Durham E-Theses

Love, Glory and Beauty in Jonathan Edwards and Hans Urs von Balthasar

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Material Abstract:

Christian tradition, rooted in scripture, affirms both that God seeks His own glory, and that God is love. However, these goals appear to be in tension, with seeking one's own glory seeming self-centred, while love being oriented towards the other.

This thesis explores how Jonathan Edwards resolved this tension in *The End of Creation*. In this work, Edwards draws on scriptural and philosophical arguments to resolve the question using a concept of *theosis*. This thesis argues that the general structure of Edwards' resolution is compelling, but there are weak details in the argument. Many of these weaknesses are rooted in one specific weakness: Edwards' account relies upon a concept of beauty which is too influenced by natural theology to be consistent with classical Protestantism.

These problems can be addressed by using the ideas of the Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, ironically making Edwards more consistently Protestant. Unlike Edwards, Balthasar develops an understanding of beauty which coheres well with key Protestant loci, notably in its emphasis upon seeing beauty in revelation, perceived through scriptural exegesis and the cross. While Balthasar's account does allow for a role for natural sources in his account of beauty, it does so in a way which centres on revelation, and thereby coheres well with Protestant thought.

The thesis argues that Balthasar's account of divine beauty (particularly as found in his Christology and his interpretation of the Trinity) contains ideas of love and glory which help to reconstruct Edwards' ideas. Tension within Edwards' understanding of love may be improved by using Balthasar's aesthetic concept of love, centred on the cross of Christ. This concept of love itself contains a concept of union, which helps to improve Edwards' understanding of *theosis*. Due to this reconstruction, Edwards' theology becomes stronger, and more consistent with his own Protestant principles.

Love, Glory and Beauty in Jonathan Edwards and Hans Urs von Balthasar

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Declaration

None of the material in the main text of this thesis has been submitted for a degree at Durham University, or at any other institution.

However, the material in the appendix has previously been submitted as the research dissertation component to an MA degree in Biblical Interpretation and Theology at the University of Nottingham.

Statement of Copyright:

Introduction

Throughout the Bible and Christian tradition, we consistently find reference to two divine goals: glory-seeking and love. The Bible contains both, and tradition affirms both. Indeed, in almost any act of Christian worship, one is almost guaranteed to find the explicit or implicit presence of belief in both: the worship will likely contain frequent reference to God's love for humanity, while expressing – either in words, or simply in the fact that it is an act of worship – belief that God desires glory and praise.

These goals appear to stand in tension. To seek one's own glory seems to be self-centred – while most definitions of love involve an orientation towards the other. If God is defined by His love, it therefore seems surprising to find Him seeking His own glory.

It is easy to come up with simple accounts of how these two goals relate. For example, one could affirm that God seeks His own glory in order to love human beings. It would be easy to affirm how God could be at His most loving in displaying His own glory for humanity and enabling them to come into an appropriate relationship with the fountain of beauty and goodness. However, to claim that God's sole goal in glorifying Himself is the good of the other would be difficult to reconcile with a number of biblical texts – for example, God states in Ezekiel 36:22 that "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name",[1] while Paul's opening prayer in Ephesians clearly regards the ultimate goal of the blessings God gives in salvation as being the worship of God's glory.[2]

On the other hand, one could do the opposite, and suggest that God's acts of love are done to achieve His own glory. In assisting and blessing human beings, God demonstrates His own power and value, and thereby glorifies Himself. However, this would be highly problematic, lying in tension with any usual definition of love – to seek the good of the other for a self-centred goal would be no more loving than to marry someone for their money.

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[1] Ezekiel 36:22, NRSV.
[2] Ephesians 1:3-14.

This thesis explores the question of how these two, apparently contradictory, divine goals can be related to one another.

Glory

In the celebrated words of St Irenaeus, "The glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God."[3] Christian theology has always seen the theme of divine glory as inextricably linked with that of the redeemed human – as human beings are made in the image of God, they reflect and embody the divine glory that they see.

Glory is a term which has no simple definition. The Hebrew term *kabod* comes from the term for weight,[4] and indicates the greatness of something: "that characteristic which people typically honour: wisdom (…), might (…), wealth".[5] When applied to God, it indicates the value of the divine attributes in themselves,[6] as well as them being displayed, known, loved and honoured by human beings. [7] The Greek term *doxa*, while it has its own meaning, was used by the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew *kabod*, and therefore came to have the same meaning in the religious sphere of early Christianity.[8]

Jonathan Edwards

The primary source for our engagement with the question of glory-seeking and love will be the Reformed theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), who wrote several works in which he considered the question.

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[3] Irenaeus, "Against Heresies", in *The Writings of Irenaeus: Volume I*, trans. by Alexander Roberts and W. H. Rambaut (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1868) 444.

[4] Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament: Volume Two*, trans. by John Baker (London: SCM Press, 1967), 30.

[5] Darrell D. Gwaltney Jr & Ralph W. Vunderink, "Glory", in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 507-508.

[6] Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 29-34.

[7] Ibid, 34-35.

[8] Gwaltney & Vunderink, "Glory", 507.

The main place where Edwards discusses the question of the relationship between glory-seeking and love is in his *Dissertation Concerning the End for which God Created the World*[9] (hereafter, *The End of Creation*). This work, which has been the subject of recent scholarly attention despite having "been one of his most neglected works historically",[10] was written towards the end of Edwards' life and published posthumously in 1765[11] (with a foreword stating that Edwards would have edited it further had he lived longer[12]). The work seeks to answer one specific question: why did God create the world? It considers this question in two chapters: the first looks at the question by means of reason and natural theology, while the second addresses the same question with reference to revelation (which Edwards identifies with scripture). In answering this question, Edwards argues that the goal of creation is also the goal of all God's interactions with creation, and that God has one overall goal. He argues at length that this one goal meets several criteria, including that it can legitimately be spoken of as embodying God's love for Himself, God's glory-seeking, and God's love for humanity.

The End of Creation formed, together with its sequel *A Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue*[13] (hereafter *True Virtue*) a set, usually known as the *Two Dissertations*. Both works were written at the same time, and it is widely recognised that they are deeply linked, so that one dissertation can be used to interpret the other one.[14] In this thesis, we will find that elements of *True Virtue* will offer a large number of interpretative clues which will help us understand *The End of Creation*, significantly influencing the argument of this thesis.

The primary aim of *True Virtue* is to make an argument as to how human beings should morally act and be, and to enable the reader to distinguish between affections which appear to be virtuous but are not, and those which are truly virtuous. All of this is rooted in a concept of moral beauty, which for our purposes will be very

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[9] Jonathan Edwards, "Concerning the End for which God Created the World", in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, [hereafter WJE] ed. by Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 8:403-536.
[10] Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 76.
[11] George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 459.
[12] Hopkins, "Preface to the Two Dissertations", WJE 8:401-402.
[13] WJE 8:539-627.
[14] E.g. Stephen R. Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 44-45.

significant, as I will demonstrate that a structurally very important part of the argument *The End of Creation* is rooted in this understanding of moral beauty.

Edwards' understanding of beauty was a key part of his thought, and other elements of his corpus also include reference to it. In particular, he began a work which he intended to be called "The Mind",[15] which was to cover a range of subjects. Although he never came to finish it, his notes contain extensive discussion of his understanding of beauty.

Additionally, Edwards' wrote extensive private theological notes – known as the "Miscellanies". It has recently been increasingly acknowledged that, being personal notes (and often representing "work in progress" towards finished theological works), they ought to be given less priority than Edwards' published works,[16] but they nonetheless serve as an invaluable source of what Edwards thought at various points in his life.

Finally, another source ought to be mentioned: Edwards was a preacher by profession, and so there are large numbers of sermons which are extant. These frequently offer insights into his theology. On several occasions in this thesis, we will note that the account of some aspect of theology which is given in his sermons (which, in accordance with their genre, rely more directly on scriptural exegesis) is not susceptible to some of the critiques which this thesis will direct towards his other published works.

Edwards' Account

In *The End of Creation*, Edwards argued that God has one ultimate goal in both creating the universe, and in his actions within it: His own glory. This love of glory is rooted in theocentric love – drawing on his understanding of moral beauty, Edwards argues that God must give infinitely more love to the being which has an infinitely larger degree of being, which is God, and therefore cannot love humans independently of this love for God.

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[15] WJE 6:332-393.

[16] See, e.g., the discussion in Oliver D. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4-5.

This divine love for God is manifest in God seeking to glorify Himself, which Edwards argues can be summarised as God causing Himself to exist *ad extra* – for His internal divine attributes of understanding and will to exist outside of Himself. This, in Edwards' scheme, becomes effectively another way of God loving humanity – loving humanity by giving them the highest goods of understanding of God and love of God. In order to explain why God loves humanity at all in this scheme, when He should ultimately have love only for God, Edwards develops an eccentric doctrine of *theosis*. I shall argue that this account of *theosis* has flaws which are required by the understanding of moral beauty which begins *The End of Creation*.

Beauty

Edwards (unusually among Reformed theologians) placed great importance on beauty. His descriptions of his own spirituality stressed the importance of his vision of divine beauty,[17] and this worked its way into his academic writings. Holifield writes that the concept "reflected an angle of vision that found expression in almost everything he wrote",[18] and it has even been put forward that the idea "provides a larger purchase upon the essential and distinctive features of his thought than does any other aspect, such as the idealist, empiricist, sensationalist, Platonist, scholastic, Calvinist, or mystic."[19] It is therefore no great surprise that beauty is central to Edwards' argument in *The End of Creation*.

As a consequence of the importance of beauty for Edwards' argument, this thesis will include extensive discussion of the meaning of beauty, which will be the primary subject of four chapters, in which a detailed account of the meaning of beauty will be developed. However, on a much more basic level, it will be valuable to establish at this juncture a rough "base meaning" for what this term could mean.

In *The Mind*, Edwards begins the section on beauty (which he identifies with the word "excellency") with a reflection upon its (lack of) definition. In it, we see that

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[17] See Louis J. Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards on the Experience of Beauty* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 2003), 80-90.

[18] E. Brooks Holifield, "Edwards as Theologian", in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. by Stephen J. Stein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), of 144-161.

[19] Roland André Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* (London: Yale University Press, 1968), vii.

Edwards is dissatisfied with any existing definition, while at the same time having a number of things which he can say about what the word means:

> There has nothing been more without a definition than excellency, although it be what we are more concerned with than anything else whatsoever. Yea, we are concerned with nothing else. But what is this excellency? Wherein is one thing excellent and another evil, one beautiful and another deformed? Some have said that all excellency is harmony, symmetry or proportion; but they have not yet explained it. We would know why proportion is more excellent than disproportion, that is, why proportion is pleasant to the mind and disproportion unpleasant.[20]

In this paragraph (before suggesting that the real meaning behind this beauty – "that is, why proportion is pleasant to the mind" – is something which he will go on to examine in greater depth), Edwards identifies beauty/excellency with both that which is "pleasant to the mind", and "harmony, symmetry or proportion" – thereby giving two definitions of beauty. Edwards holds both definitions to be true – this duality is not in any way problematic, since they are not in any way competitive definitions: something being "pleasant" is a comment on the impact it has on another person, whereas something having "proportion" is a comment on what it is like in itself, and it is entirely logical for Edwards to suggest that the two are linked, and to say that we find things which are proportioned to be pleasant.

Edwards discusses his objective definition of beauty – as concerning "harmony, symmetry or proportion" – extensively, and this will be covered in detail in the first chapter of this thesis. The subjective definition – as something which elicits a response of pleasure – is defined in less detail in Edwards, but is nonetheless significant. While I will critique Edwards' objective definition of beauty within this thesis, it seems that his subjective definition is of considerably more value. Given this definition of beauty, it seems difficult to dispute that God must be beautiful.

It is almost inconceivable that a Christian theologian might deny that a vision of God Himself ought to delight us; instead, there is strong warrant for such a belief in both Christian tradition and the Bible. For example, this idea is fundamental to the

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[20] WJE 6:332.

traditional concept of the beatific vision, and is affirmed by a number of biblical passages.[21]

What is perhaps more controversial is to say that a vision of God Himself does in fact delight us, rather than simply that it ought to. For a Christian – particularly one (like Edwards) who is Protestant – there is a significant difference between how human beings ought to be, and how they actually are. As such, one might expect human beings to *not* gain delight from God, even though they should (this is a particularly common position within Protestantism). However, here, Edwards' position is significantly more nuanced than I have so far indicated; while he has above affirmed that humans respond to beauty in general with this pleasure, he did not do so with regard to God's beauty. Indeed, elsewhere Edwards affirms that unregenerate humans do not do this with regard to God.[22] Instead, Edwards would say that human beings *should* delight in God.[23]

This allows one to put forward a slightly different version of Edwards' identification between beauty and that which causes pleasure: beauty is that which human beings should gain pleasure from. Given a classically Protestant doctrine of humanity, it serves no particular theological problem for a Reformed theologian such as Edwards to affirm at once that it is natural and in accordance with the order of things for a human being to gain pleasure in seeing God, and that at the same time fallen human beings do not. It therefore seems no problem to interpret his understanding of beauty as concerning that which humans *should* gain delight in – and *would* delight in if they were responding to reality without blindness or sin – without saying that, in the case of God, human beings always *do* delight in it.

This concept of beauty should be closely associated with God in general, not any specific aspect of God. It would hypothetically be possible to say that human beings should delight in God because he possesses a specific property known as beauty which is the cause of that moral expectation, rather than because God in Himself is the appropriate object of love. However, this hypothetical position would raise

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[21] E.g. Psalm 37:4, Psalm 22:8, Nehemiah 1:11.

[22] Indeed, this is one of the key themes of *True Virtue*.

[23] The distinction between the delight humans should have in God, and their frequent failure to display such delight, is a key theme of much of Edwards work. For example, the ability to distinguish between those who have those emotions and those who do not is fundamental to *Religious Affections* – see WJE 2:84-461.

problems; at a very simple level, it would be impossible to hold together with divine simplicity, which would leave many parts of Christian tradition unable to hold it. Furthermore (using the same kinds of arguments which are used in support of divine simplicity), it would seem extremely odd to suggest that there are elements or aspects of God which do not deserve for us to delight in them: does that not imply that there are elements of God which are not as good as other elements, thereby drawing into question divine perfection? It would seem much more reasonable to suggest that we are expected to love, and delight in, God Himself as a whole – and to interpret language of divine beauty as being a way of describing God Himself as a whole. If God's beauty is that about God which ought to be delighted in, then God's beauty is God Himself. Beauty can represent a particular human angle or perspective on beholding God, or a particular way of viewing the nature of God; it cannot, however, be said to represent only part of God.

Natural Theology

Central to my argument in this thesis will be that Edwards' account of beauty is deeply influenced by natural theology, and therefore incompatible with Protestantism.

Natural Theology – that is, theology which is determined by some combination of human experiences of the world, and/or reflection using human reason – has played some role in all Christian traditions, including Protestantism. Indeed, it is possible to name Protestant theologians who have given a great role to natural theology – one need only think of Schleiermacher or Tillich. However, the contention of this thesis is that Protestantism in the classical tradition – that is, the theological tradition which began with figures such as Luther and Calvin – is inconsistent with too great a reliance on natural theology. Instead, such Protestantism must centre knowledge of God on revelation.

We find in the original Protestant sources a suspicion of the ability of humans to develop a sufficiently valid theology without revelation, which is rooted in the doctrine of the fall. This shall be discussed in greater depth in the third and fourth chapters, but for now it will be necessary to give a general summary. For both Luther and

Calvin, it was hypothetically possible for humans to perceive God in creation through the use of their reason – but this is no longer true for human beings as they currently exist. Instead, due to the fall, this ability of humans has been corrupted – when humans attempt to undertake natural theology, they will take what is good and, in their sin, corrupt it.

As a result of this, their theology stresses the need for divine revelation, found in the life and death of Jesus and transmitted to us in the Bible. For both thinkers, it is possible for human beings to use this biblical knowledge to subsequently use natural theology (the details of how this may function in each thinker will be explored again in the third and fourth chapters). However, this is only possible so long as one incorporates it within a theology which is fundamentally derived from revelation. Revelation has significant priority over natural theology within the classical Protestant tradition. While natural theology is not inherently evil or wrong, it is not consistent with their ideas for a theology to be in practice centrally determined by natural sources.

Protestantism has a rich variety of approaches to questions of natural theology, many of which meet this criterion. However, it is true that there are examples of other theologians within Protestantism who place a much more central role for natural theology, and we have already named two. Nonetheless, when such theologians do so, they are acting in a way which is inconsistent with the ideas of the founders of the Protestant theological tradition. Whether they are justified in doing so or not is beyond the scope of this thesis; what is relevant is that they are acting inconsistently with the classical Protestant tradition.

Therefore, when this thesis demonstrates that Edwards' account of beauty is determined by natural theology – and that this account of beauty in turn determines much of his argument in *The End of Creation* – it also demonstrates that Edwards is being inconsistent with classical Protestant tradition. It is this classical Protestantism with which we shall be concerned in this thesis, and later unqualified references to Protestantism will serve as a shorthand for Protestantism in the classical tradition. This is not intended to imply that there are no streams within Protestantism which have more space for natural theology.

Edwards and Philosophy

Central to the argument of this thesis will be an evaluation of to what extent Edwards' theology is dependent upon philosophy and natural theology in specific areas of Edwards' theology. The relationship between philosophy and Edwards' theology have been much debated in modern Edwards scholarship –reflecting the fact that there is "a certain duality which seems to divide [Edwards'] thought",[24] with both philosophical and theological elements within his ideas. A range of perspectives have sought to explain the relationship between the two, and it will be worthwhile to make brief remarks on the history of the discussion.

Prior to the middle of the twentieth century, Edwards was not the subject of great scholarly attention. However, in 1949 Perry Miller published a book - entitled *Jonathan Edwards* – and "[i]t has become customary to date modern interest in Edwards from the appearance of Miller's enormously influential intellectual biography which set the tone for the renaissance in studies of Edwards".[25] Miller's profound interest in Edwards' work was especially notable because he did not share in his religious beliefs – to quote a scholar who (like myself) is broadly religiously sympathetic to Edwards' theology, "[i]n one of the great turns of irony in God's providential plan, it was an atheist who resurrected Edwards from obscurity, disregarding the church's neglect and raising him as an example of a thinker of the highest order."[26]

Perhaps reflecting his own atheism, while Miller's Edwards does hold to Calvinistic doctrines – "a primitive religious conception which often seems hopelessly out of touch with even his own day"[27] – nonetheless these are only "the peculiar doctrines in which he expressed his meaning [rather than] the meaning itself."[28] For Miller, Edwards' theological doctrines are secondary: what is primary is Edwards' development of the philosophy and science of the enlightenment, and Miller gives the impression of being embarrassed by their expression in forms of Christian

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[24] David C. Pierce, "Jonathan Edwards and the 'New Sense' of Glory", *The New England Quarterly*, 41:1 (Mar 1968), 82-95.
[25] Carol Ball, *Approaching Jonathan Edwards: The Evolution of a Persona* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 9.
[26] Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 1.
[27] Perry Miller, Jonathan Edwards (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1959), vi.
[28] Ibid, vi.

doctrine. In all of this, Edwards is fundamentally seen as an artist rather than a systematiser of knowledge – "much more a psychologist and a poet than a logician".[29]

Miller influenced the thinkers that followed him in varying ways. While few seemed quite as embarrassed by the theological Edwards as he did, nonetheless many placed great stress on his philosophical-aesthetic elements. Following very shortly after Miller, Douglas Elwood interpreted Edwards in a way which "reunite[d] Edwards the theologian and Edwards the philosopher".[30] For our purposes in this thesis (which will be dominated by questions of Edwards' understanding of beauty), perhaps the most important is Delattre, whose monograph on Edwards' aesthetics[31] remains the most substantial work dealing with theme. Delattre reads Edwards' understanding of this key theme as being "at once philosophical and theological".[32]

For Delattre, while "[m]any considerations shape Edwards' ontology … none is more decisive than his concept of beauty and the fact that it provides him with his fundamental model of order."[33] That concept of beauty is fundamentally tied into his theology, "fundamental to [his' understanding of Divine Beauty"[34] and helps one to understand "his doctrine of the Trinity"[35] as well as other ideas such as the relationship between God and creation[36] – his understanding of beauty determines his understanding of God in a natural way; while "the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart"[37] is necessary for a human being to perceive beauty, these things are perceived in created things[38] by "the agent himself in his encounter with reality".[39] Furthermore, for Delattre's Edwards, created things are ultimately the place where beauty "is manifest and encountered."[40] In Delattre's account, Edwards is both a

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[29] Ibid, v.

[30] Douglas Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 3.

[31] Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*.

[32] Ibid, 15.

[33] Ibid, 29.

[34] Ibid, 2.

[35] Ibid, 2.

[36] Ibid, 2.

[37] Ibid, 3.

[38] Ibid, 30-43.

[39] Ibid, 42.

[40] Ibid, 40.

theologian and a philosopher – but it must be said that he does give a priority of order to Edwards the natural theologian.

In 1966, Conrad Cherry published *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal*[41], which sought to change the direction of Edwards scholarship. While recognising that "every contemporary student of Edwards is profoundly indebted"[42] to Miller, it nonetheless rejected his emphasis on Edwards' influence by the philosophy of his age. Instead, Cherry reads "Jonathan Edwards from the perspective of his theory of faith under the conviction that Edwards was first and last a Calvinist theologian".[43] The first part of this sentence is important; Cherry focuses his analysis of Edwards around the theme of faith (not through any claim that the idea is *the* central idea, but rather that it is *a* central idea around which Cherry chooses to focus.)[44]

Cherry's Edwards adopts a concept of "simple idea" (the basic unit of thought "e.g. ideas of yellow, cold, bitter, thinking, willing"[45], which cannot be generated by mental activity but simply exist already in the mind) from Locke, and states that the basic existence of human faith is a simple idea – he quotes Edwards as describing this simple idea as "the idea of Christ as my saviour in a sense and conviction of his reality and goodness as a Saviour as the Gospel reveals him."[46] For Cherry:

> Edwards does not confuse the simple idea which is received with the operations of the mind with respect to the idea. Not does the mind give itself the simple idea in which it acquiesces – as we shall see in the next chapter, it is a gift of God's spirit. Yet the idea involves itself so intimately in the unity of man's being that it is immediately saluted by the powers of intellect and will.[47]

In this theology, the core "faith" is a gift from God, revealed directly – but subsequently to this, human beings use their minds and natural capacities to interpret, analyse and deepen their understanding of this faith. In this, Cherry's

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[41] Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1966).
[42] Ibid, 3.
[43] Ibid, 6.
[44] Ibid, 6-8.
[45] Ibid, 18.
[46] Jonathan Edwards, "Faith", as quoted in Cherry, The Theology of Jonathan Edwards, 18.
[47] Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 19.

Edwards is using a concept from contemporary philosophy to describe a belief in a theology in which revelation is prior to the natural, but nonetheless allows natural thought to subsequently illuminate these truths. Edwards' version of this understanding of a "simple idea" serves as the equivalent of a traditional theological concept of "the illuminating divine light of faith"[48] (an idea originating with Augustine but found in Edwards' Puritan heritage[49]) whereby "faith is a 'light' in the mind that calls forth a full mental response."[50]

Nonetheless, Cherry's stress was unusual for this period in giving as much attention as it did to Edwards the Reformed theologian; most important works continued to stress the philosophical. In particular, "[w]ithout question, the most influential interpretative proposal of Edwards's thought is"[51] Sang Hyun Lee's *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*[52] – which has been described as "champion[ing] Edwards as a philosopher [instead of] first and foremost, a theologian."[53] Lee's Edwards underwent a "search for a philosophical understanding of the Christian faith"[54] and after this developed a radically new philosophy: "a strikingly modern conception of reality as a dynamic network of dispositional forces and habits."[55] This "dispositional ontology"[56] is seen as challenging the traditional western Christian concept of God, and it is perhaps no surprise that this reading of Edwards has been controversial in subsequent literature.

In the years subsequent to this, Edwards has been the subject of significantly greater scholarly attention as precisely a Calvinist thinker. (To be sure, this attention had never gone away – there have always been Reformed individuals who have written about Edwards as a figure of interest to their communities – but recent years have seen an increase in those works which have been of interest to scholarly writers.)

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 18.
[52] See Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards: Expanded Edition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).
[53] Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 19.
[54] Lee, *Philosophical Theology*, 3.
[55] Ibid, 4.
[56] Ibid, 8.

We read in Michael McClymond's *Encounters with God*[57] that "the simplistic contrast between Puritanism and the Enlightenment does not apply, and that Edwards's position is a complex synthesis between the two."[58] Edwards is "an apologist, attempting to bridge the hiatus between distinctively Christian claims and the broader culture of his day".[59] He did not engage with each 'side' of his influences in the same way, however; he "was necessarily drawn into [early modernity's] circle of ideas"[60] in order to be able to engage with them apologetically. In doing so, however, he went on to develop them, "appropriating and modifying entire intellectual traditions, reinterpreting them so as to make them subservient to his theological purposes."[61] This is an Edwards who is deeply influenced by secular philosophy, but organises this thought around his Reformed tradition.

Steve Holmes' work *God of Grace and God of Glory*[62] (perhaps the work of Edwards scholarship which engages most with this thesis' key themes of glory and love, although looking at Edwards' whole corpus rather than specifically *The End of Creation*) was published only shortly after McClymond's work, and takes a similar approach to the relation between Edwards the theologian and Edwards the philosopher. For Holmes, Edwards is fundamentally "a Reformed preacher and theologian. His undoubted greatness as a writer, a philosopher, even his early promise as a scientist, should not be allowed to obscure this truth."[63] Having said that, Holmes' Edwards is shaped by the philosophy of the time: he advocates "a distinctively Enlightened Puritanism, a Calvinism that has found (…) ways to reshape its own distinctives so that they can stand without apology in an intellectual climate shaped by the heirs of Locke and Newton."[64] As such, Holmes reading of Edwards is like McClymond's that he is fundamentally a Reformed thinker, but one who engaged with the thought of his day and was able to reshape this orthodoxy in ways which took into account the ideas of the enlightenment.

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[57] Michael McClymond, *Encounters with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
[58] Ibid, 4.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid, 6.
[61] Ibid, 7.
[62] Holmes, *God of Grace.*
[63] Ibid, 30.
[64] Ibid.

Finally, Kyle Strobel's *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*[65] interprets Edwards as ultimately and finally "a true theologian … who is compelled by the mystery of the gospel and its God, overcome by the deepest dimensions of God's self-revelation in Christ."[66] To regard – as so many other thinkers had – "Edwards as a philosopher first and a theologian second"[67] is to make "a disastrous error."[68] Human knowledge of God is found in "a vision of God in Christ by his Spirit through the dark glass of the gospel."[69] Strobel's focus in this work is not to explain the relationship between the philosophical elements of Edwards (which he clearly acknowledges are present[70]) and the theological, but instead to argue that the theological is central and controlling, and to give a description of that very theological vision.

This brief overview has demonstrated that there are a wide range of perspectives regarding how far one emphasises the philosophical or the theological within Edwards. This thesis will not seek to take sides in this debate or to make any global claims about the degree to which Edwards' writings as a whole are influenced by revelation and his theological tradition, and how far they are influenced by philosophy. However, there is a more limited way in which this thesis will relate to this debate: it will posit that specific elements of Edwards' writings – and especially within *The End of Creation* – are heavily influenced by philosophy, in a way which damages the argument of *The End of Creation*.

Edwards' Apologetic Intent?

This position will be argued for on the basis of Edwards' textual content in the first few chapters, but it will be worthwhile at this stage to respond to the strongest argument which the adherents of the theological Edwards might use to defend him from my argument.

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[65] Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*.
[66] Ibid, 2.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid, 16.
[70] For example, in his discussion of Lee's interpretation, he critiques not his finding of philosophy in Edwards but rather the fact that he foregrounds it – see Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 18-20.

Regardless of exactly how exactly one balances the theological and the philosophical in Edwards, there is undoubtedly an apologetic element to the *Two Dissertations*. Those who see him as more theologically led may draw from this the conclusion that those elements of thought which this thesis suggests are discontinuous with Protestantism (that is, those elements which are most 'natural') are conditioned less by Edwards' own inner approach to the questions, and more by the goal to which he is working. McClymond writes:

> Although Edwards agreed with Christian orthodoxy generally that our idea of God is based finally on revelation rather than reason alone, the *Two Dissertations* were an apologetic enterprise that sought to establish God's moral status within the thought-forms of his day. An appeal to revelation alone would have been insufficient for his purposes.[71]

If Edwards is read in this way, it could be said to undermine my argument that his theology has too great a place for natural theology for someone who stands within the classical Protestant tradition. While Protestantism is suspicious of claims that it is possible to know God naturally through creation, this is a different thing to saying that it is impossible for a Protestant to believe – once (s)he is already a believer – that things in creation can be seen with the eyes of faith as displaying divine glory, or that ideas ought to be engaged with apologetically. If this reading of Edwards is correct, it is difficult to say that Edwards as an individual was generally characterised by thinking in a way that was inconsistent with Protestant teachings. In this way, the interpretation of Edwards as primarily a Reformed theologian could be adequately defended from the observations which this thesis makes on *The End of Creation*.

However, this is of less significance to my argument than might otherwise appear. My goal in this thesis is not to make a personal point about Edwards' as a historical individual, but rather to make a constructive argument about the work which he left to the world. While *The End of Creation* is rarely used as an apologetic work today, it has continued relevance as a living theological work, and has been particularly influential among those who belong to the Reformed theological tradition. The use to which the dissertation has been put[72] suggests that the arguments contained within

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[71] McClymond, *Encounters With God*, 58.
[72] And, indeed, the use to which it continues to be put.

The End of Creation are worthy of engagement on their own terms, and not only as a source for studying the ideas of a historic individual. My argument that *The End of Creation* can be made more consistent with Protestantism is of value as a contribution to Reformed thought, even if it involves addressing elements of the work which represent more the genre of the dissertation than the ideas of the man himself.

Balthasar

This thesis will not only diagnose a problem within Edwards, but will also attempt to reconstruct his thought to address it. It will do this by drawing on the thought of another theologian: Hans Urs von Balthasar.

The Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) is "perhaps most immediately known today as the 'theologian of beauty'".[73] His most important influence on modern theology was his development of a "theological aesthetics" – a theological account of the beautiful – principally in a seven volume work known as *The Glory of the Lord*,[74] as well as in other works such as *Love Alone*.[75] Balthasar's sources in these works included a number of historical figures in philosophy,

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[73] Brendán Leahy, "Theological Aesthetics" in *The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. by Bede McGregor and Thomas Norris (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 23-55.

[74] See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume I: Seeing the Form*, trans. by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982).
Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume II: Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles*, trans. by Andrew Louth, Francis McDonagh, and Brian McNeil, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984).
Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume III: Studies in Theological Style: Lay Styles*, trans. by Andrew Louth, John Saward, Martin Simon, and Rowan Williams, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986).
Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume IV: The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity*, trans. by Brian McNeil, Andrew Louth, John Saward, Rowan Williams, and Oliver Davies, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989).
Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume V: The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*, trans. by Oliver Davies, Andrew Louth, Brian McNeil, John Saward, and Rowan Williams, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991).
Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume VI: Theology: The Old Covenant*, trans. by Brian McNeil, Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991).
Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume VII: Theology: The New Covenant*, trans. by Brian McNeil, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989).

[75] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone: the Way of Revelation,* trans. by Alexander Dru, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1970).

literature and church history, as well as religious experience,[76] and he was unusual among modern theologians in the emphasis which he placed on scripture – "among contemporary theologians there are only a few who are so naturally and completely at home in Scripture as von Balthasar."[77] This thesis will argue that his emphasis on scripture means that – ironically – his account of beauty is more consistent with Protestantism than that of Edwards.

Balthasar's understanding of beauty will be dealt with in depth in Part 2 of this thesis. At its heart is a belief that the world – and natural human knowledge of God – is composed of fragments of true beauty, which can be reconciled and seen as a whole through seeing the God whom they reflect, and how they integrate into this vision of God. This God is seen supremely in Jesus, and especially in His passion, and so the fragments are reunited and made whole through finding their centre in the cross of Jesus.

Balthasar and Edwards are two especially interesting theologians to place together. Coming from very different traditions and centuries, they inevitably approach most theological questions in very different ways. However, they both share in several key emphases – notably, they both stress concepts of glory and beauty which are closely related to love.

Protestantism & Catholicism

Edwards himself is a particularly interesting figure to place in relation to other theological traditions. He undoubtedly understood himself as very much a Reformed theologian, with all the antipathy towards Catholicism that one might expect of an eighteenth-century Puritan. Nonetheless, in several areas of his thought he displays considerable similarities to ideas outside of his tradition. For example, he developed a Reformed doctrine of *theosis*.[78] It is therefore not surprising that Edwards has

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[76] Balthasar was especially influenced by the experiences of a mystic with whom he was close, Adrienne von Speyr. A brief introduction to her and her relationship to Balthasar can be found in Aidan Nichols OP, *Divine Fruitfulness: A Guide through Balthasar's Theology beyond the Trilogy* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 109-123.

[77] Christoph Schonborn OP, "Hans Urs von Balthasar's Contribution to Ecumenism" in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. by David L. Schindler (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991), 251-263.

[78] See, e.g., Kyle Strobel, "Jonathan Edwards's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*", *Harvard Theological Review*, 109:3 (2016), 371-399.

been seen as having significant similarities to Eastern Orthodoxy. Analogies have been made between him and Maximus the Confessor[79] and Gregory Palamas.[80] Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that Edwards was sufficiently aware of the eastern tradition to know of his likeness,[81] and he undoubtedly understood himself as doing an exclusively Reformed theology, rather than some ecumenically-minded combination.

His ideas may be fruitfully used to promote ecumenical engagement, but this does not mean that he himself was any sort of ecumenist. Kyle Strobel has observed a tendency for ecumenically minded people to engage with these elements of Edwards' theology in ways which emphasise the similarities with other traditions, thereby reducing the ability to examine the details of Edwards' theology on its own terms.[82] By contrast, this thesis attempts to examine the details of Edwards' theology, and then subsequently relate them to wider theological currents.

Receptive Ecumenism

The project which I am putting forward in this thesis contains several similarities to the "Receptive Ecumenism" project, and it will be worthwhile to make brief remarks about its relation to this field.

Receptive Ecumenism holds that the majority of easily-resolved issues in ecumenical theology have already been solved.[83] Instead, in order to further the ecumenical project, what must now be undertaken is something more like a growth or conversion of each individual theological tradition or church group.[84] Each tradition ought to seek to grow by drawing on other traditions as resources.[85] In particular, the groups associated with a particular theological tradition should identify the weaknesses and

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[79] Michael D. Gibson, "The Beauty of the Redemption of the World: The Theological Aesthetics of Maximus the Confessor and Jonathan Edwards", *Harvard Theological Review*, 101:1 (Jan 2008), 45-76.

[80] Richard B. Steele, "Transfiguring Light: The Moral Beauty of the Christian Life According to Gregory Palamas and Jonathan Edwards", *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 52:3-4 (2008), 403-439.

[81] Gibson, "The Beauty of the Redemption", 75.

[82] See Kyle Strobel, "Jonathan Edwards and the Polemics of *Theosis*", *Harvard Theological Review*, 105:3 (2012), 259-279.

[83] Paul D. Murray, "Introducing Receptive Ecumenism", *The Ecumenist; A Journal of Theology, Culture, and Society*, 51:2 (2014), 1-7.

[84] Ibid, 4.

[85] Ibid.

tensions within their own tradition, and draw reflectively upon the resources within another tradition.[86] This allows them to remain true to their own tradition, while strengthening it and deepening it in a way which gradually grows into a deeper union with other traditions. If all churches and theological traditions undertook such a task, one might hope that over time their doctrines would deepen in such a way that the ecumenical task would be accomplished.

In many ways, the argument of this thesis can be seen as being somewhat compatible with receptive ecumenism. As within receptive ecumenism, this thesis identifies a weakness with a theology, and draws upon the resources of a different theological tradition in order to address this weakness. The author of this thesis is a Protestant of a Reformed tradition broadly similar to that of Edwards, who is seeking to draw on the Catholic tradition to address a theological problem identified in a Protestant thinker. Furthermore, I am personally sympathetic towards the strategy of receptive ecumenism, admiring its recognition that large differences remain between the traditions and should not be minimized or ignored – and how it at the same time offers a way of seeking church unity in this context, neither abandoning the hope of deeper church unity in the future nor expecting anyone to compromise their own theological integrity.

However, this thesis significantly differs from receptive ecumenism in multiple ways. Firstly, there is a difference of framework: the overarching concern of this thesis is concerned with the interpretation and use of Jonathan Edwards; it seeks not to contribute to the ecumenical task, but instead rather to make sense of some questions within Reformed theology. Its primary context is Protestant thought, not ecumenism.

Additionally, this thesis differs from receptive ecumenism insofar as the weaknesses identified within the original theology are not representative of a wider tradition, but instead are found within one particular thinker. Furthermore, that thinker contains these weaknesses precisely in the respect that he is distinct from his own theological tradition. The resources gained from Catholicism do not serve to correct Protestantism, but more to correct Jonathan Edwards' divergence from

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[86] Paul D. Murray, "Families of Receptive Theological Learning: Scriptural Reasoning, Comparative Theology, and Receptive Ecumenism", *Modern Theology*, 29:4 (2013), 76-92.

Protestantism. If there is anything distinctively non-Protestant to be gained from Balthasar, it is his account of beauty, given that Protestantism has rarely developed one. However, this could not make Edwards any less typically Protestant, since he already has his own emphasis upon divine beauty, and we will argue that Balthasar's understanding of beauty is compatible with Protestantism. As such, this thesis does not advocate either the Protestant or Reformed traditions learning from Catholicism, but rather Edwards' theology learning from Catholicism.

Thesis Outline

This thesis will be divided into three parts. The first part will explore the ideas of Jonathan Edwards, arguing that his understanding of beauty grounds his explanation of the relation between glory and love. The second part will examine Balthasar's understanding of beauty, arguing that it is sufficiently compatible with Protestantism to mean that its incorporation within Edwards' theology would result in Edwards' theology being more consistent with Protestantism, rather than less. The third part will then explore how Balthasar's theological aesthetics may alter, reconstruct and strengthen Edwards' ideas about the relationship between glory and love.

Part 1

The first part will begin with Chapter 1, which explores Edwards' ideas about beauty, first in *The Mind* and then in *True Virtue*, while also briefly looking at a sermon entitled *The Excellency of Christ*. This chapter will identify his understanding of beauty and demonstrate that it is derived from philosophy, and is therefore in tension with a Protestant epistemology.

In Chapter 2, the thesis will then turn to *The End of Creation*. It will demonstrate that Edwards' understanding of beauty influences his account of the relationship between glory-seeking and love, observing that his thesis is rooted in an account of a union between God and humanity, before identifying various strengths and weaknesses of his ideas. These weaknesses will set the scene for later chapters which will work to reconstruct Edwards' thought by using an account of beauty derived more from

revelation, and therefore more consistent with Protestantism and Edwards' wider thought.

Part 2

Part 2 will begin this process by looking at the account of beauty of Hans Urs von Balthasar, arguing that it fits within the Protestant tradition (or is at least more naturally present than Edwards' own thought). Its first chapter, Chapter 3, introduces Balthasar's thought, his key themes, particularly his understanding of how different "fragments" of beauty cohere around the cross. It then spends the remainder of the chapter examining how Balthasar's thought relates to Protestant epistemology, with reference to the question of natural theology – showing that it is more compatible with Protestantism than Jonathan Edwards' account.

The following chapter, Chapter 4, examines Balthasar's thought in the light of a central Protestant theological loci: Martin Luther's concept of the Theology of the Cross. The chapter identifies three specific criteria by which, according to Luther, a Theology of the Cross can be identified: that it believes divine revelation subverts human knowledge; that it is crucicentric; and that it displays appropriate humility. It then goes on to examine Balthasar's theology in the light of this, arguing that he appears to meet all three criteria sufficiently well.

Chapter 5 then examines Balthasar's use of the Bible – a question which is fundamental to the question of whether his ideas can be seen as sufficiently close to Protestantism. It examines in turn first Balthasar's understanding of the close relation between glory and beauty, arguing that Balthasar's use of biblical language of glory to see beauty is sufficiently well-founded. It then goes on to evaluate in turn Balthasar's use of the Old and New Testaments, arguing that the approach to beauty which emerges is closer to Protestantism than Edwards' understanding.

Part 3

Part 3 then explores how Balthasar's ideas can be used therapeutically on Edwards' understanding of the relationship between glory and love. It draws on a number of

themes in Balthasar, but at the centre is Balthasar's rich understanding of love which involves a union between the lover and the beloved. This offers an alternative way of giving an account of union between God and humanity which does not contain the weaknesses of Edwards' own equivalent ideas.

It begins with two chapters which examine those ideas within Balthasar's theological aesthetics which come closest to dealing with the question of glory and love. In Balthasar, these themes coincide with "the two dogmas which constitute Christian revelation: Christ and the Trinity."[87] Chapter 6 examines Balthasar's understanding of Christology in a chapter of *The Glory of the Lord* called *Word-Flesh*. We see in this chapter how Balthasar relates two apparently contradictory attributes of Jesus – authority (which includes glory) and poverty – to the cross, uniting them around a concept of self-giving love. This self-giving love displays a unity between the lover and the beloved. We will also find that this account explains the relationship of the incarnate Son's glory and His love for the Father – but not for humanity. It therefore presents the beginnings of such an answer, but not the whole of one.

The following chapter, Chapter 7, goes on to examine the role the Trinity plays in Balthasar's account of the divine goals. For Balthasar, the kenosis of the cross is a manifestation of a more fundamental kenosis found in the Trinity itself, whereby the Father's begetting of the Son is understood as the Father, in His self-giving love, giving Himself to the Son. In this act, the Father shares His glory with the Son, and the two are united in this sharing of love. This relation is itself the ground of the Trinity's relation to humanity in salvation history, and in the act of salvation humanity is incorporated within the intra-Trinitarian love, therefore enabling a union between God's love for redeemed humanity and His love of His own glory. We will see that this again makes a further contribution to this question, but does not explain why God loves prior to salvation.

Following on from these two chapters, the final chapters then turn more closely to Edwards' work and how his account can be healed. They do this in two stages – firstly by looking at the theme of love; secondly, by looking at the theme of union.

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[87] Angelo Scola, *Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 53.

Chapter 8 examines Edwards' understanding of love. It identifies three features of Edwards' account of love – it is rooted in the lover's desire for joy, it involves a union between lover and beloved, and it desires the good of the other. However, this chapter argues that these features are in tension, and are especially problematic when applied to God, given divine aseity. As a consequence, it argues for a modified version of Edwards' account, whereby the first feature is rejected (at least with regards to God), and the remaining two features are united by using Balthasar's understanding of how self-giving love brings about a union. This heals and fulfils strands of Edwards' ideas, uniting them around Balthasar's centre of beauty: the cross.

The final chapter, Chapter 9, finally brings together the ideas from previous chapters, focusing on the central idea of union between God and humanity. While Part 1 established that the details of Edwards' resolution of the tension between glory and love in *The End of Creation* owes a great deal to natural theology, this chapter demonstrates that there are other places in Edwards where the idea of resolving tension through a different account of a divine-human union is postulated based on scriptural sources. Therefore, while a number of the details of Edwards' account in *The End of Creation* are problematic and rooted in natural theology, his basic idea of resolving the tension through union between God and humanity is consistent with Protestantism.

This chapter proposes an alternative view which draws on ideas from Balthasar's account of divine beauty. The thesis has already argued towards reinterpreting Edwards' understanding of love around a centre drawn from Balthasar's ideas. This chapter explores how this concept of a love which involves a union between God and humanity may enable a union between God's love for Himself, His love for humanity, and His love for glory – enabling an account which retains the scriptural strengths of Edwards', without incurring the problematic elements.

Previous Dissertation

My MA dissertation was related to this thesis. My former dissertation examined *The End of Creation* from the perspective of Edwards' understanding of the doctrine of

the Trinity, arguing that using Balthasar's understanding of the Trinity would strengthen Edwards' account. It was from this research that my PhD was born, as through a study of the two figures I concluded that examining their respective ideas about beauty would be likely to be especially fruitful.

However, it has been important that I not repeat fundamentally the same work in both dissertations. In order to prevent this, I have included my former dissertation as an appendix to this work, and occasionally reference elements of it within the text when the argument in my thesis is dependent upon some argument in my previous dissertation, rather than repeat the same argumentation in both dissertations.

This will also allow the examiners to identify the originality of this thesis, which – while not unrelated to the former work – is sufficiently independent of it that I am confident that it justifies being submitted for a separate qualification. Due to the need to prove this, I have chosen to incorporate the former dissertation in full in the exact state in which it was submitted. In one sense, I find this very regrettable, because I am aware that the earlier dissertation contained numerous minor errors of such things as spelling and grammar. (This is because I broke my ankle very shortly before submitting the former dissertation, which upset my writing schedule and meant that the final editing process was extremely rushed.) I am also now aware of a handful of scholarly mistakes that I made in the earlier dissertation, but would not make now. I trust that the reader will assess my competence in such areas based on the evidence of this thesis, rather than of the earlier dissertation.

Notes on Language

Finally, it is worthwhile to make some notes on my use of language.

Firstly, throughout this thesis, there will be numerous occasions when I will discuss Protestantism when I could also have referred to Reformed theology. In particular, my argument is that Edwards' use of natural theology is inconsistent with his Protestantism, and can be made more consistent by being reconstructed using Balthasar's ideas. When discussing this, I could usually be more specific and speak of making Edwards more consistent with his Reformed theology, rather than simply with Protestantism.

I chose to ordinarily use the more generic term because there are specific times in this thesis where I draw one or both of Edwards and Balthasar into dialogue with elements of Protestantism which are not specifically Reformed. The most extensive example is Chapter 4, where I argue that there are significant elements of commonality between Balthasar's account of beauty and Martin Luther's understanding of a "Theology of the Cross". These are examples of Balthasar's ideas being used to reconstruct Edwards to make him more consistent with Protestantism, but rather than bringing Edwards closer to his Reformed tradition, they instead use Balthasar's ideas to bring different Protestant traditions together.

As a result of this, I have opted to use "Protestant" rather than "Reformed" when either is suitable. However, this does not mean that I do not think that Balthasar's ideas could make Edwards more consistently Reformed, specifically; as Reformed theology is a type of Protestant theology, therefore to be made more consistently Protestant is, at the same time, to be made more consistently Reformed. Instead, the language is used to make it simpler to incorporate examples where other Protestant traditions are dealt with.

Secondly, I consistently choose to capitalise divine pronouns, despite this not being followed in the texts which I am quoting from either Balthasar or Edwards. I choose to capitalise divine pronouns, partly because I prefer the implications of reverence, but primarily because when referring to both God and a theologian within a short space of text, it makes it considerably easier to distinguish between the theologian and God if this use of pronouns is followed. However, the reader will have to be aware that this is my practice, and not that of my primary sources, and so it will not be followed in their quotes.

Thirdly, it will be worthwhile to note the way my footnotes are abbreviating the standard Yale edition of the Works of Jonathan Edwards. I am using the abbreviation of "WJE" followed by the volume number, a colon, and the page numbers.

Part 1: Jonathan Edwards

Chapter 1: Edwards on Beauty

Part 1 of this thesis will look at Jonathan Edwards' resolution to the question of glory-seeking and love. We will see that Edwards' argument, put forward over the course of *The End of Creation*, is rooted in his understanding of beauty. I will argue that the account of beauty and morality that is found in several places in Edwards' corpus can help us to interpret a significant amount of Edwards' argument in *The End of Creation*. This chapter will consider Edwards' understanding of beauty, and the following chapter (Chapter 2) will examine Edwards' argument in *The End of Creation* in the light of this.

Beauty, for Edwards, is fundamentally connected to concepts of consent,[88] agreement and likeness, "consisting in symmetry, mutual agreement, or, more comprehensively, 'harmony.'"[89] It is "fundamental to Edwards' understanding of Divine Being",[90] and he speaks of how God is "distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above 'em, chiefly by his divine beauty".[91]

There are a number of places in Edwards' corpus that he discusses his understanding of beauty, but there are two which will be of particular importance to us. One is in *True Virtue*, which is notable as the companion volume to *The End of Creation*. Using a number of philosophical arguments and assuming only a handful of religious concepts (such as the existence of God), *True Virtue* attempts to argue from a concept of moral beauty to the moral centrality of the requirement to love God, before discussing in detail what this means for specific ethical situations.

Also particularly helpful for understanding Edwards' concept of beauty will be another work, which scholars refer to variously as "The Mind" or "Notes on the

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[88] The concept of "consent" between beings has been a key interest in Edwards' scholarship, with scholars not only seeing in it Edwards' understanding of love, but also finding it to be a key part of Edwards' metaphysics. Edwards' understanding of creation was fundamentally idealistic, and within such a context appropriate relations between entities explained among other things their distinction. For discussion of this point see, for example, Richard R. Niebuhr, "Being and Consent", in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. by Sang Hyun Lee (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 34-43.

[89] William M. Schweitzer, *God is a Communicative Being* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 50.

[90] Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 2.

[91] WJE 2:298.

Mind".[92] *The Mind*, as we have it, is a "notebook"[93] which was "designed to be the basis for a Treatise on 'The Mind'".[94] It contains a number of entries on various subjects and we are fortunate that, *The Mind* contains sufficiently detailed notes on the subject of beauty that we can be confident of knowing what Edwards thought on the topic.

This chapter will begin by giving a general understanding of Edwards and beauty, including introducing some of the ways interpreters have related Edwards' understanding of beauty to philosophy and revelation. Following on from this, it will examine in turn first *The Mind* and then *True Virtue*, in each case demonstrating that Edwards' account of beauty is built on philosophy and can therefore be called natural theology when applied to God. They will also demonstrate that Edwards' understanding of beauty concerns an understanding of proportion according to which an entity must be appropriately in proportion to other entities; in the moral sphere entities are thus obliged to love other entities in proportion to how much being they have; this obliges both God and humanity to love God with all of their love, since God has infinitely more being than any other being.

Before the end of the chapter, we will note that there is a sermon – "The Excellency of Christ" – which serves as a counterpoint to the general thrust of the rest of Edwards' works, developing a different account of divine beauty from scripture rather than from natural theology. However, we will also demonstrate that this is an outlier that contradicts the rest of Edwards' thought, and need not affect our overall judgment that Edwards' account of beauty is derived from philosophy rather than scripture.

