of desire.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² “On Music,” XI. 2, *FC*, vol. 2, p. 355. For a discussion of Augustine’s concept of love as a weight, see Ch. I, p. 50. See also *Confessions*, X. 29. 40, p. 202. Augustine frequently uses the metaphor of being made whole or unified in Christ; apart from him, the soul is “disintegrated into multiplicity.”

¹⁸³ Augustine discusses the relationship between the will and the passions in Book XIV. 5-10 pp. 554-567, of *The City of God*. Desires and fears and joy and sadness cover the whole gamut of emotions in Augustine’s theory of the affections. The passions are not intrinsically evil but depend on the orientation of the will to determine their quality. In “Psalm 86. 6,” in *WSA*, III/18, p. 252, Augustine captures the rich imagery of the nomadic peregrinations of the heart in search of God. Augustine links the affections and will and attributes the changed heart of the believer to a changed will. “...lift up your hearts to heaven. And how can I do you say? What ropes are needed? What machines? What ladders? Your affections are the steps, your will the way. By loving you mount, by neglect, you descend. Standing on the earth you are in heaven if you love God. For the heart is not so raised as the body is raised: the body to be lifted up changes its place: the heart to be lifted up changes its will.” Like Edwards, Augustine distinguishes between the affections and passions when speaking of their relationship with the will, but he locates them in different parts of the soul. The affect or affection is a movement of the higher intellectual soul, which is voluntary, in that it is in accordance with the will.

See *Religious Affections*, *Works*, 2, p. 99. In his discussion of the nature of spiritual understanding Edwards explicitly links the affections and the will in his observation that “true religion consists, in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actions of the inclination and will of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the heart....I say a sense of heart; for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding: nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately in this matter.”

¹⁸⁴ *The City of God*, XIV. 11, pp. 568-569. *Confessions*, VIII. 5. 11, p. 140; VIII. 10. 24, p. 203; *Teaching Christianity*, 1. 26. 27, *WSA*, I/11, pp. 117-118. “But living a just and holy life requires one to be capable of an objective and impartial evaluation of things; to love things, that is to say in the right order.” On the centrality of desire as that which motivates all human actions, see W. S. Babcock “Augustine and the Spirituality of Desire,” *Augustinian Studies* 25 (1994), pp. 179-199.

¹⁸⁵ *Confessions*, VIII. 10. 22, p. 148.

The sense of delight or aversion which he labeled “opposing poles of desire” are the same as inclinations which come to the mind that are influenced by feelings of desire and dislike, and these affections motivate the will to action. Augustine links the affections and the will by declaring that the affections are “all essentially acts of will,”¹⁸⁶ exactly as did Edwards. The affections themselves are morally neutral: “the good feel these emotions in a good way, and the bad feel them in a bad way, just as an act of evil may be rightly or wrongly directed.”¹⁸⁷ It is the character or quality of the will as an expression of the heart that determines the quality of the affections: “If the will is wrongly directed, the affections will be wrong; if the will is right, the affections will be not only blameless, but praiseworthy.”¹⁸⁸ The wrongly directed will he describes as “desire in opposition to the will.” This state of internal conflict with the human will acting in opposition to God’s will is a tragedy.¹⁸⁹ After his conversion Augustine sensed that his will had now been liberated from its bondage to self-love and that *caritas* and not *cupiditas* was the spiritual inclination of his heart. He could rejoice that his loves were now re-oriented according to God’s will while still admitting to moral failures because of his inability to hold on to the knowledge of God in his heart.¹⁹⁰

In a sermon preached in 428, “On Love of God and Love of the World,” he reiterates the point that he advanced throughout his life that the heart is torn between two loves, and whichever love wins it will “pull the lover as by the force of gravity.” The impetus behind the two loves is “the force of desire,” and contrary desires keep one “stuck to the earth.” Love needs changing, and that is Christ’s purpose in coming to earth. “Christ came to change our love, and to make lovers of the heavenly life out of earthly lovers; he was made man on our account, having made us men in the first place; he was God taking on a human

¹⁸⁶ *The City of God*, XIV. 6, pp. 555-556. Eugene Teselle notes that in Augustine, volition is identified with the fundamental affective orientation of each person, realized as *caritas* or as *cupiditas*. See FN 143. For an insightful analysis of Augustine’s understanding of the place of delight in willing, see Eugene TeSelle, “Exploring the Inner Conflict: Augustine’s Sermons on Romans 7 and 8,” in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, eds. Frederick Van Fleteren, and Joseph C. Schnaubelt. OSA, (New York: Peter Lang, 2004, 2001), pp. 321-330.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, XIV. 8, p. 560. “This shows that will, caution, and gladness are felt by good and bad alike; and (to make these same statement in other words) desire, fear and joy are emotions common to both good and bad.” See also Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, p. 40. Dixon also suggests that Augustine viewed proper affections as leading to the integrated heart, while prodigal passions lead to its dissolution. pp. 8-9.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, XIV. 6, p. 555.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, XIV. 12, p. 571. “it is calamitous for him to act according to his own will.” (CCSL 48, 434). “periculosum autem suam, non eius a quo creata est facere voluntatem.”

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, X. 24. 35, p. 200. Augustine writes that when he discovered truth in his memory, there he found God. He finds God whenever he recalls God to mind, and with that knowledge at the forefront of his consciousness, delights in God’s presence. His delight is a gift from God who sees his poverty and takes pity.

being, in order to make human beings into gods.”¹⁹¹ All human loves need to be put in the right order, he tells his congregation. The hierarchy of loves begins with God, then the church which brings eternal life, then the family which feeds and clothes, and finally friends and so on.

Christ in Gethsemane is illustrative for the direction of a right love or will as Augustine uses it here. In a clever use of “will” Augustine teaches that believers are to draw on Christ’s strength and “change your kind of love, and you will be shown, not a death that will present itself to you against your will, but a death which will, if you so will, absent itself altogether.” There are two deaths he refers to in this sermon, temporal and eternal. No-one escapes the first, only unbelievers face the second. The discriminating factor is “the will that obtains justice from the Lord,”¹⁹² and by this he means the lovers of eternal life. “What have you been in love with?”¹⁹³ he demands of his people as he dangles before them the fearful prospect of denying Christ and so losing eternal life in order to gain a few more days of temporal existence. Even for the converted heart there is a constant tension despite the fact that the heart understands and almost tastes the beauty, excellency and loveliness of the triune God.¹⁹⁴

Love at its most perfect and most beautiful is the love of the triune God and is the gift of the Holy Spirit who is the mutual love of Father and Son in the Trinity.¹⁹⁵ The Holy Spirit guides one’s loves, but as he explains to his congregation, it is not up to the individual to make the first choice to love wisely.¹⁹⁶ Augustine’s uncompromising insistence that the will is unfree without divine illumination through the gift of grace in the heart provoked the ire of those who favoured some autonomy for human volition, in his context, the Pelagians. His defence of God’s sovereignty in choosing those whose hearts are to be transformed by grace bears some interesting similarities to that of Edwards.

¹⁹¹ “Sermon 344. 1,” Mt. 10: 37-38, “On Love of God and Love of the World,” in *WSA*, III/10, p. 49.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁴ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, p. 281. “spiritual knowledge primarily consists in a taste or relish of the amiableness and beauty of that which is truly good and holy.” “Psalm 30. 6,” (Exp. 4) in *WSA*, III/ 15, p. 330.