Reason in Edwards

Before doing this, it will be worthwhile to make brief remarks on the relationship between reason and revelation in Edwards. One can summarise his view on reason by saying that he "had a lofty view of reason, when considered in the abstract, apart

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[92] WJE 6:332-393.
[93] Marsden, *A Life*, 78.
[94] Ibid.

from its fallen condition in the unregenerate."[95]   However, this comes with the clear qualification that humans as we know them are unable to use the reason to reach a true knowledge of God. We will briefly explore the different sides of this.

For Edwards, the rational capacity is itself fundamental to human spirituality; without knowledge of God in the reason, human beings cannot know God.

> God hath given us the Bible, which is a book of instructions. But this book can be of no manner of profit to us, any otherwise than as it conveys some knowledge to the mind: it can profit us no more than if it were written in the Chinese or Tartarian language, of which we know not one word.
>
> … Such is the nature of man, that nothing can come at the heart but through the door of the understanding: and there can be no spiritual knowledge of that of which there is not first a rational knowledge.[96]

In this passage rational knowledge is gained through the sources of revelation, but processed through the faculty of reason. It is difficult to see, at this point, any particular distinction between Edwards and any number of adherents of classical Protestantism. While this does involve the use of the human faculty of reason, it does so in a way which is dependent not on itself but on God's revelation.

Edwards does, however, go further than this and argues that reason on its own is hypothetically capable of gaining significant amounts of knowledge of God, without these revelatory sources. He follows classical Reformed thinkers in holding that key facts such as the existence of God can be established by natural means,[97] but goes further in arguing that reason can by itself also know the whole glory of God as well as anything else.[98]

However, this refers to unfallen reason – and not reason as it is actually known in the world. In the fall, human reason has come to have prejudice against the truth of the gospel which prevents them from perceiving it:

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[95] Gerald R. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 56.

[96] WJE 22:88.

[97] McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts*, 56-58.

[98] Ibid, 59.

> The mind of man is naturally full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind…[99]

However, when God's redemptive activity leads to Him being revealed to the mind, this changes:

> …but when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys that enmity, and removes the prejudices, and sanctifies the reason, and causes it to be open and free. Hence is a vast difference, as to the force that arguments have to convince the mind.[100]

This means, of course, that the redeemed human can once again use the newly-sanctified reason to know God. However, this is dependent upon the fact that the believer has already received this revelation from another source. Furthermore, Edwards elsewhere makes remarks about the superiority of revelation – arguing that, even for the believer, "revelation is the surest guide in these matters",[101] fallen human reason still having the capacity to mislead.

From these brief remarks it will be apparent that human reason plays a great role in Edwards' theology – but one which is broadly consonant with Reformed theology. While Edwards' claims about the extent to which natural reason can hypothetically know God go further than is typical within his tradition, nothing has been found which is in fundamental contradiction with his Protestantism. However, this chapter will show that, in the specific example of beauty, Edwards in practice follows a methodology which contradicts the methodological commitments of his tradition, and his own stated beliefs.

Edwards on Beauty

There are two specific facts about Edwards' understanding of beauty which will be fundamental for my later argument in this thesis. The first of these is that Edwards'

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[99] WJE 2:307.
[100] WJE 2:307.
[101] WJE 8:463.

account of moral beauty requires any virtuous (specific) being to love another (specific) being to the degree that the second being has being. The second is that Edwards' account of beauty – and, specifically, this feature of it – is primarily derived from philosophy and natural theology. I will devote particular emphasis to exploring and establishing these points in order to provide a strong grounding for my argument in the remainder of this thesis.

In general, there is dispute within Jonathan Edwards studies as to how far one should interpret Edwards' ideas as derived from philosophy, and how far they come from distinctively theological sources. When one turns to the specific topic of beauty, scholars widely agree that Edwards' understanding of beauty comes at least partially from philosophy or natural theology. This is no surprise when dealing with those who emphasise the philosophical Edwards – those such as, for example, Miller, who describes Edwards' empirical methodology, noting that "[a]s Locke had taught him, Edwards set himself to sift out the contents of the concept [of beauty] – to understand and to know what constitutes the beauty of the beautiful."[102] Similarly, we find that "[i]n Delattre's interpretation, Edwards is primarily an expert metaphysician with little interest in Puritan doctrines."[103]

It is slightly more notable that the emphasis on the natural or philosophical origin is also found in authors who take a more moderate interpretation of Edwards as highly influenced by both philosophy and theology. A notable example is Sang Hyun Lee, who more generally interprets Edwards' engagement with philosophy as "enabling him to reaffirm in the strongest possible terms his theological tradition within a thoroughly modern philosophical framework."[104] When interpreting Edwards on beauty, he affirms that our understanding of divine beauty is only possible through knowing created beauties, although he qualifies this in several ways.[105] He argues that human beings "perceive beauty when the mind passively receives sense data through sense organs and self-reflection, and then as we actively order those ideas

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[102] Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 240.
[103] Kin Yip Louie, 'The Theological Aesthetics of Jonathan Edwards' (doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2007), 10.
[104] Lee, *Philosophical Theology*, 4.
[105] Sang Hyun Lee, "Edwards and Beauty", in *Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to America's Theologian*, ed. by Gerald R. McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 113-126.

in such a way that their relations become visible to the mind."[106] This process does not function within human beings after the fall[107] – but is restored to the Christian through the redemptive work of the persons of the Trinity.[108] In his interpretation of Edwards, Jesus becomes "the converted people's 'key', so to speak",[109] enabling believers to perceive "God's beauty as reflected and repeated in nature and history",[110] and the Holy Spirit empowers the human mind to do its interpretive work.[111]

This escapes being called a pure natural theology because there is space for revelation as the key – but it still retains a significant element of it, in that raw data is found in the created world, which is then processed through human brains. This is not an incidental relationship, but fundamental to how Edwards relates human and divine beauties; in this system, if there was no "continuity" between divine and created beauties, "it would be in principle impossible for human beings ever to experience God's beauty",[112] while the ultimate telos of the physical is to image God: "the true actuality of the physical universe is achieved through the converted person's perception of it as an image of God's beauty."[113] Although this interpretation does require God's salvific work, it does so as part of a system in which the natural is indispensable and irreplaceable.

Nor is this understanding of beauty in Edwards limited to figures whose interpretation of Edwards places a particular stress on the philosophical side of Edwards' writing. Writers who are less inclined to interpret Edwards in philosophical terms also see his understanding of beauty as being fundamentally determined by philosophy. For example, Kin Yip Louie, in a work aimed at correcting scholarship by "show[ing] that theological concern is central to the [sic] Edwards' aesthetics",[114] argues that Edwards used the philosophical aesthetics of the English Enlightenment and built on

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[106] Ibid, 117.
[107] Ibid, 119.
[108] Ibid, 121-122.
[109] Ibid, 121.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid, 115.
[113] Ibid, 122.
[114] Louie, 'The Theological Aesthetics of Jonathan Edwards', 14.

it theologically,[115] "develop[ing] his definition of beauty into a defense of the Reformed system of doctrine."[116]

We find comparable ideas among those who stress a continuity between Edwards and Reformed theology. Belden C. Lane suggests that "[f]or Edwards, like Calvin and the Puritans before him, nature functions as a school of desire, teaching humans how to perceive God's glory."[117] Creation displays "partial, secondary beauty, available through the senses"[118] which "gives us direct training in the multidimensional way of knowing that is necessary for meeting God." [119] For Lane's Edwards, God has created two books – nature and the bible.[120] Lane's interpretation defends against potential over-stress on natural theology by suggesting that creation "does not offer any new content, beyond what we already have in the 'first book' of scripture."[121] Nonetheless, created beauty is necessary in this scheme in order to know God.

A slightly different reading of Edwards and beauty is found in the work of A.N. Williams,[122] an Anglo-Catholic who reads Edwards as developing the Christian tradition. A.N. Williams observes that in Edwards' works, "direct references to the prior tradition of Western aesthetics are fleeting and sparse."[123] At the same time, Williams also notes that Edwards "evidences the same broad tendencies … [as] earlier Christian thinkers"[124], stating that Edwards "express[es] explicitly a set of notions of beauty which are hinted at or latent in the prior tradition, whether or not he developed them out of his knowledge of that tradition or arrived at them independently."[125]

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[115] Ibid, 61.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Belden C. Lane, "Jonathan Edwards on Beauty, Desire, and the Sensory World", *Theological Studies*, 65 (2004), 44-72.
[118] Ibid, 53.
[119] Ibid, 52.
[120] Ibid, 56.
[121] Ibid.
[122] A. N. Williams, *The Architecture of Theology: Structure, System, and Ratio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 197-201.
[123] Ibid, 197.
[124] Ibid, 201.
[125] Ibid, 197.

Williams therefore advocates the possibility of Edwards being influenced by tradition, which (especially within her anglo-Catholic tradition) could be read as an influence by revelation. However, within Edwards' Reformed tradition, church tradition could not itself be identified with revelation. To determine whether the influence of tradition removes the suspicion of natural theology, one would need to determine whether this tradition was true to the Bible.

A thorough examination of the origins of the concept of beauty in church tradition prior to Edwards would be beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it should be noted that for the majority of church history Christian theologians appear to have followed in the mainstream perspective on beauty that was developed by the ancient Greeks and became dominant in the thought of the western world until the eighteenth century.[126] If one uses the example of the two most important Western theologians prior to the Reformation, it is worthy of note that the ideas about beauty appear to be derived from previous secular philosophy in both Augustine and Aquinas.[127] This suggests that prior church tradition may have itself developed a natural theology of beauty; the similarity between Edwards' account and that of prior church tradition is therefore no strong argument against Edwards' use of natural theology.

In all of these scholars, we have found that there is a significant role to play for philosophy and the created world. However, a number of scholars qualify this by suggesting that there is also a significant role for revelation and redemption. In each case, thinkers advocate that nature provides the raw data (or at least a major part of it) by which human beings learn to know beauty. However, they may also stress that Edwards also saw God as being active in the process. There are broadly two ways in which they describe God as being active: either by assisting the process of reflection (e.g. God using the Holy Spirit to inspire the process whereby humans reflect upon the raw data), or by adding additional raw data in Christ.

In the former case, one should still note that the sources and methodology are entirely natural, and the fact that God is stated to be involved and behind the process

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[126] See, e.g., Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, "The Great Theory of Beauty and Its Decline", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 31:2 (Winter, 1972), 165-180.
[127] Ibid, 168.

does not do much to defend against the charge of natural theology – this would always be true in any Christian account of natural theology. The latter is more complex, in that while it acknowledges an element of natural sources, it also qualifies this in suggesting that revelation is also used as a source alongside natural data, helping us to interpret it. While it is clear that there is at least an element of natural theology in Edwards' understanding of divine beauty, this leaves open the question of the extent to which it is present.

In this chapter, I will answer this question through an engagement with a number of the primary texts within Edwards' corpus. We will see that Edwards' writings on beauty display a pattern whereby he builds his understanding of divine beauty upon something which he can see from the created world. There are specific places where Edwards abandons this practice and builds substantially on sources of revelation (most significantly, "The Excellency of Christ"), but this is exceptional and not typical. As such, regardless of Edwards' theoretical doctrine of how a theological method ought to approach such a question, we will see that in practice his understanding of divine beauty does constitute a natural theology.

Beauty in *The Mind*

The first text we will look at to examine Edwards' understanding of beauty will be *The Mind*, which is regarded as "the most purely philosophical of Edwards' notebooks".[128] This work contains entries on a number of subjects, the first of which Edwards describes as "excellency."[129]

For Edwards, "excellency" is very close in meaning to beauty – while it "is not a synonym for beauty … the two are intimately related in Edwards's thinking."[130] There is even, in a sense, an "identity in definition"[131] between the two. The difference lies in excellency placing more stress on "objective relations"[132] while beauty adds to "the structure and substance of excellence"[133] with the "evaluative

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[128] Holmes, *God of Grace*, 18.
[129] WJE 6:332-338.
[130] Crisp, *God and Creation*, 96.
[131] Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 63.
[132] Ibid, 62.
[133] Ibid, 64.

and … subjective"[134] aspects of the "largely aesthetic concept".[135] In other words, excellence speaks of the inner structure of the thing – beauty is also concerned with its emotional impact on those who see it.

Given this, when Edwards writes on "excellency", we ought to expect him to be speaking of beauty – and this is exactly what we find in *The Mind*. He writes "Excellence, to put it in other words, is that which is beautiful and lovely"[136] He begins by examining what that is:

> Wherein is one thing excellent and another evil, one beautiful and another deformed? Some have said that all excellency is harmony, symmetry or proportion; but they have not yet explained it. We would know why proportion is more excellent than disproportion, that is, why proportion is pleasant to the mind and disproportion unpleasant.[137]

In this passage, Edwards cites the common understandings of beauty ("harmony, symmetry, or proportion"), all of which are common in philosophical thought, as well as in Christian traditions which have been influenced by this philosophy.[138] He seems to be "[d]rawing on his Platonic and Augustinian heritage and current theories of beauty".[139]

The question Edwards poses is subsequently: why is proportion beautiful? Of the terms he used (harmony, symmetry, and proportion), proportion is the criterion of beauty which he focuses on; indeed, he uses terms such as "'harmony' … as synonymous with 'proportion.'"[140] His goal is to ask what it is about proportion that makes it beautiful, but in order to do this he first investigates proportion as a criterion of beauty.

He then uses several illustrations, showing various lines and circles in different relations to one another, to support various statements which he makes regarding the beauty of proportionality. [141] In doing so, he not only argues that beauty is

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[134] Ibid, 65.
[135] Ibid.
[136] WJE 6:344.
[137] WJE 6:332.
[138] See Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, "The Great Theory of Beauty and Its Decline", 165-180.
[139] Marsden, *A Life*, 78.
[140] Ibid, 79.
[141] WJE 6:332-335.

constituted by proportion, but also makes other statements giving nuances or explaining in more detail. For example, he notes that beauty is found in proportionality, but can involve a complex proportionality within a large system without requiring every individual entity within a system to be in proportion with all other entities.[142]

More central to his overall point, however, is that this appropriate proportion therefore essentially means "similarness, or identity of relation";[143] he also uses the word "equality",[144] which he subsequently defines as meaning agreeing with being.[145] Ultimately, he reasons, that the reason we are delighted by beauty

> is because disproportion, or inconsistency, is contrary to being. [...] When one being is inconsistent with another being, then being is contradicted.[146]

He therefore argues that the beauty of proportion, which he has observed above in illustrations, is rooted in a love of being agreeing with being. Therefore:

> Excellency consists in the similarness of one being to another – not merely equality and proportion, but any kind of similarness. … This is a universal definition of excellency: The consent of being to being, or being's consent to entity. The more the consent is, and the more extensive, the greater is the excellency.[147]

This is true in both natural beauty (i.e. beauty in physical entities such as plants) and spiritual beauty,[148] where the beauty is "of a vastly larger extent."[149]

Love as Beauty

Edwards goes on to argue that love is therefore especially beautiful:

> One of the highest excellencies is love. As nothing else has a proper being but spirits, and as bodies are but the shadow of being, therefore, the consent of bodies to one

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[142] WJE 6:332-334.
[143] WJE 6:334.
[144] WJE 6:335.
[145] WJE 6:335.
[146] WJE 6:336.
[147] WJE 6:336.
[148] WJE 6:335-336.
[149] WJE 6:336.

> another, and the harmony that is among them, is but the shadow of excellency. The highest excellency, therefore, must be the consent of spirits one to another. But the consent of spirits consists half in their mutual love to one another, and the sweet harmony between the various parts of the universe is only an image of mutual love. [150]

Furthermore, since "God is proper entity itself", therefore "so far as a thing consents to being in general, so far it consents to him."[151]

Edwards argues that self-love cannot appropriately be called love, as love requires consent between multiple entities.[152] He does not, in *The Mind*, explain how this definition of moral beauty applies to God – in what sense God can be beautiful. However, as I discuss below, it appears that his argument here informs the argument Edwards puts forward about God's end in *Two Dissertations*, especially *The End of Creation*.

Edwards' Account as Philosophy

At this stage, the main thing to note from Edwards' argument about beauty in "*The Mind*" is that it is derived from philosophy. Edwards begins his argument by citing previous people who have affirmed "that all excellency is harmony, symmetry or proportion"[153] – this obviously refers to a philosophical tradition which began in ancient Greece, and had influenced figures – notably, British Enlightenment figures with whom Edwards engaged. He then continues – as we have seen – by supporting this definition of beauty with a number of drawings from which he makes observations and arguments.[154] In so doing, he hopes to use reason and the senses to convince his readers of his interpretation of beauty. All of this this is clearly based on nature rather than revelation.

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[150] WJE 6:337-338.
[151] WJE 6:337.
[152] WJE 6:337.
[153] WJE 6:332.
[154] WJE 6:332-335.

We have seen that Edwards' argument in "*The Mind*" is derived from reason and nature, rather than from revelation. We will find the same is true of the other main place where Edwards discusses beauty, *The Nature of True Virtue*.[155]

Beauty in True Virtue

This derivation from nature is to be expected given Edwards' aims in this dissertation. In a letter to his literary agent, Edwards describes the purpose of the *Two Dissertations*:

> I have also written two other discourses, one on *God's End in Creating the World*; the other concerning *The Nature of True Virtue*. As it appeared to me, the modern opinions which prevail concerning these two things, stand very much as foundations of that fashionable scheme of divinity, which seems to have become almost universal. My discourse on virtue is principally designed against that notion of virtue maintained by My Lord Shaftesbury, [Francis] Hutcheson, and [George] Turnbull; which seems to be most in vogue at this day, so far as I can perceive; which notion is calculated to show that all mankind are naturally disposed to virtue, and are without any native depravity.[156]

In accordance with this aim of critiquing the philosophers who were contemporary to him,[157] Edwards "did not quote Scripture"[158] in *True Virtue*, putting forward instead a philosophical treatise aimed to "[force others] to reconsider the whole direction of eighteenth-century moral philosophy."[159] His central goal is "establishing the distinctiveness of sanctified charity"[160] – that is, to describe what godly love is like and demonstrate how it differs from apparent virtue which may be found elsewhere.

Most scholars treat *True Virtue* as not being limited by this apologetic goal, but instead giving an overview of Edwards' ethics and understanding of beauty –

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[155] WJE 8:537-627.

[156] WJE 16:695-697.

[157] It is worthwhile to note that Edwards' goal was to engage with the thinkers who were contemporary with him – and, of course, not modern philosophers. Philip Quinn has drawn attention to a number of ways in which Edwards' argument would be more compelling to his contemporaries than to modern scholars – see Philip L. Quinn, "The Master Argument of The Nature of True Virtue", in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, ed. by Paul Helm and Oliver D. Crisp (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2003), 79-97.

[158] Marsden, *A Life*, 464.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Stephen A. Wilson, "Jonathan Edwards's Virtue: Diverse Sources, Multiple Meanings, and the Lessons of History for Ethics", *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 31:2 (Summer, 2003), 201-228.

Delattre refers to it as "[t]he most systematic formulation of his thoughts on this theme".[161] However, Danaher has argued that, one ought to treat it as instead putting forward a more limited number of his ideas, which were restricted by the apologetic nature of his task.[162] If one were to take Danaher's perspective on this, it might give cause to question the argument of this chapter, since the understanding of beauty contained within it might be expected to be unrepresentative and particularly likely to appear like natural theology than otherwise. There are, however, several points which mitigate against any claim that this potential unrepresentativeness might undermine my argument.

The first is that, while this is Danaher's position, he suggests that other scholarship regards *True Virtue* as a "paradigm text"[163] for Edwards' overall theology; if this standard interpretation is true, then the apologetic occasion should not prevent us from seeing the content as representative. Other scholars, while acknowledging it as being an apologetic text, regard this aim as being compatible with its having a much broader intention to explain Edwards' own theology – for example, McClymond referred to it as going about "the divinizing of ethics and the ethicizing of the divine",[164] with the *Two Dissertations* together seeking to show the unity between ethical theory and the centrality of God[165] – this is simultaneously an apologetic strategy and an overall statement of Edwards' account of ethics.[166]

Secondly, this is not the only work in which Edwards displays the same basic concept of beauty. We have already seen the same overall vision in *The Mind*, which is the other main text where Edwards gives a systematic account of his understanding of beauty. *The Mind* is not an apologetic text, but nonetheless retains the same key features.

Thirdly, we should note that our argument in this chapter is intended to ground the interpretation of *The End of Creation*. It cannot be doubted that the *Two*

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[161] Roland J. Delattre, "Aesthetics and Ethics: Jonathan Edwards and the Recovery of Aesthetics for Religious Ethics", *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 31:2 (Summer 2003), 277-297.

[162] William J. Danaher Jr, "Beauty, Benevolence and Virtue in Jonathan Edwards's The Nature of True Virtue", *The Journal of Religion*, 87:3 (July 2007), 386-410.

[163] Ibid, 386.

[164] Michael J. McClymond, "Sinners in the Hands of a Virtuous God: Ethics and Divinity in Jonathan Edwards's *End of Creation*", *Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte*, 2:1 (1995), 1-22.

[165] Ibid, 6.

[166] Ibid, 5-6

Dissertations form a natural unity – indeed, on Danaher's reading, they are both part of the same apologetic project.[167] If *True Virtue* is unrepresentative of Edwards' project, we should expect the same unrepresentative ideas to also be found in *The End of Creation*. In view of this, when these ideas are present in *The End of Creation* (as we shall see they are in the next chapter[168]), Danaher's reading poses no reason for not attributing them to natural theology. Therefore, even if Danaher's interpretation of *True Virtue* is true and the content is unrepresentative, this need not have any significant consequences for the overall argument of this thesis.

Virtue as Moral Beauty

Edwards begins *True Virtue* by arguing that everyone, "excepting some skeptics who deny any difference between virtue and vice",[169] understands virtue as being the same thing as beauty in the moral realm.[170] He states:

> So that when it is inquired, what is the nature of true *virtue?* This is the same as to inquire, what that is which renders any habit, disposition, or exercise of the heart truly *beautiful?*[171]

As soon as he states this, however, he qualifies it. As we have seen, for Edwards beauty has to do with a being's relationship with other beings; this relational understanding of beauty grounds Edwards' distinction between "a general and a particular beauty." [172] A general beauty is when a thing is beautiful with regard to its relation with all beings/being in general; a particular beauty is beautiful only if you see it through its relations with a limited subset of beings.[173] A particular beauty appears beautiful if you do not consider its relationship with a larger group of beings,[174] but may be "discordant and disagreeable"[175] if one looks at its relationship

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[167] Danaher, "Beauty, Benevolence and Virtue", 387-388.
[168] See Chapter 2.
[169] WJE 8:539.
[170] WJE 8:539.
[171] WJE 8:539.
[172] WJE 8:540.
[173] WJE 8:540.
[174] WJE 8:541.
[175] WJE 8:540.

with all of being. Edwards argues that true virtue is specifically general beauty, not particular beauty, in the moral sphere.[176] He summarises his position as:

> True virtue most essentially consists in benevolence to Being in general. Or perhaps to speak more accurately, it is that consent, propensity and union of heart to Being in general, that is immediately exercised in a general good will.[177]

Virtue as Love

He then repeats much of his argument for this position, before moving on to introduce the term "love".[178] Edwards begins by observing:

> It is abundantly plain by the Holy Scriptures, and generally allowed not only by Christian divines but by the more considerable Deists, that virtue most essentially consists in love.[179]

Edwards hereby cites three sources of authority – the Bible, Christian theologians, and "the more considerable Deists".[180] It is worth noting that this sentence provides a degree of evidence against my argument that Edwards' account of beauty is derived from natural theology. Edwards clearly refers to revelation as a source when he cites the Bible, and presumably as an (indirect) source when he cites Christian theologians.

However, we should weigh this against the rest of the argument which Edwards makes in *True Virtue*. In the first three chapters, which discuss Edwards' understanding of beauty (both moral and otherwise), Edwards consistently and repeatedly makes arguments from philosophy or natural theology. Furthermore, even this sentence does not only cite revelation; Edwards' refers to Deists, who can only gain their ideas through natural theology.

In addition, all that Edwards cites the Holy Scriptures in support of in this verse is an identification between virtue and love. This is indeed a position that is deeply embedded in both the Scriptures and in Christian tradition, but it does not amount to

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[176] WJE 8:539-540.
[177] WJE 8:540.
[178] WJE 8:540-541.
[179] WJE 8:541.
[180] WJE 8:541.

Edwards' whole argument, which insists not only that love is virtuous but that it is only virtuous when it embodies other criteria of beauty. When it comes to these criteria, Edwards only relies on natural theology in their support.

Having just used the term "love", he goes on to draw this into his definition of true virtue, stating that "true virtue consists in love to Being in general".[181] Not all examples of love for specific beings are expressions of virtue, but only "such as arise from a generally benevolent temper, or from that habit or frame of mind, wherein consists a disposition to love Being in general."[182]

Two Forms of Love

The remainder of the first chapter[183] is taken up with a qualification of his argument, whereby Edwards argues that there is a secondary form of love. He notes that many have made a distinction between two forms of love - "love of benevolence and love of complacence".[184] Benevolence is identified with love of being in general,[185] which is how he has already defined moral beauty. Complacence is identified with love of beauty.[186] Since moral beauty is identified with love of being in general, complacence is identified with love of *love of* being in general – i.e. complacence is love of benevolence. Edwards explains that this complacence is the necessary outworking of benevolence, because:

> When anyone under the influence of general benevolence sees another being possessed of the like general benevolence, this attaches his heart to him, and draws forth greater love to him, than merely his having existence: because so far as the being beloved has love to Being in general, so far his own being is, as it were, enlarged; extends to, and in some sort comprehends, Being in general and therefore he that is governed by love to Being in general, must of necessity have complacence in him, and the greater degree of benevolence to him[187]

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[181] WJE 8:541.
[182] WJE 8:542.
[183] WJE 8:542-549.
[184] WJE 8:542.
[185] WJE 8:545.
[186] WJE 8:543.
[187] WJE 8:546-547.

As such, benevolence is primary, whereas complacence is secondary and dependent upon it. (This represents a change from Edwards' earlier writings, where he suggested that complacence is primary and benevolence is secondary.[188])

Throughout Chapter 1 of *True Virtue*, we have seen Edwards making arguments primarily on the basis of philosophy and common assumptions between himself and his contemporaries. His argument therefore constitutes a form of natural theology. We will now see the same in Chapter 2.

Virtue as Theocentricity

The main point which Edwards argues for in chapter 2 of *True Virtue* is that, given his argument in chapter 1, "true virtue must chiefly exist in love to God".[189] This is not understood as excluding love for human beings, but does mean that love for humanity must be incorporated within love for God.[190] He maintains this on the basis of the principle of proportion.

This argument is made from the very start of chapter 2. The first argument deals with why God should be given love of benevolence ("the *first* objective ground of love"[191]), the second with why God should be given love of complacence ("the secondary ground of love"[192]). In both cases, Edwards argues for his position on the basis that God has a greater proportion of what motivates this love. Regarding who is deserving of benevolence, Edwards argues:

> … that being who has the most of being, or the greatest share of virtuous benevolence, so far as such being is exhibited to the faculties of our minds, other things being equal. But God has infinitely the greatest share of existence, or is infinitely the greatest being. So that all other being, even that of all created things whatsoever, throughout the whole universe, is as nothing in comparison of the Divine Being.[193]

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[188] See Danaher., "Beauty, Benevolence, and Virtue", 405.
[189] WJE 8:550.
[190] See the opening of: Ki Joo Choi, "The Role of Perception in Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought: The Nature of True Virtue Reconsidered", *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 38:2 (June 2010), 269-296.
[191] WJE 8:550.
[192] WJE 8:550.
[193] WJE 8:550.

As God has "infinitely the greatest share of existence",[194] so he is similarly entitled to infinitely the greatest share of benevolence.

Similarly, Edwards argues that with regard to complacence, "God's beauty is infinitely more valuable than that of all other beings",[195] so he is entitled to an infinitely greater share of complacence.[196]

Therefore, anyone who has true virtue "must necessarily have a supreme love to God, both of benevolence and complacence."[197] In fact:

> all true virtue must radically and essentially, and as it were summarily, consist in this. Because God is not only infinitely greater and more excellent than all other being, but he is the head of the universal system of existence; the foundation and fountain of all being and all beauty; from whom all is perfectly derived, and on whom all is most absolutely and perfectly dependent; *of whom*, and *through whom*, and *to whom* is all being and all perfection; and whose being and beauty is as it were the sum and comprehension of all existence and excellence[198]

Edwards' argument in this section is, therefore, an argument that God is worthy of infinite love, because God has an infinitely greater proportion of being and beauty. But why does Edwards assume that an entity's entitlement to love is a function of the proportion of being (or beauty) which that entity has?

Proportion as Moral Beauty

The answer appears to be that this is Edwards' understanding of beauty. Throughout this section, Edwards affirms and presupposes the identity between True Virtue and moral beauty. Given this, the fact that – as we have seen above - Edwards argues in *The Mind* that beauty must be proportional, it is reasonable to suppose that this understanding of beauty is driving Edwards' argument in *True Virtue*. This is particularly likely given that the final conclusions which Edwards

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[194] WJE 8:550.
[195] WJE 8:551.
[196] WJE 8:550-551.
[197] WJE 8:551.
[198] WJE 8:551.

reached in *The Mind* – that beauty concerns agreement, or love, between beings – are central to Edwards' argument here.

We should also note that the concept of 'proportion' is something which would have been naturally associated with beauty by Edwards' intended audience. As we have already cited, Edwards stated that his intention in writing the *True Virtue* was to defend his account of morality "against that notion of virtue maintained by My Lord Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Turnbull".[199] Proportion could easily have been recognised as beauty-language by those he was writing against - for example, Shaftesbury wrote:

> Where then is this beauty or harmony to be found? How is this symmetry to be discovered and applied? Is it any other art than that of philosophy or the study of inward numbers and proportions, which can exhibit this in life?[200]

Edwards therefore seems to be adopting a shared definition of beauty from those whom he is writing against, in order to undermine their arguments using their own presuppositions. At this stage Edwards is using the principle of proportion to argue for the supremacy of importance of love for God, noting that:

> There seems to be an inconsistence in some writers on morality, in this respect, that they don't wholly exclude a regard to the *Deity* out of their schemes of morality, but yet mention it so slightly, that they leave me room and reason to suspect they esteem it a less important and a subordinate part of true morality[201]

It is natural to read Edwards as adopting a shared definition of beauty to undermine this feature of other writers.

In either case, this principle of proportion appears to be derived from natural theology. We have already seen how Edwards' account of beauty in *The Mind* is derived from natural theology. The same is true of that of the writers whom Edwards

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[199] WJE 16:696.
[200] Anthony Earl Cooper (Third Earl of Shaftesbury), *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) (ed. Lawrence E. Klein), 416.
[201] WJE: 552.

states he is opposing – Shaftesbury,[202] Hutcheson,[203] and Turnbull[204] – all of whom based their arguments regarding beauty on philosophy, rather than Christian revelation.

Unproportionate Love as Unvirtuous

Edwards goes on to defend his assertion that love "to a *particular person* or *private system*, which is but a small part of the universal system of being"[205] cannot be regarded as genuinely virtuous.[206] Edwards notes that this is universally accepted in the example of self-love,[207] and puts forward three reasons why this is equally true for any particular love that is not for being in general, in accordance with the proportion of being any (specific) being has.

All three of these arguments are based not on scripture or revelation, but on reason. Firstly, Edwards reasons that any such love will in certain circumstances find itself opposed to love to being in general (i.e. when the interests of the smaller group or individual are contradicted by wider interests), and Edwards reasons that this cannot be possible as the truly virtuous cannot contradict itself.[208] Secondly, he argues that any such love will have a tendency towards such opposition – if we are aware of the supreme love which God requires of us, to have another love is inclined towards opposing this love.[209] Thirdly, he argues that as well as tending to cause opposition to love for God, such love "would become itself an opposition to"[210] supreme love for God, since "it exalts its private object above the other great and infinite object; and sets that up as supreme, in opposition to this."[211]

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[202] Louie, 'The Theological Aesthetics of Jonathan Edwards', 36-42.

[203] Ibid, 46-54.

[204] Alexander Broadie, "Art and aesthetic theory", in *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. by Alexander Broadie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 280-297.

[205] WJE 8:554.

[206] WJE 8:554.

[207] WJE 8:554.

[208] WJE 8:555.

[209] WJE 8:555-556.

[210] WJE 8:556.

[211] WJE 8:556.

Virtue as Theocentricity

After this, Edwards makes two additional points before concluding his chapter. Firstly, he observes that – given what he has already said about the nature of true virtue –the virtue of God Himself "must consist primarily in *love to himself*, or in the mutual love and friendship which subsists eternally and necessarily between the several persons in the Godhead".[212] He therefore makes, at this point, an explicit argument for divine theocentricity which is based upon his understanding of divine beauty, and which is derived from natural theology. (I will later suggest that the same ideas are behind his argument for divine theocentricity in Chapter 1 of *The End of Creation*.)

It is worth noting, at this point, that the conclusion to which Edwards comes is not one that can be entirely derived from natural theology, since the reference to "the several persons in the Godhead"[213] cannot be understood without reference to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. While there have been attempts to derive the doctrine of the Trinity through means of natural theology,[214] these are rare. It is doubtful whether this reference to the Trinity can be ascribed to natural theology.

However, it can reasonably be inferred that, while Edwards' belief in the Trinity is not derived from natural theology, the fact that he cites it at this point is a conclusion based upon Edwards' natural theology of divine beauty. In the Mind, Edwards writes:

> That which is often called self-love is exceedingly improperly called love. …
>
> One alone, without any reference to any more, cannot be excellent; for in such case there can be no manner of relation no way, and therefore, no such thing as consent.[215]

Given this, God must love without having self-love. However, given Edwards' earlier argument in favour of the appropriateness of God and humans having a supreme love for God, it is a natural logical deduction – if one believes in the Trinity – that God must have this intra-Trinitarian love. Therefore, while this brief reference to the

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[212] WJE 8:557.
[213] WJE 8:557.
[214] See, for example, Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
[215] WJE 6:337.

doctrine of the Trinity does incorporate an element of theology which is not natural, it is nonetheless a reference which is organically derived from an argument based on natural theology, and poses no challenge to my argument that Edwards' account of beauty is derived from philosophy.

Edwards then qualifies this theocentric understanding of love, finishing Chapter 2 of *True Virtue* by arguing that virtuous love for God can cause a love for humanity.[216] We have seen that Edwards' understanding of virtue negates any virtuous love being ultimately directed anywhere other than God, but a love for another human being may come as a consequence of love for God.[217] Edwards argues that this is possible even if the human is not conscious that their love for another human is dependent on their love for God in this way.[218]

Secondary Beauty

Chapter 3 then discusses "the secondary and inferior kind of beauty"[219] – which he distinguishes from the primary beauty of true virtue, describing it as "another, inferior, secondary beauty, which is some image of this, and which is not peculiar to spiritual beings."[220] This consists of:

> mutual consent and agreement of different things in form, manner, quantity, and visible end or design; called by the various names of regularity, order, uniformity, symmetry, proportion, harmony, etc.[221]

Edwards goes on to give numerous examples of things which have this secondary beauty, including "the mutual agreement of the various sides of a square,"[222] and "the sweet mutual consent and agreement of the various notes of a melodious

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[216] WJE 8:557-560.
[217] WJE 8:557-560.
[218] WJE 8:558.
[219] WJE 8:561.
[220] WJE 8:561.
[221] WJE 8:561-562.
[222] WJE 8:562.

tune."[223] He also notes that beauty of this sort can involve "the visible fitness of a thing to its use, and unity of design"[224]

After describing secondary beauty, Edwards states that it is identical to that found in contemporary philosophers. He notes that his definition of (secondary) beauty is:

> the same that Mr. Hutcheson, in his treatise on beauty, expresses by uniformity in the midst of variety: which is no other than the consent or agreement of different things, in form, quantity, etc.[225]

This identity between Edwards' understanding of beauty, and that of a Hutcheson – "the most influential moral philosopher of the era"[226] – again supports the statement that Edwards' understanding of beauty is a form of natural theology. This case is less strong than it could be, since Edwards is stating that his understanding of *secondary beauty* is identical, rather than the much more important beauty found in true virtue. However, this is not a very significant difference because, for Edwards, the distinction between secondary and primary beauties is not regarding whether such things as proportion, consent or agreement are to be identified as beauty (they all are, regardless of whether the beauty is primary or secondary), but rather in where these are to be found.

The distinction which Edwards makes between this secondary beauty and the primary one (that is, true virtue) is that the primary beauty is found in love – "the union of minds or spiritual beings in a mutual propensity and affection of heart",[227] whereas secondary beauty is not found in love but is rather "an image of this"[228] in other things. This image is an "analogy"[229] of the spiritual beauty of true virtue. Secondary beauty is like primary beauty, but is not found in love but instead in other things – often material things (although not exclusively, as we shall shortly see.)

Edwards then states and argues for a number of specific points about secondary beauty. Firstly, he states that humans find this secondary beauty attractive (or, in

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[223] WJE 8:562.
[224] WJE 8:563.
[225] WJE 8:562.
[226] Marsden, *A Life*, 465.
[227] WJE 8:564.
[228] WJE 8:564.
[229] WJE 8:564.

Edwards' idiom, "grateful"[230]) because God made it to be so.[231] As John E. Smith describes Edwards account, "God presents this inferior beauty, especially to those of a truly virtuous temper, as a way of making them aware of the divine love and of enlivening their sense of spiritual beauty."[232] Humans, on observing something which has secondary beauty, do not necessarily notice the consent that constitutes the beauty, but nonetheless have the feelings associated with the beauty.[233] This is:

> a law of nature, which God has fixed, or an instinct he has given to mankind; and not their perception of the same thing which God is pleased to have regard to, as the ground or rule by which he has established such a law of nature.[234]

Secondly, humans are more influenced by secondary beauty when "in objects that are of considerable importance than in trivial matters."[235] Thirdly, qualities such as "uniformity and proportion"[236] are not alone necessary for secondary beauty to be present; there must also be "some relation or connection"[237] between entities before they can be part of some form of beauty.[238]

Edwards' fourth point is to observe that, although secondary beauty can exist outside of spiritual beings, it can also exist in the spiritual realm.[239] The main example which he gives of this is the virtue of justice.[240] Justice, Edwards suggests, "consists in the agreement of different things that have relation to one another, in nature, manner, and measure: and therefore is the very same sort of beauty with that uniformity and proportion which is observable in those external and material things that are esteemed beautiful."[241]

Although Edwards identifies justice with secondary beauty, rather than the primary beauty of true virtue, he nonetheless argues that "most of the duties incumbent on

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[230] WJE 8:565.
[231] WJE 8:565.
[232] John E. Smith, *Jonathan Edwards: Puritan, Preacher, Philosopher* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), 110-111.
[233] WJE 8:565-567.
[234] WJE 8:565-566.
[235] WJE 8:567.
[236] WJE 8:567.
[237] WJE 8:567.
[238] WJE 8:567-568.
[239] WJE 8:568.
[240] WJE 8:569-572.
[241] WJE 8:569.

us, if well considered, will be found to partake of the nature of justice."[242] This can probably be best explained by observing a qualification which Edwards makes. Although justice is, for Edwards, a form of secondary beauty, nonetheless true virtue is a motivation which will incline an individual towards justice:

> 'Tis true that benevolence to Being in general, when a person hath it, will naturally incline him to justice, or proportion in the exercises of it. He that loves Being, simply considered, will naturally (as was observed before), other things being equal, love particular beings in a proportion compounded of the degree of being and the degree of virtue, or benevolence to being, which they have.[243]

However, justice is nonetheless also a form of secondary beauty, as love to Being in general is not the only possible motivation for it.[244] Instead, the beauty of justice can be seen as a manifestation of both true virtue and secondary beauty.[245]

Finally, Edwards' fifth point concludes chapter 3 by observing that secondary beauty "is entirely diverse from the beauty of true virtue"[246] and therefore "that that disposition or sense of the mind which consists in determination of mind to approve and be pleased with this beauty, considered simply and by itself, has nothing of the nature of true virtue".[247]

At this point, it is worth noting that at no point in this chapter has Edwards made any argument on the basis of scripture or revelation. Throughout the chapter, Edwards consistently argues by using reason and observation from the world. As we have seen, he at one point notes the similarity between his views and those of a contemporary philosopher. Once again, Edwards' understanding of beauty appears to come from natural theology.

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[242] WJE 8:569.
[243] WJE 8:571.
[244] WJE 8:572.
[245] WJE 8:572.
[246] WJE 8:573.
[247] WJE 8:573.

Beauty in "The Excellency of Christ"

Nonetheless, there are occasions when Edwards draws on sources other than natural theology when speaking of beauty. In particular, "[t]he gospel accounts impressed Edwards as narratives about how Jesus brought opposites into harmonious unity."[248] As a result of this, he found himself using biblical material to speak of divine beauty as manifest in creation. We see this in particular focus in one of his sermons, "The Excellency of Christ",[249] from August 1736[250] (or 22 years before his death finally ended the composition of the *Two Dissertations*.)

"The Excellency of Christ" puts forward a different account of beauty – using the terminology of excellency – to that which we have already seen. In the words of Danaher:

> But Edwards chose another aesthetic to describe the saving work of Christ. Unlike the unitive aesthetic [Danaher's terminology for that found in *True Virtue* and elsewhere] this Christological aesthetic is bivalent – its power lay not in achieving harmony out of diverse constitutencies but in reconciling two incongruities without the loss of integrity to either. Edwards explored this aesthetic in his sermon "The Excellency of Christ" (1738).[251]

Throughout the text he consistently builds on scriptural texts, thereby suggesting that this text serves as a counterpoint to the position which I have put forward above. In this text, he develops an "understanding of beauty, [whereby] beauty becomes more intensified as more and more disparate entities or characteristics of an entity are harmonized into an integrated whole. The point of the sermon is that the conjunction of various polar attributes and characteristics in the person and work of Christ, symbolized by the images of the lion and the lamb, render Christ intensely beautiful and infinitely excellent. Thus, the doctrine of the sermon reads, 'There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ.' In Christ there is conjoined infinite highness and infinite condescension, infinite justice and infinite grace, infinite glory and lowest humility, infinite majesty and transcendent meekness,

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[248] E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 115.
[249] WJE 19:560-594.
[250] M. X. Lesser, "Editor's introduction to 'The Excellency of Christ'", WJE 19:562.
[251] Danaher, "Beauty, Benevolence and Virtue", 403-404.

self-sufficiency and entire trust. The sermon continues in a wonderfully relentless fashion as Edwards describes how in Christ's person and work infinite polarities are conjoined, and that such a harmonization renders Christ infinitely beautiful."[252]

Edwards begins by citing his text for the sermon – "[e]xplicating Revelation 5:5-6, [to portray] Christ as both a lion and a lamb. It is in the conjunction of these two images that Edwards elaborately portrays the beauty and excellency of Christ."[253] In this, the lion represents Jesus' strength, power and authority,[254] while the lamb represents "meekness and patience".[255] The most important thing which Edwards seeks to gain from this text is not the individual details of each side, but rather the fact of the paradox: that "there is in him [Christ] a conjunction of such really diverse excellencies, as otherwise would have seemed to us incompatible in our subject."[256] He then develops this point in three ways: firstly discussing the excellencies themselves (included how they are contrasted and related) as they are in Christ;[257] secondly, discussing how these excellencies are manifest in various of Christ's works in salvation history;[258] and thirdly, applying this to the lives and hearts of his hearers.[259]

Firstly, he describes distinctions between apparently opposite excellencies. To begin with, Jesus at once has "infinite highness and infinite condescension"[260] – and Edwards cites biblical texts in support of both.[261] He observes that the condescension – by which he means Jesus' humility to lower Himself to our level and be gracious to us – is not usually the sort of thing that goes along with the divine highness,[262] but nonetheless is all the greater because it is something so high which condescends.[263]

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[252] Louis J. Mitchell, "The Theological Aesthetics of Jonathan Edwards", *Theology Today*, 64 (2007), 36-46.
[253] Mitchell, "The Theological Aesthetics", 41.
[254] WJE 19:564.
[255] WJE 19:565.
[256] WJE 19:565.
[257] WJE 19:565-573.
[258] WJE 19:573-582.
[259] WJE 19:582-594.
[260] WJE 19:565.
[261] WJE 19:566.
[262] WJE 19:565-566.
[263] WJE 19:566-567.

Similar contrasts to this are later described – that between "infinite glory and the lowest humility"[264] is discussed separately,[265] while later a contrast between "infinite majesty and transcendent meekness"[266] is given two pages.[267] Shortly thereafter, Edwards draws together "an exceeding spirit of obedience, with supreme domination over heaven and earth",[268] and then "absolute sovereignty, and perfect resignation."[269] Although the details are different, in each case there is a contrast between some element of the greatness and power of God, and some aspect of Jesus' humility or grace, and could be seen as elements of the tension between the lion and the lamb in the initial text for the sermon. (Each is also justified on the basis of their own specific biblical texts.)

Not all of the contrasting excellencies, however, are manifestations of this same initial idea. Edwards also draws contrasts between other sets of excellencies – for example, between "infinite justice, and infinite grace,"[270] between "the deepest reverence towards God, and equality with God",[271] between "infinite worthiness of good, and the greatest patience under sufferings of evil",[272] and "self-sufficiency, and an entire trust and reliance on God".[273] These examples are significantly more varied than the above ones, but in each case they still contrast two divine excellencies as found in Jesus, holding that Jesus unites them both. They also again are rooted in scriptural texts.

What is notable in these examples is that, while everything which Edwards has said is clearly rooted in the bible and Christian tradition, it is significantly different to what Edwards has written in such works as *The Mind* and *True Virtue*. As we saw in these texts, Edwards understands excellency to reside fundamentally in a love which is proportionate according to the degree of being which beings possess. This understanding of excellency is nowhere to be found in "The Excellency of Christ".

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[264] WJE 19:567.
[265] WJE 19:567-568.
[266] WJE 19:568.
[267] WJE 19:568-569.
[268] WJE 19:570.
[269] WJE 19:571.
[270] WJE 19:567.
[271] WJE 19:569.
[272] WJE 19:570.
[273] WJE 19:571.

The second section of "The Excellency of Christ" concerns how these excellencies are manifest in Jesus' works. Edwards in turn looks at specific elements of the work of Christ – firstly the act of the incarnation,[274] secondly the events described in the earthly life and ministry of Jesus,[275] thirdly the crucifixion of Christ,[276] fourthly in his current role in heaven,[277] and fifthly (and finally) in his future role at the second coming.[278] When discussing the first, second, fourth and fifth (that is, the incarnation, Jesus' earthly life and ministry, Jesus' current exaltation in heaven, and Jesus' second coming) Edwards speaks almost entirely of the contrast between Jesus' power and gracious humility – between the lion and the lamb.[279]

This is not the case, however, in the third – the crucifixion. In this event, to which Edwards gives priority, stating of it that:

> As this was the greatest thing in all the works of redemption, the greatest act of Christ in that work; so in this act especially does there appear that admirable conjunction of excellencies, that has been spoken of. Christ never so much appeared as a lamb as when we was slain: he came like "a lamb to the slaughter" (Is. 53:7). Then he was offered up to God as a lamb without blemish, and without spot: then especially did he appear to the antitype of the Lamb of the Passover: 1 Cor. 5:7, "Christ our Passover sacrificed for us." And yet in that act, he did in an especial manner appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; yea, in this above all other acts, in many respects …[280]

In this text, the excellencies which are seen in the cross are given priority over the excellencies found in other divine acts. As a result, he gives considerably more space to his discussion of this work of Christ than he does to any of the others, making it into seven sub-points.[281]

Within this priority, Edwards is still placing the key contrast between lion and lamb at the heart of what he is saying. One of the sub-points can be seen as aspects of the same general contrast between divine power and authority, and divine humility and grace, which we have already seen: in the first sub-point, we see how the cross

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[274] WJE 19:573-574.
[275] WJE 19:574-576.
[276] WJE 19:576-581.
[277] WJE 19:581-582.
[278] WJE 19:582.
[279] WJE 19:573-576 & 581-582.
[280] WJE 19:576.
[281] WJE 19:576-581.

shows "Christ in the greatest degree of his humiliation, and yet by that, above all other things, his divine glory appears."[282] The remaining ones are distinct (although in some cases one can see them as being connected.)

The second shows how at the cross, Christ at once showed love for God, and love for the enemies of God.[283] The third has the cross showing Jesus' love for divine justice, while at the same time being a victim of that same justice out of love for the very people the justice is directed against.[284] In the fourth, Edwards speaks of how "Christ's holiness … illustriously shone forth… in his last sufferings; and yet he was never to such a degree treated as guilty."[285] The latter is not for its own sake, but a manifestation of divine grace and love for us.[286] The fifth states that Christ "never was so dealt with as unworthy as in his last sufferings, and yet it is chiefly on account of them that is accounted worthy."[287] The sixth "shows an admirable meeting of justice and grace in the redemption of Christ"[288] in his "suffer[ing] most extremely from those that he was then in his greatest act of love to"[289] – that is, both human beings and God the Father. Finally, in the seventh, there is again a contrast between the power of the lion and the grace and humility of the lamb, as Edwards discusses how Christ "was delivered up to the power of his enemies"[290] – displaying his grace in his willingness to be so[291] – while at the same time, this being the way that he "conquers and triumphs over"[292] the same enemies.

Throughout this section on the works of Christ, Edwards can again be understood as rooting his argument in revelation. This is partly because there are frequent bible quotes which Edwards uses to argue for a number of his points, but this is not the only reason. Alongside this, Edwards is consistently arguing from the basis of a

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[282] WJE 19:576.
[283] WJE 19:577.
[284] WJE 19:577-578.
[285] WJE 19:578.
[286] WJE 19:578.
[287] WJE 19:578.
[288] WJE 19:579.
[289] WJE 19:579.
[290] WJE 19:579.
[291] WJE 19:580.
[292] WJE 19:580.

theological perspective – for example, citing substitutionary accounts of the atonement[293] – which are themselves seen as rooted in scripture.

Lastly, Edwards applies these excellencies for his hearers.[294] There are three particular applications he makes. Firstly, briefly (and perhaps least interestingly), he uses it to explain why so many names are given to Jesus, and so many illustrations are used to describe Him – these things are there to help us to see the many sides of Him.[295] Secondly, he calls on those of his hearers who are not converted Christians (which, from his puritan background, he distinguished strongly from those who were nominally Christian) to come to Christ, citing the many excellencies which he offers as evidence that he is worthwhile to come to.[296] In the third and final application[297], he encourages the Christian to love Jesus more, and to "choose him for your friend and portion"[298] as a result of the excellencies which he has demonstrated in the sermon.

This application section again regularly cites scripture in support of a number of its points. However, the main dominating application points are not themselves directly derived from an exegesis of specific scriptural texts giving those specific applications. Nonetheless, this is not the same thing as to say that they are not applications rooted in an interpretation of scripture; they are instead rooted in the interpretation of scripture which had been developed prior to this point in the sermon. (They are also influenced by a Protestant theological tradition which sees itself as being rooted in scripture, as we see in the second application's calling on the hearer to convert, which presupposes a particular theological account of conversion.)

"The Excellency of Christ" and Natural Theology

We have seen how, throughout this sermon, Edwards is making an argument for a number of claims about excellency – that is, beauty – which are based on a reading

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[293] See, e.g., WJE 19:577-578 & 578-579.
[294] WJE 19:582-594.
[295] WJE 19:582-583.
[296] WJE 19:583-588.
[297] WJE 19:588-594.
[298] WJE 19:588.

of scripture, and not on natural theology. This might seem to undermine my claim in this chapter that Edwards' account of divine beauty is rooted in natural theology.

In fact, however, it does not. "The Excellency of Christ" serves as an exception to Edwards' wider theology of beauty, not only in the sources it uses, but also in the account of beauty which it gives. When Edwards, above, gives an account of beauty which is rooted in natural theology, he describes it as involving proportionate relations between entities. By contrast, when he gives one which is rooted in scripture, he describes it as involving different elements of beauty, being united together in the person of Jesus. The approaches are so different that it is not possible to argue that because the latter kind of beauty is rooted in scripture, the former is not rooted in natural theology.

Furthermore, even if the two accounts of beauty were equally central to Edwards, nonetheless the one developed in *True Virtue* would be significantly more important to the argument of this thesis, because *True Virtue* is the companion volume to *The End of Creation*, which is the primary focus of this thesis.

Nonetheless, Edwards' argument in "The Excellency of Christ" is of interest and relevance to this thesis. In Part 2, we will see how Balthasar develops a theological account of beauty based on a reading of scripture, and it is interesting to note that there are a number of similarities between the two readings. In particular, both have otherwise contradictory elements (or fragments) of beauty being cohered together in the person of Christ. In both cases, elements which cohere together include some kind of concept of divine power or glory, and some kind of concept of divine humility for the sake of the other. Furthermore, in both cases the cross serves as the centre for how the divine beauty is manifest in creation. These similarities are not trivial, and appear to support the claim which I make in Part 2 – that Balthasar's theology can reconstruct Edwards in a way which makes him more coherent with Protestant theology, rather than less, due to being less influenced by natural theology. This claim can only be strengthened if Edwards' own theology is found to develop along similar lines when determined by scripture rather than by natural theology.

Observations on Edwards' Account of Beauty

As this stage, there are two particular observations on Edwards' account of beauty which will be relevant to the remainder of this PhD.

Natural Theology

Firstly, throughout this examination of the primary sources, we seen that Edwards continually makes arguments on the basis of philosophy and nature. This all supports my claim that Edwards' understanding of divine beauty is fundamentally a form of natural theology.

At the beginning of this chapter, I noted that some scholars of Jonathan Edwards have interpreted his account of beauty in more complex terms than simply as natural theology. They argue that elements of revelation are present in his account – for example, suggesting that the Holy Spirit enables us to perceive truth in creation and that Christ provides a key to creation.[299] In doing so, I believe that they have drawn upon elements of Edwards which reflect his underlying Protestant, Reformed commitments and therefore his theoretical rejection of natural theology.

However, the theory which I have argued for in this chapter suggests that Edwards' theology is usually virtually indistinguishable from natural theology. While this is clearly compatible with those accounts of Edwards' aesthetics which most emphasise the philosophical and the natural, it will be worthwhile to consider how it relates to those accounts which give a strong role to divine action in revelation.

Some of these accounts emphasise divine action by suggesting that God's work of redemption allows human beings to perceive what was already present in the data – for example, through the Spirit's inspiration enabling the believer to see more fully. This poses no fundamental contradiction with my account: the methodology is the same, regardless of whether or not the theory also involves God being active. Indeed, I am confident that Edwards did believe that the Spirit was at work in the thoughts of the redeemed to allow them to perceive beauty. At the same time this remains a natural theology – albeit a natural theology which (like any legitimately

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[299] See Mitchell, "The Theological Aesthetics", 36-46.

Christian natural theology) has God's work preceding the human use of natural capacities.

However, we have also seen accounts which suggest that God's work not only enables humans (in some way) to develop a natural theology, but also suggest that revelation itself serves as a key. While even these readings do involve a significant element of natural sources within Edwards, these readings nonetheless put forward a significantly different position to the one which I have demonstrated in this chapter. These readings offer a considerably more generous reading of Edwards than my own – suggesting that he meets in practice meets the criterion which his tradition sets out.

In response to these, the only thing that can be said is that– given the reading of the texts which I have put forward above – it seems difficult to accept these readings. We have seen that Edwards wrote lengthy and extensive accounts of how his account of beauty as proportion can be derived from natural sources, while never justifying these ideas from biblical sources (indeed, it seems difficult to see what texts he might hypothetically have drawn on). While he did draw on biblical texts in some of his writings – notably, *The Excellency of Christ* – the account of beauty which he develops in such cases is significantly different to his more typical account of beauty. Therefore, while one can commend the intellectual generosity which seeks to assume that Edwards' ideas are consistent with his theological tradition, nonetheless it seems that it can only be maintained while ignoring some of the features of the texts.

Instead, in this chapter we have seen that Edwards' account of beauty is usually shaped by natural theology. This seems to embody an incoherence within Edwards' ideas. What we have seen was not rooted in scripture – furthermore, I cannot see how it might be rooted in scripture. This suggests a tension between Edwards' Protestant tradition and the actual content of his account of divine beauty.

Divine Beauty as Quasi-Mathematical

The second observation is that Edwards' account of beauty has been seen to have an almost mathematical 'style'. Edwards understands beauty as following certain

rules, which can be proved from experience using a clear, logical methodology. Concepts such as proportion can be analysed mathematically. Since God himself follows this account of beauty, we can even see this as analysing God mathematically. In the next chapter, we will at points see Edwards again showing this tendency towards analysing God as if he were a mathematical equation that can be solved.

Nuance on the 'sense of the heart'

It is worthwhile briefly to discuss and note one other potential nuance. Edwards spoke of a "sense of the heart" which is empowered by God to perceive things, notably beauty. Some scholars have seen this as substantially continuous with the ordinary senses.[300] Others see it as operating as a God given "sixth sense" which enables the believer to perceive things and gain knowledge independently of the other senses, and which they cannot perceive.[301] To my mind, the most convincing accounts combine elements of the two accounts,[302] but detailed discussion of the debates around this would not be possible within the scope of this thesis. It will nonetheless be worthwhile briefly to comment on these matters in order to demonstrate why they need not influence our thesis in this chapter.

This is largely obvious if one takes the approach which reads this "sense of the heart" as being continuous with the ordinary sensual capacities of humans. On this account, the sense of the heart is ultimately a version of already existing knowledge – it has been described as "the apprehension of a content that is already accessible and known through everyday experience. The new sense may be a deeper vision of the world, but it is not the vision of a different world or of a different object in the world."[303] On this reading, the sense of the heart adds nothing of relevance to the account which we have developed here – the sense of the heart would simply be a

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[300] Such an interpretation was probably first put forward in Perry Miller, "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart", *The Harvard Theological Review*, 41:2 (Apr. 1948), 123-145.
[301] See, for example, William Wainwright, "Jonathan Edwards and the Sense of the Heart", *Faith and Philosophy*, 7:1 (Jan 1990), 43-62.
[302] See Michael J. McClymond, "Spiritual Perception in Jonathan Edwards", *The Journal of Religion*, 77:2 (April 1997), 195-216.
[303] Ibid, 196.

way by which knowledge gained through natural theology is applied to the believer's heart. It would add nothing to the interpretation of Edwards found in this chapter, and would lie in tension with the Protestant tradition for the same reasons which that theory does.

Alternatively, some read the "sense of the heart" as adding additional knowledge to the believer, in a sense which is not available to the non-believer – "religious knowledge is not an aspect of human experience per se, but comes as a divine intrusion into human experience to those who are the chosen."[304] Given the theme of this chapter, it is worthwhile to analyse this potential form of divine revelation – God's action in the heart of the believer which enables the believer to know and perceive things which cannot be understood separately. If this reading of Edwards is correct, then it could be significant for our purposes.

Does it operate alongside and in addition to scripture, giving the believer some intellectual content which is not even contained within scripture?[305] This kind of reading may not fall within ordinary definitions of natural theology, but it would lie in tension with Edwards' Reformed tradition and the Protestant commitment to *sola scriptura*. While there have been Protestant traditions which have stressed direct revelation to individuals (for example, such ideas were found among the Anabaptist groups at the time of the Reformation), such a concept certainly does not fall within the classical Protestant tradition of Luther and Calvin (except when carefully qualified to explain how this direct revelation is itself subject to scripture). This fact in itself gives us strong grounds for not believing it offers a good interpretation of Edwards. However, even if it did, and if it were the key source of Edwards' account of beauty it would not compromise the argument of this thesis that Edwards' account of beauty is incompatible with Protestant tradition, since such a reading would itself be incompatible with Protestant tradition.

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[304] Claude A. Smith, "Jonathan Edwards and 'The Way of Ideas'", *The Harvard Theological Review*, 59:2 (Apr. 1966), 153-173.

[305] To my knowledge, such a theory that Edwards' account of the "sense of the heart" is in contradiction to *sola scriptura* has never been explicitly put forward by any scholar, and Edwards' commitment to Protestant tradition would make such a theory difficult to believe. Nonetheless, there are occasions when Edwards scholars seem to me to be implicitly speak of this "sense of the heart" almost as an independent source of revelation. While they would almost certainly clarify their comments at any suggestion that they thought Edwards was rejecting *sola scriptura*, it nonetheless seems worthwhile to briefly address such a hypothetical interpretation.

A much more likely reading of Edwards is that this 'sense of the heart' refers to the Spirit applying knowledge to the believer where the broad content is in some sense present in Scripture, but nonetheless incapable of actually being perceived and apprehended without supernatural aid. There are a number of different ways that such an account could be nuanced, but the core idea would involve the activity of the Spirit enabling the believer's heart to perceive the truths of God to which the Bible testifies. Edwards' wrote of it as "a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the Word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them, thence arising."[306] This reading would effectively support the classical Protestant account of revelation, and the natural theology which we have observed in this chapter would lie in tension with it in the same way in which it lies in tension with classical Protestantism.

I am convinced that there is a lot to learn from Edwards' account of the 'sense of the heart'. Nonetheless, there seems no plausible reading of the 'sense of the heart' which requires one to amend the argument of this chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that many of the same concepts are present in both *The Mind* and *True Virtue*. Beauty is identified as consent or agreement; in the spiritual realm, this is love. This consent, in order to be beautiful, must not be in opposition to consent with other beings; in fact, this consent must be proportional to the being to which it consents. In both works, these ideas come from natural theology, and not from any argument from revelation. This represents Edwards' most common understanding of beauty, and the one which is also present in *The End of Creation*. However, a different understanding of beauty present in a sermon, "The Excellency of Christ", shows that Edwards' understanding of beauty would be significantly different if influenced more by the Bible than by natural theology.

In the next chapter, we will explore how Edwards' primary concept of beauty influences his argument in *The End of Creation*.

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[306] WJE 17:413.

Chapter 2: The End of Creation

Having examined Edwards' understanding of beauty in the previous chapter, this chapter will consider how this account of beauty influences his account of the relationship between love and glory-seeking in *The End of Creation*.

We saw in the previous chapter that Edwards' understanding of beauty involves entities loving other entities according to the degree of beauty which they have. However, for Edwards the nature of beauty is also "to shine forth, to manifest, and to communicate itself,"[307] and so *The End of Creation* has God creating the universe in order to communicate Himself. This might appear to stand in contradiction with Edwards' understanding of beauty: if the beautiful is oriented towards that which already has being, why should it create being where there is none? In *The End of Creation*, Edwards gives an account which explains how divine beauty results in its own spilling-out in the act of creation. In doing this, he incorporates both glory and love within this communication of beauty.

The End of Creation is split into three sections. The first, and by far the briefest, is an introduction giving a detailed explanation of some of the terminology he will later be using.[308] The other two are the two chapters – Chapter 1 argues on the basis of philosophical arguments,[309] and Chapter 2 argues on the basis of scripture.[310] Each chapter is subdivided into several 'sections'.

Edwards briefly discusses the relation between the two chapters, and their theological sources, at both the beginning and the end of Chapter 1. At the very start of Chapter 1, after explaining that the chapter concerns "some things which reason seems to dictate in this matter",[311] he nonetheless goes on to state:

> this affair seems properly to be an affair of divine revelation. In order to be
> determined what was aimed at or designed in the creating of the astonishing fabric of
> the universe which we behold, it becomes us to attend to and rely on what he has told
> us who was the architect that built it. He best knows his own heart, and what his own
> ends and designs were in the wonderful works which he has wrought. […] I confess

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[307] Lane, "Edwards on Beauty, Desire, and the Sensory World", 48.
[308] WJE 8:405-415.
[309] WJE 8:417-464.
[310] WJE 8:465-536.
[311] WJE 8:419.

> it would be relying to much on reason to determine the affair of God's last end in the creation of the world, only by our own reason, or without being herein principally guided by divine revelation, since God has given a revelation containing instructions concerning this matter. Nevertheless, as in the disputes and wranglings which have been about this matter, those objections, which have chiefly been made use of against what I think the Scriptures have truly revealed, have been from the pretended dictates of reason – I would in the first place soberly consider in a few things, what seems rational to be supposed concerning this affair; and then proceed to consider what light divine revelation gives in it.[312]

In other words, he states that reason should not be relied upon in this matter, but instead one should turn to revelation. He goes on to qualify this, stating that we cannot learn "only by our own reason"[313] – the word "only" implying that reason may play a role so long as it is not alone – or "without being herein principally guided by divine revelation"[314] – again implying that reason is allowed a role, as long as it is subordinate to revelation. However, since "objections … against what I think the Scriptures have truly revealed, have been from the pretended dictates of reason",[315] he thinks it is reasonable to begin with a chapter considering the question of God's ultimate end using reason, in preparation for his chapter on revelation.

At the end of the chapter, Edwards again discusses the relation between reason and revelation, stating that although "revelation is the surest guide in these matters"[316] his argument in Chapter 1 has been used to "prepare the way"[317] – it has done this apologetically: "by obviating cavils insisted on by many; and to satisfy us that what the Word of God says of the matter, is not unreasonable".[318] By doing this, it "prepare[s] our minds for a more full acquiescence in the instructions [Scripture] gives".[319]

In these quotations, Edwards appears to assume that reason – when properly used – will ultimately be in agreement with scripture. Edwards puts himself forwards as responding to authors who have attempted to use reason to undermine what he

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[312] WJE 8:419-420.
[313] WJE 8:419.
[314] WJE 8:419.
[315] WJE 8:420.
[316] WJE 8:463.
[317] WJE 8:463.
[318] WJE 8:463.
[319] WJE 8:463.

takes to be the teaching of scripture, contrasting valid use of reason is contrasted with "the pretended dictates of reason"[320] – or reason when used badly. This presupposes that human reason can be used to godly effect – but can also be used to undermine the truth. Edwards does not specify here whether or not it is possible for a fallen human being to gain truth and avoid error through a sufficiently strong application of unaided reason. However, he is undoubtedly giving great priority to revelation over reason.

Edwards' stated goal in Chapter 1 is simply defensive, and is not to make arguments for positions from which he can build his case in Chapter 2. He simply wants separately to show that his case in Chapter 2 can also be seen as reasonable. This priority to revelation is consistent with his theological tradition, as well as what he says elsewhere about the relationship between reason and revelation.[321]

However, it is my contention that, in practice, Edwards' argument in Chapter 2 does not function in this way. While Edwards asserts that his argument is based on Scripture alone, I will show that elements of his argument in Chapter 2 presume his conclusions from Chapter 1. As such, natural theology appears to be playing a determinative role in Edwards' account, despite his belief in its limits and the fact that this dependence upon natural theology is incompatible with Edwards' Reformed tradition. I will also show that Edwards' understanding of beauty plays a central role in his argument in Chapter 1, and therefore has significant consequences for Edwards' conclusions in both chapters.

In order to show this, I will begin by examining Edwards' argument and conclusions in Chapter 1, before moving on to Chapter 2 and showing how many of these conclusions are dependent upon arguments made in Chapter 1. I will then examine the strengths and weaknesses of Edwards' position. I will argue that not only is Edwards' dependence upon natural theology itself in tension with his Protestantism, but the way it works in his system causes other weaknesses to arise.

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[320] WJE 8:420.

[321] See, e.g., Helen Petter Westra, "Jonathan Edwards and 'What Reason Teaches'", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 34:4 (Dec 1991), 495-503.

The End of Creation: Chapter 1

In Chapter 1, Edwards argues "by deductive reasoning from shared implicit assumptions, widely-held concepts, empirical postulates, definitions, and derived propositions,"[322] arguing in a tight and precise way which clearly spells out every step in his argument, so that anyone who shared his presuppositions ought to have little choice but to come to the same conclusions as himself. It is divided into four sub-sections, which we shall explore in turn.

Divine Theocentricity

The initial argument in Section 1 maintains that it is appropriate for God to make Himself His own end. Edwards' stress on theocentricity – both divine and human – is a frequent theme within his works,[323] and plays a great role in *The End of Creation*. It is based upon what has been referred to as the "principle of proportionate regard"[324] – the principle that moral entities should (and, therefore, God does) "[have] respect to things according to their nature and proportions".[325] According to this principle, moral entities are obliged to regard other entities according to the "degree of existence"[326] and the "degree of excellence"[327] which they possess:

> [a perfect judge] in adjusting the proper measures and kinds of regard that every part of existence is to have, would weigh things in an even balance; taking care that greater, or more existence should have a greater share than less, that a greater part of the whole should be more looked at and respected than the lesser in proportion (other things being equal) to the measure of existence, that the more excellent should be more regarded than the less excellent: so that the *degree of regard* should always be in a proportion *compounded* of the proportion of existence and proportion of

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[322] Walter J. Schultz, "Jonathan Edwards's Philosophical Argument Concerning God's End in Creation", *Jonathan Edwards Studies*, 4:3 (2014), 297-326.

[323] Scholars have frequently put forward perspectives on Jonathan Edwards seeking to understand his thought with reference to some specific theme; it is not surprising to find that convincing attempts have put Edwards' stress on theocentricity at the heart of his thought. See Michael J. McClymond, "God the Measure: Towards an Understanding of Jonathan Edwards' Theocentric Metaphysics", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 47:1 (Feb 1994), 43-59.

[324] Michael McClymond, "Analogy: A Neglected Theme in Jonathan Edwards and Its Pertinence to Contemporary Theological Debates", *Jonathan Edwards Studies*, 6:2 (2016), 153-175.

[325] WJE 8:421.

[326] WJE 8:423.

[327] WJE 8:423.

> excellence, or according to the degree of *greatness* and *goodness* considered *conjunctly*.[328]

Using this principle, he argues that this perfect judge would rule that: "as the Creator is infinite, and has all possible existence, perfection and excellence, so he must have all possible regard."[329] God's perfections ensure that He would follow the same course as this hypothetical perfect judge, and can therefore be expected to have this regard for Himself.[330] This therefore "might incline us to suppose that God has not forgotten himself, in the ends which he proposed in the creation of the world; but that he has so stated these ends (however he is self-sufficient, immutable, and independent) as therein plainly to show a supreme regard to himself."[331]

However, Edwards does not argue in favour of the principle of proportionate regard at any point in *The End of Creation*; he simply assumes it. Nonetheless, there are several indications that this principle comes from Edwards' understanding of beauty.

It will be apparent to any reader who has read the previous chapter's discussion of beauty in Edwards that this principle is identical to his understanding of beauty in the moral realm. In both cases, it is considered moral for a being to love beings according to the degree of Being which they possess, in combination with the degree of "excellence." Indeed, central to the argument of *True Virtue* is an absolute identity between virtue and beauty in the moral realm.[332] Therefore, when Edwards here makes a moral claim about how God should act, he must at the same time be making a claim about what it means to be beautiful. It is therefore to be expected that this concept is identical to Edwards' understanding of beauty.

One can therefore be confident that this principle of proportionate regard is identical to Edwards' concept of beauty in the moral realm. It is not as certain that this example of Edwards' understanding of morality is rooted in Edwards' broader understanding of beauty (rather than, for example, Edwards' pre-existing understanding of morality influencing his account of beauty), though there are

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[328] WJE 8:423.
[329] WJE 8:424.
[330] WJE 8:425.
[331] WJE 8:425.
[332] WJE 8:539.

indications that it is. We can note that, as we have seen above, in *The Mind* and *True Virtue* the argument proceeds from an interpretation of beauty to an account of what it means to be moral. We can also note that the close relation between the *Two Dissertations* means that it is reasonable to read either one as a key to the other. These are therefore indications that Edwards' understanding of morality comes from his understanding of beauty – but all we can be certain of is that his understanding of morality and of beauty are identical.

Nonetheless, this absolute identification between beauty and morality does mean that, were Edwards convinced that his understanding of beauty was relevantly wrong, we can be confident that he would feel compelled to adjust his understanding of morality accordingly. Therefore, when (in Part 2 of this thesis) we explore an alternative way of understanding beauty which might be more appropriate given Edwards' wider theological commitments, we can confidently conclude that this element of his argument – and therefore those built from it – could be reconstructed accordingly.

It is worthy of note that Edwards is, at this point, displaying again the tendency towards a mathematical style of reasoning which I noted in the previous chapter was a feature of much of his writing about beauty.[333] Indeed, at this stage, he is arguing that God should act in a certain way, because he ought to respond to other entities in accordance to their respective size – almost as if there is an equation which Edwards knows which can be seen to describe how God loves.

Theocentricity Manifest in Creation

Edwards builds on this argument for theocentricity in the following two sections of Chapter 1, to show in what way he thinks that God's actions in creation manifest divine theocentricity. In Section 2, Edwards identifies "what thing or things are actually the effect or consequence of the creation of the world that are simply and originally valuable in themselves."[334] He identifies several things as being both consequences of the creation of the world and being good in themselves, rather than

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[333] See Chapter 1.
[334] WJE 8:428.

subordinately good (that is, good because they enable or cause some other good).

First of all, he identifies the divine attributes being "exerted in the production of such effects as might manifest"[335] them, because if these attributes themselves are inherently valuable then their manifestation should also be inherently valuable.[336] He secondly points to "the glorious perfections of God … be[ing] known, and … seen by other beings besides himself"[337] because knowledge of God is an inherently good thing.[338] Thirdly, he identifies these same attributes being "valued and esteemed, loved and delighted in"[339] because if it is good to esteem God's perfection, then it is good to value that same esteem in others.[340] Finally, he identifies the emanation, or communication, of God's perfections as being something inherently good,[341] while observing that the second and third things which were identified as inherently good can be identified as elements of this fourth idea of the emanation of the divine perfections.[342]

In Section 3, Edwards combines his arguments in Sections 1 and 2 by explaining how, in each of these things God is "manifesting an ultimate respect to himself"[343] – why the inherently good ends identified in Section 2 are the same as the ultimate end identified in Section 1.[344] With regard to the first three points which Edwards' has identified as being inherently good, Edwards makes a psychological argument that it is natural for divine theocentricity to manifest in love for these things: it is natural, if one values something in itself, to value the same thing being manifest, known, and loved.[345]

Edwards then develops a longer and more detailed argument with regard to his fourth point (which, as we have seen, also encompasses the first three), using "the ad intra/ad extra distinction".[346] Edwards' argues that the "propensity in God to

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[335] WJE 8:428.
[336] WJE 8:428-430.
[337] WJE 8:430-431.
[338] WJE 8:430-432.
[339] WJE 8:432.
[340] WJE 8:432.
[341] WJE 8:432-433.
[342] WJE 8:433-434.
[343] WJE 8:436.
[344] WJE 8:436-444.
[345] WJE 8:437-438.
[346] Sang Hyun Lee, "God's Relation to the World", in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. by Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 59-71.

diffuse himself may be considered as a propensity to himself diffused".[347] It is reasonable for God, who loves Himself *ad intra*, also to love Himself *ad extra*. This is particularly clear when Edwards uses the language of "participation"[348] to describe how God's attributes *ad extra* relate to the same attributes *ad intra*; created knowledge, holiness, and happiness are all participations in divine attributes[349] (thereby giving another, perhaps stronger, reason as to why loving the second and third inherent goods can be identified with loving God).

It is also worthy of note that it is in Section 3 at this point that Edwards makes his first reference to God's love for humans. Edwards observes that God's disposition to communicate Himself – or to communicate His own goodness – could be seen as love, but is careful about terminology. God's tendency to communicate Himself cannot be regarded as love "when taken in the most proper sense"[350] when it is found in God's decision to create the world.[351] This is because this decision cannot be for the sake of another, since that other does not exist – even as an idea – before God's decision to create.[352] (Edwards' writings seem to describe God as making these decisions within time, although his argument would also be compatible with understanding the sequence as a logical, rather than a temporal, one.) Once the decision has been taken to create, however, the "tendency to diffuse Himself"[353] is legitimately regarded as love because it is at this stage acting for our sake, "moved by benevolence for these creatures".[354]

Even here, though, Edwards insists that God can have no love that is not for Himself; His love for created beings is in fact identified with His love for Himself. He writes:

> God's acting for himself, or making himself his last end, and his acting for [created beings'] sake, are not to be set in opposition; or to be considered as the opposite parts of a disjunction: they are rather to be considered as coinciding one with the other, and implied one in the other.[355]

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[347] WJE 8:439.
[348] WJE 8:442.
[349] WJE 8:441-442.
[350] WJE 8:439.
[351] WJE 8:438-439.
[352] WJE 8:438-440.
[353] WJE 8:440.
[354] WJE 8:440.
[355] WJE 8:440

Edwards, in this section, also briefly discusses how these apparently different motivations can be united. We have already seen that Edwards uses the language of participation to refer to the relation between divine attributes *ad extra* and *ad intra*. However, on other occasions in this section, Edwards also uses the language of this emanation of the divine attributes being a "conformity"[356] or "image"[357] of God's own attributes. In particular, he uses this language when making another point. On this occasion, he comments that, since God intends "an increasing communication of himself throughout eternity",[358] after eternity "the creature becomes more and more conformed to God",[359] "forever [coming] nearer and nearer to that strictness and perfection of union which there is between the Father and the Son".[360] Since God sees eternity, from the divine perspective all the elect have an infinite union between themselves and God and can therefore be seen as identical – thereby meaning that God respecting this *ad extra* manifestation of His attributes constitutes a form of self-love, and loving created beings is similarly identified with self-love.[361] This stream of argument will be further developed, with greater clarity and precision, later in *The End of Creation*, as we shall see below.

For our purposes, the most important thing to note about Section 3 is thereby the culmination and combination of Sections 1 and 2, arguing that the things identified in Section 2 meet with the criterion of Section 1, and exploring and developing from this basis. The argument of Sections 1-3 is, thereby, to argue that God is theocentric, and to identify the ways in which God's act of creation serves that theocentricity. Therefore, the conclusions of Sections 1-3 are dependent upon Section 1 – which, as we have seen, depends upon Edwards' understanding of beauty.

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[356] WJE 8:441.
[357] WJE 8:441.
[358] WJE 8:443.
[359] WJE 8:443.
[360] WJE 8:443.
[361] WJE 8:443-444.

Objections Considered

Finally, Edwards ends his chapter with Section 4, which responds to several objections to the position he has put forward. Most of these objections are not particularly relevant at this stage; for example, among these is the obvious objection that his argument appears to contradict divine independence and immutability.[362] While this question is an important one in order to determine whether Edwards' argument is compatible with historic Christian orthodoxy,[363] it does not directly influence Edwards' argument in any way which alters our argument in this chapter, and will therefore not be dealt with here. (It will instead be dealt with in Chapter 8.)

What is more relevant in this section is Edwards' response to questions regarding whether his account portrays God as "selfish"[364] – a question to which he gives three answers.[365] First of all, he argues that selfishness is wrong not because it involves regarding one's own interest, but because it involves regarding one's own interest more than it deserves when compared to the interest of others – since God deserves all regard, God is not displaying this vice.[366] Secondly, he argues that there can be no division between God's good and the good of the whole "universal system"[367] of being.[368] Thirdly, he argues (much more briefly than at the end of Section 3) that God seeking His own good is the same thing as seeking the good of creatures.[369]

In *True Virtue*, Edwards – when summarising *The End of Creation* - suggests that this divine self-love is "the mutual love and friendship which subsists eternally and necessarily between the several persons in the Godhead".[370] Edwards has elsewhere argued that the divine self-love is intra-Trinitarian love, "because all love respects another, that is, the beloved. By love here the Apostle certainly means something beside that which is commonly called self-love, that is very improperly

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[362] WJE 8:445-450.

[363] For discussion of this point, see James Beilby, "Divine Aseity, Divine Freedom: A Conceptual Problem for Edwardsian-Calvinism", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 47:4 (December 2004), 647-658 – as well as its rebuttal, Walter Schultz, "Jonathan Edwards's End of Creation: An Exposition and Defense", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 49:4 (June 2006), 247-271.

[364] WJE 8:450.

[365] WJE 8:450-453.

[366] WJE 8:451.

[367] WJE 8:452.

[368] WJE 8:451-452.

[369] WJE 8:452-453.

[370] WJE 8:557.

called love",[371] and this argument could equally be made here. This understanding of divine self-love could particularly easily have been put forward by Edwards as an additional response to this objection, given that *The End of Creation* is a deeply (if implicitly) Trinitarian work. Several explanations have been put forward as to why Edwards did not make the Trinitarian element of *The End of Creation* more explicit (for example, Danaher suggests that "he places his Trinitarian thought in the background" as part of an "apologetic strategy" designed to appeal to deists[372]). Regardless of what the reason is for this, it would likely explain why Edwards did not put forward this argument as a defence against divine selfishness. It appears that Edwards' thought would suggest an additional, unstated, explanation for divine love not being selfishness: that it is a love within the Trinity.

The End of Creation: Chapter 2

Having looked at Chapter 1, we will now turn to Chapter 2, where Edwards argues for the same position from scripture. It is at this point, then, that we are turning to a work of Edwards which is intentionally seeking to be rooted in revelation rather than in independent human reasoning. It is therefore this section which Edwards would, in theory, regard as the most authoritative in his argument.

Edwards was a devoted student of scripture, "a forward-looking thinker with an insatiable appetite for information about the Bible, its ancient historical contexts, and the structure of the natural world in which its events, stories, songs, poems, prophecies, morals, and other teachings were – and continued to be – realized."[373] He "devoted most of his waking life"[374] to its study. It will therefore be no surprise that there is a strong and broadly compelling exegetical and hermeneutical case which Edwards' puts forward in Chapter 2. While I will identify problems in Edwards' case, these will primarily relate to the influence which the first chapter has on the second, rather than the legitimacy of Edwards' exegesis. Instead, it is my judgment

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[371] WJE 21:114.

[372] William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 201.

[373] Douglas A. Sweeney, *Edwards the Exegete: Biblical Interpretation and Anglo-Protestant Culture on the Edge of the Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 4.

[374] Ibid, 5.

that the biblical elements of *The End of Creation* are in themselves generally compelling.

Chapter 2 is divided into seven sections which together argue for Edwards' position that God created the world for His glory. He begins by arguing, in the first section, that God is theocentric and created the world for Himself.[375] In Section 2, he then gives a number of hermeneutical principles to help him use Scripture to determine God's end in creation.[376] The following three sections then identify different things which, by the rules established in Section 2, appear to be ultimate ends of God; Section 3 argues this for the glory of God,[377] Section 4 for the name of God,[378] and Section 5 for communicating good to the creature.[379] Section 6 then establishes the meaning of the terms God's glory and God's name.[380] Section 7 then gives an argument as to how all the ultimate ends which he has identified are actually different facets of one ultimate end.[381]

Divine Theocentricity

One may initially be struck by the counter-intuitive order of Sections 1 and 2. Given that Section 2 "outlines the exegetical principles [Edwards] will be adopting",[382] and given that Sections 1 and 3-5 all argue that certain things are God's ends in creating, it would appear to be more logical to reverse the order of Sections 1 and 2. This would mean that Edwards established his exegetical principles before doing any exegesis, and that the sections which identified God's goals were together rather than separated.

The reason they are not appears to be because Edwards places a priority on the divine theocentricity which he argues for in Section 1. Edwards begins Section 2 by stating:

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[375] WJE 8:467-468.
[376] WJE 8:469-474.
[377] WJE 8:475-492.
[378] WJE 8:493-502.
[379] WJE 8:503-511.
[380] WJE 8:512-525.
[381] WJE 8:526-536.
[382] Holmes, *God of Grace*, 50.

> We have seen that the Scriptures speak of the creation of the world as being for God as its end. What remains therefore to be inquired into is, *Which way* do the Scriptures represent God as making himself his end?[383]

The question which Edwards poses in Sections 2-5 is not what God's ultimate ends are, it is "in what sense God makes Himself His end."[384] Edwards is assuming, in the way he structures Chapter 2, that there is a priority to be given to God's theocentricity in understanding His goals – such that God's other goals are to be interpreted as ways of God making Himself His end.

This priority of divine theocentricity over other goals is not sufficiently justified from any biblical exegesis. The closest thing to be found to such an argument is in Section 1, which gives scriptural justification for belief in divine theocentricity. However, this section limits its engagement with the Bible to citing a handful of biblical texts and making brief comments about the biblical material. This lack of any exegetical depth helps to show why, at just two pages in the Yale edition[385] (which would be reduced to a single page if the white space and the title were removed), Section 1 is the briefest section by far. Edwards clearly devoted relatively little argumentative energy to putting forward his biblical case for God being one of His own ends – let alone that this end controls His other ends.

The closest that we find in Edwards for an argument that God is not only one of His own ends, but that this end has priority over other divine ends, is an assertion which Edwards makes of the importance which scripture assigns to God's goal of Himself:

> It is manifest that the Scriptures speak, on all occasions, as though God made himself his end in all his works[386]

In this sentence, Edwards does not only argue that the Scriptures state that God made Himself His own goal, but also that they state this "on all occasions"[387]. The obvious interpretation of this phrase – that divine theocentricity is stated at every

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[383] WJE 8:469.
[384] Holmes, *God of Grace*, 50.
[385] WJE 8:467-468.
[386] WJE 8:467.
[387] WJE 8:467.

point in Scripture – is so obviously wrong (since there are numerous places in Scripture which do not state this or even discuss God's goals) that we can safely discount that Edwards intended it. Alternatively, "on all occasions" could refer to every time which Scripture describes God has having a goal – this is perhaps a more generous interpretation, which is less obviously wrong.

Nonetheless, Edwards still does not justify this claim in the text. Indeed, in sections 3-5 he points to numerous other passages which show that there are several other things which Scripture also speaks of as God's goals.[388] Since many of these passages do not also speak of God's end being Himself, Edwards has in fact established precisely the opposite: that there are numerous occasions in the Bible when it does not "speak… as though God made himself his end in all his works".[389]

Nonetheless, Edwards does cite a number of biblical texts which state that God has Himself as His goal. The main argument Edwards makes is that numerous biblical texts[390] refer to God as being "the first"[391] and "the last".[392] He interprets the former as indicating that "he is the first efficient cause from which all things originate"[393] (that is, the creator of the universe) and the latter as indicating "the last final cause for which [created things] are made; the final issue to which they all tend in their ultimate issue."[394] Edwards refers to this interpretation of these words as "seem[ing] to be the most natural import of these expressions"[395] – a turn of phrase which suggests that even Edwards himself recognises that there is a degree of ambiguity as to whether the phrase "the first and the last" does in fact mean what he says; certainly it does not say it directly, and one could find other plausible interpretations.

However, Edwards does then go on to cite four other verses[396] that say directly what he has found only implicitly in these texts: that God is the creator of the universe, and created it for Himself.[397] He regards the fact that these explicit texts exist as

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[388] WJE 8:475-511.
[389] WJE 8:467.
[390] In particular, Edwards cites Isaiah 44:6 & 48:12, and Revelation 1:8, 21:6, & 22:13.
[391] WJE 8:467.
[392] WJE 8:467.
[393] WJE 8:467.
[394] WJE 8:467.
[395] WJE 8:467.
[396] Romans 11:36, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 2:10 & Proverbs 16:4.
[397] WJE 8:467.

confirming his interpretation of the passages which refer to God as first and last.[398] Regardless of whether or not the existence of these passages does prove Edwards' reading of the "first and last" passages (and a historical critical scholar might be sceptical[399], given that no text on either list shares an author with any text on the other list), Edwards has established his claim that there are biblical texts which speak of God making Himself His own end. However, these limited handful of texts cited (whether one draws on one or both lists) cannot be said to provide sufficient justification for the priority which Edwards gives this goal over God's other ends.

If Edwards does not, in fact, have a justification for this priority from scripture, why then does he give this goal such priority in the argument in Chapter 2? The obvious answer is that this priority is in fact determined by the arguments from natural theology which we have already seen, notably in Chapter 1 Section 1; this is the only argument given in the text of *The End of Creation* which would justify it. Therefore, this priority appears to be based on Edwards' understanding of moral beauty.

Additional evidence for this can be found by considering Edwards' language in the final paragraph of Chapter 2 Section 1, which immediately follows his exegetical arguments for God making Himself His own end. This paragraph reads:

> And the manner is observable in which God is said to be the last, to whom, and for whom are all things. 'Tis evidently spoken of as a meet and suitable thing, a branch of his glory; a meet prerogative of the great, infinite and eternal Being; a thing becoming the dignity of him who is infinitely above all other beings; from whom all things are, and by whom they consist, and in comparison with whom all things are as nothing.[400]

In other words, Edwards insists that the Bible, when it states that God makes Himself His own end, implies that this is rooted in a number of other things. At this point, we

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[398] WJE 8:467.

[399] Having said that, one interesting theory that has been put forward within Edwards' studies concerns his relation to historical critical study of the Bible. Robert Brown has suggested that the typical account of the historical critical style of biblical scholarship only emerging in the nineteenth century is not entirely accurate, and that Edwards was engaged with critical study of the Bible, which significantly altered his reading of it (see Robert E. Brown, Jonathan Edwards and the Bible (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002).) Nonetheless, it would be ludicrous to suggest that Edwards shared all features of historical critical scholarship, and it is difficult to imagine a historical critical scholar agreeing with this particular scriptural interpretation.

[400] WJE 8:467-468.

should note the similarity in language between several of these things and Edwards' earlier argument in (his) Chapter 1.

Edwards states that God's theocentricity is "a thing becoming the dignity of him who is infinitely above all other beings"[401]. Edwards makes a very similar argument – that God's infinite superiority means that He should make Himself His own end – in Chapter 1.[402] Another comparable argument regarding what human beings should make their end is made in True Virtue.[403]

Similarly, Edwards also states of God that "in comparison with whom all things are as nothing",[404] as he again has in Chapter 1[405] and in *True Virtue*.[406] Therefore, a significant part of the language which Edwards suggests is implicitly present in the text may be seen to reflect Edwards' conclusions from the more philosophical or natural-theological elements of the *Two Dissertations*.

This similarity does not in itself prove that these elements are present only because of the earlier natural theology; while it opens up this suspicion, it is possible for Edwards to come to the same conclusion based on two different sources. Edwards has been described as, in general, having a "God-entranced worldview"[407]; it would be possible that he derives his ideas here from other ideas in his worldview which in turn are derived from scripture. However, if we consider what Edwards could mean in these texts, there seems little alternative but to ascribe part of what he is saying to the influence of Chapter 1.

This passage begins with Edwards stating that in the preceding texts which argue for God making Himself His own end, this divine theocentricity is "evidently spoken of as"[408] the things which follow. Edwards does not explain how it is that he can tell

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[401] WJE 8:468.
[402] See, e.g., WJE 8:421-422.
[403] WJE 8:550.
[404] WJE 8:468.
[405] WJE 8:424.
[406] WJE 8:550.
[407] Mark Noll, "Jonathan Edwards, Moral Philosophy, and the Secularization of American Christian Thought",

Reformed Journal, 33 (Feb 1983), 22-28.

[408] WJE 8:468.

this, apparently assuming that it is so obvious that the reader can infer it without him making an explicit statement.

In this instance, much of what Edwards reads in these texts can be supported by the implied content of these texts. We have seen that several of these texts are of a doxological nature. Since the function of such texts is to worship and praise God, it is reasonable for Edwards to read the texts as stating both that God makes Himself His end, and that God is glorious in doing so – that it is "a meet and suitable thing, a branch of his glory".[409] Therefore, Edwards' claim that some of these things are "evidently spoken of"[410] appears to be justified; these things are implied in the fact that these are doxological texts.

However, this does not explain that language of Edwards which I have above cited as indicating that Edwards is reading his philosophical ideas into the text (specifically, references to God being infinitely above all things in creation, and references to creation being nothing in comparison to God). There is nothing in any of the texts which he cites that could be used, implicitly or explicitly, to support this specific language. Instead, it makes more sense to interpret it as coming from the more philosophical parts of his thought, where we have already seen that this kind of language and reasoning is clearly found.

This, again, supports my earlier case that Edwards' argument in Chapter 1 is implicitly presumed in Chapter 2. This serves as evidence for my claim that the priority he gives to divine theocentricity is rooted in his earlier argument from natural theology and his concept of beauty.

This priority then feeds into the remainder of Chapter 2, so that when sections 3-5 list other motivations for divine actions they are seen as ways in which the divine goal of self is manifest or fulfilled. In each case these are presented as ultimate ends, and the relation between this and the priority given to theocentricity is not resolved until the final two sections (Section 6[411] and Section 7[412]).

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[409] WJE 8:468.
[410] WJE 8:468.
[411] WJE 8:512-525
[412] WJE 8:526-536

Other Goals

Edwards' argument in sections 3-5 is, in itself, considerably stronger and less reliant on natural theology than the argument that God's goal in Section 1 has priority. These sections establish, through exegesis, that the Bible speaks of God doing things for the sake of His own glory (Section 3), [413] His name and praise (Section 4),[414] and to communicate good to His creatures (Section 5).[415] In each case, he cites a large number of biblical passages in support of these claims and meets the exegetical principles which he set out in Section 2.

In these sections, he makes a number of statements about how God's various ends relate to one another which it is worthwhile to note at this stage. In Section 3, he states that glory-seeking is an aspect of divine theocentricity.[416] However, he also states that God's name[417] and glory[418] are ultimate ends in themselves, and God does good in creation for the sake of them.[419] However, in Section 5, he makes it clear that God's love – which he identifies with His desire to communicate good to the creature – is itself an ultimate end.[420]

In other words, seeking God's name and glory is something which God does for Himself; however, it is also an aspect of divine love for the creature. Seeking the creature's good is something which God does for the creature's own sake in itself – and it is also something which God does for the sake of His name. How these apparently distinctive goals for the same actions relate to each other (and are, in fact, all finally found to be the same thing) is the subject of the next two sections.

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[413] WJE 8:475-492.
[414] WJE 8:493-502.
[415] WJE 8:503-511.
[416] WJE 8:469.
[417] WJE 8:493-496.
[418] WJE 8:492.
[419] WJE 8:493-495.
[420] WJE 8:503-505.

The Meaning of Glory

In Section 6, Edwards then goes on to discuss the range of meanings carried by the terms "glory" and "name" of God.[421] He spends the majority of the section discussing "glory",[422] before briefly noting that "name of God" appears to mean almost precisely the same thing.[423]

His account begins with a study of the etymology of the Hebrew *kabod* and the Greek *doxa*,[424] which are the words translated into English as glory. Edwards first notes that the Hebrew word's primary or literal meaning is "heavy or weighty"[425] – which modern Hebrew scholarship has no trouble affirming.[426] He then goes on to argue that the word *doxa*, which translates the Hebrew *kabod*,[427] carries the same meaning in the New Testament as *kabod* – this, again, is recognised by modern New Testament scholarship.[428]

Edwards then goes on to describe four meanings which the word glory can carry. Firstly, God's "internal glory"[429] – here, the word is "used to signify what is within, inherent or in the possession of the subject, it very commonly signifies excellency, or great valuableness, dignity, or worthiness of regard."[430] He then uses exegesis to establish this meaning, explaining how it links to the Hebrew meaning of *weight*.[431]

Secondly, glory can mean "the exhibition, emanation or communication of the internal glory. Hence it often signifies a visible exhibition of glory; as in an effulgence or shining brightness, by an emanation of beams of light."[432] Edwards, again, argues this in detail from exegesis of scriptural passages.[433]

For our purposes, it is particularly worthy of note that during Edwards' discussion of this second meaning of glory, he makes several statements regarding the

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[421] WJE 8:512-525.
[422] WJE 8:512-523.
[423] WJE 8:523-525.
[424] WJE 8:512-513.
[425] WJE 8:512.
[426] See, e.g., Gwaltney & Vunderink, "Glory", 507.
[427] WJE 8:513.
[428] Again, see e.g., Gwaltney & Vunderink, "Glory", 507.
[429] WJE 8:513.
[430] WJE 8:513.
[431] WJE 8:513-515.
[432] WJE 8:515.
[433] WJE 8:515-521.

relationship between glory-seeking and love. He (again) identifies "the happiness and salvation of men"[434] as being an ultimate end,[435] but now adds to this that his is itself "the glory of God".[436] He therefore, presumably, identifies our "happiness and salvation" with God's glory in this second meaning – God's internal glory existing *ad extra*.

Thirdly, Edwards identifies glory as meaning "the view or knowledge of God's excellency" by beholders.[437] Again, Edwards supports this by citing several biblical texts.[438]

Fourthly, and finally, Edwards shows how the word glory "in Scripture, often signifies or implies 'praise.'"[439] In doing so, he not only elucidates the meaning of glory, but also clarifies that the meaning of the word praise (which he has identified as an ultimate end of God in Section 4) is included as one part of the meaning of the word glory. He, once again, justifies this meaning of glory through analysis of several biblical texts.[440]

After identifying the meaning of glory, Edwards turns to the meaning of "God's name".[441] He argues that the two things "at least very often, signify the same thing in Scripture",[442] before citing several occasions when both terms are used in the same text to mean the same thing.[443] Each of these occasions are examples of Hebrew parallelism. After this, he goes on to list examples of the term name meaning the things that he has just indicated that glory means,[444] further supporting his claim that the terms are "equipollent expressions"[445] ("equipollent" being an archaic word indicating equality or equivalence[446]).

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[434] WJE 8:519.
[435] WJE 8:519.
[436] WJE 8:520-521.
[437] WJE 8:521.
[438] WJE 8:521-522.
[439] WJE 8:522.
[440] WJE 8:322-323.
[441] WJE 8:523.
[442] WJE 8:523.
[443] WJE 8:523-524.
[444] WJE 8:524-525.
[445] WJE 8:523.
[446] "Equipollent", in *Merriam-Webster's collegiate(R) dictionary: 11th Edition* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2012). Retrieved from

It would be beyond the scope of this PhD for me to evaluate the strength of Edwards' exegesis. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to note that modern biblical scholarship would broadly agree with Edwards' account of the meaning(s) of both glory[447] and name.[448] While this does not conclusively prove that his interpretation of the word "glory" (nor the original *kabod* or *doxa*) is correct, it does point in this direction and suggest that Edwards' argument at this stage is based on a strong reading of the biblical text, and offers strong support to his own claim that his argument is based on scripture. Regardless of whether his exegesis is good or his argument is valid, it is clearly not subject to the critique which I made of Chapter 1: that it was based on philosophy rather than revelation.

As we have seen above, in sections 3-5 Edwards identifies four things as God's ultimate ends in creating the world: God's glory, God's name, praise of God, and the communication of good to creatures. In Section 6, he has not only demonstrated the semantic range of the term "glory of God", but also demonstrates that all the other ends can be described under this semantic range.

We have also seen that Edwards identifies God seeking "the happiness and salvation"[449] of His creatures with the second element of glory, that of communicating His own goodness, and therefore appears to identify communicating His own goodness with communicating goodness to the creature. However, we have not yet explored how he does this, since he does not fully explain in Section 6 *why* these varying ends are identified – he only argues that the identity is biblically grounded. I will explore whether this is sufficiently grounded when he brings his argument together in Section 7.

The Unity of Glory

Finally, in Section 7 Edwards explores in more depth how all the goals which Edwards has described are one, and how all are forms of divine theocentricity. It is

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http://ezphost.dur.ac.uk/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/mwcollegiate/equipollent/0?institutionId=1856.

[447] See, e.g., Gwaltney & Vunderink, "Glory", 507-508.

[448] See, e.g., G.F. Hawthorne, "Name", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia: Volume Three*, ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 480-483.

[449] WJE 8:519.

here that Edwards puts forward his most developed account of the question we are concerned with: how God's goals of glory and love are to be related to one another. (However, at this stage he also borrows liberally from earlier arguments in sections 3 and 4 of Chapter 1.)

Edwards begins Section 7 by arguing that, since "it appears that all that is ever spoken of in the Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works is included in that one phrase, 'the glory of God'",[450] that is the only end which God aims at in His work.[451] This means we "have reason to think that the design of the Spirit of God don't seem to be to represent God's ultimate end as manifold, but as one."[452]

While Edwards has already argued (in Section 6, as we have seen) that it can be seen that all God's goals can be described with the phrase "the glory of God", there seems to be a flaw in his case at this stage without further argumentation. Section 6 demonstrated this as part of an argument in which the phrase "the glory of God" is itself multivalent, having a number of distinct meanings which Edwards identifies separately.