¹⁹⁵ *The Trinity*, XV. 31; XV. 38; XV. 41, in *WSA*, I/5, pp. 31-32, 425-426, 427-428.

¹⁹⁶ “Sermon 34. 2,” (420), in *WSA*, III/ II, p. 166. (CCL 41, p. 424): We are urged not to love but to choose what we love. But what choice can we make unless we are first chosen, since we cannot even love unless we are first loved? ... [God] has given us God’s self, the one we have loved has given us what to love with... “Through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5) “Non ergo admonemur ut non amemus, sed ut eligamus quid amemus. Sed quid eligimus, nisi prius eligamur? Quia nec diligimus, nisi prius diligamur?... [Deus] dedit se ipsum quem dileximus, dedit unde diligeremus... ‘Per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis’” (Rom. 5.5).

3.7 The Freedom of the Will

If Edwards produced the most significant exposition of the will in the eighteenth century, his most important ideas are prefigured in Augustine, although Augustine does not have the sustained philosophical analysis of the nature of the will itself: being more interested in free will and grace. Having said that, Edwards' analysis of the will as outlined above is in the same tradition as Augustine, that which Charles Kahn calls "the theological concept of the will" as opposed to that typified by post-Cartesian or Kantian perspectives.

¹⁹⁷ There is some justification for the view that Augustine's attention to the will (*voluntas*) in his epistemology is "the doctrine of the primacy of the will in all knowledge."¹⁹⁸ He has been credited with inventing the theory of the will or at least bringing together the separate components of the will in antiquity.¹⁹⁹ Augustine's theories of the will are closely aligned

¹⁹⁷ Charles H. Kuhn, "Discovering the Will," in *The Question of Eclecticism: Studies in Later Greek Philosophy*, John M. Dillon and A. A. Long eds., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 235. See Augustine, "Admonition and Grace," in *FC*, vol. 4, p. 299 for a discussion of the relationship between the will of God and the will of humans in one of his most important anti-Pelagian works: Augustine says that "there is no doubt that human wills cannot resist the will of God."

¹⁹⁷ Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of the Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982) 133-35; 143. See also John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptised*, p.50. Kuhn, on the other hand, allows some elements of Aristotelian or Stoic thought in Augustine's theory of the will, but argues that Augustine does not offer a fully integrated philosophical exposition of the notion of will; this had to wait for Aquinas. Kuhn, "Discovering the Will," p. 235). Kahn, Rist and Dihle offer a history of the concept of *uoluntas*. Kahn notes "in this tradition the theory of the will of God precedes and guides the analysis of the human will; the human will is thought of as modelled on, or responding to, the will of God." (p. 238).

Rist regards Augustine's use of *uoluntas* as being possibly influenced by Epictetus and Seneca, both of whom use it to refer to moral character. This is undoubtedly the way in which Augustine uses it, but his innovation is "the near-identification of the will with love, or a set of accepted loves." Rist, (p. 188). *Uoluntas* is a love which has been accepted and consented to.

According to Albrecht Dihle, however, Augustine's concept of will, *uoluntas*, as an aspect of personality distinct from the intellect and the affections, yet acting in harmony with them on the journey to faith, represents a radical departure from the Greek tradition as exemplified in the thought of Aristotle, Epicurus and Epictetus. He credits Augustine with developing a concept of the will that does not presuppose a distinction between the rational decisions of the mind and the irrational impulses of the affections or emotions. Augustine's great achievement is to integrate the cognitive and affective sources of motivation into his conception of willing. See Dihle, pp. 123-144. James Wetzel supports this view in *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 101. Wetzel suggests that Augustine believes that the affections have a reason of their own otherwise they wouldn't have the power to move us. Conversion integrates the power of reason and the power of affection in willing.

Kuhn credits Dihle with showing how the Biblical notion of obedience to the will and commands of a sovereign God whose actions were at times inscrutable and seemingly capricious, necessitated a response of the whole person, understanding and will, to the divine initiative in human affairs. Kuhn, (p. 238).

¹⁹⁸ Robert E. Cushman, "Faith and Reason in the Thought of St Augustine," *Church History*, vol. 19, no. 4, (Dec. 1950), p. 289.

¹⁹⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* ((USA, Harcourt Brace & Co., Harvest Book Reprint, 1978) 84. Arendt dubs Augustine "The first philosopher of the Will."

with a Platonic worldview,²⁰⁰ but like Edwards, his starting point is the sovereignty of God and original sin. From that platform he enunciates doctrines that were later to become essential components of the Calvinism adopted by Edwards.²⁰¹

The huge gap between God's will which is perfect, and human will which is fallen is the basis for Augustine's observation immediately after his conversion that the "nub of the problem was to reject my own will and to desire yours. But where through so many years was my freedom of the will?"²⁰² He simply couldn't make the choice to love God of his own volition. Augustine decided that what is morally crucial, and this is the same insight espoused by Edwards, is the ability to choose, not the rational faculty itself. In a fallen world, the capacity to choose the good is hopelessly compromised by a radically defective heart that can be traced back to Adam.

Augustine insists that the fallen will preceded the evil act because of pride which rendered the heart incapable of choosing the good. Knowledge followed sin's dictates with the result that the natural faculty of understanding was impaired and deflected from its

²⁰⁰ The structure of Augustine's ontology and epistemology follows that of the Platonic school. In this schema, there is a downward movement of the soul from the One to the material world, and an upward movement of the soul to re-unification with the One. Both Plato and Plotinus were emanationists. Both held that there were levels of being which followed a pattern of descent from "the One," not to be thought of as the first in an arithmetic progression but one that is united as opposed to being scattered. The One is identical with the Platonic Idea of the Good; it is the basis of all reality and the standard of all value, but is above being and goodness. At the next level of being is the mind or intelligence, (*nous*) which is produced by emanation from the One. This is produced by the One's reflection on itself and is the locus for the Platonic Ideas. Below Mind is Soul, which Janus-like faces upwards to Mind and downward to Nature. Nature in turn produces the material world. At the lowest level is matter, that which is farthest from the One. In the return to the One, Soul governs and controls the world of bodies with wisdom from the World-Mind above. Because the World-Mind is constituted by the Ideas which are the objects of its thought, it is composite. Since in ancient philosophy, a unitary "being" is the highest form of existence, the World-Mind returns to the One. Humanity's true goal is union with the One, but in order to do this, the soul must rise from the hindrances of the material world, primarily the body, pleasure and sensation, and rise towards the One. For the background to Greek Philosophy see Anthony Kenny, *An Illustrated Brief History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006) Ch III, "The Philosophy of Plato," pp. 38-60; Ch. VI, "Greek Philosophy after Aristotle, Neo-Platonism," pp. 106-109. For Augustine's indebtedness to the Platonic school for his epistemology, see Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, Ch I: "The Structure of St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge."