However, in Section 7 Edwards now goes on to give a specific meaning of the word glory which enables God's distinct goals of glory-seeking to be identified, or at least so closely linked as to justify his claim that they can be seen as one goal. He writes:

> The thing signified by that name, "the glory of God," when spoken of as the supreme and ultimate end of the work of creation, and of all God's works, is the emanation and true external expression of God's internal glory and fullness… Or in other words, God's internal glory extant, in a true and just exhibition, or external existence of it.[453]

This statement enables Edwards to say that, of the four meanings of the word "glory" identified in Section 6, all of those which are "spoken of as the … end of the work of creation"[454] are identified together as being one and the same meaning, or that the third and fourth meanings of the word "glory" are parts of the second meaning (which is what Edwards describes above - God's internal glory when communicated

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[450] WJE 8:526.
[451] WJE 8:526.
[452] WJE 8:526.
[453] WJE 8:527.
[454] WJE 8:527.

externally). This is itself closely connected to the first meaning of glory – that is, God's internal glory – but is nonetheless distinct. (If one is operating within the Christian tradition which he inherited, there is no need for him to establish why God's internal glory is not an end of creation – it cannot depend on creation in any way.)

This then leaves the question of in what sense the third (knowledge of God) and fourth (praise of God) meaning of glory are part of the second. Edwards answers this in a great deal of depth. A significant part of this argument is dependent upon Edwards' doctrine of the Trinity,[455] whose effects on *The End of Creation* I have written extensively on in my previous MA dissertation.[456]

In this work, I observed in detail how Edwards' language of "understanding" and "will" in *The End of Creation* is clearly a reference to the doctrine of the Trinity[457] - presumably, Edwards was "consciously patterning his understanding of the internal structure of man and the *imago dei* upon the Trinity."[458] "Edwards apparently wants to stress the indistinguishability between God's own knowledge and will and that same knowledge and will existing *ad extra* in the creature."[459] When he states "God's internal glory, as it is in God, is either in his understanding or will",[460] he is making a claim about God's glory as being constituted by the persons of the Son and Spirit, who are identified with these faculties. I showed that, if one follows the logic of Edwards' argument while paying close attention to his Trinitarian thought, one ends up with the confident conclusion that when he refers to God spreading His "knowledge", "holiness" and "love"[461] for Himself (which he identifies with God's

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[455] The role of the Trinity in Jonathan Edwards' theology has been discussed extensively, perhaps most famously in: Amy Plantinga Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002). For a general discussion of the role of the doctrine of the Trinity in the *Two Dissertations* specifically, see William J. Danaher Jr., *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 202-220. For a discussion of Edwards' Trinitarian theology and its relation to traditional orthodoxy, see Oliver D. Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity", *Jonathan Edwards Studies*, 4:1 (2014), 21-41.

[456] My own research is available in the Appendix to this thesis.

[457] Again, see Chapter 1 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix.

[458] Robert W. Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit as the Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007), 68.

[459] Ibid, 190.

[460] WJE 8:528.

[461] One implication which this has is that Edwards' understands love as fundamentally something that is received from God. Given the fundamental importance of love for Edwards' understanding of virtue, this means that all human virtue is ultimately something which is received. This idea has of human virtue as received and receptive has been used to illuminate Edwards' ethics in:

understanding and will[462]), he is spreading the totality of His internal glory, which is also identified with the second and third persons of the Trinity.[463]

This therefore helps to explain why the third and fourth meanings of glory can be said to all fall under the one meaning of the second, and therefore that God can be said to have only one Goal – seeking His own glory, in the sense of His internal glory existing *ad extra* (the second meaning). The third meaning of glory is knowledge of God;[464] it is natural, in Edwards' scheme, to identify this with the (ad extra existence of the) second person of the Trinity – understanding – which means God's internal glory.[465] Similarly, the fourth meaning of glory is praise – meaning "high esteem and love of the heart"[466] towards God, and "joy in God".[467] This can be identified with the (ad extra existence of the) third person of the Trinity – will – which again means God's internal glory.[468]

Glory and Love

However, this does not address how one looks at the main topic of this thesis – the relationship between glory and love. Edwards, in fact, devotes considerable space to this question in Section 7.

Since, as we have just seen, Edwards' understands God's glory seeking as being His communicating His own internal glory – or goodness – then this means that it is identified with God spreading knowledge, joy and holiness to His creatures. Within established Christian doctrine, God is the only ultimate source of these attributes – for Edwards, whose Trinitarian theology assumes an absolute identity between God and these attributes, the identity between God's internal glory and these attributes is absolute.[469] This means that there is an identity between what God would do if he

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[462] WJE 8:528-529.
[463] See Chapter 1 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix.
[464] WJE 8:521-522.
[465] See Chapter 1 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix.
[466] WJE 8:522.
[467] WJE 8:523.
[468] See Chapter 1 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix.
[469] Again, see Chapter 1 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix.

wished to seek glory, or if he wanted to do good for the creature: in either case, He would communicate His own internal goodness.

However, this raises the question of *why* God communicates His internal goodness to us: is it because of love for us, or divine glory-seeking? In fact, Edwards has already insisted in Chapter 2 Section 6 – based upon a reading of John 12:23-32 – that God communicating His goodness to creatures is simultaneously for Him to love us[470] and to seek His own glory[471] – they are both the same aim.[472] It is at this point that he explains his argument.

The first thing which he observes is that he has "said in Ch. I, Sec. III and IV"[473] enough to explain how God's love for the creature and His self-love are not "a double and divided respect".[474] This demonstrates that his position was already substantially finished in the first chapter, suggesting once again that it is influenced by natural theology.

Nonetheless, Edwards restates his position in this chapter again, adding additional nuances based upon his biblical argument. When explaining how "his respect to himself, and to the creature"[475] are to be seen as one, he writes:

> When God was about to create the world, he had respect to that emanation of his glory, which is actually the consequence of the creation, just as it is with regard to all that belongs to it, both with regard to its relation to himself, and the creature. He had regard to it as an emanation from himself, and a communication of himself, and as the thing communicated, in its nature returned to himself, as its final term. And he had regard to it also as the emanation was to the creature, and as the thing communicated was in the creature, as its subject.[476]

The important thing to note here is that God's decision to communicate His glory in creation involves His own glory being communicated from Himself, to the creature. The decision therefore involves regarding two entities: God, whose goodness is communicated; and the creature, who receives this goodness.

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[470] WJE 8:519-520.
[471] WJE 8:520.
[472] WJE 8:521-522.
[473] WJE 8:531.
[474] WJE 8:531.
[475] WJE 8:531.
[476] WJE 8:532.

Edwards goes on to argue that God's love for His internal glory is the source of His love for the same thing when found in the creature. When these attributes are identified with Himself, it is logical for Him to value what He values inside Himself when He sees the "image, communication or participation of these, in the creature."[477] Indeed, "'tis because he values himself, that he delights in the knowledge and love and joy of the creature".[478]

It is worth noting at this stage that one of the chief concerns of moral philosophers of Edwards' age was to answer the Euthyphro dilemma.[479] If one is aware of this background, one might find the outline of an answer to this dilemma here: God gives us good things (including love, which we have seen above is closely associated with moral virtue), but they gain their definition as good from the fact that they originate within God. God, in his love for us, communicates good to us: however, in His self-love, He defines what the good is that He communicates as being what He is.

Edwards also puts forward another argument at this stage for suggesting that our possessing knowledge, joy and love is valued by God in a self-loving way. Since all three of these attributes are primarily knowledge, joy and love *of God*,[480] God values them because they return to Him:

> it is the necessary consequence of the true esteem and love of any person or being (suppose a son or friend) that we should approve and value others' esteem of the same object, and disapprove and dislike the contrary.[481]

In itself, this is a deeply flawed argument. The deep difference between human beings and God would mean that, for this argument to be convincing, one would at the very least have to explore *why* human beings feel this way, and whether those elements of human psychology could be attributed to God. Edwards does not do this.

Nonetheless, this analogy illustrates an important point within Edwards' scheme: that the internal glory which God shares with us is His own intra-Trinitarian self-

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[477] WJE 8:532.
[478] WJE 8:532-533.
[479] Schultz, "Jonathan Edwards's End of Creation", 248.
[480] WJE 8:528.
[481] WJE 8:533.

knowledge/self-love - "[t]he saints' divine vision and enjoyment is by the operation of God's self-revelation and self-love in them."[482] Therefore, human beings coming to participate in this glory participate in this intra-Trinitarian relationship and are orientated towards God.

Edwards' argument is building towards a final conclusion which most fully identifies God's goals of self and of humans by using an eccentric version of *theosis*.[483] As I have argued elsewhere, this argument is derived from his (equally eccentric) understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.[484] In Edwards' view, God communicating His glory to human beings leads to human beings participating in the persons of the Trinity as the persons themselves mutually participate in one another; the apparent key difference being one of the extent of participation between the human persons (who participate finitely), and divine persons (who participate infinitely).[485]

In the final four pages,[486] Edwards uses this position to give a final conclusion as to how love for human beings and love for the divine can be unified. Edwards argues that since God is continually communicating His own glory to humans,[487] the creature will gradually grow in the extent to which it participates in God:

> God's respect to the creature's good, and his respect to himself, is not a divided respect; but both are united in one, as the happiness of the creature aimed at is happiness in union with himself. The creature is no further happy with this happiness which God makes his ultimate end than he becomes one with God. The more happiness the greater union: when the happiness is perfect, the union is perfect. And as the happiness will be increasing to eternity, the union will become more and more strict and perfect; nearer and more like to that between God the Father and the Son[488]

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[482] Seng-Kong Tan, Fullness Received and Returned: Trinity and Participation in Jonathan Edwards (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2014), 70.

[483] Edwards' development of a Reformed doctrine of theosis had been widely discussed and commented upon within Edwards' studies, but it is less frequently noticed that his account is intertwined with an account of the beatific vision – which may also be considered surprising for a Protestant. For discussion of this, see Kyle Strobel, "Jonathan Edwards' Reformed Doctrine of the Beatific Vision", in *Jonathan Edwards and Scotland*, ed. by Ken Minkema, Adriaan Neale and Kelly van Andel (Dunedin Academic Press, 2011), 171-188.

[484] See Chapter 1 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix.

[485] Again, see Chapter 1 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix.

[486] WJE 8:533-536.

[487] Or, at any rate, those who are elect.

[488] WJE 8:533.

That is, as human beings grow in possession of happiness (the logic of Edwards' argument would work for knowledge and love as well as joy – and he uses all three when making the same argument in Chapter 1[489]), they increasingly participate in the divine nature, gaining increasing union with God. This union becomes progressively more like the union between Father and Son.

At this point, Edwards puts forward his final stage. Since this increase will last forever and never cease, human beings will tend towards "infinite increase of nearness and union to God".[490] Therefore, from the perspective of eternity, the creature "must be looked upon as united to God in an infinite strictness."[491] God, from his eternal perspective, sees this final state – but it will nonetheless never be realised at any particular moment within created time.[492] Therefore, Edwards argues, from this divine perspective, human beings are as united to God as the Father and the Son are to one another,[493] "[a]nd viewed thus, their interest must be viewed as one with God's interest; and so is not regarded properly with a disjunct and separate, but an undivided respect."[494] However, this "could never be completed, because the distance to the mathematical infinite, the axis along which this continuity lies, can never be fully traversed in time and space".[495] At any given point in time, the creature is always infinitely short of this union with God, and so the creator-creature distinction is maintained.

This final resolution has once again shown Edwards' precise writing developing into a mathematical style of reasoning about God. On this occasion, he has used mathematical concepts of infinity to analyse divine attributes in order to make his argument.

Within this system, Edwards has managed to at once maintain that God has love for humanity, and that God's own ultimate end is Himself. At the same time, these are neither separate goals, nor equal goals, but instead God's love for humanity is

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[489] WJE 8:443.
[490] WJE 8:534.
[491] WJE 8:534.
[492] WJE 8:534.
[493] WJE 8:533.
[494] WJE 8:535.
[495] Don Schweitzer, "Aspects of God's Relationship to the World in the Theologies of Jurgen Moltmann, Bonaventure and Jonathan Edwards", *Religious Studies and Theology*, 26:1 (2007), 5-24.

incorporated within His self-love, which is given priority. Sang Hyun Lee writes that, although God's ultimate end is the external existence of Himself:

> the end of the happiness and salvation of the fallen creation is also an ultimate end –
> an end that is valuable in itself. Yet this end is subordinate to, and comprehended in,
> God's chief end. God wishes to save and make humanity happy, and this end is
> valuable in itself. But this end is comprehended in the greater ultimate end – namely,
> God's own end.[496]

Evaluation

It will probably be obvious to most readers that there are problems with the final stage of Edwards' argument (that is, the stage concerning our union with God in infinity). I have addressed these problems in detail elsewhere,[497] so I will not discuss them here. However, there are numerous other elements of Edwards' scheme which deserve evaluation. I will therefore now briefly consider some of the strengths and weaknesses of Edwards' argument.

It is my judgement that the overall, general thrust of Edwards' theory, particularly in Chapter 2, is fundamentally compelling. It displays a number of compelling strengths; to begin with, it manages to draw together several of God's motivations (theocentricity, the meaning(s) of the term 'glory', and divine love for creation). Each of these motivations is found consistently in Christian tradition, and is convincingly established as a divine motivation by Edwards' detailed exegesis.

Edwards' scheme has the virtues of broad logical consistency (leaving aside several of the details), detailed biblical exegesis, explaining well God's actions in salvation,[498] and general compatibility with the Christian tradition. Furthermore,

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[496] Lee, "Edwards and Beauty", 116-117.

[497] See Chapter 2 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix.

[498] It is particularly notable that Edwards' account of salvation – broadly rooted in his theory of divine self-communication – allows him (probably unintentionally) to resolve tensions between Protestant and Catholic soteriology. Anri Morimoto has argued that Edwards' account of divine self-communication results in an account of soteriology which allows God's grace to be a created reality (rather than a legal fiction) within the individual and therefore meet Catholic criteria while being nonetheless entirely of God and therefore meet Protestant criteria (see Anri Morimoto, *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995)). While this raises questions (themselves widely debated within Edwards scholarship) as to how far Edwards was continuous with the Protestant tradition's account of grace, it is nonetheless notable that this is another way that Edwards' theology can be used in an ecumenical way to resolve tensions between Protestantism and Catholicism.

Edwards' scheme not only displays these rational strengths, but also contains a God who is beautiful. While I have critiqued Edwards' account of beauty, his intuition that God must be shown to be beautiful in his actions is something that is to be commended. (The remainder of this thesis will consider how this concern would be maintained given a different standard of beauty.)

One could also suggest that Edwards' understanding of beauty "enlarging" itself might make sense of the etymological meaning of *kabod*. Something having weight is quite a similar concept to having size, so the concept of God glorifying Himself by making himself bigger makes sense of this word.

Furthermore, Edwards also develops a reasonably convincing way of enabling the reader to identify the three goals (theocentricity, glory, and love) which he has identified. While there are problems in some of the details of this account, the general thrust is effective and – I will argue in the rest of this thesis – the details can be repaired.

These three goals are not separate goals, but rather different manifestations of the same goal –the external existence of God's internal glory. He effectively shows how most of the meanings of the term 'glory' can be shown to be manifestations of this underlying meaning of the term glory. This is a manifestation of the love of God's internal glory – that is, of divine self-love.

The most problematic element to incorporate within this definition is God's love for creatures, which he identifies with a desire to communicate good to them. Edwards identifies the good that is communicated with God's glory, which is constituted of the three attributes of knowledge, love, and joy.

However, a unity in God's goals in Edwards' scheme requires not only that the outcome of the good is one, but also that God's motivation for communicating this good is one, and incorporates both theocentricity and legitimate love for humanity. This begins with an argument based on definitions. For Edwards, God loves His glory *ad extra* because he values His internal glory and it is consistent to therefore value the same thing externally – this kind of love for Himself involves Him defining Himself as good. This means that the desire to communicate good to the creature is loving to the creature because (s)he is to receive good, and loving to God because it

is valuing God's internal glory by regarding it as good. While Edwards does not find this fully convincing in itself, it is fundamental to his argument.

However, this argument displays one of Edwards' argument's weaknesses. In several places, Edwards reasons that it is loving towards God for God to value the divine glory when it exists *ad extra* – since God values understanding and will inside Himself, He must therefore value it outside of Himself, and seek for it to exist there. He uses as an illustration the fact that it is natural for human beings, if they value something in one location, to value the same thing in a different location.

However, I would suggest that this logical step is insufficiently established, and in fact contradicts much of Edwards' own argument. To begin with, if the illustration from human beings is seen as an argument, it is clear that it does not function. There may be several reasons why human beings might derive love of one thing from love of another thing – pleasant memories associated with one thing causing us to like another thing, for example – many of which do not apply to God. Any orthodox Christian theology insists that God is very different to human beings, and the fact that something is true of human beings cannot therefore demonstrate that it is necessarily true of God.

However, another way of making sense of Edwards' argument is to observe that it is logically to be expected to value an equivalent or identical thing in two different places, if the reasons why one values one thing is present in both cases.[499] In this case, if God's love for God is something which God values inside of Himself, it would stand to reason that He would love it when present outside of Himself, because He sees it as a valuable thing in both instances. This is not necessarily exactly the same thing as valuing one thing *because* one values another thing – instead, one values two things for the same reasons – but they are closely related concepts.

However, this kind of claim would seem to lie in tension with much of Edwards' argument for divine theocentricity in Chapter 1 (as well as in *True Virtue* and *The Mind*). In this argument, Edwards reasons that – by the criterion of moral beauty – God is obliged to love God with all of His love (as are we), since love should be allocated according to the 'size' of respective beings. This argument assumes an

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[499] The analogy from humanity may simply be an attempt to expressing this point.

equivalency of type of being; since that which is in a human and that which is in God are equivalent, God is obliged to love God infinitely more since God possesses infinitely more of 'it'. According to this argument, then, the similarity between God's glory *ad extra* and God's internal glory should instead oblige God to place no value whatsoever in God's *ad extra* glory, since it is infinitely smaller than God's internal glory. Therefore, not only does his attempt to argue that God's desire to communicate His glory comes from His theocentricity fail, but in fact his own account of beauty comprehensively rules out the possibility of God loving anything external to Him in this way. If God is theocentric according to Edwards' argument from beauty, then God ought never to seek to communicate His glory for any reason whatsoever. This argument would therefore destroy everything which Edwards puts forward in *The End of Creation*.

However, I have also noted that Edwards' account of beauty is derived from philosophy, and therefore lies in tension with the Protestant tradition. Therefore, this problem comes from an understanding of beauty whose presence within Edwards' thought is in itself problematic.

This is also similarly the case regarding my observation that Edwards reasons about God using a logic that is essentially mathematical. My readers may (or may not) share my instinctive suspicion to Edwards' tendency to use the laws of mathematics to analyse God, as if he could be described or predicted using an equation. Regardless of whether the reader shares my reaction, it is something which we saw in the previous chapter, and which has at least part of its origin in the same tendency being present in Edwards' understanding of beauty.[500]

Reconstructing Edwards and Beauty

We have seen in this chapter that a number of problematic features of Edwards' account are derived from his understanding of beauty. In order to remove such features, there are therefore at least two routes one could take. On the one hand,

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[500] It was, after all, first observed above, in an argument where Edwards was implicitly using – I have argued – his understanding of beauty. The elements of Edwards' account of beauty which seemed mathematical in the last chapter are precisely those which are used by Edwards at this point.

one could seek to reconstruct Edwards' theology simply by rejecting his understanding of beauty, and therefore rethinking how the relevant parts of his account might work without reference to beauty. This would leave an account which did not contain any concept of beauty.

Alternatively, one could seek to reconstruct Edwards' account by changing his doctrine of beauty into one which does not generate the same problems. After this, one would have the opportunity to remove the problematic elements of Edwards' theology. One would also likely find oneself reconstructing other elements of Edwards' theology in the light of the new doctrine of beauty.

This thesis takes the latter path of altering the account of beauty, rather than removing it. As argued elsewhere in this thesis,[501] we have good reason to believe that God should be seen to be beautiful. In the light of this, one should already expect that an account of how God acts in any area ought to be able to be described as beautiful.

Furthermore, the question of beauty is particularly relevant in the case of the question of glory-seeking and love. A natural and common objection to the biblical concept of God seeking His own glory is aesthetic: it may seem unattractive or even repulsive to have God acting in this potentially self-centred or self-congratulating way. This could be presented either as an intuition or as a formal theological argument, and one criterion which any account of the relationship between glory-seeking and love ought to meet should be that it is compatible with a God who can be rightly loved and delighted in. To demonstrate that such a criterion has been met, one would require some concept of beauty to measure it against.

This does, however, leave open the question of how one might alter Edwards' account of beauty. It would be difficult to see how such a project could be worthwhile if one were to only make minor – or even moderate – changes; given the profound influence which natural sources had on this understanding of beauty, it is difficult to see how anything like Edwards' central thinking on beauty could influence his understanding of God without his doctrine becoming a form of natural theology, contradicting classical Protestantism. Instead, in the following chapters, we will see

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[501] See the Introduction to this thesis.

how using the account of a different thinker – Hans Urs von Balthasar – may instead be used therapeutically on Edwards' account.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that Edwards' understanding of beauty works its way through his account of the relationship between glory and love in *The End of Creation*. I began by demonstrating that this is true in Chapter 1 of the dissertation: this is not a great surprise, since Chapter 1 is explicitly built on natural theology. What is more surprising is what I went on to argue: that Edwards' argument continues to influence his approach throughout the second chapter, determining a number of elements of the argument. Finally, I evaluated Edwards' approach, observing that Edwards has significant strengths, but also weaknesses which arise as a result of the natural account of beauty which forms an integral part of his system.

Part 2: Hans Urs von Balthasar

Chapter 3: Beauty and Balthasar

In Part 1, we saw that Edwards' argument in *The End of Creation* is deeply influenced by his understanding of divine beauty. We identified a number of strengths with Edwards' argument, which constructively engages with the bible and Christian tradition in order to explain how biblical themes of divine theocentricity, glory-seeking and love coexist and make sense together. At the same time, we identified some weaknesses – most notably, we saw that Edwards' understanding of divine beauty is itself a form of natural theology, and so lies in tension with a classically Protestant epistemology such as Edwards' own.

As we now begin Part 2, we turn to the Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar. Balthasar and Edwards' themes are surprisingly similar for two theologians so separated by time, geography and tradition, both stressing loci such as glory, love and beauty in comparable ways. Nonetheless, there has been little written which compares the two thinkers. Among the exceptions is A. N. Williams, who included within her *The Architecture of Theology* a chapter on the role of beauty which devotes a few pages to the two thinkers.[502] Williams sees Edwards as falling recognisably within the theological tradition[503] (albeit while being "anomalous in certain respects"[504]) while Balthasar's focus on the beauty of the cross is "a departure from the tendencies of the tradition before him"[505] – by which she means the Catholic tradition, suggesting that Balthasar's crucicentrism "likens him more to the Reformation theologians than to the patristic tradition".[506] Williams explicitly reads Edwards as being "more recognizably thinking within the tradition"[507] than Balthasar; thereby implying that Edwards' interpretation of beauty is more compatible with Catholicism than that of Balthasar. As an Anglo-Catholic, Williams presumably approves of this feature of Edwards.

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[502] A.N. Williams, *Architecture*, 186-212.
[503] Ibid, 197-201.
[504] Ibid, 204.
[505] Ibid, 203.
[506] Ibid.
[507] Ibid, 204.

More recently, Kyle Strobel wrote an article comparing Balthasar's account of beauty with that of Edwards[508], which he primarily interprets from "The Excellency of Christ"[509] (which, it is worthwhile to note, I have already argued is unrepresentative of Edwards' view of beauty), arguing that "there is a wide-ranging overlap between Edwards and Balthasar",[510] while "there are of course great differences as well."[511] In particular, Strobel suspects that Balthasar would argue that Edwards' account of beauty is insufficiently focused upon the historical revelation and overly willing to probe into the nature of God apart from the cross[512] (a critique which is particularly interesting given that Strobel has emphasised "The Excellency of Christ", which we have already seen is the text which is most distant from such a critique.[513])

Neither of these thinkers has anticipated the argument which I will use Edwards and Balthasar to build. Nonetheless, in both cases their ideas fit well with the case I will be developing: that Edwards may be reconstructed and made more consistent with Protestantism by using of Balthasar's account of beauty. Balthasar's theology of beauty is put forward as based upon a robust theology of revelation, and relies upon the extensive space which Balthasar gives to examination of the Bible, with particular focus upon the cross and the events of the passion. In view of this, Part 2 will argue that Balthasar's interpretation fits well within a Protestant epistemology.

Part 2 will focus precisely upon how Balthasar understands divine beauty. As a result of this focus, the consequences that incorporating these ideas would have on his argument in *The End of Creation*, will be left for Part 3. It also means that some elements of Balthasar's aesthetics will not be discussed other than incidentally; Balthasar's theological aesthetics also involves discussion of subjects such as human art[514] or the role the aesthetic dimension of life plays in soteriology.[515] While

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[508] Kyle Strobel, "The Beauty of Christ in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards and Hans Urs von Balthasar," in *The Ecumenical Edwards: Jonathan Edwards and the Theologians*, ed. by Kyle Strobel (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015), 91-109.
[509] Ibid, 101-106.
[510] Strobel, "The Beauty of Christ", 108.
[511] Ibid.
[512] Ibid.
[513] See Chapter 1.
[514] Balthasar was himself particularly keen to engage with one specific type of art, that of literature; see David S. Yeago, "Literature in the Drama of Nature and Grace: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Paradigm for a Theology of Culture" in *Glory, Grace, and Culture*, ed. by Ed Block, Jr. (New York/Mahwah, N.J: Paulist Press, 2005), 88-106.
[515] E.g. see Balthasar, *Love Alone*, 81-86.

these topics are not discrete items which can be entirely separated off, they are not of primary importance to the role which Balthasar plays in this thesis. The focus of these chapters will instead be on precisely how Balthasar understands the beauty of God specifically.

Part 2 will itself be split into four chapters. This chapter will begin Part 2 by looking at central ideas with Balthasar's understanding of beauty and how they fit with Protestantism, with a particular focus upon doctrines of revelation. The following chapter will follow on with an analysis of the details of how Balthasar understands revelation, and how this might fit with one specific Protestant theological loci: Martin Luther's account of the "Theology of the Cross". All of this will drive us towards the final question we will need to ask: whether Balthasar's account of beauty in scripture can be sufficiently justified exegetically for a Protestant. In order to answer this, the remaining chapter will put forward an exposition and evaluation of the volumes which deal directly with scripture.

This chapter itself begins by introducing Balthasar's understanding of beauty, and giving a broad overview of it. It then goes on to explore an element of Balthasar's ideas which is particularly significant for our purposes: his understanding of why Protestantism has almost never developed a theology of beauty. From this, it notes that Edwards himself has developed a theology of beauty, and therefore serves as an exception to Balthasar's rule – however, Edwards' account of beauty is developed contrary to precisely those elements of Protestantism which Balthasar identifies as running contrary to Protestantism, and thereby actually strengthens both Balthasar's case and my own. Finally, this chapter turns to the question of how Balthasar's account of beauty itself relates to Protestantism, arguing that its core ideas fit within a Protestant system – although Balthasar's account of beauty involves reflection on the world, this is different to how Edwards does so, and is in a way which is compatible with Protestant ideas.

Beauty

We will begin by examining Balthasar's understanding of beauty. In order to do so, there are two key terms which need to be understood:

> [there are] two elements in the beautiful which have traditionally controlled every aesthetic and which, with Thomas Aquinas, we could term *species* (or *forma*) and *lumen* (or *splendor*) – form (*Gestalt*) and splendour (*Glanz*).[516]

For Balthasar, the concepts of "form" and "splendour" are central to his account of aesthetics, and so we will now examine what he means by these terms.

Form

To Balthasar, "form" – which in the original German is *Gestalt* ("a totality which transcends the variety and diversity of its parts"[517]) – is a description of how a thing is in itself. It is a matter of an entity viewed as a whole, rather than according to its parts.[518] Although a form is a thing in itself, a form nonetheless will express itself,[519] and for Balthasar, "a comprehensive definition of expression must encompass all modes of manifestation".[520] The form may exist within the expression as its "content",[521] but the form is not identified with the expression – it does not "los[e] itself to [its] outward appearance."[522]

For Balthasar, human perception of divine beauty is on the basis of a form which we perceive. He writes "even the most intimate self-disclosure of God in the soul has a 'form', even if it is spiritual: the form of experiences, sensations, illuminations, which as such are not the self-disclosing God himself."[523] God reveals himself through a form of revelation which was created by God in his act of creation, and reflects and reveals God's nature – but it is not identified with it.[524]

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[516] Balthasar, *Glory I*, 118.
[517] John O'Donnell SJ, *Hans Urs von Balthasar* (London and New York: Continuum, 1991), 21.
[518] Leahy, "Theological Aesthetics", 31.
[519] Peter J. Casarella, "The Expression and Form of the Word: Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Sacramentality of Language in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theology" in *Glory, Grace, and Culture The Works of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. by Ed Block, Jr. (New York/Mahwah, N.J: Paulist Press, 2005), 37-68.
[520] Ibid, 42.
[521] Ibid, 44.
[522] Ibid.
[523] Balthasar, *Glory I*, 430.
[524] Ibid, 430-431.

This revelation which came to exist in creation is perfected in "[t]he revelation of the triune God in Christ",[525] which is not merely an extension of the revelation in creation but rather its fulfilment.[526] This revelation "bring[s] together in one divine and human Head everything heavenly and earthly", [527] so that "[i]n this way the form of the world itself, which as such already was the revelation of the divine δόξα, in Christ and in the Holy Spirit poured out through him becomes a temple which, like the tabernacle and Solomon's edifice, harbours within and above itself the *kâbôd* of God."[528]

Even the Christ-event "is in the first place characterised indirectly in its form-quality as the perfection of the form of the world"[529] – identified as being neither itself God, nor even something original but rather the perfected form of something that already exists. However, with the eyes of faith the believer also perceives another level of revelation in the Christ event.

For, in accordance with Chalcedonian Christology, Christ has two natures – divine and human. For Balthasar, in Christ what is revealed is "the becoming visible and experienceable of the God who in himself is triune."[530] Furthermore, this "form of revelation does not present itself as an independent image of God, standing over against what is imaged, but as a unique, hypostatic union between archetype and image."[531] "[T]he image"[532] (that is, "the man Jesus"[533]), is of interest "only in so far as in this image (Christ!) God portrays himself – indeed, in so far as this man himself is God."[534]

The human Jesus derives his significance as the form of revelation from his hypostatic union with the divine person of the Son of God. However, in this revelation the human Jesus is significant as the perfection of the forms of revelation that already existed in creation.

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[525] Ibid, 431.
[526] Ibid.
[527] Ibid.
[528] Ibid, 431-432.
[529] Ibid, 432.
[530] Ibid.
[531] Ibid.
[532] Ibid.
[533] Ibid.
[534] Ibid.

Balthasar stresses that the word "form" is not of fundamental importance:

> Like all other words that are applied to Christ and his revelation, the word 'form' too must be used with care, which means that its abstract and general conceptual content must be held *in suspenso* in view of the uniqueness of this particular application. What is crucial here is not the word, but the thing itself … The thing in this case is one which presents itself as definitive, even if it emerges in different modes of appearance (as an active, suffering, dying man, and as a man who rose bodily in glory) and even if it is apprehended by perceiving man in different states – here by faith, hereafter by vision.[535]

He also notes that the phrase "form of revelation"[536] could just as easily be replaced with "revelation-body",[537] and would be equally valid – and would require "the same qualifications".[538] He stresses that what matters is not the language or the concept but the reality.

Splendour

The second concept which is fundamental to Balthasar's understanding of beauty is that of "splendour". This refers to God, or some other beautiful entity, having an "aesthetic radiance"[539] whereby it shines out of itself and is "offered in such a way that man can see it".[540] Beauty becomes visible not primarily due to the faculty of sight in the human, but because there is something of itself that makes it shine outside of itself and make itself visible.

The concept of splendour is primarily significant in Balthasar's thought because it explains how it is that the beautiful can be seen. It is also important because it is closely associated with the concept of glory: glory is often regarded as the outshining of the inner beauty of God. However, for our purposes in this thesis, which focus on in what sense God is beautiful (in order to address questions regarding Edwards' understanding of this question) the concept of form will be more important.

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[535] Ibid, 432-433.
[536] Ibid, 433.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Ibid.
[539] Ibid, 120.
[540] Ibid, 121.

Protestantism and Beauty

In *The Glory of The Lord*, Balthasar puts forward an argument as to why Protestantism never developed a worked through theology of beauty.[541] He begins his account of Protestant failure regarding beauty by looking at Luther – arguing that he developed a number of ideas which led to the concept of "the *absconditas Dei sub contrario* – God's absolute veiledness".[542] For Luther, God is a mystery and so ought not to be analysed through philosophy – and therefore Luther attacks reason[543] and its "[aesthetic] attempts to achieve a harmony between divinity and humanity."[544] In fact, Luther sees consistent evidence of contradiction between the nature of God and what he sees in His acts in the world – and argues that this ought to humble our pride and make us assume our inability to know God through creation.[545]

As such, Balthasar's Luther forbids human beings from using "harmonising",[546] "skill", [547] or "comprehension"[548] on revelation. However, without this nobody can "achieve an overview that makes comprehension possible",[549] and any apparent harmony "must disintegrate in the face of the 'contradiction'".[550] However, no concept of beauty is possible without this harmonious overview of the whole.[551] This sets up a problem:

> This dialectic now places us at a final crossroads. We may decide, on the one hand, that the dialectic is to be understood as the exuberant outpouring of the Gospel's nuptial love, a love which, in the 'blessed despair' of a wholly self-surrendering faith, places all human skill and art at the disposal of the one divine Art. … On the other hand – and this is our other alternative – the dialectic may be wrenched loose from the

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[541] Ibid, 45-57.
[542] Ibid, 46.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Ibid, 47.
[545] Ibid.
[546] Ibid.
[547] Ibid.
[548] Ibid.
[549] Ibid, 48.
[550] Ibid.
[551] Ibid.

> mystery of the love which generates it and be expanded to the proportions of a negation, a cold methodological protest.[552]

The latter option does not allow a vision of beauty to develop, and Balthasar argues that it was this course that substantially won the day over the subsequent period, leading to a loss of an aesthetic perspective.[553] Finally, however, Balthasar identifies Barth as someone who developed an account of theological aesthetics which Balthasar warmly commends[554] - "restor[ing] to God the attribute of 'beauty' for the first time in the history of Protestant theology."[555]

Beauty in Edwards and Balthasar

This quote, of course, ignores one specific occasion when Protestant tradition has given a strong place to beauty, particularly when applied to God – Jonathan Edwards. I am not the first person to have noted that Edwards serves as an exception to Balthasar's general rule.[556] However – as we have also seen – Edwards' did so through a natural theology. This kind of natural theology is itself a violation of the dialectic between God and human reason which Balthasar identified as the fundamental obstacle to a Protestant account of divine beauty. Therefore, this does not contradict Balthasar's argument as to why the concept of beauty is foreign to Protestant theology in this period – Edwards' theology of beauty is itself foreign to Protestant theology for precisely the reasons which Balthasar cites.

Balthasar himself, by contrast, does not develop his concept of divine beauty from natural theology. Indeed, some of his work critiques those of similar tendencies to Edwards, speaking of those who in their understandings of beauty are guilty of:

> simply subjugating and subordinating God's revelation with its own form, to the laws not only of metaphysics and of private, social, and sociological ethics but also of this-worldly aesthetics, instead of respecting the sovereignty which is manifested clearly enough in God's work.[557]

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[552] Ibid.
[553] Ibid, 48-52.
[554] Ibid, 53-56.
[555] Ibid, 53.
[556] See Gibson, "The Beauty of the Redemption", 45-46.
[557] Balthasar, *Glory I*, 37.

This passage already indicates that Balthasar is critical of those theologies which allow the understanding of divine beauty to be controlled by sources other than revelation. (Indeed, Balthasar makes a distinction between a "theological aesthetics" – a theological account of beauty, which is determined in its content by a robust revealed theology – and an aesthetic theology, which is merely a theology which is controlled by aesthetics, making no secret of his strong preference for the former.[558]) Already here we can see how Balthasar's account of beauty appears to be more in keeping with Protestant thought than that of Edwards.

Balthasar's understanding of 'form' may appear to be less compatible with Protestant thought. In a section discussing the two categories of form and splendour, Balthasar goes on to comment on how Protestantism deals with form:

> We may, however, without prejudice distinguish and relate to each other, albeit in a very preliminary way, two elements in the beautiful which have traditionally controlled every aesthetic and which, with Thomas Aquinas, we could term *species* (or *forma*) and *lumen* (or *splendor*) – form (*Gestalt*) and splendour (*Glanz*). As form, the beautiful can be materially grasped and even subjected to numerical calculation as a relationship of numbers, harmony and the laws of Being. Protestant aesthetics has wholly misunderstood this dimension and even denounced it as heretical, locating then the total essence of beauty in the event in which the light irrupts.[559]

This paragraph both strengthens and weakens my argument that Balthasar's theology can be used to make Edwards more Protestant. It strengthens the argument because Balthasar's description of form as "even subjected to numerical calculation as a relationship of numbers, harmony and the laws of Being"[560] sounds extremely like Jonathan Edwards' account of beauty as an almost mathematical concept of proportion between different beings. If Balthasar's assertion is true that some other (unnamed) Protestant theologians have identified this approach as being

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[558] For a discussion of this distinction (arguing that Balthasar fails to meet his own challenge), see Roland Chia, "Theological Aesthetics or Aesthetic Theology: Some Reflections on the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 49:1 (Feb 1996), 75-95.
[559] Balthasar, *Glory I*, 118.
[560] Ibid.

heretical, then this strengthens my argument that Edwards' understanding of beauty lies in tension with Protestant theology.

Balthasar's use of the word "even"[561] in this paragraph is worthy of note. In reference to the concept of form, he asserts after suggesting that the beautiful can be "materially grasped"[562] that it can "even"[563] be "subjected to numerical calculation".[564] The word "even" in this sentence seems to suggest that the mathematical approach is a possibility within this framework, but is only actualised in the more extreme examples. Since Edwards takes this stronger approach, he can therefore be subject to such a critique when other comparable theologians may not.

At the same time as strengthening my argument that Balthasar can make Edwards more Protestant, it also weakens it because Balthasar is writing about these ideas in a broadly approving way; he could therefore be read as himself being incompatible with Protestantism in a similar way to Edwards. Nonetheless, Balthasar's use of the word "even" should again be noted. The final sentence discusses Protestants' failure to understand the concept of form, before suggesting that they might "even"[565] call it "heretical"[566] – the "even" suggests that it is possible that others do *not* do this. Where they do not do this, Balthasar only asserts that they "misunderstand" the concept of form – and a misunderstanding is often open to correction without any fundamental problems occurring. Presumably (although this is not explicitly stated), a Protestant is less likely to find the concept of form problematic when the weaker type (not involving mathematical reasoning) is used.

Balthasar acknowledges that there are elements of truth in the Protestant critique, insofar as the ideas which the Protestants seek to put forward are true. However, he disagrees that these ideas contradict the concept of form, properly understood. This is seen in the immediately subsequent text, when he goes on to discuss how this concept of form relates to the reality of the God who lies behind it:

> Admittedly, form would not be beautiful unless it were fundamentally a sign and appearing of a depth and a fullness that, in themselves and in an abstract sense,

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[561] Ibid.
[562] Ibid.
[563] Ibid.
[564] Ibid.
[565] Ibid.
[566] Ibid.

> remain beyond both our reach and our vision. … In this way, too, the Spirit appears in history in a concealed manner; and, in a manner still more concealed due to infinite freedom and superiority to the world, God manifests himself in his creation and in the order of salvation. … The form as it appears to us is beautiful only because the delight that it arouses in us is founded upon the fact that, in it, the truth and goodness of the depths of reality itself are manifested and bestowed, and this manifestation and bestowal reveal themselves to us as being something infinitely and inexhaustibly valuable and fascinating. The appearance of the form, as revelation of the depths, is an indissoluble union of two things. It is the real presence of the depths, of the whole of reality, *and* it is a real pointing beyond itself to these depths.[567]

This section discusses (without using the word) what Balthasar means by splendour: God's internal beauty spilling out and becoming visible outside of Himself. In doing so, it establishes a link, as well as a strong distinction, between the form as found in the world and the underlying divine beauty which grounds it. The former is beautiful and delights the soul solely because it reflects and embodies the splendour of the latter. At the same time, there is always an ever greater dissimilarity between God and creation.

We see here in Balthasar a concept of analogy between beauties in creation and those in God. Analogical thinking has a greater role within Catholicism than in Protestantism,[568] but a concept of analogy between God and creation is not entirely foreign to Edwards – indeed, he holds that God "has constituted the external world in an analogy to things in the spiritual world [which includes, but is not limited to, God], in numberless instances",[569] which specifically include beauty.[570] However, these analogies are external similarities rather than internally the same.

This is a considerably milder doctrine of analogy than is found in Balthasar. For Balthasar, the analogy between beauty in the world and beauty in God is not an arbitrary, external thing but is rooted in an ontology whereby creation was created precisely to reflect or embody the creator.[571] This would appear to be an indication

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[567] Ibid.

[568] For a comparative discussion of the role which analogy plays in both traditions, see Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1964).

[569] WJE 8:564.

[570] See WJE 8:564-565.

[571] See Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 87-97.

against my claim that using Balthasar's theology of beauty can make Edwards' ideas more consistently Protestant. In fact, however, two points count against this claim.

Firstly, the concept of analogy is not entirely foreign to Protestantism. While, it is true that figures such as Luther and Calvin rejected the idea of humans being able to find a reflection of God in creation as it is, they did so because they held that creation had been warped by sin – originally creation (and in particular, human beings in the *imago dei*) was by nature analogous to God.[572]

Furthermore, Luther and Calvin both affirmed that through revelation we can gain knowledge of God through analogy after the fall, although they also held that this consists of an external analogy which God voluntarily chooses (rather than one which is based on God respecting an objective link between the two), and which therefore does not allow us to know God's essence in itself through the analogy.[573]

While these ideas clearly reject our ability to find an inherent link between the essence of created things and the divine essence, this is not because of an inherent property of creator-creation relations. Rather, it is a contingent result of the fall and our subsequent abilities and nature. This therefore allows a degree of room for a link between the creator and the creature – albeit with the qualifier that it is impossible for humans, after the fall, to see this link.

Secondly, Edwards does himself elsewhere make an ontological link between the divine and created natures (which means that for Balthasar to make a similar link is not to do something less Protestant than Edwards himself does). Edwards makes this link not when discussing beauty, but rather glory (the two concepts being less closely identified in Edwards than in Balthasar). In *The End of Creation*, Edwards refers to elements of glory (i.e. knowledge, joy and holiness) as being an "emanation or communication of",[574] and "participation"[575] in the same within God.

Indeed, this kind of ontological link is stronger than that found in Balthasar. The concept of analogy found in Balthasar is the classical concept of the analogy of

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[572] See Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy*, 103-110.
[573] Ibid.
[574] WJE 8:528.
[575] WJE 8:530.

being.[576] Fundamental to this concept of analogy is the belief that however similar the two are, there is nonetheless an "ever greater dissimilarity" between the two.[577] By contrast, Edwards' explanation suggests total continuity between divine and human (albeit while the created is the quantitatively smaller of the two[578]).

Therefore, while this idea of a link between God and creation does not exist within Edwards' theology of beauty, it does exist within Edwards' wider system (indeed, in the closely related concept of glory), and therefore to use these kinds of ideas within Edwards' system would not make him any less Protestant than he already is.

Balthasar and Natural Theology

Having introduced Balthasar's theology of beauty and given a broad outline of how it compares to Edwards', we will now turn to what may be the key issue for the purpose of this thesis. In order for the key contention of Part 2 of this thesis to be justified, it must be shown that Balthasar's account of beauty does not share the same problems as Edwards'. In particular, it must fundamentally not be a natural theology, but rather a theology derived from revelation. I will now demonstrate how Balthasar's theology successfully meets this test.

Sources of Balthasar's Portrayal

Balthasar's account of beauty is developed across the seven volumes of *The Glory of the Lord*, culminating in the final two volumes. In volume 1, Balthasar gives a general overview of the general structure of his thought.[579] In volumes 2[580] and 3,[581] he describes the approaches to beauty in various different Christian thinkers. Volumes 4[582] and 5[583] then draw on ideas about beauty in philosophy and secular

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[576] For discussion of the role of the analogy of being in Balthasar's work, see John R. Betz, "Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (Part Two)", *Modern Theology*, 22:1 (Jan 2006), 1-50.
[577] Junius Johnson, *Christ and Analogy: The Christocentric Metaphysics of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Augsburg, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 62.
[578] See Chapter 2.
[579] Balthasar, *Glory I.*
[580] Balthasar, *Glory II.*
[581] Balthasar, *Glory III.*
[582] Balthasar, *Glory IV*.
[583] Balthasar, *Glory V.*

thought. The final two volumes discuss how the Bible, and biblical salvation history, approaches and discusses beauty, and the closely related concept of glory. Volume 6 discusses the Old Covenant, identifying a number of key elements which go into a biblical account of God's glory, while noting that these elements frequently appear to be in tension with one another.[584] Finally, volume 7 completes the set, drawing together all the preceding elements – especially those to be found in volume 6 – around the cross, which serves as a cohering centre for Balthasar's vision of theological aesthetics, resolving the apparent tensions discussed beforehand.[585]

Even from this brief summary, it will be apparent to the reader that Balthasar's account of beauty contains elements which would fit well within Protestant tradition, and those which would not. In particular, the final two volumes reflect a desire to make the testimony of scripture authoritative for theology: a deeply Protestant concern. At the same time, volumes four and five lie much more in tension with this Protestantism, building as they do on philosophy and having a tendency which reflects the concerns I have raised with Edwards' own account: that of tending towards natural theology. Volumes two and three seem somewhere in-between: while Protestantism affirms the usefulness of tradition and its suitability of use as a source of theology (including both Edwards and the wider Reformed tradition), it – unlike traditional Catholicism – insists that its role is dependent upon, and subordinate to, that of scripture. While there is nothing necessarily to be objected to in von Balthasar's devoting two volumes to a study of the Christian tradition, a Protestant of Edwards' type might start with a degree of scepticism as to whether he might give too great or too determinative a role to tradition (particularly given that these volumes concern specifically Catholic tradition).

At this point we can immediately see that there are elements within *The Glory of the Lord* which vary greatly in how well they are consistent with Protestant theology. One thing that should be noted, however, is that Balthasar himself states that the final two volumes – those which seem most consonant with Protestantism – ought to be given priority within the work. These volumes represent:

> the place towards which the whole work has been tending: to the theology of the glory of the living god, who 'in many and various ways spoke of old to our fathers by the

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[584] Balthasar, *Glory VI.*
[585] Balthasar, *Glory VII*.

> prophets' and 'in these last days speaks to us by the Son, … the splendour of his glory and the very stamp of his nature'[586]

In other words, the whole work has been leading towards the final two volumes, which see God's glory as it has been revealed in salvation history. In volume 7, he writes of this as both criticising and fulfilling philosophical ethics:

> what we have called in this work 'theological aesthetics', taken by us both to be the criticism and the surpassing fulfilment of the 'philosophical' transcendent aesthetics, must be fulfilled likewise in the final self-disclosure of the glory of God in the New Testament[587]

To see how, precisely, Balthasar's understanding of beauty relates to philosophy and the natural world, we shall need to explore Balthasar's wider theology of beauty.

The Cross at the Centre

For Balthasar, the life – and, particularly, the passion – of Jesus serves as the centre of any understanding of God's revelation of His glory[588] – and thus of His beauty. In the person of Jesus Christ, God is revealed in this world in a specific historical life.

This does not negate belief that God is revealed elsewhere; to imagine so would make a nonsense of numerous other parts of Balthasar's work, including both his account of knowledge of the beautiful outside of the community of faith (which he sees in both philosophy and other religions[589]), as well as in the Jewish people before the coming of Christ (discussed, as we have seen, in volume 6 of *The Glory of the Lord*[590]). However, the cross is determinative to any understanding of God. These two beliefs are held together by Balthasar's position that the cross serves as the centre of any human understanding of God and His glory.

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[586] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 9.
[587] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 18-19.
[588] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 77-89.
[589] Balthasar, *Love Alone*, 11-24.
[590] Balthasar, *Glory VI*.

In this scheme, Balthasar affirms elements of truth which are to be found elsewhere while suggesting that their fullness of truth can only be perceived by interpreting them through the cross. This often comes in terms of a paradox between apparently distinct elements of truth, which are nonetheless both together fulfilled in the cross, being shown to be in harmony rather than tension. For example, in volume 6 Balthasar identifies two apparently contradictory themes: that of divine judgement against sin,[591] and that of the grace that comes from the divine steadfast love.[592] He notes that God portrayed in the Old Testament, from this perspective, presents a problem – these elements of the divine attitude towards human beings appear to contradict, or at least stand in tension. However, the cross enables these elements to be reconciled[593] - enabling both divine judgement against sin[594] and divine grace[595] to be seen to the uttermost, while demonstrating a harmony within the cross between these two, otherwise apparently disharmonious, themes as the wrath is "taken up into the far greater momentum of the love of God in the New Testament".[596] The cross serves as the centre, enables these two elements of truth to cohere around it so that each are seen more fully than they would be without it, as part of a bigger picture.

However, this theme is not limited by responding only to elements of truth found in the Old Testament, or elsewhere in the Christian religion. Balthasar is able to affirm the truth of numerous elements of non-Christian religions and of philosophical thought.[597] Indeed, Balthasar argues at length in volume 6 of *The Glory of the Lord* that the writers of the Old Testament themselves adopted ideas from the philosophies of the surrounding Hellenism of its time,[598] thereby incorporating these ideas within Christian scripture. And, as with elements of truth in the Old Testament, the cross similarly serves as a centre of these elements of truth[599] – showing how they make sense as part of a bigger whole and a greater beauty. In this respect, he

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[591] Ibid, 215-224 & 365-401.
[592] Ibid, 144-211.
[593] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 202-211.
[594] Ibid, 204-208.
[595] Ibid, 205-206.
[596] Ibid, 205.
[597] Balthasar, *Love Alone*, 11-24.
[598] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 344-364.
[599] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 77-89.

speaks of the relation between the Old and New Covenants as being an "archetype"[600] of the relation between philosophy and theology.