²⁰¹ Namely, that the will is not free, a belief in the predestination of the saints, prevenient and irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. While Augustine mentions the will as a force in the spiritual life in many works, the most useful texts for Augustine's understanding of the will are *De libero arbitrio*, (388-395); and his anti-Pelagian writings *De natura et gratia* (414/415); *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* (418); *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* (420); *De gratia et libero arbitrio* (426/427); *De corruptione et gratia* (426/427); *De praedestinatione sanctorum* (428/429) and *De dono perseverantiae* (428/429). Augustine does admit to development in his thinking, from his earliest pronouncements on freewill which gave more autonomy to human will, to the position he sets out in "To Simplicianus, On different Questions," where God prepares the heart for faith so that faith is a gift from God as is perseverance. He defended this position from 396, and particularly from 411 onwards in the debates with the Pelagians.

²⁰² *Confessions*, IX. 1. 1, p. 155.

pursuit of proper ends.²⁰³ Perversion of the will is reflected in a perverse understanding which precludes knowledge of God. What is needed to find the way to knowledge of God is divine illumination. This will aid seekers after truth to understand the significance of the Incarnation and to see God's beauty in providing salvation for the elect. The Platonists failed to acknowledge the Incarnation and so see "dimly through the obscurities of a subtle imagination" what Christians know is the way of salvation and by which they "can arrive at those realities in which we believe, and which we can in some small measure comprehend."²⁰⁴

It is not impossible to know what is good, Augustine argued, but reflection on the realities of evil within his own heart and in his environment meant that he saw the contradictions of an impotent will as more significant than cognitive imperfections. The desertion of the changeless good which is God is voluntary and is a failure of love, "for if the will had remained unshaken in its love for the higher changeless Good, which shed on it light to see and kindled in it fire to love, it would not have been diverted from this love to follow its own pleasure..." The original evil was for "man to regard himself as his own light, and turn away from that light which would make man himself a light if he would set his heart on it."²⁰⁵ Humanity is fallen through pride into an excessive love of self and the creation. Only a new, more compelling love can replace the old perverse love and change the understanding to comprehend divine truths.

At the heart of Augustine's intellectual difficulties lay the seemingly incompatible notions of grace and free-will. If conversion entailed surrendering one's own free-will to God's will, and yet one was unable to will that self-abnegation, how could one be saved? The idea that God could overcome the will by coercion was abhorrent to Augustine and so he was left with the classic dilemma for the would-be convert, how to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable concept of the human will being simultaneously free to will to act, and yet not free to will the good.

Augustine's first extended discussion of freedom of the will appears in the dialogue *On Free Will* which he began at Cassiciacum soon after his conversion in 386, and completed in 395, around the time he was ordained Bishop of Hippo. His main purpose in

²⁰³ *The City of God*, XIV. 11-13, pp. 568-574.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, X. 29, p. 414. (CCSL 47, 304). "tenuis imaginationis umbracula, quo nitendum sit; sed incarnationem incommutabilis Filii Dei, qua saluamur, ut ad illa, quae credimus uel ex quantulumque parte intellegimus, uenire possimus, non uultis agnoscere."

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, XIV. 13, pp. 572-573.

tackling this complex issue so soon after his conversion was to clarify his thoughts on the nature of evil and the responsibility of the human will in the face of the Manichean dualism that he had so recently abandoned, but which was still a force to be reckoned with in the late fourth century.²⁰⁶ Whilst not mentioning grace explicitly, Augustine does claim that he obtained “divine aid” in his search for truth and throughout the work emphasizes God’s sovereignty in creation, arguing against those “who deny that evil derives its origin from the free choice of the will”²⁰⁷ and attribute evil to God. It is God who “owes nothing to any man, for he gives everything gratuitously.”²⁰⁸

In this work he makes the point, and it is one that he continues to make throughout his life, that nothing outside the will determines the will; it is the quality of the will itself, either good or bad, that determines one’s choices.²⁰⁹ At this point he is in substantial agreement with Edwards. Natural necessity exists apart from the will as in the case of death for example. Theological necessity or moral necessity resides in the will itself. As he explains, “if we so wish, it exists; if we do not so wish, it does not-for we should not will if we did not so wish.” When we will, we will by free choice according to Augustine. “Our wills are ours and it is our wills that affect all that we do by willing and which would not have happened if we had not willed.”²¹⁰ While he agrees that the will is free to choose, only wrong choices are possible for the unredeemed heart because the will is diseased.²¹¹ “The choice of the will, then, is genuinely free only when it is not subservient to faults and sins. God gave it that true freedom, and now that it has been lost, through its own fault, it can be restored only by him who had the power to give it at the beginning.”²¹²

The complex relationship between grace, free will and election is clearly evident in his reply to Simplicianus’ request for an exegesis of Romans 7:7-25. Written shortly after becoming a bishop in 396. Augustine reveals his misgivings about the power of the human will to control desire and the inscrutability of the divine will in choosing the recipients of

²⁰⁶ “On Free Will,” in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 102.

²⁰⁷ *Retractions*, FC, vol. 60, Chapter 8. 2, p. 32.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, III. 15. 45, p. 198.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 12. 25, I, 14. 30, in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, pp. 127, 130. A good will is a “will to live rightly and honourably and to reach the highest wisdom.”

²¹⁰ *The City of God*, V. 10, pp. 194-195.

²¹¹ Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptised*, p. 188. Possibly influenced by Epictetus and Seneca, Augustine links moral character with wants, and as a result, moral character is distorted and inconsistent, unable to meet the requirements of a righteous God.

²¹² *The City of God*, XIV. 9-10, pp. 563-567.

grace.²¹³ In the letter Augustine also rejects the idea that God's foreknowledge of faith is the ground for election and makes grace entirely gratuitous and irresistible, all features of Edwards' teaching on free will.²¹⁴ Augustine's thinking on the freedom of the will changed little for the rest of his life.

Love and delight motivate the will, but as Peter Brown remarks, for Augustine, delight is not a simple matter.²¹⁵ Strong feelings are aroused when the will is moved towards an object of delight and this becomes the impulse for action. Unfortunately, the capacity to take delight in a course of action is something that escapes one's control and the processes that prepare a heart to take delight in God are not only hidden, but actually discontinuous and erratic.²¹⁶ The gift of grace draws the will to love God and live the Christian life in humble submission to God, but no one can manufacture the desire for God in the heart but God himself.

We are commanded to believe that we may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and become able to do good works by love. But who can believe unless he is reached by some calling, by some testimony borne to the truth? Who has it in his power to have such a motive present to his mind that his will shall be influenced to believe? Who can welcome in his mind something which does not give him delight? But who has it in his power to ensure that something that will delight him will turn up, or that he will take delight in what turns up? If those things delight us which serve our advancement towards God, that is due not to our own whim or industry or meritorious works, but to the inspiration of God and to the grace which he bestows.²¹⁷

²¹³ "To Simplician: On Various Questions," II.11-XII, 17, in *Augustine: Earlier Writings* pp. 376-406. Augustine commends this early work on grace in "The Predestination of the Saints," and in "The Gift of Perseverance," both written towards the end of his life. See *WSA*, I/26, pp.149-185, 191-237. See also James Wetzel, "Pelagius Anticipated: Grace and Election in Augustine's *Ad Simplicianum*," in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. Joanne Williams, (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), pp. 121-132. Wetzel argues that in this work Augustine believes that grace does not involve force in the transformation of the will, and that grace is irresistible. (p.126). The harshness of the doctrine troubled Augustine and in sympathizing with his congregation confesses that "if you want to know the truth, it [i. e. predestination], troubles me too, because I am human." See also "Sermon 26.15," in *WSA*, III/2, p. 101. (CCSL 41, 358). "Si uerum uis audire, et me mouet quia homo sum."

²¹⁴ "To Simplician: On Various Questions," II.11-XII, 17, in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, pp. 394-395, 398.

²¹⁵ Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 155.

²¹⁶ "To Simplician: On Various Questions," 2. 21, in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 405. Augustine attributes the entire work of salvation to God, just as did Edwards. "We could neither will nor run unless he stirred us and put the motive- power in us."

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 405

The pivotal role of divine grace in the realignment of the will is quite explicit, but its operations are enigmatic. As James Wetzel rightly observes, Augustine “makes redemption wholly a matter of God’s will to redeem.”²¹⁸

Book 1 deals with the dilemmas experienced by Paul in Romans 7: 7-25, and then with the morality of Jacob’s election over Esau. Augustine uses Paul’s conversion as his model for grace as an unmerited gift, writing of the sufficiency of God in the whole business of redemption: “Our sufficiency, by which we begin to believe is of God...so no one is sufficient for himself, either to begin, or to perfect faith; but our sufficiency is of God.”²¹⁹ Where Jacob is called, Esau is not for no other reason than that God wills it so.

In the second book, Augustine states that “A man begins to receive grace from the moment when he begins to believe in God, being moved to faith by some internal or external admonition.” These “admonitions” come through “visions of the mind or spirit, or by more open admonitions reaching him through the bodily senses.”²²⁰ In every case of election to faith and good works, justification precedes election. “Unless, therefore, the mercy of God in calling precedes, no one can even believe, and so begin to be justified and to receive power to do good works. So grace comes before all merits.”²²¹ The mystery of election comes down to the changed will. Augustine goes on to argue that if God is merciful and calls sinners to repentance, they are given the power to will the good and to do it. Those who refuse the call do so as a consequence of God willing it, because “the effectiveness of God’s mercy cannot be in the power of man to frustrate, if he will have none of it.”²²² Edwards was in full accord with this understanding of God’s sovereignty in election. The will is free to sin but not free to choose the good.

The Pelagian controversies in the second decade of the fifth century drew Augustine’s most sustained rebuttal of the notion of human autonomy in volition with respect to knowledge of God and faith. Augustine very quickly realized that to champion the freedom of the will as Pelagius did was also to deny original sin and the necessity of

²¹⁸ Wetzel, “Snares of Truth: Augustine on Free Will and Predestination,” in *Augustine and His Critics*, pp. 124-141, p. 131.

²¹⁹ “The Predestination of the Saints,” Chs. 7-8., in *WSA*, 1/26, 152-155. In Ch. 7, Augustine admits to several errors with regard to faith and grace that he had held to in his first years as a Christian. In Ch. 8, Augustine refers to his “Reply to Simplicianus,” acknowledging that since that time, his efforts had been devoted to commending the priority of the grace of God in conversion and the spiritual life, and that he had never deviated from that path.

²²⁰ “To Simplician: On Various Questions,” in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 386.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

²²² *Ibid.*

grace. When the Pelagians spoke of grace, they meant humanity's original endowment of free will and the subsequent help from God to use their free will wisely, although not much was needed since Christ had dealt with sin for all time. The argument hinged on the object of one's loves. Where Augustine equates true love and delight with a right love of God that is the gift of God, Pelagius saw right loving as self-determined. One is free to choose to love God and by sheer will power one can live the good life, but as Augustine had discovered from his own experience and as an astute observer of the human condition, it simply wasn't possible to choose to love God and live well. Without grace, the heart is not free to choose the good. In one of his earliest anti-Pelagian works, (412) Augustine displays a remarkable similarity to Edwards in his declaration

that the human will is divinely assisted to do the right in such manner that, besides man's creation with the endowment of freedom to choose, and besides the teaching by which he is instructed how he ought to live he receives the Holy Spirit, whereby there arises in his soul the delight in and the love of God, that supreme and changeless Good. This gift is his here and now, while he walks by faith, not yet by sight: that having this as earnest of God's free bounty, he may be fired in heart to cleave to his Creator...²²³

It is the delight in and love for God that comes with the gift of the Holy Spirit in the heart that is testament to a right will. Like Edwards, Augustine is convinced that divine grace is a work entirely of God that occurs in the heart and is accompanied by an experiential knowledge of delight, joy and love.

Two of his last works against the Pelagians confirm the consistency of his thought on the importance of the will in his spiritual epistemology. In *The Predestination of the Saints*, (428/429) Augustine confirms his earlier conviction that faith itself is a gift from God. Quoting Philippians 1:29 and Acts 9: 1-9 against the Pelagians who maintained that faith is initiated by man but increased by God,²²⁴ he insists that free and unmerited grace is solely a work of God because "in those who have been chosen the will is prepared by the Lord,"²²⁵ a sentiment that anticipates Edwards. That the will is intimately associated with the heart seems evident from his comment that grace leads to faith since grace is given "precisely in order that hardness of the heart may first of all be removed."²²⁶ Faith that engenders delight is the beginning of the understanding whereby the heart may grasp the truth about God and come to love God, but the heart must be first changed by God. In a similar fashion

²²³ Augustine, "The Spirit and the Letter," IV, in *Augustine's Later Works*, trans. John Burnaby, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. VIII (London: SCM Press, 1955), p. 197. True grace is the gift of the Holy Spirit, which kindles in the soul the joy and love of goodness. One of his early polemical pieces against the Manichees, written soon after his return to Africa in 388, contains a sequence which prefigures Edwards. Speaking of Gen. 3 and the temptation of Eve, Augustine isolates three stages of willing. First comes the suggestion, then a sense of delight or aversion depending on what is perceived, and finally, consent, at which point action may ensue. "On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees," II. 20, in *WSA*, 1/13, p. 85. Foreshadowing Edwards, this re-direction of the will is in response to the sweetness of the divine call. In a sermon preached on John 6: 54-66 in A. D. 417 at the height of the Pelagian controversy, Augustine reminds his congregation of Jesus's assertion that: "No one comes to Me, except the Father who sent Me, draw him." Augustine goes on, "Draw him. Not lead him. This violence is done to the heart, not the flesh. Why do you marvel? Believe, and you come; love, and you are drawn. Think not that this is harsh and injurious violence; it is soft, it is sweet; it is sweetness itself that draws you.... and I think that there is no compulsion of the body, but an assembling of the desire."

²²⁴ "On the Predestination of the Saints," in *WSA*, 1/26, III-IV, pp. 150-151. "From whom, then, does the very beginning of our faith come but from him?" Augustine's final two works on the will were both written c. 428/9, a year or two before his death. They are long letters written in reply to pleas for help from Prosper and Hilary in the face of a resurgent semi-Pelagianism in Southern Gaul.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, X., p. 158.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, VIII. 13, p.160.

Augustine argues that the gift of perseverance is also a gift from God.²²⁷ God's grace, distributed not according to human merit but in "accord with the choice of his will,"²²⁸ is the source of divine illumination and is lauded as the initiatory factor in salvation and the final help in perseverance.