Critiquing Philosophical Ideas

This does not, however, negate the possibility of critiquing non-Christian thought; in fact, Balthasar speaks of revelation as a "judgement"[601] on this thought itself. Louis Dupré summarises this aspect of Balthasar's thought:

> Not to accept that form [the Christ form] amounts to "objectively misapprehending it either in whole or in part" (I, 509) – a misapprehension which "cannot be exempt from a certain kind of guilt" (I, 510).[602]

In a section of Volume 7 of *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar gives an account of the origins and function of theology.[603] In this, he argues that Hellenistic philosophy underwent an "evolution",[604] analogous to the relationship between the Old and New Covenants.[605] One of the fundamental things that Christian theology does, in its replacement of Hellenistic philosophy, is to "match"[606] "true gnosis"[607] "against false gnosis."[608] According to Balthasar, Christian theology in the Nicene period was:

> using precisely the means of metaphysics to ward off the danger of the absorption of what was decisively biblical and Christian into a universal metaphysical schema.[609]

In other words, Christian theology used Hellenistic metaphysics itself to defeat the Hellenistic tendencies that would stand against the gospel.

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[600] Ibid, 106.

[601] Balthasar, *Glory I*, 34.

[602] Louis Dupré, "The Glory of the Lord: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetic" in Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work, ed. by David L. Schindler (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991), 183-206.

[603] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 103-114.

[604] Ibid, 106.

[605] Ibid, 105-106.

[606] Ibid, 106.

[607] Ibid.

[608] Ibid.

[609] Ibid.

Balthasar commends the church for developing the thought of Hellenism in ways which allow it to undermine itself – and which undermine precisely those elements of itself which do not cohere with the gospel as he understands it. For Balthasar, Hellenistic philosophy can be used by the church in service of the Gospel, but is itself judged by the gospel and by whether and how it might express the truth of the God who is manifest at the cross.

Balthasar affirms that this is not the result of anything distinctive about the Hellenistic ideas which were adopted by the early church.[610] Other ideas, "in other periods or cultures, may offer themselves afresh as vehicles of the translation of the mystery".[611] What is true in this case is also potentially true of interaction with enlightenment philosophy (a strong element within Edwards' writings), or of any interaction with other non-Christian thought forms.

It should be stressed that Balthasar's understanding of the appropriation of philosophy is one which begins in the revelation of faith. "Everything that follows" the initial confession of faith only draws out meaning from it.[612] There is an "inner logic of love in the covenant" which exists as part of an intimate relationship with God, and provides the grounds for a Christian knowledge of God and, therefore, the appropriate adoption of non-Christian ideas.[613] It is impossible to grasp this while standing outside of this intimate relationship, granted through the initial revelation of faith.[614]

As such, "[Balthasar] asserts that the meaning of worldly beauty was radically changed by Christ."[615] While his account does involve the adoption of philosophy into Christian theology, it does so despite a simultaneous belief that revelation challenges many of the elements of this philosophy. Those which remain are transformed and fulfilled by finding their centre in the revelation of God, which is found on the cross.

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[610] Ibid, 107.
[611] Ibid.
[612] Ibid, 112.
[613] Ibid, 113.
[614] Ibid.
[615] Kevin Mongrain, *The Systematic Thought of Hans Urs Von Balthasar* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002), 69.

Natural Theology in Balthasar and Protestantism

This account of the relation between theology and philosophy might appear to lie in tension with Protestant thought. I have been arguing that Edwards' account of beauty is inconsistent with Protestantism due to his adoption of philosophical ideas. It might initially appear that Balthasar is similarly (if, as a Catholic, more predictably) inconsistent with Protestantism.

However, this is not the case. While classical Protestantism is more sceptical than Catholicism towards philosophically derived claims within theology, this does not necessarily rule out affirming any elements of truth within beliefs which are derived from reason or experience in the world. Instead, numerous Protestant theologians have affirmed a limited degree to which these truth claims can be adopted. We shall use John Calvin, the foremost theologian of Edwards' Reformed school, as an example.

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin discusses at length his belief that God has revealed Himself in creation.[616] As a result of this creation, all human beings have the potential to know God.[617] Human beings subsequently reject God and turn away from Him, setting up idols in His stead.[618] Nonetheless, we have the capacity to know God. Due to our sin, however, this potential capacity does not benefit us; instead, we confuse our potential knowledge into human error and false religion.[619] Thus, all that this previous knowledge does for those outside of Christ is to establish that they have no excuse for not following God.[620]

Nonetheless, Calvin goes on to affirm in the following chapter (which argues that we need Scripture to know God[621]) that through knowledge of the Scriptures, human beings can come to perceive God in creation.[622] Using the analogy of how

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[616] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Volume I*, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 51-69.
[617] Ibid, 51-55
[618] Ibid, 55-58.
[619] Ibid, 63-68.
[620] Ibid, 68-69.
[621] Ibid, 69-74.
[622] Ibid, 69-70.

spectacles help people to see things that they cannot otherwise properly see due to a fault in their eyes, Calvin argues that:

> so Scripture, gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly shows us the true God.[623]

In other words, scripture does not entirely replace the natural knowledge that we have access to, but rather enables us to use that positively rather than merely negatively. It fulfils a similar role with respect to natural knowledge as revelation does in Balthasar's scheme. Therefore the element of appreciation of philosophy and natural theology within Balthasar's scheme does not in itself make Balthasar's account of beauty incompatible with Protestant theology.

What will, however, need to be considered is the different approaches between Protestantism and Balthasar to the question of revelation itself. Within Protestantism, particularly of the sort which Edwards held to, the concept of revelation is very closely associated with scripture; Catholicism (including that of Balthasar) has a broader understanding of revelation which also includes church tradition (although there are a number of Catholic theories about how church tradition and scripture are connected). In order to demonstrate my argument that Balthasar's understanding of beauty can help make Edwards more compatible with Protestant tradition, I will therefore need to examine how Balthasar understands revelation (and especially scripture) and how this relates to his theological methodology in order to evaluate whether or not this can be adapted in a Protestant direction.

However, before turning to this, I will need to first briefly consider an objection which may be raised at this stage.

Edwards' Beauty and Protestant Tradition

Having argued that some degree of use of philosophy and natural theology is compatible with Protestant tradition, the obvious question arises as to whether the

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[623] Ibid, 70.

critique I have made of Edwards' compatibility with Protestantism is no longer valid. If it is legitimate for Balthasar to use elements of natural theology, why do I object to Edwards' use of philosophy?

The key difference between the two figures' approach to philosophy is that, for Edwards, a philosophically derived concept of beauty appears to be a central theme, and exists independently of revelation. We have seen that Edwards argues for it in both *The Mind* and *True Virtue* – in both cases doing so using natural theology rather than any form of revelation.[624] Furthermore, we have seen how, in Chapter 1 of *The End of Creation*, Edwards goes on to use purely natural arguments to argue from this understanding of beauty for his overall position regarding divine glory and love.[625] We have even seen that in Chapter 2, where Edwards states that his theology is based on revelation, we can nonetheless see that the philosophical ideas developed in Chapter 1 nonetheless appear to be implicitly controlling many aspects of the argument.[626] Philosophical elements are not only present in Edwards – they are dominant.

By contrast, for Balthasar, revelation provides a centre for, and radically alters, the knowledge that would be gained through philosophy. In Balthasar, revelation is at the core, and philosophical elements can be used in service of this core. In Edwards, the philosophical elements appear to be as fundamental as revelation. For this reason, Balthasar's account is in this respect the more consistent with Protestant theology.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that Balthasar's understanding of beauty concerns two key ideas – form and splendour. Splendour is the outshining of a thing so that it is seen; form is a thing seen as a whole – and so, in Balthasar's view, can incorporate many fragments into one in itself.

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[624] See Chapter 1.
[625] See Chapter 2.
[626] Again, see Chapter 2.

We have also seen that Balthasar has an understanding of theological history whereby Protestant commitments to the rejection of natural theology prevented most Protestants from developing an account of beauty. We noted that one exception is Edwards – however, Edwards himself only develops an account of beauty through natural theology in tension with his Protestantism, thereby in fact endorsing Balthasar's argument regarding beauty and Protestantism.

We then went on to examine how Balthasar's ideas stand in relation to Protestantism. I argued that Balthasar's account of beauty is compatible with Protestantism, which does allow some use of knowledge gained from the natural world, as long as it is integrated and made sense of within a framework derived from scripture. This is not true of Edwards' account of divine beauty, but I posit that it is true of Balthasar's. This supports my claim that Balthasar's theology of beauty could reconstruct Edwards' in a way which makes it more coherent with his Protestantism.

In the following two chapters, we will look at two specific questions regarding Balthasar's account of beauty and how it relates to Protestantism. In the next chapter, we will examine how Balthasar's crucicentric account beauty relates to Martin Luther's understanding of the Theology of the Cross. In the subsequent chapter, we will consider whether Balthasar's biblical exegesis meets the standards required for it to be compatible with Protestantism.

Chapter 4: Balthasar and the Theology of the Cross

In the previous chapter, we established that the place which revelation plays in Balthasar's theology is coherent with Protestant theology. In this chapter and the following one, we will establish how exactly Balthasar's theology makes use of revelation, and in doing so we will investigate whether the precise understanding of revelation is coherent with Protestant theology. In particular, we will look at two specific theological loci. In the next chapter, we will examine how Balthasar makes use of the Bible, and to what extent this is coherent with Edwards' Protestantism. Firstly, however, in this chapter we will compare Balthasar's account of the theological centrality of the cross (much of which we have already looked at) with Martin Luther's "Theology of the Cross".

We will begin by examining Martin Luther's theology of the cross in itself, before going on to look at Balthasar. We will examine whether Balthasar meets three specific criteria of the Theology of the Cross: whether his understanding of revelation through the cross subverts natural human knowledge, whether it places the cross at the centre of his understanding of revelation, and whether it involves the theologian displaying sufficient theological humility. In each case, we will see that Balthasar's account can be seen as meeting the criteria (perhaps with some qualifications).

After this, we will turn to exploring how the cross works within Balthasar's understanding of beauty. We will examine the role which the cross plays in 'cohering'[627] fragments of beauty around it, and I will argue that a minor modification of Balthasar – whereby these fragments are seen as not merely partial, but actually broken by the fall and therefore in some sense negative – makes him more consistent with Protestant theology. We will then see that the fundamental way in which the cross coheres the partial elements is by displaying God's self-giving love, around which everything else centres.

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[627] It is not typical in English to convert "cohere" into a transitive verb, but it seems a useful way of describing Balthasar's understanding of how the cross brings coherence to apparently disparate ideas.

Martin Luther's Theology of the Cross

Balthasar's emphasis on the centrality of the cross to divine revelation bears some similarity with a key idea of Martin Luther's, that of the "Theology of the Cross." Luther's ideas in this regard are not universal within Protestant thought and are not especially prominent in the Reformed tradition (which, of course, is Edwards' tradition). Therefore, to find Balthasar's ideas in contradiction with Luther's would not automatically mean that his ideas were fundamentally inconsistent or anti-Protestant – they would merely lie in tension with a specific Protestant tradition, which was not necessarily that of Edwards himself. This chapter is therefore not strictly necessary for the purposes of this thesis.

Nonetheless, this chapter does pose an opportunity to put forward an analysis which, while not necessary, is nonetheless interesting. The Theology of the Cross poses a significant tradition within Protestantism,[628] and it will therefore be constructive to compare Balthasar's ideas with it. We will thereby see additional ways in which Balthasar is coherent with Protestantism. One could even suggest that relating Balthasar's ideas to both Edwards and Luther in this way could even, in a sense, heal Protestantism – bringing together two distinct Christian traditions, and uniting disparate theological fragments from Martin Luther and Jonathan Edwards around a centre that is found in the cross.

We will begin with Martin Luther. Martin Luther's Theology of the Cross was put forward in his *Heidelberg Disputation* in 1518.[629] In this text, he developed a contrast between a "theologian of glory" and a "theologian of the cross", putting forward (among others) the following theses:

> 19. Anyone who observes the invisible things of God, understood through those things that are created, does not deserve to be called a theologian.

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[628] Luther's Theology of the Cross has been given a number of interpretations over the years, in ways which Luther both would and would not approve. Perhaps most famously in modern theology, Jurgen Moltmann – who belongs to the broad Reformed camp – has used his ideas to develop a radical political and social understanding of Christianity, in Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, trans. by R.A. Wilson & John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1974).

[629] Martin Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings: Third Edition*, ed. by William R. Russell & Timothy F. Lull (Augsburg, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 14-25.

20. But anyone who understands the visible rearward parts of God as observed in suffering and the cross does deserve to be called a theologian.[630]

21. A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.

22. That wisdom which sees the invisible things of God in works as perceived in humans is completely puffed up, blinded, and hardened.[631]

There are several things which can be observed from this text.

To begin with, it should be noted that the "theologian of glory" which Luther condemns is presented as a natural theologian who understands God "through those things that are created."[632] This passage therefore represents a key Protestant critique of natural theology.

It should also be observed that flaws of the "theologian of glory" are closely associated with having excessive pride (in Luther's words, being "completely puffed up"[633]). This pride is what drives the theologian to believe that they can, through their own mind, perceive God in creation. (It is also worth noting that the first eighteen theses argue for the depravity of human beings in their works;[634] the theology of the cross is built on the negative view of human nature which has already been developed.[635]) The theology of the cross is placed in contrast to a proud human belief in the human's ability to perceive God. Instead, God must reveal Himself.

Furthermore, the location of God's self-revelation is specifically the cross. In the cross, God displays "the visible rearward parts" of Himself;[636] this appears to be a reference to Moses being permitted to see God's back, but not His front.[637] God is

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[630] Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough: Second Edition* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 202-203. (Note that I am using McGrath's translation of these two verses because I am persuaded by his arguments that the conventional translation of them is deficient in some respects. McGrath does not, however, translate the entirety of the text, so the standard translation will be used for the remainder.)
[631] Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", 15.
[632] McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 202.
[633] Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", 23.
[634] Ibid, 16-22.
[635] Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 69-70.
[636] McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 203.
[637] Ibid, 203-204.

thereby truly perceived in the cross – but there are nonetheless limits to how much of God can be known there.

Central to these limits is the contrast which Luther identifies between what the cross reveals – God's glory, power, etc – and the external appearance of the cross.[638] God hides his wisdom in the (apparent) foolishness of the cross; he hides his power in the (apparent) weakness of the cross.[639] The cross is thoroughly different to how a human being would imagine God to be – thereby (in Robert Jenson's words), Luther's "point is that the vision of God-crucified crucifies us and precisely in our religious needs and seekings",[640] thereby crucifying our preconceived ideas of what God is like, along with any belief in our ability to perceive God in any direct way.

However, it is relevant to note that there is a qualification to this condemnation of human wisdom. In thesis 24, Luther writes:

> 24. Yet that wisdom is not of itself evil, nor is the law to be evaded; but without the theology of the cross a person misuses the best in the worst manner.[641]

The supporting text of this thesis makes clear that this means that after having "been brought low, reduced to nothing through the cross and suffering"[642] human beings can use this wisdom.

This explains thesis 29 – the first of the so-called "Philosophical Theses"[643] – which states:

> 29. Whoever wishes to philosophize by using Aristotle without danger to their soul must first become thoroughly foolish in Christ.[644]

Luther's Theology of the Cross, then, is similar to what we have already seen of Calvin's theology of scripture in that it creates room for the constructive use of non-

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[638] O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross*, 70-90.

[639] Ibid, 79-81.

[640] Robert Jenson, "The Hidden and Triune God", *International Journal of Systematic Theology,* 2:1 (March 2000), 5-12.

[641] Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", 23.

[642] Ibid.

[643] Dennis Bielfeldt, "Introduction to the Heidelberg Disputation", in *The Annotated Luther: Volume 1: The Roots of Reform*, ed. by Timothy J. Wengert (Augsburg, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 73.

[644] Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", 16.

Christian ideas, as long as those ideas are subordinated to revelation, and interpreted and evaluated in the light of said revelation. This means that Balthasar's use of non-Christian thought forms does not inherently stand in tension with Luther's Theology of the Cross – so long as they are dealt with in a way which is coherent with the aforementioned Theology of the Cross.

Balthasar and the Criterion of the Theology of the Cross

What now needs to be determined is whether the rest of Balthasar's theology of beauty can be said to meet the challenge posed by Luther's Theology of the Cross. We will analyse in turn three specific criteria which will help us determine whether or not it does: whether the theology is sufficiently subversive of (apparent) human knowledge of God; whether the theology is sufficiently centred on the cross; and whether the theology is sufficiently humble.

Balthasar and the Subversiveness of the Cross

We will begin by asking whether Balthasar's theological aesthetics is sufficiently subversive of human knowledge to merit being called a Theology of the Cross.

For Balthasar, natural human knowledge consists of fragments of truth (we shall explore more of what this means in the following chapters.) These fragments are elements of truth, which are in themselves good but partial and incomplete, not realising that their own significance is ultimately found in the Christian revelation.[645] In itself, this might pose a problem for the theology of the cross: it seems to be a suggestion that these elements of natural theology are true, and endorsed by Balthasar's theology.

In fact, however, Balthasar's theological aesthetics are more subtle and complex. While Balthasar does endorse the knowledge contained in the fragments, he holds that on their own this fragment is very different to the true revelation:

> all religions and philosophies tend, in their thought, towards ultimate human forms, and since they are rooted in man's natural relation to his creator, they may display

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[645] See Balthasar, *Love Alone*, 11-24.

> traits similar to the final Christian form, reflecting it in various degrees of clarity; but an even greater dissimilarity cuts right across that similarity and is shown to us in the acts of the living God, his death on the Cross and resurrection.[646]

He goes on to explain that virtues in human religions all express partial elements of Christian truth, while falling short of them. So "[i]t is wisdom that sends a man into a Buddhist monastery in order to practise and acquire virtue through the sacrifice of worldly goods."[647] Christian practice is "outwardly analogous"[648] to this, but unlike in Buddhism, it is not rooted in the self – instead, it is perfected and found as good in the Christian's relationship to Jesus, where "it is only within that love that he can believe that his self-sacrifice, when joined to the sacrifice of the Cross, makes sense, because it is included in Christ's love."[649] This serves as an example of Balthasar's understanding that non-Christian ideas contain a part of the truth – but without the core that makes sense of it.

We see in this that, without revelation, human beings take the good that is found in the fragments and turn it into something else. This is not far away from how Martin Luther's account of how a "Theology of Glory" operates – taking good things that we already have access to (like wisdom, power, etc), and misusing them. As a consequence of this, when Balthasar's theology has these fragments being incorporated around the cross, it is simultaneously endorsing the truth in these fragments and subverting what human beings have done to them.

Balthasar and the Centrality of the Cross

At the same time, there are elements of Balthasar's theology which seem not to meet criteria necessary to be a Theology of the Cross. For example, there are places where he does not appear to place the Cross itself sufficiently centrally to merit the label of "Theology of the Cross".

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[646] Ibid, 106.
[647] Ibid, 107.
[648] Ibid.
[649] Ibid.

In volumes 2[650] and 3 of *The Glory of the Lord*,[651] Balthasar describes twelve previous attempts to put forward an account of God's beauty. These views are put forward as positive examples of how Catholic tradition has embodied what Balthasar has argued for – Balthasar describes them as "reflected rays of the glory".[652] And the way which Balthasar puts them forward appears to lie in tension with Martin Luther's idea of the cross as the determining means by which a theology can be judged. Aidan Nichols describes Balthasar's account of these writers as follows:

> The centers of interest of these writers … are very different. But this is not, he says, a problem. It is perfectly natural that one theology will center its sense of glory on God himself (so that all else is lovely only insofar as he shines forth in it); and another on his revelation in its mediating role in his regard (so that beauty belongs primarily to God's self-display in creation and salvation); and a third theology center on Jesus Christ as, in his two natures, "the synthesis of God and the world" (here, where redemption in the Son takes center stage, it is the beauty of suffering love which, above all, strikes and overwhelms the observer); or, yet a fourth on the Spirit of Christ, poured out on humankind from Father and Son as the gift of a share in their glory – whereupon the focus shifts to the theme of transfiguration. And this plurality of centers of interest, which can coexist happily as so many perspectives in mutual collusion, is mirrored, Balthasar goes on to explain, in the variety of styles in which these theologies, with their distinct foci, come to expression.[653]

In other words, these theologies contain a variety of different foci – not all of which centre on the cross of Christ.

This appears to stand in tension with a commitment to a crucicentric understanding of revelation. Nor can one object that these volumes are merely describing other theologies to which the writer does not himself hold; Balthasar is clear that these understandings of beauty are to be seen as authoritative traditional statements, embodying genuine truth about the beauty of God.

Balthasar instead sees all of these differing focuses as different perspectives on the same ultimate truth, each one a historical manifestation that "breaks out anew from the centre".[654] While Balthasar's own understanding provides a central role for the

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[650] Balthasar, *Glory I*.
[651] Balthasar, *Glory III*.
[652] Balthasar, *Glory II*, 13.
[653] Aidan Nichols, "Balthasar's Aims in the 'Theological Aesthetics'", in *Glory, Grace, and Culture: The Work of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. by Ed Block, Jr. (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 107-126.
[654] Balthasar, *Glory II*, 29.

cross, it is possible for other perspectives to be true while not standing in contradiction to other true perspectives. Both sides can be true, but as part of a bigger picture.

This, however, raises a problem for my argument. It would not seem compatible with Luther's Theology of the Cross to say that an approach which focuses on the cross is *equally* true to other approaches with different emphases. The role the cross plays in a theology is the test by which one assesses that theology; therefore, a theology which gives an appropriate role to the cross must be *better* than a theology which does not. This means that these different perspectives of which Balthasar broadly approves cannot all be equally valuable.

However, this does not entirely rule out the possibility of Balthasar viewing other perspectives as being legitimately true as part of a bigger picture. We have already seen that Luther himself allows for the possibility of using non-Christian philosophies if they are viewed in the light of the cross; it would be strange indeed if the same logic were not also true of Christian theologies which fail to be theologies of the cross. There are no problems or lacks which the Theology of the Cross identifies with them which it would not identify in Aristotle.

However, for these theologies to be adopted as valuable, one would need to interpret them in the light of the cross. Since Balthasar himself places the cross at the centre of his theology, he appears to meet this test himself.

However, this is only possible if one suggests that Balthasar's own interpretation is superior to that of some of the writers which he exposits (that is, those for whom the cross is not central). His interpretation can be seen as a fuller view, which incorporates these other true perspectives within it, and orients them around the cross. This might suggest that Balthasar's theology constitutes the whole – or something like it – into which the rest of the ideas cohere.

Balthasar and the Humility of the Cross

This leads one naturally on to the critique of Balthasar put forward by Karen Kilby. In her book, *Balthasar: A (Very) Critical Introduction*,[655] Kilby argues that Balthasar's approach to theology has him standing somehow above the material – able to see the whole and perceive how other elements fit within it, because of an (implied) privileged access to the system. After discussing an anecdote given by one of Balthasar's companions, of how he once completed a jigsaw with remarkable speed by quickly perceiving how the individual pieces fit within the whole,[656] she asks (clearly suggesting an affirmative answer):

> Is Balthasar, with the Catholic tradition as with the jigsaw puzzle, one who stands above and effortlessly assembles, putting each thing in its place until the whole is completed? There is a sense of mastery here, of effortless authority and superiority, of privileged access, even, which might be unsettling.[657]

If this is true, it lies in tension with the concept of the Theology of the Cross. Fundamental to Luther's account of the Theology of the Cross is a strong stress on humility and an emphasis on human brokenness. Luther asserts that our ability to know God is fundamentally broken, and all the instinctive perceptions of a human being are so distorted that the cross is required to overcome them. Balthasar, on Kilby's interpretation, instead appears to have a lack of humility in his theological enterprise, finding it easy (for himself, at least) to identify how the material all fits together. For Luther, the fact that disparate elements such as power and weakness stand in contradiction at the cross is a sign that the human lacks the ability to perceive God; for (Kilby's) Balthasar, these apparent contradictions can simply be seen past by an interpreter who has as much skill as Balthasar. On Kilby's interpretation, then, Balthasar would fail one criterion by which Luther would assess whether a theology is, or is not, a Theology of the Cross.

It should be said that Kilby does not entirely dismiss Balthasar – she affirms that "there is a great deal to be learned"[658] from him – while this is a disturbing feature of

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[655] Karen Kilby, *Balthasar: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012).
[656] Ibid, 12.
[657] Ibid, 13.
[658] Ibid, 2.

his writing this does not necessitate ignoring everything that he writes. Furthermore, given what has already been said (in both this chapter and the previous one) about how there is no problem with adopting specific non-Christian ideas within a Christian framework, there would also be no problem with adopting individual ideas from Balthasar, such as the concept of beauty, even if the structure of his ideas as a whole were problematic. Therefore, since my contention in this chapter is specifically that Balthasar's account of divine beauty can strengthen Edwards' theology, we do not need to examine whether Balthasar's theology as a whole merits Kilby's critique. Instead, we need to determine whether Balthasar's account of beauty itself contains the flaws which Kilby identifies.

When Kilby applies her critique to the question of beauty in Balthasar, she observes that Balthasar's account is put forward as a description of an aesthetic experience which he asserts is the experience of all humans, without arguing for this position.[659] She suggests that as a consequence of this, there is an "all-or-nothing quality"[660] to Balthasar's account. She notes that, when discussing the concept of the form, he "lays great emphasis on the *wholeness* of the form: one cannot see the form of revelation bit-by-bit, but only as a totality."[661] And, since this concept of "form" is so fundamental to beauty in Balthasar, this inevitably means that Balthasar's understanding of the beauty of revelation cannot be understood in parts, but rather as a whole.

This means, Kilby says, that:

> Clearly, then, his project, particularly in its culminating discussion of the New Testament in Volume 7, not only is as a matter of fact but *has to be* ambitious. He can not aim to illuminate some aspects of revelation, but must attempt to weave the New Testament together as a whole to bring out its beauty, its glory, the form of revelation as such. … One sees the form, as Balthasar presents it, or one fails to do so. … It is an approach that seems to allow for the possibility of an author to stand above his reader: the author, who has already "seen the form", who is already in possession, as it were, of this central aesthetic experience – an experience relating not to some particular insight or set of insights but quite simply revelation as a whole – does what he can to indicate this central beauty to the readers, who in turn themselves either see or fail to see.[662]

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[659] Ibid, 45-46.
[660] Ibid, 55.
[661] Ibid.
[662] Ibid.

She then goes on to observe that there is a way around this interpretation of Balthasar's account of beauty: by observing Balthasar's stress on the incomprehensibility of God, and by observing that Balthasar spends a great deal of time expositing the views of other writers, one can see Balthasar as "undertaking, and introducing his readers into, a continuous and strenuous effort to see more adequately, or to see again and anew, that whole which is dimly perceived."[663] On this reading, he would be putting forward "one offering, one among many possible perhaps, one attempt to glimpse and say something about the glory of God given in revelation."[664]

Kilby, however, cites another feature of Balthasar's reading which makes this interpretation less likely. Balthasar frequently puts forward "a clear dividing line between those capable of perceiving and those who are not",[665] so that it seems that Balthasar is suggesting "that not to accept Balthasar's theology is simply to fail to see, to lack the eyes of faith."[666] As a result, Kilby indicates that "the logic of Balthasar's position [may not allow] for any distinction between resistance to his own theological position and resistance to the gospel as such."[667]

What are we to make of this? To begin with, we may observe that there are features that suggest that Kilby's case may be overstated. (However, it should also be noted that Kilby puts forward these points regarding Balthasar's theology of beauty in a very 'suggestive' or 'questioning' manner – rather than a firm declaration that Kilby's interpretation of Balthasar is undoubtedly correct.) While Kilby is right to observe that Balthasar at numerous points suggests that there are things to do with beauty which create a division between those who can see with the eyes of faith and those who cannot, it is clearly not the case that Balthasar thinks that anyone who already does not already share the totality of his views is by definition a rejecter of the gospel. If this were the case, he would need to reject the legitimacy of the faith

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[663] Ibid, 56.
[664] Ibid.
[665] Ibid, 56-57.
[666] Ibid, 56.
[667] Ibid, 58.

numerous individuals who he discusses approvingly in volumes 2[668] and 3[669] of *The Glory of the Lord*, whose ideas are approved of while not being identical with his own. What does seem, however, to be true is that there are some things which are present within Balthasar's understanding which he sees as having this decisive, dividing result on individuals. This is far from stating that all aspects of Balthasar's theology are like this.

It might, nonetheless, be seen as problematic in itself that Balthasar is willing to divide human beings into two different categories in this way, condemning one set of them based upon their response to certain aspects of (what he believes to be) the Christian faith. However, given that my argument concerns how far Balthasar's idea can be incorporated within the ideas of Edwards and Luther, this does not make the situation any more problematic than it otherwise might be. Both Edwards[670] and Luther[671] were advocates of the doctrine of predestination, whereby some individuals are simply enabled to see the truth, and others are not. This is a highly controversial doctrine which itself contains all the problems or questions which would be raised by Balthasar's idea (as well as further questions which are not themselves raised by Balthasar's ideas). Furthermore, both Edwards[672] and Luther[673] hold that there are significant numbers of people who fall into the 'rejected' group, despite being those whom a 'standard' use of language would ordinarily consider to be Christians.

Regardless of whether these highly controversial ideas are tenable, what is important for our purposes is that – given that the problems associated with the

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[668] Balthasar, *Glory II*.

[669] Balthasar, *Glory III*.

[670] Edwards' most important work on the subject of predestination is "The Freedom of the Will", which can be found in WJE 1:129-439.

[671] Luther appears to have been uncomfortable with the image of God presented by any concept of divine reprobation, viewing the reason that God did not save everyone as something that had not been revealed. He wrote of a distinction between, "the preached and offered mercy of God [and] that hidden and awful will of God whereby he ordains by his own counsel which and what sort of persons he wills to be recipients and partakers of his preached and offered mercy. This will is not to be inquired into, but reverently adored, as by far the most awe-inspiring secret of the Divine Majesty, reserved for himself alone and forbidden to us" – Martin Luther, "The Bondage of the Will", in *Luther's Works 33*, trans. & ed. E. Gordon Rupp, Philip S. Watson, A. N. Marlow & B. Drewery (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 139.

[672] Edwards in particular wrote a book, Religious Affections, putting forward a number of tests whereby one can distinguish between "true religion" and "false religion" – see WJE 2:84-461 (introducing the specific language of "true religion" and "false religion" on page 85).

[673] The most striking example of Luther considering someone who is ordinarily regarded as a Christian as nonetheless belonging to the rejected group is probably the Pope, who Luther regarded as the Antichrist.

ideas of Balthasar are already present in both Edwards and Luther – it poses no additional difficulty to adopt these ideas. Therefore, they pose no challenge to my claim that Edwards' theology can be strengthened by Balthasar's theology, and nor can Balthasar's contrast be said to stand in contradiction with Luther's Theology of the Cross.

What is a more significant problem is the role that the aesthetic sense itself seems to play here. From a Protestant point of view, there seems to be a suggestion that the aesthetic sense is itself something like a source of revelation. Balthasar, after all, suggests that the credibility of Christian faith can be found in aesthetics, and that identifying the beauty of the Christian revelation is part of how one demonstrates that it is true.[674] These ideas seem to find themselves very close to natural theology, which is precisely what we have turned to Balthasar to escape. Furthermore, they appear to lie in tension with the Theology of the Cross's belief in the cross subverting and undermining anything about human beings which allows them to in any way contribute to knowing God. This therefore raises the question of whether the role the aesthetic sense itself plays in Balthasar's account of beauty is consonant with the Protestant ideas which I am exploring.

We have described above how Protestant theology does not necessitate rejecting all elements of natural knowledge, merely that they must be judged and interpreted in the light of revelation. We have also seen that this is true even in the case of the theology of the cross. However, if a person's aesthetic experience is fundamentally or centrally determinative of some aspect of their theology, that is very difficult and cannot be squared with the theology of the cross, with Edwards' Reformed tradition, or with classical Protestant theology more generally. This must therefore at least raise questions as to whether these ideas could be adopted within Protestantism.

These questions are interesting and worthy of further exploration; however, this exploration is not necessary for the purposes of this thesis. In this thesis, I am exploring not all of Balthasar's ideas about aesthetics, but precisely whether his understanding of divine beauty – of what it means for God to be beautiful – can be

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[674] For example, Balthasar's shortest summary of his theological aesthetics (Balthasar, *Love Alone*) aims to demonstrate that the beautiful vision of love found in the gospel is ultimately the best apologetic and the means by which God converts people to Himself.

incorporated within Edwards thought. These broader ideas about the role that beauty plays in the Christian life can be seen separately. We will shortly see how Balthasar argues for his position regarding divine beauty from Scripture; while his account of aesthetics may affect the way he reads scripture, the important thing for our purposes is whether or not these ideas can be justified from scripture. If they can, then they can be found to be consonant with Protestant theology and Luther's theology of the Cross – regardless of whether or not other elements of Balthasar's theological aesthetics, including his account of how beauty affects us, are similarly consonant.

However, this does leave the question of how one can reasonably argue for Balthasar's position from Scripture. Balthasar's approach to scripture seeks to unite careful study of scripture with the spiritual practice of contemplative engagement with the Bible.[675]

Balthasar, as Kilby notes,[676] gives an account of beauty which is based on a view of the whole of biblical history – rather than focusing on analysis of the specifics or the details. However, if one rejects using an innate aesthetic sense to interpret the Bible, it is not immediately apparent how one may interpret the Bible as a whole. Any argument from the Bible must be based, at some level, on analysis of individual texts – after all, it is not even possible to read the entire bible at once; one must read individual texts one by one.

To be sure, the orthodox Christian will certainly affirm with Balthasar that the Holy Spirit inspires not only the biblical text itself, but also the Christian and the Church's interpretation of the text. This all means that through reading, the reader comes to experience being "draw[n] into a reality that vastly transcends the text".[677] Nonetheless, without engaging with individual texts, one cannot experience the biblical text itself, it would be difficult to argue that the Spirit's activity of inspiring the reading of scripture negates the need to engage with scripture in any way. The fact

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[675] For discussion of Balthasar's attempt to unify these themes, see Georges Chantraine SJ, "Exegesis and Contemplation in the Work of Hans Urs von Balthasar" in Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work, ed. by David L. Schindler (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991), 133-147.

[676] Kilby, *Balthasar*, 82-93.

[677] Jeffrey Ames Kay, *Theological Aesthetics: The Role of Aesthetics in the Theological Method of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Ltd, 1975), 84.

of the activity of the Spirit in the process of bible reading does not, therefore, negate the need for engagement with individual biblical texts.

This does not mean that analysis of the Bible as a whole must be rejected. There are a number of different views of how one should interpret scripture, and the concept that it should be interpreted as a whole is not rare. Prior to the modern age, the standard approach to hermeneutics was to interpret the Bible as a whole "forming a cumulative story… the story's climax, in light of which all of its parts from beginning to end were understood, is the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."[678] In the modern era the concept of "canonical interpretation" has become popular.[679] However, no argument on the basis of the Bible as a whole can succeed if it is not also based on individual texts; the Bible is composed of smaller units, and it is not possible to even hear or read – and thus intellectually engage with – the Bible as a whole without engaging with the individual parts. For Balthasar's account of scripture to be convincing, it must be possible to show how the account of the whole makes sense of the parts of scripture.

This is a question which will be dealt with in depth in the following chapter. Before doing so, I will briefly make some remarks about how Balthasar's cross-focused methodology ought to be interpreted.

How the Cross Reveals God's Beauty

We have seen that Balthasar's account of theological aesthetics meets, for our purposes, (or, in one case, cannot yet be proven not to meet), the criteria of Luther's Theology of the Cross. In particular, Balthasar's account of theological aesthetics the Cross of Christ stands at the centre of how God is revealed, and as it does so it subverts human wisdom. What we have not seen is in what sense it does this, or how this relates to wider theological loci. It will therefore be useful, at this point, to consider how Balthasar's theology of the cross works on its own terms.

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[678] W. T. Dickens, *Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics: A Model for Post-Critical Biblical Interpretation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 5.
[679] See, e.g., Rolf Rendtorff, "'Canonical Interpretation' – a New Approach to Biblical Texts", *Studia Theologica*, 48 (1994), 3-14.

Within Balthasar's understanding (as we shall see in greater depth in the next chapter[680]), creation contains a number of fragments of divine glory, or beauty. These are not, however, together in such a way as to enable them to constitute the form (or *Gestalt*) of God's revelation, and so what is seen in these individual fragments is incomplete, and vastly inferior to the whole. We have seen how these incomplete fragments tend towards a partial truth which is distorted and very different from the whole truth.

However, God's revelatory work allows these fragments to be united around the cross,[681] which serves as the centre of revelation. In the cross, they find their relationship to the whole: "as Christians reflect on this [the fragments] after Easter, it is seen that all fragmentary images order themselves as if automatically towards this midpoint [of Easter], and contribute a clarification to the unity."[682] (For Balthasar, the events of Easter include other events such as the resurrection, but are nonetheless centred on the cross.[683]) These fragments find their meaning and their fullness in the cross. We will see later in this thesis specific examples of how this functions.[684]

What is particularly important to consider at this point is the question of in what sense this incorporation into the whole completes the fragments, and a more precise understanding of what was wrong with them in the first instance. The word "fragment" suggests that they form part of a greater whole, and may also imply that the greater whole has in some sense been "broken." This language allows more than one interpretation of in what sense they are incomplete and broken, connected to different ways of understanding the fall and the place it has in Christian theology.

Are the fragments simply incomplete and less positive than they could be – whether due to the fall, or simply due to being made for something greater than they realise on their own? Or are they actively broken and negative – which could only happen as a result of the fall? As a consequence of this, does the cross simply complete

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[680] See Chapter 5.

[681] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 81-84.

[682] Ibid, 34. It should be noted that in this passage, Balthasar is directly speaking of fragmentary images from the Old Testament; however, for Balthasar the relationship between Easter and the Old Testament is an archetype of the relationship between Easter and non-Christian worldviews.

[683] One of Balthasar's most relevant texts – in which he meditates on several events of the whole of Easter, and how they revolve around the self-giving love that is manifest in the cross – is: Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. by Aiden Nichols (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990).

[684] See, especially Chapter 6.

them, and make them more of what they are on their own? Or does it heal them, and correct what they are on their own in fulfilling it by incorporating it into a greater whole?

The latter would fit more naturally within Protestant theology, while the former is perhaps a more naturally Catholic approach to the questions (although Catholicism does not deny the fall). In Balthasar, while one can find evidence of a significant role for the fall – such as the fact that (as we have seen above) the fragments of human knowledge are very different to full knowledge and end up being subverted by the cross – it seems that, as one might expect, he more commonly follows the classically Catholic approach. Balthasar speaks of how, while:

> The revelation of the triune God in Christ is not simply, to be sure, the prolongation or the intensification of the revelation in the creation: but, in their essence, they are so far from contradicting one another that, considered from the standpoint of God's ultimate plan, the revelation in the creation is seen to have occurred for the sake of the revelation in Christ, serving as the preparation that makes it possible.[685]

In itself, this poses a problem to a Protestant attempt to appropriate Balthasar. However, it is not one which is insurmountable. We have not seen any reason to do with the inherent theological logic of Balthasar's account which would mean that it could not be mildly modified to include a greater stress on the fall, and subsequently on the brokenness of the created fragments of divine beauty. Balthasar does, after all, already speak about aspects of their brokenness – it is merely a matter of how much one ought to stress such things. Furthermore, when we later see these ideas within this thesis, we will see specific cases where Balthasar's ideas may make more sense if altered in this way.[686] While a Protestant appropriation of Balthasar's theological aesthetics may need to place greater stress on the fallenness of the fragments of divine beauty, and therefore alter the extent to which the cross heals these fragments rather than simply completing it, there is nonetheless no reason why it could not be modified in this way, and there is therefore no reason why this change ought to pose a fundamental opposition to a Protestant appropriation of Balthasar's theological aesthetics.

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[685] Balthasar, *Glory I*, 431.
[686] See, in particular, Chapter 6.

A Cross-Focused Beauty

Throughout this chapter, we have explored in what way Balthasar's account of beauty relates to various theological loci rooted in Protestant theological traditions. What remains to be seen is in what sense the cross can be said to reveal beauty: that is, what is the beauty that we see at the cross? In what sense is the cross beautiful?

We have already seen – and will see in much greater depth in the following chapters – that Balthasar's account of the cross becomes the centre around which a number of fragments cohere. At the centre of the cross is divine, self-giving love which is manifest in the self-emptying of the cross.[687] This concept of love – and how it relates to the other fragments – will be examined in great detail in the following chapters, which will give a much broader concept of how this fits in with other themes and ideas, and in what sense it can be said to be their centre.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined Martin Luther's theology of the cross, before establishing that Balthasar meets the criteria thereof. Balthasar's understanding of beauty is sufficiently centred on the cross to meet that criterion; it is sufficiently subversive of human ideas on their own to meet that criterion; and it can be said to meet the criterion of humility (subject to the qualification that the details of how it reads the Bible must be justified).

We then explored how Balthasar's account uses the cross. We saw that Balthasar's account of fragments being united around the cross makes considerable sense within a Protestant framework, but integrates better within it if one makes a minor alteration to Balthasar's scheme: the fragments should no longer be seen as only partial and incomplete, but actively broken by sin. We then saw that, for Balthasar,

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[687] This will be explored in greater depth in Chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis.

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the centre of beauty is found specifically in the self-giving love that is seen at the cross.

Chapter 5: Balthasar's Scriptural Account of Beauty

The previous two chapters have introduced Balthasar's theological account of beauty, arguing that it is in principle compatible with Protestant epistemology. However, both chapters have left us with the same question: can Balthasar's theological aesthetics be justified by an interpretation of scripture. In order to address this question, this chapter will deal with Balthasar's biblical exegesis in support of his theological aesthetics.

Balthasar devotes the final two volumes of *The Glory of the Lord* to this subject, dividing them into a volume on the "Old Covenant"[688] and a volume on the "New Covenant"[689] (which correspond to the Old and New Testaments, respectively).[690] Balthasar's study of the scriptural texts, and how they are relevant to theological aesthetics, takes up almost the entirety of the two volumes of *The Glory of the Lord*. It would not be feasible in this PhD to examine this volume of exegesis in a sufficiently detailed way to justify his account of beauty. However, in order to argue the specific claim which I am putting forward in Part 2 – that using Balthasar's account of beauty can make Edwards more consistent with Protestantism due to his epistemology being more Protestant – I will only need to argue that Balthasar meets two specific tests. Firstly, his exegesis must be based on his reading of specific biblical texts – and therefore closer to Protestant epistemology than that of Edwards (regardless of whether or not a detailed study would necessarily find his reading to be well-founded). Secondly, neither his exegesis nor his conclusions should contradict Protestant commitments, as this would itself undermine any claim that Balthasar's ideas can be used to make Edwards more consistently Protestant.

Of course, these criteria are in no way sufficient to argue that Balthasar's theological aesthetics is justified. To do this, his reading would have to be more than based on biblical texts, but also show that they are a good interpretation of those texts – an

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[688] Balthasar, *Glory VI*.

[689] Balthasar, *Glory VII*.

[690] Balthasar takes a fairly binary approach to the two covenants, although the term is contentious in biblical scholarship, with many scholars suggesting that the Old Testament understanding of covenant is complex and better seen as involving several covenants than one. For discussion of different covenants found in the Bible, see Roger T. Beckwith, "The Unity and Diversity of God's Covenants", *Tyndale Bulletin*, 38 (1987), 93-118.

exercise which, given the extent of Balthasar's exegesis, would be unimaginable in a single PhD thesis (let alone one chapter). However, by showing that Balthasar's reading meets these two criteria, we will be able to establish that it is broadly compatible with Protestant theological commitments, including a commitment to listen to scripture above natural theology.

In this chapter, we will find that Balthasar's account meets the first criterion but not the second. However, its failure to meet the second criterion is not irredeemable; the specific ways in which he contradicts Protestant commitments are not necessary for the general thrust of his account of beauty to be followed. Instead, these elements which are inconsistent with Protestant commitments are in less-central areas of Balthasar's theology, which can be removed from his theology without fatally undermining the rest of the theology.

We will begin this chapter by considering Balthasar's understanding of glory, and of its relation to beauty. We will then evaluate Balthasar's exegesis of the Old Testament in volume 6 of *The Glory of the Lord*, observing a number of things including his stress upon the tension between grace in the covenant, and the judgment which follows Israel's failure to keep the covenant. Following on from this, we will turn to his exegesis of the New Testament in volume 7, providing an overview which covers a wide range of things, including how the cross resolves tensions such as these. Finally, I will put forward a section which evaluates the overall strength of Balthasar's interpretation of scripture, arguing that it broadly meets our basic criteria: of being based on biblical exegesis and compatible with Protestant theological commitments.

Glory and Beauty

In Balthasar's two volumes on the biblical account of aesthetics, his key focus is on what the Bible means by the word "glory".[691] "Glory" is a term which, Balthasar insists, "cannot be defined"[692] – God's "glory is a fundamental statement which

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[691] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 9-10.
[692] Balthasar, *Glory IV*, 11.

leavens all of Scripture",[693] and so it is too absolute and all-encompassing to be able to be given a definition.[694] Nonetheless, he states that in the final volumes he will provide "a handy definition (or at least description) of what 'glory' means in its biblical and Christian sense".[695] In other words, the final two volumes together explain what exactly Balthasar means by glory.

Nonetheless, what is clear is that the word glory is identified, or at least closely associated, with the idea of beauty.[696] This is fundamental to Balthasar's case in the final two volumes – his argument is that glory is to be identified with *divine* beauty in particular. Edwards himself also links these two things, writing that in the Bible "the word 'glory' is very commonly used to signify the excellency of a person or thing, as consisting either in greatness or in beauty… or in both conjunctly."[697] Since Edwards and Balthasar both connect glory and beauty, there is no need for the purposes of this thesis for us to justify the link in Balthasar – using this element of Balthasar could not weaken Edwards' case, or make it any less coherent with Protestantism. However, given the structural importance of this identification between beauty and glory, it will be worthwhile to briefly examine whether there are sufficient grounds for these things to be identified.

The Identification of Glory and Beauty

There are several scriptural passages which directly identify or link these two attributes – for example, in Exodus 28:2 and 28:40 there is a clear link made between the Hebrew words for glory and beauty.[698] However, it should be acknowledged that there is no specific passage which explicitly links the two terms when used with reference to God. This is not evidence against the identification of beauty and glory – the word "beauty" is not a common Hebrew term in general, and is used sparingly when referring to God,[699] so it is not particularly surprising that it is

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[693] Ibid.
[694] Ibid, 11-12.
[695] Ibid, 14.
[696] Rodney A. Howsare, *Balthasar: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 68-69.
[697] WJE 8:514.
[698] See Exodus 28:2 & 20.
[699] Although the word beauty certainly is *occasionally* used by the Bible to refer to God – most notably in Psalm 27:4.

not much linked with another word – but we should acknowledge the lack of explicit biblical warrant for the identification of the terms glory and beauty.

However, if we consider the "base" meaning of beauty which I identified in the introduction, then it will be apparent that it is not possible coherently to uphold the concept of God's beauty without identifying it with divine glory. In the introduction, I argued in favour of identifying the concept of beauty with that which one should find gives one pleasure to behold. I argued that a Christian should understand God to be beautiful by this standard, and that divine beauty should be understood as being God Himself, rather than a particular aspect of Himself (which would be problematic from the point of view of divine simplicity), interpreted from a specific angle (that of God's visible nature bringing about joy through being seen).

Once we have identified divine beauty with God as a whole, it becomes natural for Balthasar to identify this beauty with glory. In *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar begins his description of the biblical account of glory by arguing that "the glory of God is actually nothing other than his divinity itself".[700] He writes:

> If, in place of 'the Lord's glory we were to say 'God's divinity', then it would be evident that nothing can be the formal object of the believer's perception of revelation except God, *in so far* as he is *God* and not, for instance, in so far as he is the horizon of the world's origin and goal, since in this respect God is the object of philosophy or 'natural theology'. It becomes evident, therefore, that in spite of the fact that even though God uses creaturely guises to speak and act throughout Holy Scripture, what is essentially at stake is solely men and women's encounter with the divinity or glory of God. In this respect we can agree with Oetinger when he says, 'God's glory constitutes not only the chief content, but also the formal foundational character of Scripture.'[701]

In this passage, Balthasar insists that whenever we perceive God revealed, we are perceiving God's glory. This means that Scripture is ultimately about God's glory – even when discussing other subjects, including created beings and forms. And, if one combines this with this thesis' definition of beauty, it also means that divine beauty and glory are appropriately identified – both are effectively God Himself.

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[700] Aidan Nichols OP, *The Word Has Been Abroad: A Guide Through Balthasar's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 187.
[701] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 9-10.

If one holds to divine simplicity, something like this is to be expected (and perhaps not particularly interesting) – all divine attributes are then identical within God Himself. However, in fact the identity between the two attributes is more significant. Glory, for Balthasar (and in biblical tradition) is not solely understood as God in Himself, but the true God when perceived by human beings – God Himself when He is "the formal object of the believer's perception of revelation".[702] Beauty, as defined previously, is not simply God in Himself, but God as understood as that which should bring about pleasure when seen by humans.

In both cases, the attribute is not simply God, but rather God as perceived by the human. Glory is God perceived; beauty is God perceived leading to pleasure. Given that (under the definitions given in the introduction) humans ought to find a vision of God in Himself as bringing about pleasure (rather than specific elements thereof), one can therefore presume that while the term beauty does contain greater stress on the perceiving subject's emotional state, one can identify the term glory with the object (God) being beautiful in itself. If one says that God is glorious in some respect, one can equally say that God is beautiful in the same respect – the only difference is that when one says that God is beautiful, one is also saying that humans would (if not subject to blindness or sin) take pleasure in the sight of this glory.

Glory in the Old Covenant

Balthasar distinguishes three themes in scripture's discussion of theological aesthetics;[703] these are glory,[704] image,[705] and "the whole realm delimited by concepts such as grace, covenant and justification."[706] However, if understood properly the latter two cannot be separated from glory. An "image" of God is an image of His glory, and "if this image is to resemble its archetype, certain traits of glory must be intrinsically proper to it".[707] Furthermore, "concepts such as grace,

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[702] Ibid.
[703] Ibid, 14-17.
[704] Ibid, 14-15.
[705] Ibid, 15.
[706] Ibid.
[707] Ibid.

covenant and justification"[708] proceed from divine glory[709] and set up how the divine presence interacts with, and exists within, the human realm.[710]

Glory

Balthasar then devotes two volumes to discussing how Scripture reveals God's glory. He begins with a section[711] identifying, in the abstract, different aspects of divine glory as found in the Old Covenant, with a focus on those aspects as they are seen from outside of God, "in the phenomenal realm".[712] He gives sections on "Appearance/kabod",[713] "Knowing and not knowing",[714] "Seeing and not seeing",[715] "Form and non-form",[716] "Dazzling darkness",[717] "Abode and event",[718] and "Dialectic of fire".[719] In each case, he brings forward a number of biblical texts, putting them together in a formulation which emphasises the paradoxical nature of apparent contradiction between different biblical elements. The persistent paradoxical language in these sections is not accidental or coincidental, but the best way of speaking when talking of God. "Balthasar tries to expound what is *truly* concrete in the divine Epiphany in a series of apparent paradoxes which bring out the quality of such fractured yet continuous manifestation".[720] For our purposes, it is worthwhile to note the similarity to the stress on contradiction within Luther's Theology of the Cross. We shall shortly see how the theme of contradiction is later connected to Balthasar's doctrine of the cross.

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[708] Ibid.
[709] Ibid.
[710] Ibid, 15-16.
[711] Ibid, 31-86.
[712] Ibid, 54.
[713] Ibid, 31-37.
[714] Ibid, 37-38.
[715] Ibid, 38-39.
[716] Ibid, 39-41.
[717] Ibid, 41-44.
[718] Ibid, 44-47.
[719] Ibid, 47-50.
[720] Nichols, *The Word Has Been Abroad*, 193.

He then begins a new section, entitled "The Divine 'I'",[721] which looks behind this to "aspects of God"[722] within this Divine 'I'. In his first heading of this section,[723] he explains how these aspects are integrated – they are all distinct but closely related: "the more the aspects of God are differentiated, the more they reciprocally interpenetrate".[724] He then explores different aspects of God. His divine power enables Him to act in His relationship with the Israelites.[725] God's divine Word, to which "[a]ll sensory revelation of glory is directly oriented",[726] "points to the quality of the speaker"[727] and so contains within it other divine aspects – Balthasar explicitly mentions *kabod*, grace, judgement, and power – in such a way as to embody divine lordship by determining its hearers existence.[728] God's holiness and name are then dealt with together – the latter concerns "[t]he fact that God utters himself makes him both nameable and approachable"[729] while the former "reveals his incomparability and unapproachableness"[730] – God "does indeed disclose his name, but only as a holy name",[731] and the mutual interpenetration of these two concepts reveal together God's nature.[732] Finally, he discusses the language of "face", which he interprets the Old Testament as describing primarily in terms of looking and glancing: the face is the means by which we see God, and God sees us; therefore, when God turns His face towards Israel it exists in a positive relationship with Him – when He turns it away, it is under judgement.[733]

All the key points of this section, which have just been described, are derived from biblical texts. None of them are inherently in contradiction with any Protestant commitments.

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[721] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 51-86.
[722] Ibid, 54.
[723] Ibid, 51-55.
[724] Ibid, 54.
[725] Ibid, 55-57.
[726] Ibid, 57.
[727] Ibid.
[728] Ibid, 57-61.
[729] Ibid, 61.
[730] Ibid.
[731] Ibid.
[732] Ibid, 61-66.
[733] Ibid, 66-73.

Image

The next section is entitled "Image", in which Balthasar discusses human beings and their status as bearers of the image of God.[734] In this image we see beauty – but it is "beautiful only as the imaging forth of that splendour which is beyond all images".[735] For Balthasar, the image makes sense only as a creature which comes from God, and is oriented towards a return to God in praise.[736] Nonetheless, fundamental to Balthasar's understanding of image is that human beings nonetheless have their own freedom and space[737] - "indeed, a sphere of autonomy is allowed it over against God that it may be a 'world' of its own with respect to God."[738] By using this language of autonomy, Balthasar is not attempting to suggest that human beings are independent of divine rule – or to suggest that they can establish their own independent moral law (*auto nomos*) – but instead, this space allows humans the freedom "to know God, respond to him in freedom, and welcome him with love",[739] and this understanding of the image is itself rooted in the comparable relationships which exist between the divine persons within the Trinity.[740]

The content of this section cannot be affirmed as immediately as the previous one; while Balthasar can draw on the Bible in support of the language of "image" as the concept of the image of God is undoubtedly put forward in Genesis 1, the term is otherwise used infrequently in the Bible. Therefore, to allow for the concept to be extended to include everything that Balthasar includes within it requires justification.

However, while the terminology of "image of God" is rarely used in the Bible, later Christian tradition has had no problem in interpreting the term "image of God" as containing a much wider amount of content than one can immediately derive from the individual text itself. Furthermore, this Christian tradition seems very easy to justify: if one notes that Genesis 1 uses the term "image of God" to refer to the special importance and distinctiveness of humanity as opposed to other animals, one can therefore agree with later Christian tradition in including within the term any other

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[734] Ibid, 87-143.
[735] Ibid, 87.
[736] Ibid, 88.
[737] Ibid.
[738] Ibid.
[739] Ibid, 87.
[740] Ibid.

things about human beings that are contained in this importance and distinctiveness[741] – regardless of whether this is specifically stated in Genesis 1 itself.

With this in mind, there is no great problem in including the bulk of what Balthasar says in this section within an exposition of the term "image of God." It may not have originally been contained within the term "image of God", but ideas about humans being oriented towards the praise of God can easily be justified from the Bible[742] and fit within the general sphere of the significance of humanity. It therefore seems reasonable and in keeping with scripture and Christian tradition to include them within the language of "image of God".

What is perhaps more problematic is Balthasar's emphasis upon human "autonomy" in this section, which is closely connected to his understanding of free-will. It is worthy of note that the concept of free-will is a hugely contested concept in Christian history, and the Reformed tradition in particular is least likely to be sympathetic to Balthasar's interpretation of scripture at this point. There are various ways of interpreting the relationship between free-will and divine sovereignty; Edwards followed the Reformed tradition in writing a lengthy dissertation arguing against any belief in free-will which does not involve God being in control of a person's actions.[743] (More recently, Tanner has argued that the bulk of Christian tradition has until relatively recently not understood free-will in a way which competes with divine control over the universe.[744]) It is certainly a matter of considerable debate as to whether one needs to understand human freedom in any way which requires God to be less active in humanity than he otherwise might be.

At the same time, there are numerous elements of the Bible which seem to involve a concept of human freedom – the persistent blame which God gives to the people of

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[741] For example, Thomas Aquinas represents a broad tradition which refers to the image of God as involving the intellectual nature of humanity (and excludes animals from possessing the same image of God) – see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae Prima Pars, 50-119*, trans. By Fr. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), 421-437.

[742] There are countless examples of biblical texts which support the claim that God intended for humanity to be oriented towards praise of Him. For example, Ephesians 1 repeats a claim several times that God intended for this to be the outcome of his work – see Ephesians 1:6, 12, & 14.

[743] WJE 1:129-439.

[744] See Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny and Empowerment?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

Israel for abandoning the way he wanted them to go, for example. While Edwards and much of the Reformed tradition would stress that this exists alongside a divine sovereignty and control of the entirety of humanity, this does not mean that God is directly involved in the choices of human beings in such a way that they cease to be the choices of the humans concerned, or in such a way in which the humans cease to be responsible[745] – or in which God becomes responsible for human sin. There can therefore be said to be a degree of 'space' – in some sense – affirmed by a reading of the Bible which is consonant with Reformed tradition.

Balthasar appears to go further, and interprets these passages as suggesting that human freedom somehow means that there are decisions taken which God does not control[746] (through voluntary refusal). This position would be more controversial in Reformed theology – but, for the purposes of this thesis, it would not compromise either of the questions which we have been asking. One of the questions may be answered by noting that Balthasar's theology is built on an interpretation of scripture which affirms freedom (albeit a particular interpretation of scripture which may not be justified). The other may be addressed by noting that, while Reformed theological tradition is generally sceptical of claims towards this kind of free-will, Protestant tradition in general has a broader range of perspectives on the question, and what Balthasar has said does not lie in tension with any Protestant theological commitment. (One could also note that this concept of free-will is only one element of Balthasar's theology, and even if it were to need to be altered in order to make it compatible with Reformed theology, this need not prevent the majority of his ideas being adopted or significantly alter the argument of this thesis.)

Balthasar regards considering "the autonomy of the image" as a necessary condition for understanding the next section – God's grace towards us in the covenant.[747]

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[745] This indeed is the key point of Edwards' main work on the topic, "The Freedom of the Will", in WJE 1:129-439.

[746] See, e.g., Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 88.

[747] Ibid.

Grace and Covenant

For Balthasar, grace is understood in a sense which would cohere well with Protestantism: not as in any sense something within the human being (even if given by God),[748] but as "the divine action of which that modification of our being is the result."[749] Balthasar notes that "[w]hen Moses begged that he might see God's glory",[750] and subsequently "see[s] the glory of God 'from the rear'",[751] the terms God uses to describe Himself are all associated with disclosing God's grace[752]:

> God hid him [Moses] in the cleft of the rock and passed by him, crying out, 'Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful (*rachum*, from *rechem*) and gracious (*channun*, from *chnn*, *chen*), slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (*chesed*) and faithfulness (*emeth*)' (Ex 34,6).[753]

He discusses how a number of divine attributes and actions connect to this language of grace.[754] These include concepts which might be more usually associated with justice or legal judgement,[755] where it is not always obvious how they might be associated with grace. Nonetheless, Balthasar interprets all of the divine character as expressing this fundamental grace, which he has just identified with glory. He draws on the reference to "slow to anger" in the above section to argue that it shows that "grace is not the one part of a two-sided revelation, but rather wrath is a function of grace."[756]

The majority of what has been said so far does not need much further comment to see that Balthasar's exegesis meets my first test of being rooted in the scripture; the bulk of this is obviously rooted in scriptural texts, and it is hardly necessary to explain how mercy or love are associated with grace. What does need further unpacking, however, is Balthasar's claim that wrath comes from love.

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[748] Ibid, 149.
[749] Nichols, *The Word Has Been Abroad*, 200.
[750] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 149.
[751] Ibid.
[752] Ibid.
[753] Ibid.
[754] Ibid, 159-177.
[755] Ibid, 162-173.
[756] Ibid, 149.

Fortunately, this is something which Balthasar discusses in greater detail. He devotes two sub-sections to the subjects of "sedek, sedeka: right conduct in faithfulness"[757] and "Mishpat: right which comes into effect as salvation".[758] In both of these cases, Balthasar discusses a number of scriptural passages which relate God's judgement to his action to defend the rights of the poor or the innocent,[759] thereby meeting my first criterion by using scriptural texts that speak of God's opposition to the creature as being an aspect of his grace towards another human. (In both cases, Balthasar extends his focus upon divine grace by going on to discuss how this judgement is not necessarily the final verdict, but even after it God may act to bring about mercy and express his grace.[760])

Balthasar then goes on to discuss how this glorious grace is manifest in God's covenant with Israel. He begins with a discussion of the concept of covenant; noting that while the term 'covenant' would usually be "an agreement between two parties",[761] this lies in tension with "the concept of a one-sided initiative of free grace".[762] He begins to resolve this by referencing "a form of covenant-making … in which one who is stronger … graciously offers an alliance to one who is weaker".[763] Even here, however, there is still a distinction between this human relationship and "the relationship between God and man."[764]

Distancing himself from these analogies based on human covenants, Balthasar puts forward an idea of the covenant as itself distinctive; God, in His free grace, initiates a covenant to "enter into a unique living relationship"[765] with Israel, but that this necessarily "lays claim to them in a total and unconditional way"[766] which requires a religious and legal response on their part.[767] In Nichols' summary, "Israel as a

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[757] Ibid, 162—169.
[758] Ibid, 169-173.
[759] Ibid, 164-165 & 170-172.
[760] Ibid, 166 & 172.
[761] Ibid, 149.
[762] Ibid, 150.
[763] Ibid.
[764] Ibid, 151.
[765] Ibid, 152.
[766] Ibid.
[767] Ibid.

whole, and the individual Israelite within her, must return an obedience of love on the basis of the unsought for divine gift."[768]

This understanding of grace is clearly derived from scriptural texts, and also fits well with Protestant tradition, and is the understanding of grace which this Protestant tradition has always found in the Bible. Reconstructing Edwards' ideas using this understanding of grace cannot make Edwards' ideas any less coherent with Protestantism.

However, at the same time there is a strong element within the concept of covenant of human responsibility to respond to God's electing love. This need not necessarily pose a problem to a Protestant exegete, but it depends upon how Balthasar develops this theme. It will therefore be valuable for us to consider how Balthasar's theology of these covenant duties are put forward.

Balthasar finds particularly in the book of Deuteronomy an attempt to:

> carry out an inexorable reduction of all of Israel's religious instruction, praxis and tradition to the sole fact of the covenant – as election by God in pure love, and as the answering love of the people in obedience[769]

Thus, Israelite religion can all be understood in terms of the Covenant. However, the covenant was established on Mount Sinai. Indeed, from Balthasar's reading of the Old Testament, was only fully present on Mount Sinai.[770] To justify his limitation of the presence of the covenant to a specific historical event, one of the texts he cites is Deuteronomy 11:2, for which he uses the translation "You have had the experience, not your sons. They have neither seen nor known the majesty of Yahweh your God".[771]

Balthasar views Deuteronomy as allowing and encouraging the Israelites to grasp in the present what had been manifest in the past[772] – "the situation of Horeb is *the* event that is utterly present today".[773] Human beings are able to choose to

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[768] Nichols, *The Word Has Been Abroad*, 201.
[769] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 184.
[770] Ibid.
[771] Ibid.
[772] Ibid.
[773] Ibid.

participate more fully in their covenant relationship with God – this, for a Protestant, might seem like an introduction of works into the system. However, since this is present in the Old Covenant rather than the New, we will need to wait until the New Covenant before evaluating whether this is compatible with Protestant theology. (It is also important to note that Balthasar regards Deuteronomy as something of an outlier in this respect; in the majority of texts, this covenant reality is seen as something that is less present in the author's 'today', regardless of the individual's decisions or piety.[774])

Obedience and Disobedience to the Covenant

After discussing God's grace in the Covenant, Balthasar turns to the fact the Old Testament records the Israelites as not keeping to the Covenant, instead disobeying its rules.[775] Balthasar defines this human evil as when Israel "turns away from [God] to look for other gods",[776] as well as "the incomprehensible refusal of an answer of love to the incomprehensible offer of eternal love." [777]

Despite this evil, God nonetheless remains committed to showing grace to His people, and to glorifying Himself.[778] In fact, Balthasar goes as far as to suggest that God's grace in the prophets in a sense prefigured the divine self-emptying of the incarnation: in the prophets, God lowered Himself by working to sanctify and glorify the ungodly realms of disobedience.[779] He writes: "God wills to construct a stairway in the men whom he has chosen, a stairway that is to lead him down into the god-less darkness."[780]

In this section, Balthasar places great emphasis upon God's response in the Prophets.[781] Through the Prophets – and their obedience – God proclaims both promises of grace and of relationship with those who turn back to him, "reach[ing]

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[774] Ibid.
[775] Ibid, 215-221.
[776] Ibid, 216.
[777] Ibid.
[778] Ibid, 222-224.
[779] Ibid, 222-223.
[780] Ibid, 223.
[781] Ibid, 225-298.

the sphere of the darkening and backsliding",[782] as well as a strong account of divine justice against disobedience – speaking to a situation "where God can penetrate only in a hostile manner, only as fire, judgement and annihilation".[783] At this stage in salvation history, it is not entirely clear how this judgement fails to contradict the promise of divine grace– but Israel with faith can submit itself to a future in which there will be grace despite it.[784]

The thrust of this section is, once again, based on biblical texts, and indeed broadly in line with a traditional Protestant interpretation of these passages. It does not contradict any Protestant commitment, and meets our criteria.

The Twilight of the Broken Covenant

The culmination of the divine judgement of which the prophets speak is found in the exile, where every aspect of the covenant appears to be broken.[785] After this, there is nonetheless hope of a restored covenant;[786] however, in the final section of Volume 6, Balthasar writes about the experience of Israel after the exile in a much more negative light than the pre-exilic time.[787]

Balthasar's approach appears to reflect streams in modern Old Testament studies:

> there are some striking parallels between Balthasar's periodization of the history of Israelite and Judean religion and that of modern Old Testament theology. There is considerable textual evidence to support the argument that in the *Theological Aesthetics*, Balthasar depended heavily on its generally appreciative view of pre-exilic and exilic prophecy and on its generally critical view of post-exilic prophetic, priestly, messianic, apocalyptic, and sapiential traditions.[788]

This approach is one which Edwards – an eighteenth-century Reformed Puritan – would no doubt find methodologically problematic. Not only would Edwards not recognise many aspects of this way of reading the Bible (such as the division of the

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[782] Ibid, 234.
[783] Ibid.
[784] Ibid, 288-290, 291-292.
[785] Ibid, 256-276.
[786] E.g. Ibid, 275-276.
[787] Ibid, 301-414.
[788] Dickens, *Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics*, 156.

Pentateuch into pre- and post-exilic sources, which he died too early to be familiar with and may not have been sympathetic to had he somehow been aware of it), he would also have found it problematic to suggest that some elements of the Bible ought to be viewed in this rather negative light, even if this is due to comparison with other elements of the Bible.

However, while we may regard elements of Balthasar's methodology as lying in contrast with Edwards' ideals, I will argue that the same cannot be said for the overall thrust of the conclusions which Balthasar comes to with this methodology.

In this section, Balthasar writes about how, after the exile, the covenant remained effectively broken:

> [w]hile the form of the covenant stood before their eyes as an idea which had been half-realised at individual points in the past (…), the history of the covenant was not only the history of a periodic decadence (…), but an unstoppable rush into the arms of catastrophe: God's glory abandons his earthly sanctuary, and the people of twelve tribes, with which the covenant had been entered upon, is definitively scattered abroad, with at most a remnant permitted to come together again; is it possible at all now to speak of a continuation of what had begun so greatly?[789]

These ideas are certainly neither obvious nor universal, but they are certainly not without precedent. The idea of some form of an end, or at least a suspension, of the covenant exists within some biblical scholars – for example, NT Wright holds that the Jews understood themselves to have remained in exile even after their return from Babylon, although it is worth noting these ideas are controversial and disputed.[790] An analysis of whether they are justified would be beyond the scope of this thesis. What we can say is that even those biblical scholars who hold to ideas of this kind would reject any idea of a complete end to the covenant – however, we will shortly see that this is something which Balthasar himself heavily qualifies.

Connected to the idea of the end of the covenant, Balthasar holds that the form of God's glory has effectively ceased to exist in Israel:

> There is no longer any positive historical continuation of the form, which had been readable in history, that God had inscribed upon the history of humanity in his history

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[789] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 301.
[790] A variety of positions are taken, both by Wright himself and his interlocutors, in the book *Exile: a conversation with N.T. Wright,* ed. by James M. Scott (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017).

> with Israel. This form, which was supposed to have proclaimed the eternal in the transitory, remains a code abruptly broken off, sealed up.[791]

However, this is a claim which he immediately qualifies:

> At the end of the long twilight, the seals will be broken for a moment in Jesus the Christ, who accomplishes what is impossible for the Old Testament and reveals the glory of the Father in the abandonment of the Son. But precisely this long twilight, with the distance it created, was necessary ...: the twilight is both failure and opening.[792]

It is a failure because it shows human inability to "establish the … historical reality of the covenant".[793] Awareness of this failure thereby reflects the themes of grace and human depravity which Reformed theology finds in the Bible. Reformed theology would similarly endorse the concept that the Old Testament covenant (or covenants[794]) failed due to human sinfulness. It may often work out the details in slightly different ways – and it may be that elements of Balthasar's exegesis are unconvincing – but this does not take away from the fact that the general thrust of this idea is very compatible with Protestantism and Reformed theology, and could therefore be integrated within Edwards' theology without problem.

Balthasar identifies the failure of the covenant as being, at the same time, an opening because the lack of the presence of glory in perceived realities establishes the distinction between those realities and the divine glory.[795] With regard to the opening, Balthasar identifies "three undertakings"[796] by which Judaism "attempt[ted] to force the glory of God into the open".[797] Each failed in itself, but prepared the ground for the coming of the Messiah.

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[791] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 302.
[792] Ibid.
[793] Ibid.
[794] Reformed theology contains several accounts of how many covenants God made with humanity; for details of how the concept of covenant as Edwards understood it would have developed, see Jens G. Moller, "The Beginnings of Puritan Covenant Theology", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 14:1 (1963), 46-67.
[795] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 302.
[796] Ibid, 303.
[797] Ibid.

The first attempt is found in prophecy of a future Messiah and a Messianic age.[798] In this aspect of the Old Testament witness, Judaism is picking up an element of itself that had been present from the start – that the present reality of the promise was "a mere model that left space for a future and for hope"[799] – and in this "projection into the future"[800] finding a new way to articulate its role in manifesting God's glory. In the future, God's covenant will be fully realised in the kingdom of Israel, and so God's glory will be fully manifest. This is a concept of "glory which is understood as salvation in the widest sense."[801] All aspects of God's glory and the covenant are magnified to the point of being absolutized, but imposed by prophecy onto the future,[802] and the ruler of this new kingdom is identified with an idealised concept of a Davidic king – the Messiah.[803]

The second attempt is related to this, and concerns how particularly apocalyptic literature looks 'above', beyond "the newly-opened space between the Heaven of God and the earth of men".[804] The "opening-up"[805] of space between these two realms "allows one to see both the drama of the forces of history in the presence of God – in the form of the four 'monstrous' apocalyptic beasts – and the scene of the judgment in Heaven".[806] As part of this opening up, "the space between heaven and earth makes available, through the affirmation of a society of angels and humans that spans that space, the idea of a possible resurrection for the dead."[807] Glory can be found above in the heavenly realms, and as a result as reflected and embodied in this world in "the drama of the forces of history".[808]

The primary text which Balthasar uses when discussing the second attempt is the Book of Daniel.[809] However, this is far from the only one; he also uses several other apocalyptic texts which do not appear in the Protestant canon.[810] Some (e.g.

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[798] Ibid, 305-320

[799] Ibid, 305.

[800] Ibid, 306.

[801] Ibid, 307.

[802] Ibid, 311-316.

[803] Ibid, 314-316.

[804] Ibid, 321.

[805] Ibid.

[806] Ibid.

[807] Nichols, *The Word Has Been Abroad*, 207.

[808] Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 321.

[809] Ibid, 321-324.

[810] Ibid, 325-343.

Baruch) appear in the Catholic canon; some (e.g. the Apocalypse of Elijah) do not. However, the fact that not all of what Balthasar says comes directly from sources that Protestants would recognise as canonical does not undermine his fundamental point, even from a Reformed perspective: that there is a Biblical tradition, in the post-exilic years, of seeing God's glory "above" in the heavenly realms.

Nothing of what Balthasar says when discussing these first two attempts could not be found within the Bible on a traditional interpretation of it, including within the Reformed tradition. What is perhaps more original is Balthasar's characterisation of these as being two of three attempts to know God despite the failure of the covenant. Nonetheless, this is largely a question of presentation: what is undoubtedly present in traditional Christian exegesis is the idea that prophecies of the Messiah made people conscious of a glory that was not present at the time the prophecies were made; similarly, discussion of what was present in the heavenly realms clearly involves making people aware of a glory which is not actually present to the readers. There is nothing present here which prevents one from integrating the general thrust of these ideas within Edwards' theology.

The third attempt is to open up the search for glory in the ideas of the surrounding cultures: "the broadening-out of Israel, which had become closed in on itself, to the surrounding culture of Hellenism."[811] This contains danger and difficulty "since it meant engaging in an authentically genuine dialogue with Hellenism, without rejecting or even merely lightening the burden of Israel's own unique election, of the exclusive covenant relationship to Yahweh."[812] Through their incorporation of these Hellenistic ideas, they find ways of "find[ing] God in all things of creation and salvation history, and who see 'glory all around'"[813] and so to "praise God in all his works".[814] In due course, the adoption of Hellenistic "language and thought-forms"[815] were significant in another way, for they "created the presupposition for Christian mission".[816]

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[811] Ibid, 344.
[812] Ibid.
[813] Ibid, 346.
[814] Ibid.
[815] Ibid, 344.
[816] Ibid.

It will be immediately obvious to the reader that there are some elements of this third attempt which appear to lie in tension with the primary claim of Part 2 (that is, that Balthasar's account of beauty is more consonant with Protestantism than that of Edwards'.) In this section, Balthasar argues that biblical revelation itself drew secular philosophical ideas into it in order to see the beauty/glory of God. This might appear to undermine a Protestant stress on the impossibility of natural theology. However, this would depend upon the precise Protestant understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology: in Chapters 3 and 4, we have already seen that Balthasar's claim that there are elements of truth in philosophy, which divine revelation itself endorses and places within the context of a Christo-centric worldview, need not automatically be rejected by all forms of Protestant thought.

What is, perhaps, a more important problem with adopting Balthasar's perspective on this third attempt as a Protestant is the books in which Balthasar finds this attempt. He discusses this almost exclusively in terms of two works – *The Wisdom of Sirach*[817] and *The Book of Wisdom*[818] – neither of which are actually present in the Protestant canon. This therefore suggests that this specific element of Balthasar's theology cannot be adopted as a Protestant: while Protestants may agree with Balthasar that a form of Judaism sought to respond to the 'twilight' by using the cultural resources of Hellenism (and may even find that to be a positive development, given the above discussion of the relation between secular thought and Protestant theology) they cannot affirm that it is biblically endorsed in the way which Balthasar appears to.

Nonetheless, the overall sweep of Balthasar's interpretation of the Old Testament does generally meet the criteria which we have put forward. We will see that the same is true of the New Testament.

Glory in the New Covenant

In Volume 7 of *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar deals with how the New Testament speaks of the glory found in the New Covenant. This is therefore where Balthasar

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[817] Ibid, 347-358.
[818] Ibid, 358-364.

places his specific discussion of the cross – which, as we have seen, is central to his theology and provides a cohering centre from which other ideas can be interpreted.

Balthasar begins Volume 7 of *The Glory of the Lord* with an introduction which primarily focuses upon his account of epistemology, methodology and other subjects which justify the procedure which he will thereafter adopt.[819] These are questions which have already been adequately addressed in the preceding chapters, and therefore need not be dealt with again here.

Balthasar then divides the main text of Volume 7 into three sections; the first is entitled "Verbum Caro Factum",[820] the second "Vidimus Glorium Eius",[821] and the third "In Laudem Gloriae".[822]

Verbum Caro Factum

The first section begins with a discussion of John the Baptist, in a section entitled "Prelude".[823] In this section, Balthasar discusses John the Baptist, who is seen as "a real renewal of the classical prophetic faith of the Old Testament",[824] which he revives in order to hand it on to Jesus, who fulfils and completes it.[825] This section serves to introduce the work as a whole, and discusses how the Gospels introduce Jesus[826] via his baptism,[827] temptations in the wilderness, [828] and infancy narratives.[829] The only important element here which does not naturally fit within Edwards' Protestantism concerns the infancy narratives, where Balthasar – in keeping with his Catholicism – lays a particular stress on the role of Mary; however, even here there is no statement which Balthasar makes which constitutes a

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[819] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 11-29.
[820] Ibid, 31-235.
[821] Ibid, 237-385.
[822] Ibid, 387-543.
[823] Ibid, 33-76.
[824] Nichols, *The Word Has Been Abroad*, 214-215.
[825] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 40-54.
[826] Ibid, 54-76.
[827] Ibid, 55-58.
[828] Ibid, 69-76.
[829] Ibid, 58-69.

fundamental doctrinal disagreement with Protestantism – it is simply that a Protestant would not be expected to place such stress on the role of Mary.

After this, Balthasar – in what he describes as an "Orientation"[830] – argues that the word (that is, the spoken or written message of Christianity) is centred on the cross.[831] The cross itself is "what is not a word",[832] but a historical event which transcends being comprehensively described in words, but is perceived by the church through words with the eyes of faith. He goes on to discuss how the church relates to this, and how the sources of theology emerge as part of the church's role in this.[833] He then builds on this to discuss how the discipline of theology evolved and is justified as a result.[834]

This historical event is itself a manifestation of the person of the divine Son, whose incarnation Balthasar discusses in a chapter entitled "Word-Flesh".[835] In this section, he gives three descriptions of Christ. He has "the claim" to the power, knowledge and authority that enables Him to judge humanity, thereby manifesting his divinity.[836] He possesses "poverty", understood in Balthasar as the vulnerability of complete reliance upon God which enables a person to be transparent to Him.[837] And He acts out of "self-abandonment", emptying Himself and allowing God to determine the course of His life and His vocation.[838] In these ways, the historical events of Jesus Christ's earthly life becomes transparent to the Father, whom He reveals.

Nonetheless, the event of the cross can be described and exposited to some extent through words.[839] A right interpretation of the New Testament will read it as centred on the cross.[840]

In "Momentum of the Cross", he discusses in greater detail how the cross serves as the centre of faith and theology.[841] For Balthasar, the cross is the centre not

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[830] Ibid, 77-114.
[831] Ibid, 77-89.
[832] Ibid, 77.
[833] Ibid, 89-103.
[834] Ibid, 103-114.
[835] Ibid, 115-161.
[836] Ibid, 115-129.
[837] Ibid, 129-142.
[838] Ibid, 142-161.
[839] Ibid, 152.
[840] Ibid, 84.
[841] Ibid, 202-235.

because other elements are not important – after all, Balthasar has already discussed in great detail the elements of glory which are found in the Old Testament – but rather because the cross serves as their focal point of unity. As the centre, the other elements find their place in their relation to the cross itself.

For example, Balthasar particularly discusses the apparent tension between God's love and just judgement, which is resolved at the cross.[842] In Balthasar's theory of the atonement, both love and wrath are real elements of the divine character and glory, but find their relation in the cross, which shows how rather than being disparate or contradictory, they are in fact united in a beautiful whole.

This specific example is relatively easy to find scriptural justification for. The theory of the atonement known as Penal Substitution has been subject to considerable debate, including with regards to whether and which scriptural texts can be said to support it.[843] Nonetheless, at the very least there are a number of texts which many scholars can claim in support of Penal Substitution. The most relevant for our purposes seems to me to be found in Romans 3:

> [23]since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; [24]they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25]whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over sins previously committed; [26]it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.[844]

This section makes a number of relevant points. One thing that ought to be noted is that in verses 25 and 26, God acts in order to reveal or display his nature – "to show his righteousness"[845] and to "prove … that he himself is righteous and that he justifies".[846] The cross is here concerned not solely with God in Himself, but also with God revealing Himself – what one might call the out-spilling of His glory, or the shining out of His beauty. Many interpreters of this passage see it as supporting a

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[842] Ibid, 202-211.
[843] For a recent contribution to the debate in evangelical theology, see, for example, Steve Holmes, "Of Babies and Bathwater? Recent Evangelical Critiques of Penal Substitution in the Light of Early Modern Debates Concerning Justification" *European Journal of Theology*, 16:2 (2007), 93–105.
[844] Romans 3:23-26, NRSV.
[845] Romans 3:25, NRSV.
[846] Romans 3:26, NRSV.

penal substitutionary account of the cross, or something very like it;[847] it would be beyond the scope of this PhD to examine whether this interpretation is true, but the fact that it is made suggests that Balthasar's account meets our criteria in this chapter.

On this interpretation, we see in this passage from Romans the two sides of Balthasar's conflict – on the one hand, we see divine grace and forgiveness; on the other hand, we see human sinfulness and divine justice against them. At the same time as referencing to both sides of Balthasar's dilemma, it makes it clear that the cross unites both sides. Therefore, it clearly provides at least one example of the cross as the centre which unifies two disparate ideas.

Also central to Balthasar's account of the cross is the idea of *kenosis*.[848] In the cross, Jesus exemplifies a self-giving love that he already expressed within the Trinity.[849] However, at the cross this self-giving love becomes a self-emptying love, and Jesus experiences the Trinitarian relations in an absolute experience of abandonment by the Father – Hell.[850] Jesus empties Himself to the absolute.

Within his discussion of the cross, Balthasar is able to give a section explaining how it grounds and explains doctrines of heaven, hell and purgatory.[851] The concept of purgatory specifically is at odds with Edwards' Protestantism, and therefore this element would need to be altered. However, this element is not sufficiently central to Balthasar's account of beauty that this alteration need stand in the way of the central contention of this chapter. It is also worth noting that this section again illustrates the centrality of the cross for Balthasar's theology, as the cross is used to ground Balthasar's understanding of the afterlife.

It is also worth mentioning that, in "Verbum Caro Factum", Balthasar also includes a chapter we have not yet mentioned, which discusses the theological nature of

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[847] See, for example, C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans, vol. 1*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975) 213, or Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans*, trans. by D. H. van Daalen (London: SCM Press, 1959), 45-46.
[848] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 211-228.
[849] Ibid, 211-212.
[850] Ibid, 228-235.
[851] Ibid.

time.[852] This is not especially relevant to our concerns in this chapter and therefore need not be discussed in any depth.

For our purposes, the most important thing to be taken from "Verbum Caro Factum" is that in Balthasar's interpretation of the New Testament, the cross is central, and serves to provide the centre and focus for the knowledge of God's glory. Other elements of glory can be found elsewhere, but they find their centre of meaning in the cross itself, to which we must therefore look primarily. The centre of "Verbum Caro Factum" is therefore an interpretation of the Bible which fits very well within the Protestant tradition, based on individual texts while cohering well with theologies which I have outlined above.

There are elements, however, within this chapter which may be more difficult to reconcile with Protestant thought. Balthasar's stress on the historical event as being the ultimate revelatory reality, which is not completely described in words (even those of the Bible), is probably broadly compatible with Protestantism. Unless one understands revelation in a very narrowly propositional sense, it would be difficult to make a claim that there is absolutely no revelatory truth in the person and life of Jesus which has not been comprehensively covered in the text of scripture. What may be less compatible is the connected stress which Balthasar places upon the role of the church and the individual's subjective faith response in receiving and appropriating this to themselves.[853] In other words, a potential concern can be raised regarding theological methodology. However, since my argument in this chapter concerns integrating Balthasar's theology of divine beauty itself, rather than associated ideas, this need offer no particular challenge to the thesis of this chapter.

Vidimus Gloriam Eius

The second section, "Vidimus Gloriam Eius", will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7, and therefore need not be discussed in as much depth here. A brief summary will nonetheless be provided for the purposes of this chapter.

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[852] Ibid, 162-201.
[853] Ibid, 89-103.

The first chapter, "The Request for Glorification", focuses upon Jesus' account of the Trinity's seeking of glory in the Gospel of John.[854] It begins with an introductory section which argues that we should not seek to understand the word "glory" through word studies (by which he means studies of the potential semantic range of terms such as *doxa*), then later finding its centre; instead, we should find its centre in the cross, and then work outwardly from there to understand the meaning of the term.[855] He then goes on to discuss Jesus' prayer in John 17 for the glory that is found in the cross; this glory reflects the intra-Trinitarian relationship between Father and Son.[856] The Spirit – the product of this relationship between Father and Son – is similarly to be manifest in glorifying Jesus, particularly in His presence in the disciples.[857] In this, we participate in the divine glory – particularly in acts like laying down our lives for one another (reflecting the cross).[858] What will be particularly important for subsequent chapters is that it is here that he most directly addresses the question of the relationship between love and God seeking His own glory.

The second chapter, "The Substance of Glory", is the place where Balthasar deals most directly with the meaning and nature of glory.[859] He begins with a section discussing "Essence and word" – which explores how words about God (including both the Bible and specific words for specific attributes) discuss the nature of God, themselves embodying the truth of the Word Himself in Jesus Christ.[860] The second section, "Appearing and Image", then discusses how language associated with vision and sight (including icon, epiphany, and light) describes how God appears to us.[861] In the third and final section of this chapter, "Correspondence", Balthasar connects the doctrine of justification by faith as found in Paul with the (primarily Johannine) concept of glory which he has been developing – within this, he develops an understanding of justification by which he aims to adopt the strengths of the Protestant understanding without compromising his Catholicism.[862]

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[854] Ibid, 239-263.
[855] Ibid, 239-244.
[856] Ibid, 244-250.
[857] Ibid, 250-255.
[858] Ibid, 255-261.
[859] Ibid, 264-317.
[860] Ibid, 264-283.
[861] Ibid, 273-295.
[862] Ibid, 296-317.

The third chapter discusses the divine hiddenness, and how Balthasar's stress on divine glory relates to his strong belief that God is beyond human perception.[863] He begins by accepting the incomprehensibility of God, but observing that the gospels (citing several specific elements and episodes from Jesus' ministry) provide literary forms which provide an "approximation"[864] of what is there; they do this by displaying paradoxes and providing broadly comprehensive forms which circle around an inner incomprehensibility.[865] He then moves from Jesus' ministry to Easter, arguing that both cross and resurrection contain both the revelation and the hiddenness of the glory.[866] He then returns to his central theme of glory as found in John, arguing that this also displays the same characteristic of revelation in hiddenness.[867]

In each chapter, Balthasar cites large numbers of specific biblical texts in support of his contentions, and there is no significant contradiction with Protestant commitments.

In Laudem Gloriae

The final section, "In Laudem Gloriae", discusses the appropriate response of human beings to God's glory.[868] This section is in turn divided into three chapters.

The first chapter, "Glorification as Assimilation and Return of the Gift", discusses how human beings receive divine glory and as a consequence of this go on to glorify God.[869] He begins by exploring how, in our relation in the New Testament, we are more than only servants of a Lord – instead, we receive the infinite honour of participating in the inner life of the Trinity, and this participation grounds our service to God.[870] He then argues that God expropriates Himself to us, thereby grounding our ability to appropriate Him to ourselves, and what impact this has on how we conceptualise the world.[871] Finally, he looks at how we are meant to respond to

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[863] Ibid, 318-385.
[864] Ibid, 323.
[865] Ibid, 318-354.
[866] Ibid, 354-374.
[867] Ibid, 374-385.
[868] Ibid, 389-543.
[869] Ibid, 389-431.
[870] Ibid, 391-399.
[871] Ibid, 399-415.

receiving the goodness of God.[872] Just as we participate in the overflowing goodness of the life of the Trinity, so we are supposed to in turn overflow with God's goodness.[873] And all of this ends with a return to God in the Eucharist.[874] Much of this is comparable to Edwards' own ideas, while developed in different ways.

The second chapter, "The Brother for whom Christ died", looks at how God is to be glorified in our human relationships.[875] It begins by discussing how the union between God and human beings enables us to encounter God in our "brother" (although Balthasar's usage of gender-specific terminology does not imply that this is only true of males), exploring this with reference to detailed biblical exegesis in the Synoptics, Paul, and John.[876] After this, he discusses the divine "solidarity" with human beings, and how it results in God's glory being reflected or embodied in the relationships within the church.[877] Finally, he discusses how the marriage relationship reflects the relationship between God and the church (as well as how the celibate possesses an equivalent glory to marriage, in that he or she is called to directly embody the relationship between God and the church, rather than through the proxy of marriage.)[878]

Finally, in the third chapter, "Setting out towards God", Balthasar explores how our eschatological belief in glory ought to direct the church and its actions. He begins by arguing that it ought to ground an ability to be open to that which lies beyond it:[879] "eschatological existence is the transition (in Christ) from every state of being closed in to what is universal: the Church has a form only so that she may transcend herself ever afresh and give the world transcendent form."[880] Human beings currently lie in a situation where they lack a place, stuck in-between the future presence of glory in the parousia and the historical events of the gospel.[881] Our aim is to focus on, and work to bring about, a future where God's glory is fully manifest in the world – where

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[872] Ibid, 415-431.
[873] Ibid, 415-417.
[874] Ibid, 418-419.
[875] Ibid, 432-484.
[876] Ibid, 434-458.
[877] Ibid, 458-470.
[878] Ibid, 470-484.
[879] Ibid, 486-507.
[880] Ibid, 486.
[881] Ibid, 490.

there is no longer any church because God is in all in the world.[882] In the meantime, Christians participate in a paradoxical tension between that world and the present dark one:[883] we see this in the fact that Christian ministers have power in powerlessness,[884] that Christians have joy in suffering,[885] and that the church contains both everlasting glory and structures that will be destroyed.[886]

There are some elements of "In Laudem Gloriae" which lie in tension with Edwards' Protestantism (for example, his stress on the eucharist in its first chapter), but for the most part it is entirely compatible. Indeed, some aspects – such as the present paradoxical tension between such things as joy and suffering, power and powerlessness – seem to reflect Protestant concerns which I have already discussed. However, the most important thing to note is that it is a section which concerns the human response to God's glory, rather than God's glory itself. This means that even if it were found to be problematic to integrate within Protestantism, this need pose no great problem, and although it is adjacent to our concerns in this chapter, it need not be discussed in as great depth as the rest of the volume.

Evaluation of Balthasar's Account of Glory

Having given an overview of Balthasar's exegesis, it is now necessary to examine whether it sufficiently grounds Balthasar's account of beauty/glory.

Balthasar's Big Picture

An analysis or evaluation of all of Balthasar's biblical exegesis in *The Glory of the Lord* is beyond the possible scope of this PhD – to do such a project justice, it would need to be at least as long as the final two volumes of the work, and so it is not feasible to include such a thing within this thesis. However, some comment is necessary. I have already argued that Balthasar's exegesis meets two criteria of being rooted in biblical texts, and of not contradicting Protestant theological

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[882] Ibid, 507-526.
[883] Ibid, 526-543.
[884] Ibid, 529-532.
[885] Ibid, 532-540.
[886] Ibid, 540-543.

commitments in any way which undermines the project of this thesis. However, there is a further question which can helpfully be asked before finally coming to a conclusion on whether Balthasar's ideas are consonant with Protestantism.

Balthasar's approach to the interpretation of the Bible involves an emphasis on the 'big picture', holding that "the parts of the canon are effective for us as an organic whole".[887] This approach has considerable precedent in Christian tradition; while modern critical approaches to the Bible usually focus upon study of the details of scripture or on specific parts of it, Christian tradition – whether Protestant or Catholic – has historically approached all parts of the Bible as being part of a greater canonical whole, to be read accordingly.[888]

However, as we have already considered when discussing Karen Kilby's critique of Balthasar, it is more difficult to justify a claim about the whole than a claim about a part. To see the whole may involve an intuitive or aesthetic sense, or some other kind of judgement which may or may not be available to all. This would open the gates to an accusation of an interpretation fuelled by pride. In order to avoid this suggestion, I argued that Balthasar's account would need to be sufficiently grounded in theological reasoning. Therefore, we now need to look at whether Balthasar's general structure can be sufficiently justified.

The New Testament

Balthasar's structure is focused around the New Testament, reasoning with Christian tradition (and a number of explicit statements by the New Testament[889]) that the coming of Jesus has fulfilled the Old Testament, which ought therefore to be interpreted in the light of the New. Since this scheme is traditional in all branches of Christianity, and has very strong direct justification from the Bible itself, it can be accepted as justified according to the criterion which we have set out.

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[887] J. B. Quash, "'Between the Brutely Given, and the Brutally, Banally Free': Von Balthasar's Theology of Drama in Dialogue with Hegel", *Modern Theology*, 13:3 (July 1997), 293-318.
[888] Dickens, *Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics*, 5.
[889] See, for example, Matthew 4:17-20, Luke 24:25-26, John 5:39-47.

Focus on John

Within the New Testament, Balthasar focuses even further upon specific elements of the New Testament. One is a specific focus upon the message of one specific biblical book, the Gospel of John, through which Balthasar reads the rest of the New Testament. The view of glory in the whole of the New Testament is therefore centred around the Gospel of John specifically. If one is to argue that Balthasar's view of beauty and glory has any strength, the centrality of John's gospel must be able to be justified.

Balthasar himself explains the centrality of John to his account of glory by writing:

> Our concern is to make a synthesis; therefore the last theology of the New Testament, the Johannine theology, will always be the vanishing point, the point towards which we are travelling[890]

This passage places John's role as the ultimate destination of an account of glory closely alongside a reference to John offering the latest theology in the New Testament (there are undoubtedly New Testament scholars who approach the Johannine literature as being very late,[891] but to say with confidence that they are the latest in the New Testament requires a higher degree of confidence than is usual that one knows when other documents were written; nonetheless it should be noted that it is usually held by New Testament scholars that John's gospel was written in the late first century or early second[892] - that is, relatively late among New Testament documents and later than other gospels are usually believed to have been written). This suggests, without explicitly stating it, that the later composition of John's gospel somehow gives it a greater authority or centrality.

This position is not completely without justification in Christian history. For example, in the ancient world, Eusebius wrote (citing Clement):

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[890] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 10.
[891] Ben Witherington III, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1995), 27-29.
[892] Andrew Lincoln, *The Gospel According to St John* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005), 18.

> But John, the last, being conscious that external facts had been exhibited in the Gospels, on the urging of his disciples and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel.[893]

This suggests that the role of John's gospel is to follow the giving of the external facts of the gospel by giving the inner spiritual meaning that interprets them. This understanding of the relationships between the gospels would seem to support Balthasar's suggestion that we should read the significance of the others through John. Balthasar's argument can be seen as an extension of this principle to allowing John's gospel to interpret the New Testament canon as a whole; even if one were not to accept Balthasar's argument for Johannine theological priority from its later composition, an argument for its status among the gospels could be used, along with a (perfectly reasonable) argument that the gospels serve as the centre of the New Testament canon,[894] to argue for the priority of John among the New Testament. One might furthermore support this by noting that a number of what have become key doctrines – notably concerning the nature of Christ and the Trinity – appear clearer in John's gospel.

These suggestions would seem together to point towards an argument for a Johannine priority in the interpretation of the New Testament. However, a careful consideration of this argument reveals that its power is limited from a Protestant perspective, as it is largely an argument based upon tradition. While external or

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[893] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History: Books 6-10*, trans. by Roy J. Deferrari (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1955), 27.

[894] While it is difficult to argue with the suggestion that a certain priority is given to the gospels in many Christian traditions, it is not rare to suggest that Protestant Christianity supplants the centrality of the gospels with the centrality of the Pauline epistles and their emphasis upon justification by faith. While there may be some truth in this, many parts of the Protestant tradition do give the Gospels centrality. Given our focus on Luther in the previous chapter, it may be instructive to cite his approach to the Gospels. The most relevant text of Luther's is probably *A Brief Instruction on what to Look for and Expect in the Gospels*. In this text, Luther does stress the importance of the other parts of the Bible, but does so by referring to the gospels. The function of scripture is to declare the person of Christ; so, wherever other parts of scripture do this as well as the Gospels, they are of equal value and importance to the Gospels. While this does put equal value on some other parts of scripture (most importantly, texts such as Romans, where Luther sees the gospel as especially profoundly expressed), I would also argue that it nonetheless implies some centrality for the Gospels because it argues for the equal value of some other scriptures by using the Gospels themselves as normative accounts of the person of Jesus, against which other parts of scripture are assessed. See Martin Luther, "A Brief Instruction on what to Look for and Expect in the Gospels", trans. by E. Theodore Bachmann, in *Luther's Works: Volume 35: Word and Sacrament I*, ed. by E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 117-124.

traditional evidence as to the purpose of John's gospel and its intended relationship with the others is interesting, it is difficult to see how a Protestant could use this as an argument without some element of scripture itself affirming this; otherwise, it seems to be built on a tradition which cannot be derived from scripture (and which therefore is not compatible with a theology of tradition as a second, derivative authority dependent upon sola scriptura).

Indeed, there are other ways that Christian tradition sometimes gives reasons for preferring John's gospel to the others. For example, Martin Luther wrote:

> If I had to do without one or the other-either the works or preaching of Christ-I would rather do without his works than his preaching. For the works do not help me, but His words give life, as He Himself says. Now John writes very little about the works of Christ, but very much about His preaching. The other Evangelists write much of His works and little of His preaching. Therefore, John's Gospel is the one, tender, true chief Gospel far, far to be preferred to the other three and placed high above them.[895]

This passage grounds a claim to Johannine superiority in a principle which Luther states he finds in the Bible itself. For Luther, Christ's word is what is important; Luther cites Christ's words in support of this (this is also a position which Luther's theology would have supported in a number of ways, both directly and indirectly scriptural). Luther notes that John's gospel gives significantly more emphasis and space to Christ's word, whereas the others give greater focus to his actions. This therefore gives him biblically-rooted grounds for giving a priority to John's gospel.

What seems the strongest argument, in this specific case, is the fact that glory is a particularly important word for John,[896] for whom "the whole of Jesus' life is a manifestation of his glory".[897] This is an emphasis which is not present in other New Testament accounts of Jesus' life.[898] Owing to the place which glory has in the gospel as compared to the rest of the New Testament, it seems natural that we would turn to John's gospel as the focal point for understanding the idea. This does not necessarily mean that we ought to join with Balthasar in putting forward John as

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[895] Martin Luther, "Preface to the New Testament 1522", in *Prefaces to the New Testament*, trans. by Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 9-10.
[896] C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text: Second Edition* (London: SPCK, 1978), 166.
[897] Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, 9.
[898] Ibid, 27 & 104-105.

the central point in any New Testament theology, but we have strong grounds to do so when we are dealing with our current focus – the idea of glory.

Focus on the Cross

The centrality of John's gospel for a concept of glory can help us as we turn to think about the other key focus of Balthasar's theology of glory – the cross. We have already given several reasons why, for our purposes, a focus on glory can be justified. What we have not yet demonstrated, however, is in what way the cross serves as central to our understanding of glory.

For Balthasar, the cross serves as a centre and focal point for other understandings of glory. Creation itself does genuinely contain fragments of glory, but they can only be seen fully and truly for what they are as part of a relationship with the whole, which Balthasar identifies with the form of beauty (or glory). This is by no means the only way one can develop a concept of the cross as the central revelation of divine glory – for example, for Luther, the cross served principally to crucify human ideas and preconceptions of glory, thereby clearing 'space' to allow humans to receive revelation.[899] In order to justify Balthasar's account, we must be able to accept that the general thrust of the way the cross works in Balthasar – that is, as revealing God's glory and love, and cohering other aspects of glory around it – can be suitably justified.