3.8 Divine Illumination and the *sensus suauitatis* in the Heart

Knowledge of God is often compared with spiritual illumination in Augustine's epistemology and light imagery is prevalent throughout his works.²²⁹ He shares with Edwards the view that faith and reason both play a part in illuminating the mind so that the believer knows God in the heart. Divine illumination is required to reorient the heart to love God first and that necessitates the intervention of the triune God.

G. R. Evans alludes to the affectional bias in Augustine's theory of divine illumination by noting that Augustine favoured an inner apprehension of truth which was centered in the heart. "The man who attains wisdom is the man who has learned to 'know' apart from the senses, which can only impede his understanding of higher things. That remains the foundation of his epistemology."²³⁰ Only the eye of the heart purified through faith, hope and love can attain spiritual illumination; without belief in the necessity of faith, hope that healing is possible, and the love and desire to seek the light, "no soul is healed so that it may see, that is know God."²³¹

²²⁷ "The Gift of Perseverance," in *WSA*, 1/26, p. 191.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, XII. 28, p. 208. At the end of his life, as he writes in a letter to Valentinus, the abbot of the monastery in Hadrumetum in 426 concerning the Pelagian heresy, the only remedy for the errant will is grace freely given; without grace there is no salvation, and without free will, there is no judgment and no knowledge of God. He tells Valentinus that when faced with the difficult doctrine of free-will, he should "where you think that you do not understand, believe for the time being the words of God that there exist both the free choice of a human being and the grace of God without the help of which free choice can neither turn back to God nor make progress toward God." "Letter 214," in *WSA*, 1/26, p. 46.

²²⁹ *Religious Affections, Works*, 2, pp. 308-309, 343. In the fifth sign of "a truly gracious affection" Edwards refers to common illuminations of things pertaining to God, and in the seventh sign, of the "illuminations and affections" that come with conversion and which "reach the bottom of the heart".

²³⁰ G.R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* (Cambridge :Cambridge University Press,1982), p. 52. Evans' observations are confirmed in Book XII in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. (c. 415) Here, in the midst of a discussion about Paul's experience in 2 Cor. 12: 2-4 of being snatched up to the third heaven, Augustine refers to the kind of intuitive heart knowledge of God that he associates with mystical experience. In one section there is lengthy discussion about various types of vision: bodily, spiritual and intellectual. The latter is the most excellent and is the one used in contemplation of God when the soul is swept away from all fancies and imaginings to behold intellectual truth "There without any bodily likeness the true transparent truth is perceived, overcast by no false opinions." Such visions are the gift of divine grace and they give a foretaste of heaven, "the ultimate bliss to possess what you love." *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, XII. 26. 54., in *WSA*, I/13, pp. 494-495.

²³¹ "The Soliloquies," I. 6. 13, in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 31.

While God is the fountain of all knowledge and the light that informs all minds, he is not recognized by those who look for him outside the self in the created world.²³² The original evil consisted in humanity's turn away from the divine light to make itself the light. Only the one who will set "set his heart" on the divine light, can be a light.²³³ At times Augustine regards knowledge of God as contemplation, a visual activity that involves both intellect and will: "What does knowing God mean but beholding him and firmly grasping him with the mind?"²³⁴ Since beholding and grasping God is restricted to the pure in heart, and only those with faith will ever attain the purity of heart to see God, Augustine argues that it is by faith that God must be loved and known, and that will be in the heart.²³⁵ Faith and reason cooperate so that the heart knows and loves God. This is called "Divine illumination" in Augustine's spiritual epistemology. The heart is illuminated by grace to see the beauty of God's holiness in the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ.

In a letter to Consentius in 410, Augustine praises both faith and reason in the matter of divine illumination and explains the link between the two. In matters pertaining to salvation, faith precedes reason "so that the heart may be purified in order that it may receive and sustain the light of the great reason, which is, of course, a demand of reason!" In a somewhat contradictory manner he straightaway remarks that there may be a faint glimmer of reason needed to persuade one to have faith in the first place, and then reason precedes faith. He mentions in the letter that he wants to encourage Consentius' faith towards a "love of understanding to which true reasoning leads and for which faith prepares the minds." The order of grace acting upon the heart begins with the gift of faith which helps reason lead the mind to an understanding of divine things, which in this letter concerns the Trinity.²³⁶ The divine light which enables this "seeing" shines "invisibly and ineffably" to illuminate the understanding.²³⁷

²³² *The City of God*, VIII. 9, p. 311. speaking of the Platonists, Augustine remarks, "Thus there are philosophers who have conceived of God, the supreme and true God, as the author of all created things, the light of knowledge, the Final Good of all activity, and who have recognized him as being for us the origin of existence, the truth of doctrine and the blessedness of life."

²³³ *Ibid.*, XIV. 13, p. 573. (CCSL 40, 435). "Illud itaque malum, quo, cum sibi homo placet, tamquam sit et ipse lumen, aueritur ab eo lumine, quod ei si placeat et ipse fit lumen..."

²³⁴ *The Trinity*, VIII. 6, *WSA*, 1/5, p. 246. (CCSL, 50, 275). "Et quid est deum scire nisi eum mente conspiciere firmeque percipere? Augustine goes on to say that only the pure in heart can behold and grasp God, that is "to know, worship and love God."

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, VIII. 6, *WSA*, 1/5, p. 246.

²³⁶ "Letter 120. 3-5, in *WSA*, II/2, pp. 131-132.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

In another context Augustine argues that religious knowledge which is known in the heart through illumination is just as valid as many other beliefs that humans hold to be true but which cannot be verified empirically. In what was most probably a sermon entitled “On Faith in Things Unseen,” he observes that it is not foolish to put one’s faith in what cannot be seen because it is “out of your heart you believe in a heart that is not yours, and you place faith where you do not focus the glance of either your body or your mind.”²³⁸ Take away faith in things unseen, love is devalued and all human relationships break down. Those who doubt the witness of the church should be moved by the “unexpected illumination of the human race by divine brightness” and believe the testimony of history.²³⁹

Augustine admits that immediately prior to his conversion he was so suspicious of the knowledge of God to be found in the Scriptures that he preferred to remain with the Skeptics.²⁴⁰ As he points out, faith or belief is “nothing other than to think with assent,”²⁴¹ and to assent to anything is to love it. When knowledge and love combine in the heart to give full assent to God as Trinity in this life, then contemplation of God as the reward of faith “and the eternal perfection of all joys” becomes a certainty for the next life.²⁴² In the meantime, a heart being purified by a loving faith and a personal experience of God’s love are the hallmarks of the Christian life for Augustine, just as was the case for Edwards.

Although there is no comparable idea to Edwards’ new spiritual sense in Augustine’s spiritual epistemology, there are some affinities in their understanding of the divine illumination bestowed by the Holy Spirit who illuminates sense data and renders theological truths discernible to the heart.²⁴³ For example, Augustine asserts that the bodily

²³⁸ “On Faith in Things Unseen,” (after 399), in *FC*, vol. 2, p.453. In Book VI of the *Confessions*, VI. 5. 7, pp. 95-96, Augustine describes his difficulties with faith as a problem of reserving judgment because of his failure to find a certain kind of proof. Upon reflection, he realizes that there are many things for which he has no first hand evidence yet he is happy to believe them, so why not believe the Scriptures?