One way in which evidence could point in this way is through the use of examples. We have already seen one of these: how this works in terms of the cross serving as a centre at which God's judgment and divine mercy can be reconciled. In the next chapter, we will explore how Balthasar's account of the cross similarly serves as a centre for concepts of sovereignty, self-emptying and poverty which could individually be disturbing, but which can be shown to be beautiful when seen as a whole which coheres around the cross. However, these individual examples of how the cross functions in this way in specific cases do not necessarily provide grounds for a claim that this constitutes a general pattern.

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[899] See Chapter 4 on Martin Luther's Theology of the Cross.

However, there is a way in which one could put forward a strong argument for a general pattern. We have already seen how an emphasis upon the centrality of the cross makes a good deal of sense from the point of view of Protestant and Catholic tradition. We should also note that it is a key theme of the Gospel of John, which – as we have also seen – is justified as the centre of a theology of glory because it is the place in the New Testament which, by far, most discusses the concept of glory. In fact, John's gospel persistently emphasises that the cross is the high point of Jesus' glory, where Jesus' glory is centrally revealed. For example, at a key point in the gospel immediately before the cross, Jesus prays "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you"[900] – thereby indicating that it is precisely at the cross at which Jesus will be glorified. New Testament scholars, and Johannine commentators throughout the ages, have put forward a number of different ways of understanding what it means for Jesus to be glorified at the cross – but there has been consistent recognition that it was precisely at the cross that Jesus was glorified.[901]

Jesus being glorified is effectively another way of saying that he revealed his glory at the cross. This involves a positive revelation of Jesus' glory, not just a negative one; while it could be combined with a Luther-style interpretation of the cross as undermining human views of God, this approach would only be possible if the undermining was part of, but not all of, what the cross does to reveal Jesus. Passages such as the above one indicate instead that the cross does something that positively glorifies God, rather than merely negatively removing obstacles that prevent that glorifying. Therefore, the idea of the cross revealing Jesus' glory (and thereby God's) – that is, providing an image or sign of what it means that God is glorious – lies at the centre of what John views as Jesus' glory.

If one accepts that the cross is the central image of God's glory in this positive sense, it becomes difficult to avoid the belief that other elements of glory would cohere into the cross. Christians of any tradition would affirm that God's glory is

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[900] John 17:1, NRSV.
[901] For a discussion of how different historical interpretations of the Fourth Gospel give varying accounts of how glory relates to the suffering and darkness of the cross, see Todd Larsson, "Glory or Persecution: The God of the Gospel of John in the History of Interpretation" in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. by Richard Bauckham & Carl Mosser (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 82-88.

present in creation, and that the fall has damaged both creation and us. If creation has been damaged then it is reasonable to see that the divine glory present within it[902] has been damaged (and within the Protestant tradition, there would also be a great stress on the extent to which the fall has compromised the human ability to perceive this glory). If these elements of glory can be found to exist, and what we have said about the cross is true, then it would be natural for them to be found to reflect the glory found in the cross. Furthermore, given that these elements of glory are elsewhere affected by the fall, it would make sense for them to be seen in a purer form in the glory revealed at the cross. As a consequence of this, one would be able to turn to the cross to make sense of what these elements of broken glory should have been.

If there is anything deeply contentious here from a Protestant standpoint, it is that it is possible for the post-fallen elements of glory to be reconstructed after the fall. However, we have already seen that this is consonant with Protestantism – it seems very similar to the ideas we have seen in Calvin, whereby the Bible operates like 'spectacles', enabling someone to see glory revealed elsewhere in the cross.[903] Since, as we have just argued, the cross stands as the central point in a biblical revelation of glory, it would therefore be a reasonable application of this perspective to suggest that the cross is able to reconstruct the broken fragments in this way.

This means that we can affirm that our criteria for a legitimately Protestant account have been met for Balthasar's approach to placing the cross at the centre and allowing other ideas to cohere around it. It is compatible with Protestant theological commitments, and can be found in a reading of scripture.

The Old Testament

Turning now to the Old Testament, we can see that Balthasar's approach here is again, broadly, methodologically sound. We have already had a rough overview of how the individual parts of the Old Testament are developed from scripture, noting

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[902] In the sense of God's external glory - that in creation which reflects or embodies God's internal glory - rather than in the sense of God's internal glory, which orthodox Christianity would insist cannot be damaged.
[903] See Chapter 3.

many elements which can be supported as well as a few elements which are more problematic. In this, we saw a great deal of Balthasar's interpretation of the Old Testament which we can see as reasonably grounded in scripture.

What we did not consider at this stage is whether Balthasar's approach to the Old Testament, as a whole, fits within his scheme and can be justified as doing so. However, at this stage, this can easily be done. Balthasar devotes considerable space in Volume 6 to establishing a case for God's gracious work towards the people of Israel, identifying the covenant as fundamentally one of grace.[904] He then argues that due to Israel's rejection of this grace, they incur judgement and separation from God,[905] arguing that we see in the Old Testament a tension between God's gracious desire to establish relationship and his need to condemn sin and therefore prevent this relationship. This interpretation is well grounded in Old-Testament exegesis, and is absolutely central to Balthasar's reading of the Old Testament – and something which is very obviously resolved by the cross according to Balthasar's view. As such, Balthasar's account of how the Old Testament can be seen to fit within this scheme and is suitably justified in general (although we should also note that there were considerable problems which I noted with a number of specifics elements of Balthasar's interpretation of the Old Testament).

Summary

We have seen here that the general thrust of Balthasar's account of glory (and therefore divine beauty) is meets the criteria which I have set out. The key focal points of his interpretation of both Old and New Testament's are sufficiently grounded in specific scriptural texts, and the broad thrust of his theory is compatible with Protestant theological commitments (although we have discussed occasional exceptions). Integrating this general thrust of Balthasar's account of beauty into Edwards' theology is able to do what I am suggesting in this thesis: make Edwards more consistently Protestant.

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[904] See Balthasar, *Glory VI*, 144-211.
[905] See Ibid, 215-224 & 365-401.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I began by observing the link between glory and beauty in Balthasar, arguing that as well as being comparable to a link which is present in Edwards, it also bears biblical justification, and so can be shown to be something which at the very least makes Edwards no less consistently Protestant.   I went on to examine Balthasar's own exegesis of Scripture in the final two volumes of *The Glory of the Lord*, arguing that the account of glory which he develops there is broadly acceptable to the Protestant (as well as arguing for the specific point that Balthasar has sufficient justification to identify glory and divine beauty). While I noted a number of specific areas where his ideas were either not compatible with Protestantism and/or not sufficiently grounded in the text, I also noted that a great deal of his exegesis was both sound and compatible with Protestantism. After this, I focused on the 'big picture' of his account of glory, arguing that the general structure of his thought – including the stress on glory as revealed in the cross, and the stress on John as the best witness to glory – is legitimate and sufficiently well-grounded to justify my central claim in Part 2: that Balthasar's understanding of beauty is more compatible with Protestantism than that of Edwards, and reconstructing Edwards' theology with it will serve to make Edwards more consistently Protestant.

In Part 3, I will consider how Edwards' theology may be altered and reconstructed in the light of the theology of beauty which I have argued for in Part 2.

Part 3: Reconstructing Edwards

Chapter 6: Word-Flesh

We saw in Part 2 that Balthasar's concept of divine beauty and glory is centred around the person of Christ, particularly as manifest on the cross, which has at its centre the divine love. As we turn now to Part 3, we move on to asking how Balthasar's theology of beauty can help reconstruct Edwards' understanding of how glory-seeking and love relate to each other.

At the outset, it is worth noting that there are two specific places in *The Glory of the Lord* where Balthasar's theological aesthetics comes very close to directly addressing the question of glory and love. One of these will be dealt with in the following chapter, while the first will be addressed in this chapter.

One of the chapters of Volume 7 of *The Glory of the Lord*, entitled "Word-Flesh",[906] deals primarily with questions which would normally be categorised as "christology", but does so in a distinctive way, through examining two attributes of Jesus: authority[907] (which will be found to contain glory) and poverty.[908] Both of these attributes are apparently distinct fragments – in fact, "[t]he distinguishing marks of Jesus' existence, 'authority' and 'poverty', are *prima facie* irreconcilable".[909] In fact (and, if one has followed the argument of Part 2, fairly predictably), Balthasar argues that they are two aspects which can easily be reconciled, due to them finding their centre in Christ and particularly the cross. In this resolution, we will find the beginnings of an answer to our question, as Balthasar incorporates his understanding of glory into a scheme centred in love.

We will begin this chapter by looking at how Balthasar understands Jesus' authority, before then looking at His poverty. After this, we will examine the apparent tension between the two, before exploring how Balthasar resolves this apparent tension by arguing that Jesus at the cross revealed another characteristic: that of a transparency that embodies an underlying self-giving love. This acts as a centre which reconciles the other attributes. We will briefly note that this transparency of

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[906] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 115-161.
[907] Ibid, 115-129.
[908] Ibid, 129-142.
[909] Ibid, 142.

self-giving love involves a union between the lover and a beloved (a union which will be particularly significant in later chapters). We will then consider the role the concept of glory plays in this scheme, observing that this scheme answers some of the same questions that Edwards did in *The End of Creation*. Finally, we will evaluate these answers, asking what strengths they have and in what ways they are incomplete.

Jesus' Authority

Balthasar's understanding of Jesus' authority is closely intertwined with his understanding of the Word of God.[910] Balthasar notes how the Johannine prologue identifies Jesus with the Word, suggesting that this is "on the basis of the old covenant"[911] – in other words, interpreting John as drawing on the pre-existing Hebrew concept of the Word of God. He goes on to observe that Jeremiah, the Book of Wisdom, and Hebrews all speak of God's word as having immense authority and power.[912] While Hebrews is not an Old Testament text, the other two are, thereby making plausible Balthasar's claim that the content of these texts form the intellectual background to the concept of the Word in the Johannine prologue. (While it should be noted that the Book of Wisdom is not present in the Protestant canon, a similar case which is more compatible with Protestantism could be made by citing other Old Testament texts which are present in both Catholic and Protestant canons – for example, in Isaiah, God says of His word that "it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it."[913]) As such, this claim can again be seen as meeting the criteria which I set out in the previous chapter: of being based on the exegesis of scriptural texts, and of being compatible with Protestant commitments.

Balthasar cites numerous different texts to support Jesus' claim to authority, as well as to establish particular truths about what it means. In practice, Jesus' authority is identified with His "claim to decide about men"[914] – a claim which Balthasar identifies

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[910] Ibid, 117-118.
[911] Ibid, 117.
[912] Ibid, 117-118.
[913] Isaiah 55:11, NRSV.
[914] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 118.

as "the formal *Leitmotiv* of all the Gospels",[915] and is thereby strongly grounded in his interpretation of arguably the most important part of the New Testament canon.[916] Within this, the Sermon on the Mount provides evidence that Jesus' authority outstrips that of Moses.[917] Balthasar cites numerous gospel texts to the effect that Jesus has knowledge of the thoughts of human hearts, and so his authority exposes other people for who they really are.[918] Where all of this is revealed in a narrative format in the gospels, the epistles put forward a "theological formulation"[919] of this which fails to fully encapsulate who Jesus is, but nonetheless "exactly meets the 'confessional situation' of the narratives and interprets this without deviation."[920] Thus, the gospels and Paul all talk about Jesus' authority expressed in judgement, particularly eschatologically.[921]

Authority and Glory

Jesus' authority is thereby clearly connected to a number of other ways of talking about Him. One further one that is of special importance for this thesis is that of divine glory. The base concepts of authority and glory are easy to connect – the etymological meaning of *kâbôd* is weight which is easy to associate with the concepts of strength or greatness that naturally connect to authority.[922] This is doubly true when, as we saw in the previous chapter, Balthasar's theological definition of glory is that of the divine lordship – by this definition, the concepts of glory and authority are almost coterminous. It should therefore be no surprise to see Balthasar discussing glory alongside authority as part of the same 'side' of the authority-poverty (apparent) dichotomy – and this is precisely what happens.

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[915] Ibid.

[916] The Gospels are widely regarded as the central texts, describing as they do the life, works and teachings of Jesus. In the previous chapter, we discussed Balthasar's especial emphasis upon one of these gospels – that of John – but holding that one of them is more important than the others does not necessarily imply that the rest are not important.

[917] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 118-119.

[918] Ibid, 119-121.

[919] Ibid, 121.

[920] Ibid.

[921] Ibid, 122-124.

[922] For a detailed discussion of the meaning of kâbôd in the Old Testament, see "kâbôd", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Volume VII*, trans. by David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MN: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 22-38.

For example, when discussing the hymn in Philippians 2, Balthasar makes a contrast between a concept of glory that is associated with power and lordship, and the weakness that comes as a result of the self-emptying.[923] It is unambiguous in this passage that glory belongs on the 'side' of authority, rather than on the 'side' of poverty.[924] Furthermore, in the introduction to the chapter, Balthasar goes further, essentially identifying Jesus' claim to authority with the Old Testament word for glory, *kâbôd*:

> it is precisely this *formal* matter, viz. Jesus' claim to authority, that is the foundation that maintains itself through all the formulations that give it content, the foundation that generates the formulations from itself. And this foundation is not concealed in the interpretations, but rather shines through along with them: for this, there is no more apt name than that of the original *kâbôd*, the unique momentum here of the one who is present, whether he utters the ἐγὼ εἰμί explicitly or not.[925]

Here, Balthasar clearly identifies *kâbôd* with Jesus' claim to authority – or, at least, with the out-shining of that authority.

All of this raises the question of who Jesus is – "[h]ow is Jesus' reference to his 'I' related to Yahweh's reference of old to his 'I'?"[926] Balthasar does not spell out the details of how all of this relates to wider doctrine, although he does say that "[t]he only solution to the mystery hidden here is the Trinitarian solution."[927] (Balthasar's Trinitarian theology will be dealt with in the following chapter.)

Jesus' Poverty

Jesus' mark of poverty is similarly rooted in an Old Testament concept: the fact that "Israel was educated into an attitude that covered all of existence – into that poverty, which being absolutely robbed and deprived of rights through God's judgement, can hope for any right and any good thing only from God."[928] And Jesus' life continues in this way, with Jesus living "in … absolute poverty and in the vulnerability which

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[923] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 147-148.
[924] Ibid.
[925] Ibid, 116.
[926] Ibid, 128.
[927] Ibid.
[928] Ibid, 130.

belongs to poverty, in the renunciation of all earthly power and every earthly possession."[929] This poverty is not restricted to a lack of wealth, but is extended to an attitude of renunciation of power – which (initially) appears to stand in tension with the concept of authority discussed above.

Balthasar's understanding of Jesus' poverty is closely connected to how he understands Christians to be expected to put into practice a similar thing. In support of this idea, he cites a number of gospel texts where Jesus supports a life of poverty, such as the beatitudes,[930] the story of "'Lazarus' against the glutton",[931] and references to sinners who acknowledge their sinfulness being accepted by Jesus[932] (saying that "the poor and the sinners sit together in the same darkness" [933] and that "the sinner sees and accepts that he is helpless in his poverty".[934])

Balthasar also identifies a special degree of poverty directed specifically "to the disciples"[935]: "the requirement to leave everything".[936] Some Christians are thereby called to a special kind of discipleship for whom "perfect poverty is one with perfect obedience: at the call of Christ, they must leave everything (Lk 5.11, 28), must 'renounce all that they have' (14.33), 'sell all that they have and distribute to the poor' (18.22) …".[937]

When Balthasar finds both kinds of poverty in the teaching of Jesus in the gospels, he clearly meets the criterion of basing his teaching on specific biblical texts. Additionally, the first kind of poverty does not lie in any tension with any Protestant commitments.

However, the same cannot be said of the second kind of poverty. This kind of poverty to which an exclusive group are especially called is a fairly obviously parallel to Catholic beliefs about such things as monastic vows, by which Balthasar appears to see justification for such practices. Protestantism does not usually affirm practices

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[929] Ibid, 131.
[930] Ibid.
[931] Ibid, 132.
[932] Ibid, 131-132.
[933] Ibid.
[934] Ibid, 132.
[935] Ibid.
[936] Ibid.
[937] Ibid, 132-133.

such as monasticism, and so this might be read as a contradiction to Protestant theological commitments.

However, there are several reasons why this does not pose an insuperable problem for a Protestant appropriation of the Word-Flesh element of Balthasar's theological aesthetics. Firstly, it is worthwhile to note that a belief that the disciples were especially called to particular poverty does not necessarily imply that later movements such as monasticism were justified in developing their own practices – this can only be justified with further beliefs; a belief that Jesus asked his original disciples in the first century to follow a particular kind of poverty does not automatically imply that Jesus calls a monk in, for example, the seventh or twenty-first century to the same kind of poverty. Secondly, even if one were to reject the second kind of poverty, the first would still exist and ground Balthasar's basic theory about the moral value of poverty. Thirdly, when supporting his claim regarding the second type of poverty, Balthasar undoubtedly cites a number of sayings of Jesus which support these ideas – even if one does not interpret and apply these texts to monasticism or anything equivalent, any Protestant reading would have to interpret them as endorsing the spiritual value of poverty for some or all Christians. Balthasar's basic point about the spiritual value of poverty for Christians is therefore not one which lies in inherent tension with any Protestant commitment, and so meets the criteria which I have set out.

The poverty which Balthasar identifies is rooted in the person of Jesus, who Balthasar identifies as the ground of this kind of moral poverty. Balthasar writes: "These unheard-of requirements, seemingly inhuman, can be based upon only one presupposition – that Jesus himself is the one who is *absolutely poor*. How could he make such demands, unless he had first accomplished this archetypally, representatively and inclusively."[938] Balthasar cites biblical texts making a link between Jesus' poverty and those of his disciples, writing (for example):

> How could he say to his disciples 'Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and not do what I tell you?' ([Luke] 6.46), if he himself did not do it, and thus show himself to be their Lord? It is for this reason that he warns those who wish to follow him, 'The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head' (Lk 9.58).[939]

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[938] Ibid, 133.
[939] Ibid.

Jesus not only practices what he preaches, but he is the model by which other people should assess how they ought to live.

Indeed, it is more than this: Jesus is where ordinary humans get the ability to practice this kind of moral poverty. This is not simply a matter of obedience or imitation, but instead Jesus puts into practice a way of living involving absolute trust in God,[940] which enables him to "make others exclusively dependent upon himself, and thereby expose them to complete poverty, in order to give them in return the absolute promise of God".[941]

Balthasar also connects Jesus to human poverty in another way: "Jesus' poverty is … above all an act of *solidarity*."[942] He cites a number of different ways in which Jesus "is in solidarity"[943] consistently with "various groups of men"[944] – citing biblical references to "'all the tax collectors and sinners' (Lk 15.1f)",[945] to children and those who are like children,[946] and those who are persecuted.[947]

The solidarity with sinners is perhaps especially important. It is not "with the sinner *qua* sinner; but … with the one who knows that he is a 'poor wretch', one whose tears flow much more quickly than those of the hard, righteous Pharisee (Lk 7.44f.)"[948] This mirrors Balthasar's definition of poverty not as solely a lack of material possessions, but also as an attitude of renunciation of one's own wealth and power in favour of receiving only from God – Jesus' solidarity is thereby with the sinner who is himself or herself poor, on the ground of their poverty.

And this solidarity with the poor inevitably leads towards the cross, where it means Jesus "must now really 'be reckoned among those who have broken the law' (Lk

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[940] Ibid.
[941] Ibid, 134.
[942] Ibid, 136-137.
[943] Ibid, 137.
[944] Ibid.
[945] Ibid.
[946] Ibid.
[947] Ibid.
[948] Ibid, 138.

22.37)."[949] At the cross we see Jesus taking poverty as far as he can go, in solidarity with the rest of the poor.

All of this meets the two criteria which I set out previously: of being based upon biblical exegesis, and of being compatible with Protestant theological commitments.

The (Apparent) Contradiction

We have already seen how Balthasar notes that these two marks appear to be contradictory, when seen in themselves. A concept of authority – especially one so closely connected to other ideas of power and glory – seems to be in contradiction with a concept of poverty – especially one so defined by lack of these things.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Balthasar frequently sets up these kinds of tensions in his theology, arguing that two apparently distinct concepts, each of which are incomplete on their own, are reunited and made whole in the revelation of beauty which is found in Jesus, and especially the cross.

In Part 2, we also saw my argument that a Protestant reading of Balthasar can reinterpret most of his understanding of beauty in the light of a stronger doctrine of the fall. This maintained that where Balthasar identifies elements of beauty as being partial and therefore being completed by being integrated into the vision of beauty provided by Christ, it is natural for a Protestant theologian to go further and argue that these elements are not only partial but also broken, and that they are not only completed but also repaired or healed.[950] At this juncture, it is worthwhile to note that this is very clearly true of these two concepts.

If interpreted on their own, outside of a broader vision of beauty, both 'marks' (authority and poverty) can easily be seen as being not beautiful, but in fact ugly. A concept of authority on its own can easily be perceived as oppressive – contrary to an individual's freedom.[951] This is especially so when combined with concepts such

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[949] Ibid.

[950] See Chapter 4.

[951] For example, the classical example of a book advocating modern liberal values (John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*) contains a chapter arguing that the exercise of authority is usually oppressive – see pages 83-103 of John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty", in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. John Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 5-128.

as power. The readers of this dissertation will be post-enlightenment thinkers, and therefore likely to share in a modern suspicion of power and authority; however, this perspective is not entirely limited to the modern age. There is, for example, a significant biblical tradition of critique of kingship.[952]

The case for the ugliness of authority can only strengthened when one considers that the claims of divine authority are not limited but rather infinite and absolute. It is not easy to see any circumstance where, if such authority were held by any non-divine person, a Christian theologian could see such authority as being anything other than ugly – but when such an attribute is held by a divine person, the way that it integrates within broader concepts allows it to be seen as beautiful.

Similarly, poverty on its own is naturally quite ugly. While one may see beautiful things within poverty, the brute fact of lack is in itself quite repulsive – on its own, it contains suffering and emptiness and any number of other things which cannot be said to be, in themselves, beautiful. However, for the Christian, Jesus' poverty is understood as part of a wider picture which may be seen as beautiful as a whole.

This means that, if Balthasar's ideas can show how these two ideas are to be reconciled, and if this reconciliation in Balthasar is able to show how the two marks are both beautiful, then this will support my argument in Part 2. With that in mind, this chapter now turns to examining how Balthasar relates these two marks together.

Balthasar's Resolution

Transparency

To begin with, it is worthwhile to note that when discussing both concepts of authority and poverty, Balthasar makes extensive use of a third concept: that of "transparency." Balthasar's usage of this language makes it considerably easier to see how the two inter-relate. He writes:

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[952] For an exploration of the varying ideologies behind the Old Testament witness regarding kingship, see K.W. Whitelam, "Israelite Kingship. The royal ideology and its opponents", in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*, ed. by R.E. Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 119-140.

> The unity [between poverty and authority] lies in the transparence of the one sent, who does not his own will, but the will only of the one who sent him (Jn 6.38), who does not speak from himself, and accordingly does not seek his own glory, and precisely for this reason is 'true' (7.18), i.e. a word that is transparent to the one who is speaking: 'My teaching is not mine, but the teaching of him who sent me' (7.16; 14.10, 24). But the synthesis which is before John's eyes comes about in the already present death of Jesus, in his 'being given up', 'falling into the earth', 'being raised up'.[953]

For Balthasar, the concept of transparency grounds both authority and poverty. Jesus' authority is derived from the Father, and comes because Jesus allows himself to embody not Himself, but rather God the Father. Balthasar writes:

> in order that everything in man, the external and the internal, and indeed the demonic, may lie before him fully transparent, it is necessary that Jesus, who is the bearer of authority, be himself fully transparent before God.[954]

In support of this claim, Balthasar focuses upon a number of texts from John's gospel:

> Here it is John who develops all the lines: the perpetual accomplishing of the Father's will by the Son (4.34; 8.29), his perpetual looking to the Father, who shows him all things (5.19f.), his proclaiming of the truth which he has heard from God (8.40). It is only on these grounds that he himself can be for John 'the truth' (14.16; cf. 1.14). … John explains Jesus' truth on the grounds of his sinlessness (8.46f.), of his selflessness that seeks only the Father's glory (5.41), of his transparence to the Father, which makes his testimony to the Father and the Father's testimony to him inseparably two-in-one (8.14ff.).[955]

He also draws on a number of other New Testament passages, particularly those which refer to Jesus as being either truth or true – since truth is identified with God, Balthasar therefore reads these texts as on some level suggesting that Jesus' significance comes from beyond him, from the Father.[956] What all of these texts ground is the idea that Jesus' authority comes from the Father, and through Jesus being transparent to him.

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[953] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 142.
[954] Ibid, 125.
[955] Ibid.
[956] Ibid, 125-126.

The concept of poverty is also grounded by Balthasar's idea of transparency. We have already seen that Balthasar defined the pre-Christian Israelite concept of poverty as despairing of one's own strength and value, in order to seek only to receive from God. The concept of poverty as applied to Jesus is not very different.

For Balthasar, Jesus' poverty is found in His resolute decision to give what He has to others: "Jesus is the bringer of salvation, equipped only to pass on what he has to others; for himself, he has nothing."[957] These others become "exclusively dependent upon"[958] Him and "thereby expose themselves to complete poverty"[959] – but by doing so receive "the absolute promise of God as responding gift and guarantee (Mt 19.29 par.)."[960] Human poverty is a dependence upon Jesus – who passes on what He receives from the Father. And this is rooted in Jesus' poverty – that is, His dependence upon the Father, from whom He receives what He goes on to give: "He has entrusted his cause so exclusively to the future which belongs to God that he can dare to"[961] expect others to receive from Him in their poverty.

At this stage, this concept of transparency begins to help us understand how authority and poverty fit together. In His transparency, Jesus has poverty because He gives up everything in order to receive from the Father – and Jesus has authority because He transparently gives up Himself in order to receive from the Father, and in receiving from the Father He thereby embodies the Father and His authority. Transparency thereby allows us to see both of these concepts as being united rather than as standing in contradiction.

We can see that this concept of transparency involves a kind of union between God the Son and God the Father. In Jesus's giving up of self to receive from the Father, what he receives is the Father – the Father and the Son thereby sharing together in Jesus' life. It is hard to see in what sense Jesus could possibly embody the Father and the Father's authority without this involving a kind of union between the two.

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[957] Ibid, 131.
[958] Ibid, 134.
[959] Ibid.
[960] Ibid.
[961] Ibid, 133.

We can also see that this meets the two criteria of being based on exegesis of biblical texts, and compatible with Protestant theological commitments.

Transparency, Self-abandonment and the Cross

At this stage, what we have said might appear to stand in contradiction to what we saw in the previous chapter about the role of the cross in Balthasar's theology of beauty: the centre around which these two concepts cohere does not seem to be in Jesus as found on the cross, but rather an abstract concept of 'transparency'. In fact, however, this is not Balthasar's position:

> even if both distinguishing marks could be comprehended in one view (as is the case in the Johannine transparency to the Father), and could persist through everything as formal characteristics at the basis of Jesus' existence, where then would 'what is not a word' (as we have termed it above when setting the scene) remain as the midpoint of the Word? It will be shown that the third and final implication of the Word made flesh, in which alone the first two distinguishing marks really come together, leads to this midpoint, to the word as not-word, as a word that abandons itself and dissolves itself.[962]

This third mark is Jesus' self-abandonment, and the third sub-section of the Word-Flesh chapter discusses how this self-abandonment is ultimately found in the cross.[963]

He begins this section with a logical argument based upon several categories – and with limited direct scriptural warrant.[964] The one explicit mention of scripture occurs at the beginning, where he quotes the phrase "The Word became flesh",[965] explaining that it means that "the divine and eternal word wished to give itself adequate expression in mortal flesh".[966] Noting the "fleetingness and futility"[967] of human existence, Balthasar states that "[t]he idea that a mortal being could give itself utterance as immortal 'word' is a contradiction that would seem necessarily to

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[962] Ibid, 142.
[963] Ibid, 142-161.
[964] Ibid, 142-144.
[965] Ibid, 142.
[966] Ibid, 143.
[967] Ibid.

burst open and destroy human existence."[968] However, in attempting to explain how the human being Jesus can be taken on as an expression of human flesh by God, Balthasar argues that a human being cannot embody the word of God in their flesh – with one exception:

> this could not happen through man himself, unless he were to place his entire existence in the flesh, mortal and futile, at the disposal of the divine Word in such a self-expression, by *handing himself over* like an alphabet or a keyboard, for the act of formulation in words, handing over himself as a whole; birth and death, speaking and silence, waking and sleeping, success and failure, and everything else that belongs to the substance of human existence.[969]

The incarnation is only possible, therefore, because the human Jesus "hand[s] himself over"[970] to God to be used by the Word. At the same time, Balthasar (noting that this account of the incarnation constitutes a "paradox"[971]) goes on to insist that in this revelation of Word in flesh, "everything that is to be disclosed – despite every seeming impossibility – must become present in this 'flesh', in this finite and transitory existence."[972] One implication of this is that the human "must be capable of being interpreted to an extent that is immeasurable, indeed infinite."[973]

However, for this "human life … to be a genuine and normal life and not that of a semigod, it cannot be burdened with the duty of"[974] changing the limited this-worldly "into something that is lasting and filled to the brim".[975] Indeed, this would be to rob the human of its humanity.[976] He writes of a (hypothetical) human who was charged with such a responsibility:

> Such a man would be obliged to accomplish through his own disposition and exertion the synthesis between his existence and meaning, between flesh and word; such an extreme thought, that could never be realised, shows clearly that in such a case the meaning and the immanent word of his life would be destroyed at its root.[977]

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[968] Ibid.
[969] Ibid.
[970] Ibid.
[971] Ibid.
[972] Ibid.
[973] Ibid, 144.
[974] Ibid.
[975] Ibid.
[976] Ibid.
[977] Ibid.

Instead, there was a "man in whose human existence God willed to proceed to his final act of self-utterance."[978]

For Balthasar, all that the human can accomplish in this scenario is to make space for the divine. And this is accomplished gradually, over time – "an increasing self-abandonment to the control by the one who alone can draw out of the whole lived existence the definitive word that God needs to complete his new and eternal covenant."[979] This means that the end of Jesus' earthly life – the cross – becomes the natural culmination of the human Jesus' role as the one who embodies the Word. And what is visible at the cross is a suffering which represents the depth of Jesus' self-abandonment.

From what we have said so far, one might see this self-abandonment as being a purely negative thing: Jesus' decision to subject Himself to suffering and death, simply for the sake of self-annihilation. If this interpretation of Balthasar were correct, it would raise serious problems: this self-annihilation would be seen as at the centre of Jesus and therefore as the highest ideal of the Christian faith, which would suggest that destruction is *in itself* at the core of Christianity, and given a positive evaluation in itself. It is difficult to see how any system which regards destruction as inherently positive could be anything other than problematic.

In fact, however, Balthasar closely links this self-abandonment with another concept: that of self-giving. The self is not abandoned for the sake of destruction or of suffering, but instead due to an orientation towards the other – that is, of love. This kenosis is not its own end, but instead is "key to von Balthasar's treatment of love."[980]

For Balthasar, self-abandonment and self-giving are identified. Jesus' self-abandonment is not for its own sake, but in order to make room for the Father – "in his self-abandonment, he cannot repel anything that the Father gives him".[981] If it were otherwise, it would be difficult to see how Jesus' self-abandonment results in

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[978] Ibid.
[979] Ibid, 145.
[980] Johnson, *Christ and Analogy*, 172.
[981] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 151.

His possession of the mark of authority, which we have already seen He receives through His self-abandonment making Him transparent to the Father. And in giving Himself over that He may allow the Father to occupy Himself, He displays His love for the Father. This also means that when, as we have seen, Jesus' transparency to the Father brings about a union with the Father, we can also say that His love for the Father brings about such a union.

Elsewhere in Balthasar, we see that this pattern of self-giving is found in the Trinity, before God interacts with the world. As Christ and the cross reveals God in Himself, Balthasar suggests that what is seen in Jesus' earthly life is an echo of what God is like within the Trinity.[982] This means that the Trinitarian relations contain this kind of self-giving – when the Father begets the Son, He gives Himself – everything that He is – to the Son, so that "[t]he Father's generation of the Son within the Trinity can be characterised as the first divine 'kenosis' which underpins everything else."[983] This is because "the utter self-giving of the Father to the Son [is] a renunciation of being divine by himself, a letting go of the divinity and, in that sense, a divine 'godlessness', prompted by love."[984] This allows a "distance"[985] between the divine persons which grounds subsequent distances such as that found at the cross[986] - "kenosis has now become an event within the Trinity itself".[987] However, within the intra-Trinitarian relationship, the persons also possess an intimacy in which, as the persons give themselves to one another, they at the same time lose and receive – finding their "identity [to be] constituted in this act of giving away"[988] – and therefore do not as a consequence lack as a result of giving away. We will see more about Balthasar's account of the intra-Trinitarian love of God in the next chapter, including how it relates to God's love for humanity.

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[982] See David Luy, "The Aesthetic Collision: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Trinity and the Cross", *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 13:2 (Apr 2011), 154-169.

[983] Gerard F. O'Hanlon, *The immutability of God in the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 37.

[984] Ibid.

[985] Ibid, 38.

[986] Ibid, 37.

[987] Edward T. Oakes, "'He descended into hell': The Depths of God's Self-Emptying Love on Holy Saturday in the Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar", in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-emptying of God*, ed. by C. Stephen Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 218-245.

[988] Rowan Williams, "Balthasar and the Trinity", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. by Edward T. Oakes & David Moss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37-50.

Balthasar's method of rooting his ideas in the nature of God is controversial, with writers having widespread disagreements on whether and to what extent they are compatible with an orthodox understanding of the Christian God. What seems much easier to affirm is that the Christological approach – one in which self-abandonment for the sake of self-giving is characteristic of Jesus' life – is based on an exegesis of biblical text and is compatible with Protestant theological commitments. This therefore meets the two broad criteria which I have set out.

Glory

One particularly notable part of Balthasar's commentary on Jesus' self-abandonment is his discussion of glory (on some occasions using the Greek δόξα, and on other occasions translating the word[989]). Balthasar particularly uses the Christ-hymn in Philippians 2 as a source for this reflection.[990] In this section, Balthasar identifies Jesus' glory with that which he is laying aside:

> And this occurs in the elementary sense of the renunciation of one's own δόξα. The early Christian hymn coined for this the concept of emptying out or making-vain (κένωσις) (Phil 2.7), and John expressed the same fact in the words of Jesus, that he does not look for δόξα before men (Jn 5.41) but for the δόξα of the only God (5.44), and that therein lies his truth (7.18). The hymn understands the emptying out as the renunciation of the μορφῇ θεοῦ, the 'form of God', but then goes on to present the Incarnation, not as the assuming of the corresponding 'form of a man', but explicitly as the assuming of the μορφῇ δούλου, the 'form of a slave'.[991]

The fundamental point here is that Jesus is giving up His glory: "the renunciation of one's own δόξα."[992] Through this abandonment, Jesus "received a share in the δόξα of God the Father".[993] This is a result of Jesus' "opening-up of the empty space through which the δόξα can send its rays."[994] In this, Balthasar's interpretation of the role of glory in Philippians is essentially identical to how he understands Jesus'

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[989] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 146-148.
[990] Ibid, 146-147.
[991] Ibid, 146.
[992] Ibid.
[993] Ibid, 147.
[994] Ibid.

authority. This is to be expected, since – as we have already seen – Balthasar closely linked glory with that 'side' of the two apparently contradictory marks.

At the same time, Balthasar also implies that there is another understanding of glory alongside this one, which is not so identified with the mark of authority. He writes:

> In this very early text [Philippians 2:6-11], we apprehend something like the replacing of one ideal by another: of the ideal of a divine glory that is so much the property of the only God that he can and may never rid himself of it by a new ideal which as such cannot yet bear the name δόξα, because it consists precisely in ridding oneself of what bore this name in the Old Testament, in order to make ready the space of complete poverty, indeed more than this, of full abandonment of self, which holds itself open for this new splendour and glory alone.[995]

In this respect, Balthasar suggests that as well as the concept of glory being associated with the side of authority and of 'greatness', there is another concept of glory which is identified with the centre of revelation itself. This latter concept of glory "enables his readers to grasp an order in which [the distinct concepts which form parts of Balthasar's presentation of God] are found so inseparable that indeed they interpenetrate one another. That order is ultimately expressive of the very being of God as he is in himself, transcribed into terms of an engagement with his creation".[996] And this concept of glory is centred on the love that is found in transparency and self-giving, not around such concepts as authority and poverty.

Alongside this, Balthasar cites Jesus' claim in John's gospel "that he does not look for δόξα before men (Jn 5.41) but for the δόξα of the only God (5.44)"[997] as a way, not of suggesting that Jesus seeks self-interested glory from God instead of human beings. Instead, drawing on the text alongside the Christ-hymn of Philippians 2, Balthasar implies that the distinction includes that seeking glory from human beings is to seek one's own interest in that glory, while seeking God's glory is ultimately to seek the glory of that which is outside of oneself – that is, to be motivated by love.[998]

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[995] Ibid.
[996] Donald MacKinnon, "Some Reflections on Hans Urs von Balthasar's Christology with special reference to Theodramatik II/2 and III", in *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. by John Riches (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1986), 164-179.
[997] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 146.
[998] Ibid.

From this, we can see the beginning of how Balthasar himself understands the relationship between glory-seeking and love. For Balthasar, love lies at the centre of this, and the way Balthasar defines love works to bring together glory as one might often understand it – as a divine attribute closely associated with such things as authority, power and victory – with another set of things which one might see as fundamentally contradictory, such as poverty and emptiness. However, love – a self-giving love which evokes transparency to the other, bringing about a union with the other – serves to reconcile these two concepts, and in so doing redefines what glory means. As a consequence of this, God's glory is identified with God's essence – and at the heart of this, making sense of all else, is God's love. In the light of this, when Jesus seeks the glory of God, this is interpreted as an act of love for God, not an act that is in any way self-interested.

Evaluating Word-Flesh on the Question of Glory-Seeking and Love

Having seen the beginnings of Balthasar's answer to the question of glory-seeking and love as they emerge in *Word-Flesh*, it is worthwhile to pause and evaluate what we make of Balthasar's answer to this question.

Balthasar's Strengths

There are several obvious strengths of Balthasar's account.

To begin with, Balthasar's account at this stage seems to meet the criteria which we have been putting forward for something to be compatible with Protestant theology. Balthasar is consistently drawing on biblical texts in a way which is consonant with a Protestant epistemology (as was established in Part 2, and specifically Chapter 5). At the same time, there is no fundamental violation of any Protestant commitment. Therefore, Balthasar's theology in this chapter meets the basic criteria which we have set out for something to be sufficiently compatible with Protestantism for the purposes of this thesis.

Secondly, Balthasar's account provides a coherent account of both glory and love. By incorporating glory in its fullest sense within love – and doing so in a way which

fits naturally within his understanding of theological aesthetics – Balthasar is able to reduce tension between glory and love. Within this, Balthasar's scheme gives a clear and rich definition of what both God's glory and God's love mean. (We will find that these definitions are drawn on in the remaining chapters.)

Thirdly, the subjective 'feel' of Balthasar's account is less precise and analytical when compared to that of Edwards, and has more of the style of a narrative or of a personal communication. Edwards' work has at times felt as if it were describing God as if he were an equation; Balthasar's feels more like he is describing God as a person. (At the same time, it ought to be acknowledged that this can be seen as a weakness. The precision of Edwards' account allows one to carefully evaluate his arguments, making it much easier to evaluate them and determine whether or not they are compelling or true – we have already seen Kilby's critique of Balthasar along these lines.[999])

The Limits of Balthasar's Account

Having said all of this, what we have seen so far is – at best – incomplete. This is to be expected, given that what we have seen here is not attempting to be answer to the question we have been concerned with in this thesis. Instead, the questions which Balthasar is concerned with in *Word-Flesh* fall under the category of Christology; he is seeking to establish an approach to the relationship between God and Christ that belongs in the realm of theological aesthetics.

This is worthwhile to note, as there are a number of things which are of relevance to our broader study that this chapter does not address. To begin with, one thing that is lacking in *Word-Flesh* is any serious consideration of God's relationship with humanity – or His love for humanity. We have seen how Jesus' response to the Father results in a "spilling out" into creation, but this has been explored in relation to how it connects to Jesus' love for the Father, and not with regard to either person being motivated by a love for humanity. There is an obvious contrast with Edwards at this point – central to his approach is a contrast between divine self-love and divine love for humanity, and an analysis of how the latter relates to the former –

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[999] See Chapter 4.

while in Balthasar in *Word-Flesh*, the latter makes almost no appearance, while the former is understood in terms of the relationship between Father and Son in the incarnation.

Similarly, while Balthasar discusses the Son's attitude to the Father in *Word-Flesh*, he does not discuss anything behind that – the will of the Father. While the Son makes space for the Father, we do not see anything about the Father's character behind this. Within orthodox Trinitarian theology, one can always assume that the nature of the Father is identical to that of the Son – but given that much of what we have seen depends upon the specific relations between Father and Son, it is not at all clear how the Father is involved.

However, this ought not to be read as necessarily signifying anything about how Balthasar approaches the question of love and glory; instead, it is simply a function of the topic of the chapter which we are examining. It does not necessarily mean there is any key difference between the approaches of Balthasar and Edwards. Nor, on the other hand, does it mean that there is no disagreement.

What it does suggest, however, is that to consider what this function means more broadly is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined Balthasar's ideas about the beauty of Christ in the incarnation. We have seen that Balthasar posits two apparently contradictory marks: that of Jesus' authority, and that of his poverty. We have seen how Balthasar reconciles them around a concept of transparency – which is a concept which itself finds its meaning and centre in the self-giving love of Jesus which is manifest in the cross. As such, Balthasar's theological aesthetics finds a concept of self-giving love, found in the cross, to be central to his understanding of God's nature.

What we have seen in this chapter will be shown to have a number of implications for Edwards in the remaining chapters of this thesis. We have already initially seen an association between self-giving love and union between the loving persons in Balthasar's ideas. This combination will become more prominent in the remaining

chapters, and when developed will work therapeutically on Edwards' attempts to use a concept of union between God and humanity to resolve the tension between glory-seeking and love.

We will immediately see, in the next chapter, how these ideas from *Word-Flesh* interact with other ideas from within Balthasar, in particular his understanding of the Trinity. This will again involve an association between love and union with the other, but will also develop these ideas in a way which makes increasing sense of the relationship between God's glory and the divine love for humanity. It will be particularly focused on the other place in the final volume of *The Glory of the Lord* which is especially related to the relationship between Glory-seeking and love – entitled *The Request for Glorification*.

Chapter 7: Trinity and Its Implications

In the previous chapter we saw that there is much that can be said about the relationship between glory and love within Balthasar's account of Christology in *The Glory of the Lord*. In particular, in his understanding, both Jesus' glory and His glory-seeking are centred around His self-giving love (and this love involves a union between the lover and the beloved). However, the Christological nature of this chapter means that this is discussed in connection with the Father-Son relationship, and does not explain how these attributes relate with regard to anything beyond that – including Jesus' love for humanity.

There is another element of Balthasar's theology which explicitly helps us to think about the relationship between God's glory-seeking and love: his doctrine of the Trinity. Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity is fundamental to his thought, providing a model of love as ontologically fundamental in such a way as to ground the rest of reality, so that "Balthasar's ontology is grounded in the inner-Trinitarian dialogicality of the relation of love between Father and Son in the Spirit."[1000] In this chapter, we will begin see how using Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity alongside the Christological ideas discussed in the previous chapter can be used therapeutically on Edwards' own ideas.

We will begin by examining how Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity enables what we saw in the previous chapter to exist within God Himself. We will then move on to look at how Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity shows God seeking His own glory out of intra-Trinitarian love. This is at once divine self-love and a form of love which is other-centred, and therefore legitimately described as love. We will also see how, in salvation history, this glory-seeking reaches out into creation, and causes God to incorporate humanity within His intra-Trinitarian love relationship.

This gives a link between God's love for Himself, and His love for the humanity that has already been incorporated within the intra-Trinitarian love. However, it does not explain God's salvific love for humanity – which, by definition, must be prior to us

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[1000] Matthew A. Rothaus Moser, *Love Itself is Understanding: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theology of the Saints* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2016), 244.

being salvifically incorporated within the Trinity - or how it connects to God's intra-Trinitarian love. For this, I will begin to develop in this chapter an idea from elements of both Edwards and Balthasar, whereby the love which the divine persons have for humanity is magnified by the intra-Trinitarian love, and thereby incorporated within this intra-Trinitarian love. However, even this will not be found to be ultimately successful at relating the two, as it does not explain where the original extra-Trinitarian love comes from. However, all of this will set the scene for later chapters, which will build on the work in this chapter and reconstruct Edwards' ideas in other ways.

God's Self-Giving in Eternity

In the previous chapter, we saw how Balthasar sees divine self-giving love – which contains a concept of kenosis – as being manifest within the life and death of Jesus. Within his scheme, this self-giving love is rooted in the eternal relations of the Trinity. Just as God the Son exhibits a self-giving love in His relation to the Father, so the Father Himself – sharing in the divine attributes – is understood as this self-giving love. However, due to the different relations, there are differences in how this is manifest in their intra-Trinitarian relationships.

Later in this chapter, we will see that the self-giving love within these relationships is the ground of the ways the persons act in salvation history, particularly with respect to glory. However, this is not the only way that self-giving love is manifest within the Trinitarian relations, which already express self-giving love before the creation of the world. We will see that Balthasar's account of the Trinity combines the traditional doctrine of the Trinity – and its account of the Father begetting the Son – with the account of the nature of the Son which we have seen Balthasar finds in the Christ event.

For Balthasar, when the Father begets the Son, He gives Himself to Him.[1001] This is understood as an act of self-giving love.[1002] He does so in a way that Balthasar even

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[1001] Antonio Lopez, "Eternal Happening: God as an Event of Love", in *Love Alone Is Credible: Hans Urs von Balthasar as Interpreter of the Catholic Tradition: Volume 1*, ed. by David L. Schindler (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 75-104.
[1002] Ibid, 84.

describes as kenotic, with the Father emptying Himself by giving Himself to the Son. However, this does not mean that the Father instead somehow becomes less than He was beforehand; the Father still possesses all that He originally was, but now possesses everything in His union with the Son – "[t]rinitarian freedom is both active and receptive; both the bestowing of life and the grateful receiving of life".[1003] Nonetheless, out of this relation arises a distance between Father and Son, and Balthasar argues that this separation "includes and grounds every other separation – be it never so dark and bitter"[1004] as it was at the cross.

What this means is that this same self-giving love, which is revealed in the Christ-event, is present without the existence of the universe. While it is revealed at the Christ event, it exists entirely independently of that. In fact, not only did God have this love before creation, but it is found in the essence of the Trinity itself. This self-giving love is so central to God that it structures His being, providing the ground for both the union and the distinction of the Trinity. This fact will be important to our argument later.

Kenosis in the Trinity

Balthasar's concept of kenosis, and especially its extension of the idea from the cross into the Trinity has been highly controversial. While a thorough examination of this topic would be well beyond the scope of this thesis, the matter is sufficiently important for this thesis that it will be necessary to make some brief remarks.

Christian theology has consistently held to a kind of kenosis in the incarnation: that in taking on human nature, the Son of God chooses to operate with voluntary self-restraint with regard to His divine nature. When it came to the cross specifically, the traditional understanding affirmed that the person of the Son of God suffered and died. However, orthodox Christianity recognises the conclusions of the council of Chalcedon, which upholds that in the incarnation, the divine person of the Son of God took on human nature, and so that the incarnate Christ contains two natures: divine and human. While the Son of God is believed to have emptied Himself to

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[1003] Rowan Williams, "Balthasar and the Trinity", 42.
[1004] Ibid.

suffering and death, He did so in His human nature, rather than His divine one. This formula allows a self-emptying of God the Son at the cross without in any way suggesting that the divine nature is changed, emptied, or compromised.

However, this traditional model has become the subject of considerable challenge in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This challenge has typically involved a reinterpretation of the incarnation and the cross to allow the divine nature to have in some sense been altered in it.[1005] However, Balthasar's reading suggests a different kind of change: a reading of the Trinity as itself already containing kenosis and something like the suffering that is found in the cross. This allows the divine nature to have self-emptied at the cross – while removing (or at the very least minimising) any need for a concept of change in the divine which this might otherwise involve, since the kenosis is rooted in an already extant Trinitarian kenosis.[1006]

However, this would seem to pose other problems for a traditional understanding of the divine nature. As Kilby observes, while "Balthasar does not – quite – bring suffering into the Trinity,"[1007] he does something quite similar:

> he does speak of something in the Trinity which can develop into suffering, of a "suprasuffering" in God, and, as we have seen, of risk, of distance, and of something "dark" in the eternal Trinitarian drama. We have seen that he consistently construes the *giving* internal to the Trinity in terms of giving *away*, giving up – in terms suggestive of loss. And we have seen that he has a kenotic understanding of the giving which makes up the Trinitarian life, so that he can speak of the Father letting go of his divinity, giving it away, surrendering himself, going "to the very extreme of self-lessness."[1008]

This is certainly not a classical reading of the inner life of God. Furthermore, it contains potential significant problems for Christianity:

> If love and renunciation, suffering (or something like it) and joy, are linked, not just in the Christian life, but eternally in God, then ultimately suffering and loss are given a positive valuation: they are eternalized, and take on an ultimate ontological status. And then, it seems to me, it becomes hard to understand how Christianity can possibly be "good news."[1009]

[1005] As a prominent example of this kind of reading, see Moltmann, *The Crucified God*.
[1006] See, e.g., Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*, vii-ix.
[1007] Kilby, *Balthasar*, 120.
[1008] Ibid.
[1009] Ibid.