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 467.

²⁴⁰ *Confessions*, VI. 4. 6, p. 94. “Fearing a precipitate plunge, I kept my heart from giving assent.” (CCSL 27, p. 77). “Tenebam enim cor meum ab omni adsensione timens precipitium et suspendio magis necabar.”

²⁴¹ “The Predestination of the Saints,” II.5, *WSA*, 1/26, p. 151.

²⁴² *The Trinity*, 1. 17, *WSA*, 1/5, pp. 76-77. “Contemplation in fact is the reward of faith, a reward for which hearts are cleansed through faith...”

²⁴³ *The City of God*, X, 2, p. 374. Augustine refers to three types of “vision”: corporeal or sense perception, spiritual, and intellectual, which he explains with reference to “Love thy neighbour.” See *Confessions*, II. 8. 16, p. 33, where Augustine speaks of God as the one who “illuminates my heart” (*inluminat cor meum*). (CCSL 27, 25).

The rational or intellectual soul, like the soul of John, cannot be light to itself, and it shines only by participating in the true light of another.” This theory of illumination is based on the Neoplatonic idea of understanding rising from the natural world to the soul in the body, then to the *nous*. Plotinus taught that the

senses provide an analogy for the vision of the heart,²⁴⁴ an image used by Edwards.²⁴⁵ The other-worldly nature of the heart's knowledge of God is seen in Augustine's example of two who hear the word, but only one understands in a way that is undeniable yet inexplicable: "something, I know not what, of an incorporeal and spiritual kind God works in us, which is neither sound to strike the ear, nor colour to be discerned by the eyes,yet

soul receives illumination from on high, and Augustine agreed with him, but they differed as to the source of illumination." See also "On Free Will," II. 3. 9, in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, pp. 139-41. "Rather I think that by reason we comprehend that there is a kind of interior sense to which the ordinary senses refer everything." "What is evident is this: corporeal objects are perceived by bodily sense; no bodily sense can perceive itself; the interior sense can perceive both corporeal objects perceived by a bodily sense, and also that bodily sense itself; but reason knows all these things and knows itself and therefore has knowledge in the strict sense of the term." Augustine speaks of a similar three-fold schema for knowledge in Book II. "On Free Will," II. 3. 8, pp. 138-139. Here, Augustine categorizes the types of knowledge into a tripartite hierarchy: knowledge from sense perception shared with animals, knowledge of the senses themselves, what Augustine called the "*interior sensus*" and reason, which distinguishes or judges the senses and the data gained from the senses. As with the senses, the *interior sensus* is shared with the animals. Only humans have a higher faculty still which can perceive what is timeless and changeless, and this faculty, the reason, does not depend on the senses. Only the information which moves beyond the *interior sensus* can become true knowledge. "What we know we comprehend by reason."

An excellent account of Augustine's doctrine of divine illumination is given in "The Light of the Soul," in Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, pp. 77-96. Edwards, too spoke of divine illumination and uses light imagery to convey God's role in revealing divine truths to the heart, but his depiction of illumination is not presented in the Platonic idiom so familiar to Augustine, and Edwards devotes more attention to the sense of the heart as the outcome of divine illumination. There is a shared belief that God illumines all minds with light, all knowledge is God-given, but not all see the truth about God. Edwards talks about "common grace" as opposed to "saving grace." All people can understand something of God, but not all people believe that God is triune and gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the heart as to the significance of the Incarnation. It is in that sense that Augustine speaks of divine illumination. See also "A Divine and Supernatural Light," (1733), in *Works*, 14, pp. 405-426. Edwards' new simple idea of divine light imparts the new sense of the heart in which the understanding and will combine to give true knowledge of God. See The "Soliloquies," I. 12. 15, in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, pp. 23-63; *Confessions*, 11. 9. 11, p. 227. "Discourse on the Trinity" in *Works*, 21, p. 138.

²⁴⁴ The "Soliloquies," I. 6. 12, in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 30. (PL 32, 875). "For Reason, who speaks with you promises to let you see God with your mind as the sun is seen with the eye." The mind has as it were, eyes of its own, analogous to the soul's senses. The certain truths of the sciences are analogous to the objects which the sun's rays make visible. Such as the earth and earthly things. And it is God himself who illumines all. I, Reason, am in minds as the power of looking is in the eyes." Augustine mentions Plato's comparison of the good, the sun of the intelligible world, with the corporeal sun which lights the world of the senses. In the Neoplatonism of Plotinus, the spiritual principal of all things is both the cause of their existence, the light of their knowledge and the rule of their lives. Augustine used Plato's idea with reference to John's gospel and his "light of the world" imagery. God is the Father of our illumination. Other examples are found in "The Soliloquies," I. 1. 2, p. 24. (PL 32, 870) and *The City of God*, X. 2, pp. 374-375. (PL 41, 280). See also John H. S. Burleigh, "Introduction," to "The Teacher," (389), which he aptly calls "an essay in epistemology." Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 65. Affection and intellect are combined in Augustine's discussion of knowledge. In the *Retractations*, Augustine reminds his readers that the purpose of the work written some forty years earlier had been to show that "there is no teacher who teaches man knowledge except God according to what is written in the Gospel...One is your teacher, even Christ." The *Retractations*, I. 11 in FC vol. 60, p. 50.

Similarly Edwards writes in *Religious Affections*, *Works*, 2, p. 343. "but the soul of a saint receives light from the Sun of Righteousness, in such a manner, that its nature is changed and it becomes properly a luminous thing: not only does the sun shine in the saints, but they also become little suns, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light."

²⁴⁵ "Discourse on the Trinity," in *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, *Works*, 21, p. 138.

something there is which it is easy to feel,-impossible to explain.” He is quite explicit that understanding takes place in the heart.” If, brethren, you have understood, your heart has also been spoken to.”²⁴⁶ The understanding of heart knowledge described in that homily is very similar to Edwards’ understanding of a new spiritual sense of the heart.

The position Augustine adopted after conversion was that all knowledge of both the sensible and intelligible worlds comes from God, “sweet light of my uncomprehending eyes,”²⁴⁷ but knowledge which comes by way of sense perception has for its object the material world, and cannot lead to direct knowledge of God. It can, however, confirm the knowledge of God that has been appropriated by faith and love.²⁴⁸ Knowledge alone puffs up, but add love to knowledge and “knowledge will be useful, not in itself but through love.”²⁴⁹ When justifying the writing of the *Confessions*, Augustine argued that only the love that has “bonded to itself and made one” believes all things, because love opens the ears of the heart to divine truth.²⁵⁰ The vision of God is the knowledge of God, but it is imperfect knowledge in this present world because the realm of the senses intrudes upon the mind. The soul cannot keep the mind’s eye fixed with “strong love” on “that unique and true beauty” and “it will never be able to abide in that most blessed vision” until the next life, when the heart gives itself wholly to God and “love remains to hold it fast.”²⁵¹

The love that holds the heart fast to God is the Holy Spirit. In one of his earliest writings on the Trinity, Augustine pays homage to the role of the Holy Spirit as part of the three-fold work of the Trinity in imparting divine knowledge to the heart. This is experienced as “a certain interior and ineffable tenderness and sweetness of remaining in this knowledge...which gift and function is properly attributed to the Holy Spirit.”²⁵² The Holy Spirit is both the mutual love of the Father and Son and the divine light. “What is the light that shines right through me and strikes my heart without hurting?” Augustine asks. “Wisdom, wisdom it is which shines right through me, ...”²⁵³

²⁴⁶ “Homily XXXX. 5,” in *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, in *NPNF*, vol. VII, p. 226-227.

²⁴⁷ *Confessions*, XI. 19. 25 p. 235.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, X. 6. 10, p. 184. “the created order speaks to all, but is understood by those who hear its outward voice and compare it with the truth within themselves.”

²⁴⁹ “Homily XXVII.10,” in *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, *NPNF*, vol. VII, p. 176.

²⁵⁰ *Confessions*, X. 3. 3, p. 180.

²⁵¹ The “Soliloquies,” 1. 6. 13, in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 31.

²⁵² “Letter 11. 4,” in *WSA*, II/I, p. 126. (CSEL 34:26). “there proceeds from the Father himself, from the single principle from whom are all things, both understanding through the Son, and a certain interior and ineffable sweetness and delight in that understanding, (outlasting and looking down upon all mortal things), which is rightly ascribed to the Holy Spirit as gift and attribute.”

²⁵³ *Confessions*, XI. 9. 11, p. 227.

The importance of the heart in divine illumination is evident in his early writings. In the *Soliloquies* Augustine argues that God illuminates the truths of *sapientia* i.e. science and geometry, with an intellectual light, just as the sun illuminates the objects on earth with physical light.²⁵⁴ When Reason asks him if he would like to know God in the same way that he knows mathematical knowledge, Augustine's reply is instructive because he clearly admits that there is no way in which he could equate intellectual knowledge of a line or a sphere with knowledge of God, even though the intellectual knowledge of mathematics is axiomatic and belongs to the inner man which is the locus for the image of God in humanity.²⁵⁵

Divine illumination is needed for theological truth which is of a different order from mathematical knowledge because it consists in love. "Even now", says Augustine, "compared to love of him [i. e. God], these things hardly enter my mind."²⁵⁶ Augustine is reluctant to concede to Reason that the way in which he "knows" the truths of mathematics is the way in which he "knows" the truth of God, even when the difference lies in the objects known and not in the knowing itself.²⁵⁷ He argues that there is an affective component to knowledge of God which is a matter of love and beauty, not simply the knowledge to be discerned in the disinterested truths of science.

While there is an analogy between the knowledge that "as the sky is superior to the earth in its peculiar beauty, so is the intelligible beauty of God superior to the certain truths of mathematics," analogy is not enough for Augustine until Reason explains that God can be seen by the mind just as the sun is seen by the eye.²⁵⁸ God illumines the "eye of the mind" for believers, so that they might see the "certain ineffable and incomprehensible light of minds," the truth of God.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ "The Soliloquies," I, 6. 12, in Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, p. 30. (PL 32, 875). "For Reason who speaks with you promises to let you see God with your mind as the sun is seen with the eye. The mind has as it were, eyes of its own, analogous to the soul's senses. The certain truths of the sciences are analogous to the objects which the sun's rays make visible. Such as the earth and earthly things. And it is God himself who illumines all. I, Reason, am in minds as the power of looking is in the eyes." Augustine mentions Plato's comparison of the good, the sun of the intelligible world with the corporeal sun which lights the world of the senses. In the Neoplatonism of Plotinus, the spiritual principal of all things is both the cause of their existence, the light of their knowledge and the rule of their lives. Augustine used Plato's idea with reference to John's gospel and his "light of the world" imagery. God is the Father of our illumination. See also "The Soliloquies, I, 1, 2 p. 24, (PL 32, 870), *The City of God*, X, 2, pp. 374-375.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 5. 11, p. 30.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 6. 12, p. 30.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, I. 8. 23, p. 37.

In *The Trinity*, there are three occasions where Augustine refers to the enlightening work of the Holy Spirit who will “teach you all truth.”²⁶⁰ The knowledge of God and self that the Spirit gives “arouses” the heart in love for God which leads to mourning as the heart realizes the extent of its fallenness.²⁶¹ Just as God is love and wisdom, so the Holy Spirit is love and wisdom, and what else is wisdom asks Augustine but “spiritual and unchanging light?”²⁶² According to Augustine, the divine light shines on all people, (what Edwards was to term “common grace”), in the form of general ideas known in the heart about God, justice and virtue, but sin prevents true recognition of their divine origin, and the heart is unable to “give itself the justice which it lost and no longer has.”²⁶³ The ability to see that God is truth comes in an intuitive moment of spiritual illumination when truth is recognized as the “good of every good,” the “good it can cleave to in love.”²⁶⁴

Knowledge of God is personal and comes from Christ who has “treasures both of wisdom and knowledge.” He is humanity’s *scientia* and *sapientia*, knowledge of the sensible world and wisdom of God in the heart²⁶⁵ given through the gift of the Holy Spirit.²⁶⁶ After the gift of the Spirit who imparts “a wholly intimate instruction from within,” the heart perceives that it can only “rise” by the grace of God.²⁶⁷ It is the Spirit dwelling in the believer’s heart who joins the believer with God and so imparts the love and knowledge of God.²⁶⁸

Two experiences of mystical illumination recounted in the *Confessions* add weight to Augustine’s view that knowledge of God is authenticated in the heart. On both occasions, Augustine experiences a sublime vision of God which is known as an intense love, rather than as intellectual knowledge.²⁶⁹ He discovers that God is “eternal truth, true love and beloved eternity,” knowledge which he “heard in the way one hears within the heart, and all

²⁶⁰ *The Trinity*, I. 18, p. 78; 4.1, p. 152; 7.6, p. 224.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, IV. 1, p. 152.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, VII. 6, p. 224.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, XIV. 21, pp. 386-387.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, VIII. 4, p. 244. (CCSL 50, 272).

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, XIII. 24, p. 363. (CCSL 50^a, 416).

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, VIII. 4, *WSA*, 1/5, p. 363. “it is he who implants faith in us about temporal things, he who presents us with the truth about eternal things.”

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, XIV. 21, p. 387.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, XV. 31, pp. 420-421.

²⁶⁹ *Confessions*, VII, 10. 16, p. 123. The first comes after a period of contemplation of the *libri Platoniorum* when he catches a glimpse of a completely foreign kind of light to that seen with the eye of the soul. It is nothing like ordinary light, not even a larger or brighter version of the light of day but one known by love

doubt left me.”²⁷⁰ Encounter with God awakens in him an enjoyment and love for God inspired by the beauty of God, just as divine illumination is experienced by Edwards.

The second mystical experience is also a confirmation of heart-knowledge gained through love. It takes place at Ostia, when in company with Monica he describes a spiritual ascent in which “our minds were lifted up by an ardent affection towards eternal being itself.” Out of their deep longing to see God and taste heaven “the mouth of the heart” opens to receive divine love. There is a moment of “total concentration of the heart” when they touch Wisdom himself.²⁷¹ In words that are a premonition of Edwards, Augustine confesses that if the vision had lasted beyond the return of inferior visions, then that would be sufficient to “alone ravish and absorb and enfold in inward joys the person granted the vision.” Love and understanding combine in his pronouncement that the vision is “that moment of understanding after which we sighed.”²⁷² These two brief encounters with divine love provide immediate knowledge of God which is experienced in the heart. Such encounters arise from faith, progress with love and bring joy to the heart.

Years later he was to tell his congregation that Christ is the light of the world who illuminates the hearts of humanity made in the image of God and reforms them. Those who do not receive the light (the “slow of heart”), are those burdened by sin. Divine illumination is always there but those who persist in sin are themselves dark and “blind of heart.” Spiritual knowledge of God, which in Augustine’s terminology is to see God, is given only to the pure in heart.²⁷³ Once converted, the saints must draw near to Christ in order to be illumined further by the light of love. They are to follow Christ with faith, long for him in their hearts and run to him with love on the two feet of love of God and love of neighbour. In a burst of enthusiasm Augustine assures his people that God has scattered his light abroad so that the saints can follow him “magnificently with godlike speed.”²⁷⁴

The experiential dimension of Augustine’s spiritual epistemology is expressed in the same language used by Edwards as an overwhelming sense of the beauty and sweetness of

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, VII. 10. 16, p. 124.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, IX. 10. 23-24, pp. 170-171.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, IX. 10. 25, p. 172.

²⁷³ “Homily I. 18-19,” in *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, NPNF, vol. VII, p. 13. It is good that Christ the light of the world is “that very light which he has named should enlighten our hearts, and we should see what he has said.”

²⁷⁴ “Psalm 33. 10, (2), WSA, III/16, p. 31.

the divine love.²⁷⁵ The *sensus suavitatis* is divine knowledge which Augustine attributes to the “sweet light” that is God himself dwelling in his heart.²⁷⁶ This inner sweetness is beyond the truths of *scientia*, but is nevertheless, intelligible: “Behold, sometimes we are made glad by a certain inner sweetness. Yes, our mind has been able to catch a glimpse, for a fleeting instant, of something above change...”²⁷⁷

This sense of God’s presence as sweetness in the heart guarantees the heart’s acceptance of the validity of the propositions of faith. *The Confessions* is replete with Augustine’s references to the sweetness he feels in his heart when contemplating God who is “my life, my holy sweetness” (*dulcedo mea sancta*).²⁷⁸ Augustine can recall times when the experience of God’s sweet presence in his heart is almost physical in its impact. Using a similar illustration of the sweetness of honey as does Edwards, Augustine describes the almost physical apprehension of the divine love in the heart. Assurance of the divine presence comes as the taste of the sweetness of the divine presence. He berates his congregation for their failure to know the sweetness of God in the heart because of the “fever of sin.” In frustration he asks them, “How can I demonstrate this immense sweetness to you, who have lost your faculty of taste in the fever of sin? If you had never tasted honey before, you would not exclaim how delicious it is unless you had first tasted it.”²⁷⁹

The close correlation between knowledge of God as triune and the heart’s experience of sweetness is a theme which is the subject of a sermon on Psalm 41. The true saints are those who have known a holy longing for understanding of God in the heart and who have “tasted the sweetness of the Lord.” Understanding of what is loved but yet unseen can only come with Christ, because he is the one who is the source of knowledge and able to illuminate spiritual mysteries: “If he is both fountain and light he obviously is understanding, for while he fully satisfies the soul athirst to know, everyone who

²⁷⁵ References to feelings of the “sweetness” of God as a sense of the heart abound throughout Augustine’s works, particularly in the *Confessions*, the *Sermons*, the *Exposition of the Psalms* and his *Homilies on the Gospel of John*.

²⁷⁶ *Confessions*, X. 17. 26, p. 194.

²⁷⁷ “Psalm 41.10,” in *WSA*, III/ 16, p. 232.

²⁷⁸ To give just a few examples: In *Confessions*, Book 1.4. 4., (pp. 4-5) and 1. 6. 9 (p. 7), Augustine refers to God as “my God, my life, my holy sweetness.” In 1. 15. 24 (p. 17), he prays that God will “Bring to me a sweetness surpassing all the seductive delights which I pursued.” In 1. 20.31, (p. 23), he refers again to God as “my source of sweet delight,” and in II. 1. 1, he tells his readers that for the sake of God’s love for him he “will retrace his wicked ways. The memory is bitter, but it will help me to savour your sweetness, the sweetness that does not deceive but brings real joy and never fails.”

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, X. 50. 65, p. 218. “And sometimes you cause me to enter into an extraordinary depth of feeling marked by a strange sense of sweetness. If it were brought to perfection in me, it would be an experience quite beyond anything in this life.” “Psalm 30. 6,” (Exp. 4) in *WSA*, III/ 15, p. 330.

understands is illumined by a light that is not corporeal or carnal or external, but is an inward radiance.” This inner light draws the heart on by a “kind of sweetness, an inward sweet pleasure” which leads to the “eternally present face of God which is joy never diminished.” It is a completely different joy from that which comes from worldly pleasures because it reaches the “ears of the heart” of one who ponders “the wonderful work of God in the redemption of believers.”²⁸⁰

SUMMARY

My comparison of the spiritual epistemologies of Edwards and Augustine demonstrates that their spiritual epistemologies represent a shift to a different order of knowledge which includes the affections as well as reason. It is apparent that both men adhere to a belief in divine illumination that takes place in the heart which is envisaged as the union of the affections and the will, with the will or love the impetus behind all actions. Furthermore, the heart incorporates an intellectual component that is somewhat analogous to the perichoretic unity of Father, Son as Word or Wisdom, and Holy Spirit as love. There is an hierarchy of knowledge with love of God’s goodness, truth and beauty at the apex. Reason alone is an obstacle to knowledge of God because true spiritual knowledge incorporates emotions which are experienced in the heart. Only heart knowledge can yield insights into the nature and commands of God.

Both subscribe to the view that the sinful heart is incapable of understanding the divine revelation of the Scriptures because of self-will. Humanity is unable to freely choose to love the good who is God and so to love rightly. There is no freedom of the will to accept or reject divine love in their spiritual epistemology. Divine illumination is needed before the heart can understand the love of God as revealed in the work of the Trinity. When the human will is changed by the divine will the heart is converted. The Spirit of Christ assists believers to understand the mysteries of faith in the triune God by imparting knowledge of the Incarnation and saving work of Jesus Christ. Confirmation of the truths of the Scriptures comes by way of an inner sense of “sweetness” in the contemplation of the divine love that is evidenced in the work of the Trinity. The *suauitas* of God’s Trinitarian love can be tasted in the heart in an almost physical sense, alongside feelings of delight, joy and happiness.

With their emphasis on the heart as the place where God is known, spiritual epistemology flows naturally into theological aesthetics in the Trinitarianism of Edwards and Augustine

²⁸⁰ “Psalm 41,” in *WSA*, III/16, pp. 239-255.

because it is the beauty of God's holiness by which God is known, and that spiritual beauty is imparted to the heart at conversion. Chapter Four examines the aesthetic foundations of Edwards' and Augustine's Trinitarian spirituality. Beauty, holiness, virtue and happiness are the key themes in their aesthetic vocabulary of heart religion.