In fact, this has profound implications for the way in which we think about God:

> The way in which Balthasar brings together reflection on the immanent Trinity and reflection on the world's horrors involves, in the end, an introduction of elements from the latter into the former, elements of darkness into the divine light.[1010]

This capacity of Balthasar's thought thereby is not only unusual and almost unprecedented within Christian tradition, apparently incompatible with what one might term classical theism; it furthermore appears to itself contain considerable dangers. In view of this, a theologian (especially one committed to classical theism) could develop a degree of reluctance to using Balthasar's theology in the way which this thesis advocates. (This will be particularly true given that the following chapter will argue that there are ways in which Balthasar's ideas can make Edwards' ideas more compatible with classical theism. This would be significantly weakened if Balthasar's ideas are themselves similarly incompatible with classical theism.)

Kenotic vs. Self-giving love

However, there is a way in which Balthasar's ideas may be altered in this area without significantly changing the relevant parts of his thought for the purposes of this thesis. This is simply to not adopt Balthasar's understanding of kenosis within the Trinity, and instead to adopt Balthasar's account of self-giving love without implying a kenosis within the Trinity. Within this, one can still allow the self-giving love within the Trinity to ground an equivalent self-giving love which is manifest in the Son's kenosis at the cross *in the traditional sense* (that is, in Jesus' human nature), but this does not require one to import this idea into the begetting of the Son. For this reason, throughout the remainder of this thesis, we will refer to the self-giving love of God without implying that this involves a kenotic love of God (save in the specific circumstances of the incarnation.)

[1010] Ibid, 122.

This need not significantly influence the argument of this thesis. Balthasar's attempts to reconcile recent ideas in kenotic Christology with more traditional ideas about the nature of God is not of particular significance for the point which this thesis is making. Without the need to reconcile these ideas, I cannot think of any detail of the account of beauty which we have developed in this or the previous chapter which could not equally be met by using the language of self-giving love without the kenotic element. Nor will there be any element of Balthasar's account which will be used in the remaining chapters which requires this concept of kenosis. There is therefore no need for this kenotic element to be used within this thesis.

Furthermore, given the terms on which we are considering Balthasar for our project, it is notable that Balthasar's account of kenosis within the Trinity is not only novel in terms of the Christian tradition, but that this development seems to lack any serious biblical support. There are numerous biblical passages that have been used to support the church's doctrine of the begetting of the Son by the Father, and several passages could be used to support a claim that this begetting was motivated by the Father's self-giving love for the Son – for example, on one occasion Jesus states that "The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands."[1011] On another occasion, Jesus (when praying to the Father) refers to "my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world."[1012]

Either of these could be seen as God the Father, motivated by love, giving things from Himself that the Son may have them – and therefore be seen as a self-giving love. However, it is difficult to see passage that might be used to argue more specifically for self-emptying love in begetting, rather than simply self-giving love. I cannot think of any passage which could be seen as saying this which would not much more naturally be seen as saying something else (such as simply that the begetting involves a self-giving love that does not contain kenosis). As such, to adapt Balthasar's account by placing to one side the elements of kenosis within the Trinitarian relations, and instead only adopting the broader concept of self-giving love, does nothing to make his ideas less consistent with Protestant thought within

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[1011] John 3:35, NRSV.
[1012] John 17:24, NRSV.

the framework of this thesis (indeed, they could arguably make his ideas more compatible.)

Balthasar on the Trinity and Glory

Having considered the important side-issue of kenosis, we are now able to return to our key question of how glory-seeking and love relate, and in particular how Balthasar views God's actions in seeking His glory in the light of the intra-Trinitarian relationship in which they are rooted. Balthasar devotes a chapter (entitled *The Request for Glorification*) of Volume 7 of *The Glory of the Lord* to this subject.[1013] In keeping with Balthasar's methodology in *The Glory of the Lord*, this section draws particularly upon the Gospel of John – particularly frequently, looking at Jesus' request for glory in John 17. This is a natural passage to turn to for this discussion, which begins:

> After Jesus has spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you.'[1014]

From this quote alone, one can already see several things. One can see that it is a passage which concerns the divine desire for God to be glorified – that is why the Son is requesting the glorification of the divine persons. We can also see the Trinitarian element – that the glorification is a mutual giving of glory between the Father and the Son, whereby the Son is to receive glory from the Father and in turn Himself glorify the Father. The chapter, *The Request for Glorification*, develops these themes, as we shall now see.

Mutual Glorification

Balthasar begins this section by reiterating what he has previously said in the Word-Flesh chapter regarding Jesus' "total renunciation of his own will"[1015], and how Jesus' self-abandonment allows the Father to be manifest in Him and given through

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[1013] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 239-263.
[1014] John 17:1, NRSV.
[1015] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 244.

Him to his disciples.[1016] Jesus' "request for glorification"[1017] from the Father is rooted in this previous content, and its belief that Jesus' "obedience"[1018] – identified with His self-abandonment in favour of the Father – glorifies the Father.[1019]

Balthasar draws on John's gospel as it speaks of Jesus seeking God's glorification. Citing specific texts, he notes how the gospel "start[s] from the human drive to 'make oneself respected' by others"[1020] and a desire to "[act] and [speak] in in the last resort on the basis of his own ego ('in his own name', 5.43; 'from himself', 7.18)."[1021] However, the gospel lays this foundation specifically in order to set Jesus in contrast to this approach:

> One may give the name of (self-)glorification (δόξα) to this lustre that the ego seeks in its presentation of itself, and demands for itself, it is precisely this that Jesus rejects: 'I do not seek my own δόξα (8.50), in words that express, not merely one attitude among others, but his innermost self-understanding. He *is* the one who in his entire existence seeks only the δόξα of the Father, the one who identifies himself with the execution of the mission, of the 'commandment' and 'commission' of the Father (10.18; 12.49, 50), with 'hearing' (8.47) and 'keeping his word' (8.55), to such an extent that the entire 'majesty' of the Father can appear localised in him.[1022]

In other words, Jesus not only seeks the Father's glory rather than His own, but His entire existence is orientated towards seeking the Father's glory – so much so that all other elements and aspects of this are seen as grounded in this orientation towards the Father's glory. This orientation towards the Father's glory is – if it were not obvious – specifically identified with love, when Balthasar writes "the obedient making way of the Son for the Father is always the expression of the eternal love of the Son".[1023] He goes on to spell out how all of this comes to work its way out in Jesus' self-abandonment at the cross (and in the various ways in which that is itself worked out).[1024]

[1016] Ibid, 244-246.
[1017] Ibid, 246.
[1018] Ibid.
[1019] Ibid.
[1020] Ibid.
[1021] Ibid.
[1022] Ibid, 246-247.
[1023] Ibid, 248.
[1024] Ibid, 247-248.

As a result of this, Balthasar says, "the reversal occurs: 'if God is glorified in him (the Son of Man), God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once' ([John] 13.32)".[1025]   Balthasar suggests that the Father's glorifying of Jesus is rooted in the Trinitarian relations – referring both to the Trinitarian distinction (for which Balthasar uses the language of "distance", as is characteristic of him[1026]) as well as in several respects to the union between the persons (e.g. referring to "the substantial identity of the personal love of the Son and the personal love of the Father"[1027]).[1028] Balthasar does not here develop a detailed account of how the Trinitarian persons relate, but what is clear is that the Son's glorifying the Father is reciprocated from the other side.

Drawing his discussion to a close, Balthasar identifies two key points. One is that God's actions in this glorifying is rooted in an "eternal, supramundane, and substantial unity of love between Father and Son"[1029] manifest in an "eternal love (love of the Father for the Son: [John] 5:20; [John] 17.24,26; love of the Son for the Father: 14.31)."[1030] Indeed, "the glory that is common to Father and Son is understood as the radiance of"[1031] this love – which leads on to the other key point, which is that this glorifying is manifest "in the work of salvation"[1032] and results in "the inner coming to an end of the will for salvation"[1033] of both Father and Son. This union of intra-Trinitarian love between Father and Son is manifest in God's love when displayed in salvation history. However, this role in salvation history is itself interpreted in the light of the third Trinitarian person – the Spirit.

The Place of the Spirit

For Balthasar, the role of the Spirit is crucial. Balthasar builds on the western theological tradition which identifies the Spirit with the love between the Father and

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[1025] Ibid, 248.
[1026] Kilby, *Balthasar*, 100.
[1027] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 249.
[1028] Ibid, 248-249.
[1029] Ibid, 249.
[1030] Ibid.
[1031] Ibid.
[1032] Ibid.
[1033] Ibid.

the Son,[1034] describing the Spirit as the "result of the mutual love"[1035] between Father and Son. This is true within the Trinity in eternity, and it is also true within the economy of salvation, with Balthasar's theology closely linking the two.

The Spirit's role (when working within creation) is to take the form of the Son's glory – in the cross – and share it with us. The Son has in the cross demonstrated His identity – that is, His loving transparency to the love of the Father.[1036] Subsequently, this "identity … must be exhibited to the world",[1037] and the Spirit has the "work of exhibiting that identity".

Once again, that which Balthasar says concerning the role of the Spirit in glorifying the mutual love between Father and Son is developed from the Bible. As one might also expect, Balthasar again primarily draws specifically from the gospel of John. Some of his argument is from things which John says directly about the role of the Spirit – for example, statements about the relationships between the Trinitarian persons are drawn out from citations from John 14, where (in Balthasar's words) Jesus "asks the Father to send"[1038] the Spirit. Similarly, that the Spirit's role is to glorify Jesus is drawn from John 16, which Balthasar cites.[1039] In addition to these places where the general relations between the roles of the persons is directly discussed, Balthasar also cites specific examples of how the Spirit glorifies the Son – such things as "speech and proclamation",[1040] "instruction",[1041] "bearing witness"[1042] – in each case drawing on specific biblical texts which show the Spirit performing a specific action which is part of the general role of the Spirit in glorifying the Son.

In all these ways, Balthasar's account of the Spirit meets my criterion of being based on exegesis of specific biblical texts. There is also no Protestant commitment which is contradicted or denied by this understanding of the Spirit. This therefore meets

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[1034] See, e.g., David Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son", *Theological Studies*, 51 (1990), 193-229.
[1035] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 251.
[1036] Ibid.
[1037] Ibid.
[1038] Ibid.
[1039] Ibid, 252.
[1040] Ibid.
[1041] Ibid.
[1042] Ibid.

the criteria which I have set out for a more Protestant account of beauty than that posited by Edwards.

Trinitarian Persons Glorified in Humanity

The role of the Spirit, seen above, is to take the intra-Trinitarian love between Father and Son, and share it with humanity in salvation. This is a consequence of what it means for God to glorify Himself – for Balthasar (as, indeed, for Edwards), this revelation of glory is not simply a conveying of information, but instead a sharing in the essence of the divine:

> To 'take what is mine' means therefore not only an external interpretation of words and deeds of the past, but the pouring out of the substance itself (which is inseparably 'word' *and* 'flesh', proclamation *and* sacrament), that is to say, the revelation of the fruitfulness that dwells within this substance.[1043]

In this passage, we see sharing in the substance of Jesus, and the revelation of Him, as closely connected. Balthasar does not spell out how the relationship between the two works, or in what way Jesus' substance can be identified with the revelation of Him (or indeed whether "the fruitfulness that dwells within this substance"[1044] has some relation to the Holy Spirit). However, there are numerous ways in which they could be related within the context of what Balthasar is saying here (for example, Edwards' identification of all knowledge of God with participation in the Son, and all love of God with participation in the Spirit, could easily make sense of this content.)

As a natural consequence of this glorifying of the Spirit, Balthasar goes on to talk about how the glory of God comes to exist within the church.[1045] The Spirit, in glorifying the Son, shares His substance with the church – that is, love. As a result, the church goes on to embody this divine love.[1046] This means that, in a paradoxical obedience to Christ which is also free, we are called to ourselves love.[1047] This love

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[1043] Ibid, 253.
[1044] Ibid.
[1045] Ibid, 255-261.
[1046] Ibid, 256-261.
[1047] Ibid, 256-257.

is to reflect Christ's love – and thus involves "the attempt as total self-renunciation, at dying to all self-will",[1048] reflecting Jesus' "self-giving".[1049]

This all results in our entry into the communion of love and joy that exists within the Trinity.[1050] As such, the Spirit draws human beings into the union of love which exists between the divine persons. Balthasar writes of Jesus' return to glorification in John 17:5 that "the context of John's gospel as a whole shows that this is no mere restoration of an original state, but rather the integration of the obedient love, lived out in the separation undertaken for the sake of bringing salvation, into the original intimacy and 'perfect joy' of the dwelling with one another of Father and Son."[1051] (Read in one way, this could appear to undermine classical doctrines such as divine immutability, but this is not Balthasar's intention.[1052]) As a result of this return, human beings – who participate in this divine glory – are themselves brought into the relationship that exists between Father and Son:

> And the final request, drawing the Church and the redeemed world too into the light of the trinitarian love, belongs essentially to this integration: 'Father, I desire that those whom you have given me may be where I am, to see the glory which you have given me, *for* you loved me before the foundation of the world' ([John] 17.24).[1053]

In this respect, as in Edwards, the final goal of Balthasar's understanding of divine glory is a union with the Trinitarian persons, found in love and knowledge of God. While several of the details do not entirely match up – for example, Balthasar does not identify the Son and the Spirit with divine understanding and love in the same way that Edwards does – there is a great deal of similarity here.

It is also worth noting that, once again, Balthasar's theology meets the criteria which I raised for the purposes of demonstrating that Balthasar's account of divine beauty can make Edwards more consistently Protestant. It is apparent that he has cited specific biblical texts, particularly from the gospel of John. There is also no fundamental contradiction with any Protestant commitment.

[1048] Ibid, 257.
[1049] Ibid, 258.
[1050] Ibid, 259.
[1051] Ibid, 260.
[1052] For extensive discussion of this, see O'Hanlon, *The immutability of God*.
[1053] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 260.

Trinity in Balthasar and Edwards

This has a number of implications for the question of glory-seeking and love, which merit consideration alongside Jonathan Edwards.

To begin with, we see here an indication that not only God's glory itself, but also God's motivation for seeking His own glory, are identified with love. We saw in the previous chapters that the nature of God's glory has at its centre a self-giving (and potentially self-emptying) love. Similarly, we see here that God's goal in seeking His own glory is also identified with love.

The love that it is identified with is other-centred, but nonetheless fundamentally intra-Trinitarian rather than specifically oriented towards human beings. It begins in a love between the persons of the Father and the Son, and then expresses itself in an outspreading love for humanity (describing the economic role of the Spirit at this point).

As such, it is still a fundamentally theocentric vision of divine love, whereby the persons are motivated by love for God, but that love can be described as sufficiently oriented towards the other to be legitimately described as love, which implies an orientation towards the other. In this respect, it meets Jonathan Edwards' criteria (as we saw in Chapter 2) for theocentricity, while still explaining how this can legitimately be described as love. (It is worth noting that this is not, in fact, necessarily very different to Edwards' own approach – in a previous dissertation[1054] I demonstrated that there is considerable evidence that Edwards, in *The End of Creation*, implicitly holds that the divine theocentric love is an intra-Trinitarian love, and that this is one reason why he held that this love is not selfish.)

However, Balthasar's account also describes how this mutual glorification results in humans being drawn into the love within the Trinity. At the same time, it does not answer many of the questions which Edwards would have regarding how divine love for humanity is related to divine love for God. Nonetheless, the suggestion that God's glorifying of Himself brings us within God's intra-Trinitarian love does seem to

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[1054] See my previous dissertation in the appendix, especially its first chapter.

suggest that the relation which we have to God – at least after we are incorporated in this way – is somehow based upon the intra-Trinitarian love, and in this respect Balthasar lines up quite closely with Edwards.

However, the ideas which we have seen do not do two of the things which Edwards' account does. Firstly, they does not give a detailed account of how, or in what way, God's love for us is based upon God's intra-Trinitarian self-love. Edwards explains that this works because divine attributes, when they exist outside of God, nonetheless participate in God and love for God therefore results in love for the attributes. By contrast, while Balthasar does uphold an account of union between God and humanity, he does not give the same kind of detailed metaphysical account beyond identifying it with self-giving love. This difference appears to reflect a distinction in theological style and approach – whereas Edwards carefully spells out exactly how different entities relate to each other with a degree of precision, almost as if analysing a mathematical problem, Balthasar instead gives a more 'artistic' approach, incorporating different elements into a big picture which seems more like giving a narrative overview than a precise analytical explanation.[1055] (I will contrast the relative merits of the two approaches in the final chapter.)

Secondly, Balthasar's account does not give an explanation of why God loves humanity before human incorporation within the love of the Trinity. While it does give an account of how the post-salvation love is incorporated within the Trinity, *The Request for Glorification* fails to explain how God's pre-salvation love for humanity fits in. The salvific incorporation of humans into the Trinity is itself described as an act of glorification of God, and is therefore motivated by intra-Trinitarian love. However, there is no explanation given for how its motivation in God's love for humanity is a manifestation of this intra-Trinitarian love.

There are a number of explanations which could be given for this. One would be that God, in Balthasar's account, simply does not love humanity until after salvation, and so that salvation is not motivated by love. However, this would lie in serious variance with both biblical material and Christian tradition, and we have already seen

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[1055] Balthasar's understanding of revelation according to the analogy of art is central theme of much of his work, and has been widely discussed in the secondary literature. Particularly of note is Stephan van Erp, *The Art of Theology: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics and the Foundations of Faith* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2004).

in Chapter 2 that Edwards rejects it on biblical grounds. To adopt such an idea would place one at great variance with the historic beliefs of Christianity.

Another would be that God acts from multiple different goals in creation. One of His goals is the glorification of God, rooted in intra-Trinitarian love – another is love for humanity, and the two are distinct and separate (although both fall under the rubric of love). However, this seems unnecessarily forced and complicated – given that the Christian tradition assumes that God is simple and therefore must have one goal, it is simpler to assume that God does not have multiple goals in the same action. Furthermore, much of Edwards' argument in *The End of Creation* makes considerably more sense if God has only one ultimate goal, which is identified with Himself (in some sense) – a position for which he marshals a number of arguments.[1056] Edwards' account, whatever else may be said about it, is able to provide an explanation of how divine love for humanity may be united with divine love for God. To adopt from Balthasar an explanation that the two goals are separate would therefore seem to be to weaken Edwards' account, in this respect at least, rather than to strengthen it.

A third option is that there is some explanation for how love for humanity is related to intra-Trinitarian love for God. This seems the most likely possibility, and the remainder of this chapter – as well as the following two chapters of this thesis – will explore how the ideas of Edwards and Balthasar may be drawn upon in a way which allows one to give a good account of how God's salvific love for humanity can be made sense of without being turned into a separate goal from the glorification that is rooted in His intra-Trinitarian love.

Theocentric Outflowing Love

We will begin by examining one initial consequence of intra-Trinitarian love for how we might see the relationship between God's loves for different objects. One way that this stress on intra-Trinitarian love could be developed is to argue that each person of the Trinity, in their intra-Trinitarian love, values the other persons and, as a consequence of this, therefore values what the other values and loves. This makes

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[1056] See Chapter 2 of this thesis, and WJE 8:419-427.

sense as an outworking of the Trinitarian theologies of both Balthasar and Edwards.[1057]

If one grants that the divine persons individually love humanity, this would therefore mean that the intra-Trinitarian love would magnify this love. As a result of (for example), the Son's love for humanity, the Father would consequently value humanity due to His love for the Son (in addition to valuing humanity as part of His own love for humanity). Similarly, as a result of the Father's love for humanity, the Son would love humanity. In this situation, if the persons of the Trinity initially possessed any love for humanity, the intra-Trinitarian love would serve to magnify this love.

The Case for Intra-Trinitarian Love Magnification

Before considering the implications of this proposal, I will first explore how such a concept might be found within the two theologians with whom we are concerned.

It is very easy to find a concept like this in Balthasar. The nature of self-glorification, as discussed above, is very close to it. To glorify the other is to honour him or her – to seek for the other to be magnified. We have seen how the divine love of the Son makes itself transparent to the Father, and how the Father seeks to honour the Son by glorifying Him. In each case, the intra-Trinitarian love is seeking for the essence of the other to be expanded, or to exist within them. The Father seeks the Son's essence to spread out, the Son seeks for the Father to exist within the Son. And since the essence of the other includes (or, given divine simplicity, is) the goals of the other, it is inevitable that any love or any goal which the beloved has will subsequently be included in this. In each case, the Trinitarian persons will value the loves and goals of the other, as a result of their intra-Trinitarian love magnifying it.

[1057] No theology built on the Trinity can be regarded as orthodox if the underlying Trinitarian theology is not itself orthodox, and many readers will have concerns with the underlying presumption in this line of thought that the divine persons have distinct centres of will and/or love (which is necessary if they are to have a love for the other which is separate to the other's love, or are able to "consent" to one another). I have seen no need to address the question of how well these ideas cohere with Trinitarian theology – a vast question – since they are present in both Edwards and Balthasar, and so if they are unorthodox, they are unorthodox in both. Their orthodoxy or otherwise would therefore neither strengthen nor weaken my argument that Edwards can be made more compatible with Protestant theology by using ideas from Balthasar.

The idea is not found in Edwards as directly, but there are features of his thought which seem very compatible with it. We saw in Chapter 1 that Edwards defines love as "consent". This would indicate that the Trinitarian persons would 'consent' to another one – and so would be inclined to love that which the other divine person loved. We particularly see this in *True Virtue*, where Edwards insists that apparent human virtues – care for one's friends and family, for example – are only virtuous if they are an expression of love for God.[1058] Human virtues express love for God when one seeks to seek the same things which God seeks.[1059] It would therefore seem natural to find the divine persons, when they love each other, seeking the things which the other persons seek. As such, while we cannot find intra-Trinitarian love magnification directly in Edwards, it seems something which naturally fits within it.

We will now turn to how this concept of intra-Trinitarian love magnification might interact with other aspects of Edwards' theology.

Edwards and Intra-Trinitarian Love Magnification

If one accepts the conclusions of the previous section – and if one accepts that any of the persons of the Trinity love humanity at all – then the divine theocentric self-love which Edwards so emphasises becomes a principle that reinforces and magnifies divine love for humanity.

This is a notable contrast with the relation which Edwards himself gives between divine love for humanity and His self-love. Within Edwards' own presentation of his argument in the first chapter of *The End of Creation* (as we saw in Chapter 2), divine self-love is, in a sense, placed in opposition to love for humanity. Edwards' argument is that (due to his understanding of beauty) God is obliged to love Himself infinitely more than He is required to love humanity. Since anything finite is as nothing when compared with something infinite, God is therefore obliged not to love us – apart from as a consequence or part of His love for Himself.

[1058] See, e.g., WJE 8:600-608.
[1059] See, e.g., WJE 8:558.

If Edwards' understanding is true, and none of the divine persons possess love for humanity, then the understanding of love as magnifying other loves would not actually have any consequences. The intra-Trinitarian love would only magnify love that already existed. But if Edwards' understanding of this is not true – and the divine persons already do possess some degree of love for humanity – then theocentric love does not serve as competition to divine love for humanity, but reinforces and magnifies it. With this in mind, it is worthwhile to consider to what extent Edwards' argument is persuasive against an independent love for humanity.

We have already considered the fact that Edwards' account is rooted in a concept of divine beauty which comes from natural theology. It is therefore built upon a presupposition in tension with Edwards' Protestantism. Therefore, a belief that God's love must be directly proportional to the beloved would need to be justified in another way.

Furthermore, if one were to grant, for the sake of argument, that Edwards was correct – whether for his own reasons, or some others – to say that God must love all entities in proportion to their degree of being or some other measure of value, it would not follow from this that God is obliged to only love Himself. It would indeed follow that God was obliged to love Himself infinitely more than humanity, but it would not therefore follow that God would be obliged to have no love for humanity at all. God, being infinite, is capable of infinite love – he is therefore presumably capable of loving Himself infinitely while also finitely love for humanity. A finite thing when contrasted with an infinite thing may be comparatively equivalent to nothing, but that does not mean that it actually is nothing – just as the fact that the size of a house is infinitely smaller than the size of the universe does not mean that a house has no size whatsoever. If God were capable only of finite love, then the argument might work – but since He is capable of infinite love, it does not.

Instead, our modified version of Edwards could adopt what I have called intra-Trinitarian love magnification, and find himself affirming that the power of divine self-love only magnifies the power of the love which God has for the creature. The love which God has for the creature is magnified by infinite love, and therefore presumably becomes itself infinite in some sense. However, it is nonetheless still a dependent form of 'vicarious love' – God seeking the good of the other out of love for

another party. This means that the Trinity as a whole can be seen as acting out of infinite love for creation, while still maintaining an infinite priority to divine self-love.

However, it still leaves open the question – raised at the end of the previous chapter – of how God's love for humanity might relate to God's love for Himself. It is possible that they are – unlike in Edwards – separate, distinct, loves, but (for reasons raised at the end of the previous chapter) it seems preferable to support Edwards' suggestion that the different loves of God should be united as one.

While this concept of intra-Trinitarian love magnification does prevent the opposition between love for humanity and love for God that is found in Edwards, it does not sufficiently explain everything. There is still a need to explain how the initial love for humanity can, itself, be united with love for God.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, in Balthasar's theological aesthetics, his account of the love revealed in Jesus is understood to reveal something of the doctrine of the Trinity. Balthasar therefore sees behind the cross, to an understanding of a self-giving love within the Trinity, whereby Jesus' earthly kenosis reflects the Father's eternal kenosis in begetting the Son. We have seen that, while the language of intra-Trinitarian kenosis is problematic, one can nonetheless adopt much the same structure using the broader concept of self-giving love without reading kenosis into the Trinity.

The intra-Trinitarian loving relationships are subsequently displayed in history, when God seeks to manifest His glory out of intra-Trinitarian love. Like in Edwards, there is a strong stress on union between God and humanity, as in Balthasar divine love reaches out to humanity and incorporates humanity within God. This means that the saved human being is incorporated within the loving Trinitarian relationship within God, which suggests a resolution between God's self-love and His love for the redeemed. However, it does not explain how we can relate God's love for us before salvation to His intra-Trinitarian self-love.

In order to begin to explore how this might be the case, I suggested that there are elements in both Edwards and Balthasar which naturally lean towards what I am calling "intra-Trinitarian love magnification" – that is, a tendency within the Trinity for the mutual love to magnify whatever the persons of the Trinity love, with the Father seeing the things that the Son loves and therefore loving them, and vice versa. This would help to explain how the intra-Trinitarian love connects to the persons' love for humanity.

However, it is still lacking a complete answer to another question: how it is that we make sense of the original love for humanity, which gets magnified by the intra-Trinitarian love. Without this love, there would be nothing to be magnified, and so this leaves us back with largely the same question which we raised at the end of the previous chapter (albeit nuanced by the content of this chapter).

In the next chapter, we will further work to explain how this question may be addressed from the ideas of Edwards and Balthasar, by examining how Edwards' understanding of love may be reconstructed using Balthasar's ideas. This will build on elements of this and the previous chapter which demonstrate that Balthasar's understanding of love involves a tendency towards union with the other. The next chapter will build towards the final chapter, which will examine how Edwards' ideas can finally be reconstructed by what we have seen.

Chapter 8: Reconstructing Love

Having examined Balthasar's aesthetic understanding of how doctrines of Christology and Trinity help us to engage the question of glory and love, we now turn to how this might help reconstruct Jonathan Edwards' ideas. This will involve connecting the ideas of Balthasar with those of Edwards, particularly those aspects which were seen in Part 1. This chapter will begin this process by discussing what Balthasar's ideas might mean for Edwards' approach to the concept of love.

While Christian tradition has been utterly clear in stressing the central importance of love for both any concept of the divine character and the practice of Christian discipleship, there is no clear universal definition of love. In fact, the opposite is true – the word 'love' has meant a variety of different things in Christian history.

To take one specific example which will be particularly relevant for the purposes of this chapter, considerable debate has been had as to whether and in what sense love can be said to be affirming of the self as well as the beloved. While Christian tradition has historically held (with notable exceptions among some writers from the past century) that God's love for creation cannot be self-affirming in any sense which implies any kind of need or dependence upon creation, this is not necessarily incompatible with all kinds of belief in any kind of love which contains self-affirmation.

One potential route around this is to suggest that God does somehow 'gain' from love, but that this need is adequately fulfilled within God. Perhaps most famously, Richard of St Victor put forward an argument for the doctrine of the Trinity which maintained that God must be Trinitarian because, in order to be as perfect as He could be, He must love.[1060] Within this argument he puts forward as an argument a claim that God's happiness is dependent upon mutual love:

> Therefore, just as that than which nothing is better cannot be lacking in the fullness of true goodness, so also that than which nothing is more pleasing cannot be lacking in the fullness of supreme happiness. Therefore, in supreme happiness it is necessary that charity not be lacking. However, so that charity may be in the supreme good, it is impossible that there be lacking either one who can show charity or one to whom charity can be shown. However, it is a characteristic of love, and one without which

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[1060] See Richard of St. Victor, "Book Three of On The Trinity", in *Richard of St. Victor: The Twelve Patriarchs: The Mystical Ark: Book Three of the Trinity*, trans. by Grover A. Zinn (London: SPCK, 1979), 371-397.

> it cannot possibly exist, to wish to be loved much by the one you whom you love much. Therefore, in that true and supreme happiness, just as pleasing love cannot be lacking, so mutual love cannot be lacking. However, in mutual love it is absolutely necessary that there be both one who gives love and one who returns love. […] In that fullness of true happiness, a plurality of persons cannot be lacking. However, it is agreed that supreme happiness is nothing other than Divinity itself. Therefore, the showing of love freely given and the repayment of love that is due prove without any doubt that in true Divinity a plurality of persons cannot be lacking.[1061]

In this, Edwards is able to use the doctrine of the Trinity to posit a kind of divine love which requires reciprocation for its own happiness, while suggesting that it is fulfilled within the Trinity and thereby avoiding any claim that God is dependent upon creation.

Alternatively, theologians have put forward a distinction between human love and divine love. For example, Augustine did not believe that God's love for humanity involved any need for humanity, but at the same time held that human love for God was united with a love for the self. While these human loves were distinct in meaning, so that humans did not have love self in the same way in which they loved God, nonetheless when humans love God according to one meaning of the word love, they also love themselves in another meaning of the love of God.

By one definition of love, human beings ought to love God by seeking closeness with Him – Oliver O'Donovan has described Augustine's view as being that: "man must love God alone, cleave to God alone, aspire to God alone, so that God is sole object of his love."[1062] By another definition of love – that is, that which seeks the good of the beloved – a human is loving themselves, and not God (who cannot gain anything from the human).[1063] In doing this, Augustine unites love for God with a tendency towards self-affirmation – but does so in a way which could not function within a God who is independent of creation.

A different kind of love can be found in the thought of Martin Luther. In the Heidelberg Disputation, Luther was like Augustine in asserting that natural human love is self-affirming, rooted in desire for the lover to gain something which it desires,

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[1061] St. Victor, "Book Three of On The Trinity", 376.
[1062] Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (London: Yale University Press, 1980), 39.
[1063] Ibid, 39.

and that it thereby "receives rather than gives something good."[1064] Unlike Augustine, however, Luther's "Theology of the Cross" has him identifying human nature of this sort as being deeply flawed and unlike how it should have been – and therefore opposed to how we should understand the nature of God.[1065] Like Augustine, Luther understood God's love for humanity as being entirely concerned with giving – "[r]ather than seeking its own good, the love of God flows forth and bestows good."[1066] What is different between the two is that, for Luther, the distinction between human love and divine love is rooted in human sin. A redeemed human being will not love in the current human way – instead, the redeemed human being receives from God through faith, and subsequently participates in the divine love as (s)he gives to other humans without receiving.[1067]

Given that the word love possesses a variety of meanings even within Christian theology, one cannot assume what Edwards meant by it.[1068] We will therefore examine Edwards' theology of love before investigating how Balthasar's ideas can reconstruct Edwards'. I will proceed by identifying three particular features of Edwards' understanding of love – that is, three things which, at some point in the *Two Dissertations*, Edwards states that are true of love, or are identified with love. Each of these features will in turn be examined.

These features are not selected because they together give a complete picture of Edwards' understanding of love, or indeed because they are necessarily the most important features of Edwards' understanding.[1069] It is not even necessarily true that

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[1064] Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", 25.

[1065] See, e.g., Theses 18-22 of Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", 18-23.

[1066] Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", 25.

[1067] See Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 159-174.

[1068] Having said that, it has been observed that Edwards' understanding of love falls within the broadly Augustinian tradition of love which passed through Calvin. Edwards' significance as key American representative of this tradition is discussed in: Stephen G. Post, *Christian Love and Self-Denial: An Historical and Normative Study of Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, and American Theological Ethics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 1-55.

[1069] This chapter fails to represent the full breadth of Edwards' understanding of love in many ways. For example, it is concerned with the inner state of mind and heart of the believer, rather than the outward manifestation of love. Edwards places considerable stress on the importance of outward practice, and using it to discern the reality of inner religious experiences –see Wayne Proudfoot, "Perception and Love in Religious Affections", in *Jonathan Edwards's Writings: Text, Context, Interpretation,* ed. by Stephen J. Stein (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996), 122-136. Similarly, Edwards' understanding of love was deeply tied in with his understanding of eschatology – with both the millennium and heaven being where one finds communities which powerfully embody love – see Ronald Story, *Jonathan Edwards and the Gospel of Love* (Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), especially pg.'s 110-121. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, it

they are the most important features of Edwards' account in the *Two Dissertations*. Instead, they were chosen because I have judged them to be significant for the argument which I am making in this thesis.

In this chapter, I will argue that these three features cannot, in fact, be held together. While I do not hold that the concepts of love are necessarily incompatible when applied to human beings, I shall argue that they are not capable of being reconciled when speaking of God unless one rejects the traditional Christian doctrine of God. This will leave us in a position to explore how Balthasar's understanding of love resolves the tension within Edwards, and I will end by showing how Balthasar's ideas may reconstruct Edwards' thought around the cross.

Love in Jonathan Edwards

Love as Seeking Happiness

The first feature of Edwards' understanding of love is that it "includes a desire or thirst for happiness, both human and divine".[1070] Indeed, love is a consequence of a person seeking his or her own happiness. However, Edwards insists that this kind of self-love is distinct from selfishness.[1071]

Edwards often places self-love and love for the other in contradiction, for example, writing in *Discourse on the Trinity*:

> That in John, "God is love" [1 John 4:8, 1 John 4:16], shows that there are more persons than one in the Deity: for it shows love to be essential and necessary to the Deity, so that his nature consists in it; and this supposes that there is an eternal and necessary object, because all love respects another, that is, the beloved. By love here the Apostle certainly means something beside that which is commonly called self-

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fails to make explicit the link between love for God and joy – for Edwards, to love God is to find joy in seeing him, and while this does not necessarily mean that to love humans is to find joy in beholding then (they are, after all, vastly less beautiful), the delight in seeing God is central to any virtuous love – see David C. Brand, *Profile of the Last Puritan: Jonathan Edwards, Self-Love, and the Dawn of the Beatific* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991), esp. pg.'s 65-77.

[1070] Paula M. Cooey, "'Eros' and Intimacy in Edwards", *The Journal of Religion*, 69:4 (Oct 1989), 484-501.

[1071] Edwards used the language of self-love in a number of different ways to describe a variety of different phenomenon. While he regarded seeking one's own happiness as being in itself morally neutral, and used the language of self-love to describe this, he also uses the language of self-love to describe several other more problematic phenomena. For discussion of the various ways in which Edwards described, see Bruce W. Davidson, "The Four Faces of Self-Love in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 51:1 (March 2008), 87-100.

> love, that is very improperly called love, and is a thing of an exceeding diverse nature from that affection or virtue of love the Apostle is speaking of.[1072]

However, at the same time there is a sense in which Edwards definitively affirms that self-love can be identified with love – indeed, in which Edwards argues that it is impossible for any other love to be rooted in anything other than a love for one's own happiness. In *True Virtue*, he writes:

> Every being that has understanding and will necessarily loves happiness. For, to suppose any being not to love happiness, would be to suppose he did not love what was agreeable to him; which is a contradiction: or at least would imply that nothing was agreeable or eligible to him, which is the same as to say that he has no such thing as choice, or any faculty of will. So that every being who has a faculty of will must of necessity have an inclination to happiness.[1073]

This means that, for Edwards, a love for one's own happiness is implicit in having any will at all – he writes elsewhere that "self-love is a man's desire of or delight in his own happiness".[1074] If a man (to use the gender of Edwards' own language) desires something else, possessing it will lead to his own happiness, which inevitably means that wanting it means wanting his own happiness.[1075] In this sense, Edwards believes that a kind of self-love is necessary – beings will always seek their own happiness, which is a kind of self-love.[1076] In his sermon "Charity Contrary to a Selfish Spirit", he wrote that "saints and sinners all love happiness alike, and have the same unalterable propensity to seek and desire happiness."[1077]

However, Edwards finds a distinction between self-love and real love in the question of what it is that you desire in order to reach your own happiness. If one desires something focused upon the other, then that desire is itself capable of being called

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[1072] WJE 21:113-114.

[1073] WJE 8:621.

[1074] WJE 18:76.

[1075] WJE 18:73-76.

[1076] See WJE 18:73. However, it is also worth noting that it seems to be that part of Edwards' stress on how natural and morally neutral it is to seek one's own happiness appears to be that he saw the danger in religious practices which apparently destroy a human's desire for their own happiness. Edwards regarded such religiosity as being immensely psychologically dangerous, to the point where he ascribed the suicide of a member of his congregation to it. For a discussion of this aspect of Edwards' thought on benevolent love and the legitimacy of some form of Christian self-love, see Stephen Post, "Disinterested Benevolence: An American Debate Over the Nature of Christian Love", *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 14:2 (Fall 1986), 356-368.

[1077] WJE 8:255.

loving in another sense than self-love –the meanings of neutral self-love and love for the other are "entirely distinct, and don't enter one into the nature of the other at all."[1078] Edwards believes that the love of one's own happiness is both universal and morally neutral. What matters is whether a person places their happiness in themselves, or in the suitable object of love (that is, ultimately, God).[1079]

It is worth mentioning at this point that the truth may not be quite as simple as Edwards appears to believe. While it is undoubtedly true that people usually gain happiness after receiving something they desire, ordinary human experience suggests that this is not always the case. Sometimes we gain what we desire, only to find that it does not bring us happiness. This surely suggests that it is not, in fact, an inevitable consequence of having a will that one love one's own happiness, and if it is not inevitable that happiness results from the will's goals being accomplished, it would in theory be possible to imagine beings for whom the outcome of receiving desires is never happiness.

A second consideration which makes the question more complex is that it makes sense to have a desire for something else in which, even though it results in a human being having happiness, yet nonetheless the person's desire is not the happiness but instead simply the object of the desire. Many of us have known (or been) parents whose children have had periods of serious health problems (or have appeared to have such periods). In such a situation, one might expect that while the child was unwell, the parent might be so focused on their desire for the child to be better that they would not even consider their own happiness – thereby being profoundly unhappy, but without any particular seeking of happiness. Therefore, when the situation was resolved, they could become happier as a result of the child's well-being, without that happiness having been itself a desire that the parent sought. This is an illustration of the fact that, even if happiness emerges from having one's desires met, one can nonetheless desire other things for their own sake, as ends in themselves, and subsequently acquire happiness as a side effect.

[1078] WJE 18:74.
[1079] WJE 18:74.

However, regardless of whether my critique is justified, the first feature which I have identified of Edwards' understanding of love is that it is rooted in a person's seeking after their own happiness.

Love, Consent and Union

The second feature of Edwards' to which I will draw attention is its association with the concept of union, which is related to his understanding of consent.

A belief that love leads to a union between the lover and the beloved is not original in Christian thought. For example, we have already seen that Augustine understands human love for God as involving a seeking of a closeness and union between God and humanity.

However, Edwards adopts this concept of union between the lover and the beloved to serve a specific role in his theology. In order to explain how the lover's desire for happiness (the above first feature) connects to what might more broadly be understood as love, Edwards draws on a concept of union between the self and the beloved. He writes of how, when a person places his or her happiness in another person's happiness, "the appetite of the soul is excited and extended, and the enjoying faculty (if I may so speak) is, as it were, opened and prepared to receive".[1080] When a lover desires another's happiness, the beloved's happiness becomes a cause of the lover's happiness in such a way that there is a kind of union between the two persons, through the lover seeking this union. This enables love for the other – "[f]or Edwards, altruism involves nothing other than an expansion of the self such that it absorbs the interests of others as its own".[1081]

The concept of union is not incidental, but is instead fundamental, to Edwards' understanding of love.[1082] In *True Virtue*, Edwards defines love (in the primary sense) as consisting of "a propensity and union of heart to Being simply

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[1080] WJE 18:533.

[1081] Richard A. Spurgeon Hall, "The Religious Ethics of Edwards Bellamy and Jonathan Edwards", *Utopian Studies*, 8:2 (1997), 13-31.

[1082] See William C. Spohn, "Union and Consent with the Great Whole: Jonathan Edwards on True Virtue", *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 5 (1985), 19-32.

considered",[1083] or as "being's uniting, consent, or propensity to Being",[1084] so that when a person loves, "his own heart is extended and united to"[1085] the beloved. In each case, the key idea is that love consists of a tendency towards union with the beloved. All forms of genuine virtue or beauty are manifestations of this union.[1086]

It is true that there is another, dependent, kind of love which emerges from this, which he refers to as "love of complacence"[1087] – distinguished from the primary sense of love, which is called "love of benevolence".[1088] In the love of complacence (as we have seen in Chapter 1) a person loves and delights in another according to their moral beauty – that is, their love towards being in general. However, in the *Two Dissertations* this love of complacence is a result of love of benevolence – Edwards writes:

> When anyone under the influence of general benevolence sees another being possessed of the like general benevolence, this attaches his heart to him, and draws forth greater love to him, than merely his having existence: because so far as the being beloved has love to Being in general, so far his own being is, as it were, enlarged; extends to, and in some sort comprehends, Being in general: and therefore he that is governed by love to Being in general, must of necessity have complacence in him, and the greater degree of benevolence to him, as it were out of gratitude to him for his love to general existence, that his own heart is extended and united to, and so looks on its interest as its own. 'Tis because his heart is thus united to Being in general, that he looks on a benevolent propensity to Being in general, wherever he sees it, as the beauty of the being in whom it is; an excellency that renders him worthy of esteem, complacence, and the greater good will.[1089]

This explanation of why love of complacence exists is therefore dependent upon a concept of primary love (of benevolence) which involves union with the beloved. In

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[1083] WJE 8:544.
[1084] WJE 8:546.
[1085] WJE 8:547.
[1086] In *True Virtue*, Edwards developed a more complex account of moral beauty and quasi-virtue which contained manifestations of this idea. This included a concept of "secondary beauty", as well as an idea of apparent moral virtue that is not necessarily actually virtuous, except when it comes to participate in the ultimate love of benevolence for God. Ultimately, all virtue is assessed by whether or not it participates in this loving union, and whether or not this is oriented towards God. For further discussion of these kinds of ideas, see, for example, William C. Spohn, "Sovereign Beauty: Jonathan Edwards and the Nature of True Virtue", *Theological Studies*, 42:3 (Sep 1981), 394-421.
[1087] WJE 8:542.
[1088] WJE 8:542.
[1089] WJE 8:546-547.

both kinds of love as described by *True Virtue*, love is defined as at root an orientation towards a kind of union with the beloved.

Other language which Edwards uses to speak of love is closely related to unity. We have already seen in Chapter 1 that Edwards' understanding of love is closely related to his understanding of beauty. Beauty, for Edwards, is found in proportion – or agreement between different entities.[1090] This agreement, or harmony, is frequently referred to as 'consent', particularly when dealing with the moral realm.[1091] Edwards uses this language when speaking of love as being a propensity towards union, describing it as "consent, propensity and union of heart to" the beloved.[1092]

Not only does this explicitly contain the concept of union, but it is also easy to see how the language of consent, harmony or agreement and the language of union are similar – what is agreement or harmony other than a kind of union? Or consent other than allowing one's own will to be united to that of another?

At the same time, Edwards' claim that "all love respects another, that is, the beloved. … that which is commonly called self-love … is very improperly called love"[1093] makes it clear that any union that emerges is not the absolute numerical unity of identity, but rather a union which contains distinction – otherwise the beloved would not be sufficiently other to be the subject of love. Edwards is not precise about the details of the union which emerges, but he is unambiguous that this union is not an unqualified union of simple identity. Indeed, it seems that the union must be something that emerges subsequently to the distinction – so that the entities are sufficiently other for the union to be something which is aimed at by love, rather than simply existing.

We can easily see how this understanding of love as an orientation towards union makes sense of many things which we refer to as love in ordinary language. For example, in many kinds of love a person seeks to be close to another – we can

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[1090] Niebuhr, "Being and Consent", 38-39.
[1091] See, e.g., Elizabeth Agnew Cochran, "Consent, Conversion and Moral Formation: Stoic Elements in Jonathan Edwards's Ethics", *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 39:4 (Dec 2011), 623-650.
[1092] WJE 8:540.
[1093] WJE 21:114.

perhaps see this most vividly in romantic love and in the love which small children have for their parents, but it is also present in many other human relationships.

There are some things that we refer to as love which may not be obviously included within this definition of love without further explanation. For example, Edwards (like most people) understands love to include a desire for the well-being of the other. This is not necessarily incorporated within this definition of love as an orientation towards union with the other, and Edwards needs to explain how the two are connected. In "Charity Contrary to a Selfish Spirit", he writes:

> So far as there is any real friendship, the parties between whom the friendship subsists do not only seek their own particular interest, but espouse the interest of each other. They seek not only their own things but the things of their friends. Selfishness is a principle which does, as it were, confine a man's heart to himself. Love enlarges it and extends it to others. A man's self is as it were extended and enlarged by love. Others so far as beloved do, as it were, become parts of himself; so that wherein their interest is touched his is touched.[1094]

The lover's happiness is united with the other in such a way that when the beloved is happy, the lover is also happy. In this way, Edwards incorporates a desire for the well-being of the other into a concept of love as an orientation towards union with the other while explaining how the first feature of his understanding of love (love as built on a desire for one's own happiness) connects to both of these meanings.

Love as "communication of good"

However, it is not universally possible to resolve these issues by following this line of thought, as we shall see by exploring the third feature of Edwards' understanding of love: that it involves "communication of good to the creature".[1095] This language is a more precise version of a very common understanding of love as seeking the good of the beloved. It emerges in Chapter 2, Section 5 of *The End of Creation*,[1096] where it is structurally very important to Edwards' argument.

[1094] WJE 8:262-263.
[1095] WJE 8:503.
[1096] WJE 8:503-511.

In this section, Edwards argues that "communication of good to the creature"[1097] is an ultimate end of God. Edwards makes clear that this communication of good to the creature is identified with love for the creature, for example by writing:

> The work of redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ, is spoken of in such a manner as being from the grace and love of God to men, that does not well consist with his seeking a communication of good to them only subordinately, i.e. not at all from any inclination to their good directly, or delight in giving happiness to them, simply and ultimately considered; but only indirectly, and wholly from a regard to something entirely diverse, which it is a means of.[1098]

In this passage, Edwards clearly identifies God's love with God's goal of making a "communication of good"[1099] to humanity. This seems to be another definition of love to the one given above.

In this definition, Edwards means the lover (in this case, God) is seeking for the other to receive good. Within the context of Edwards' overall position in *The End of Creation*, it is clear that the good that Edwards' God is seeking to communicate is the good that is in God Himself – His own understanding and will. This is not the only way that something could fall under his definition of love as "communication of good" – it could hypothetically also involve giving the creature a good which is somehow not within God – but it is unambiguously the case in this instance. As we saw in Chapter 2, when God communicates these things to the creature, He is communicating Himself to them.[1100]

One reason we may have for finding this significant is the fact that the second feature defined love as a propensity towards union with the beloved. While within Edwards' system, for God to communicate good to the creature is for Him to communicate Himself to the creature, and might therefore be seen as a propensity towards union with the creature, the definitions of love which are operating here are entirely distinct. To love by seeking to communicate good to the creature is a separate goal than to love by seeking union with the creature. While the word "love"

[1097] WJE 8:503.
[1098] WJE 8:504.
[1099] WJE 8:504.
[1100] As we saw in Chapter 2 of this thesis, and as is explained in more depth in Chapter 1 of the appendix, the language of God's "understanding" and "will" is a reference to God Himself in His second and third persons.

is used in both cases, there is no inherent link between the two (save that they happen to coincide within God).

While this definition of love as seeking the good of the beloved is not a common explicit definition in Edwards' writings, it is undoubtedly true that it is structurally very important for Edwards' argument in *The End of Creation*. In the final two sections of his second chapter, he puts forward an argument for God's ultimate goal as being His own glory, within which God's love for creation is found within this one ultimate goal. Under this argument, the fact that God's communication of good to creatures is identified with communicating Himself (and therefore His glory) enables Edwards to identify the love of communicating good with the theocentricity of glory-seeking.[1101] As a consequence, one can say that without this third feature of love, the argument of *The End of Creation* would be unintelligible.

The (In)coherence of the Three Features

This third feature may appear to stand in contradiction to Edwards' first feature, at least when applied to God. For Edwards' response to function, it requires one to accept Edwards' position in the first feature – an interpretation to which I have already raised brief objections.

In particular, it requires this feature to be true of God – that God Himself seeks His own happiness in His aims. While this is Edwards' position (as will shortly be shown), it raises questions for any theologian who is committed to a classical understanding of theism, since it would imply that God somehow needs creation for His own happiness.

Divine Impassibility

Christian theologians have traditionally spoken of divine impassibility, which insists that God's independence from creation is such that it prevents Him from having emotions which are caused by something in creation. While it is not unknown for

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[1101] See Chapter 2.

theologians to suggest that things which we would understand as emotions are within God, in these cases one would have to insist that they are not dependent upon creation. Aquinas, for example, argues in *Summa Contra Gentum* that delight and joy exist within God,[1102] while at the same time insisting that God has nothing within Himself which can be affected or changed by that which is outside of Himself.[1103] He suggest that instead God, being "the principle object of His [own] will",[1104] may gain His emotions from Himself.[1105]

The tradition of divine impassibility has been strongly affirmed by mainstream Protestant theology before the twentieth century. For example, when commenting upon biblical references which appear to describe God as having such things as repentance and anger, Calvin wrote:

> What, therefore, does the word "repentance" mean? Surely its meaning is like that of all other modes of speaking that describe God for us in human terms. For because our weakness does not attain to his exalted state, the description of him that is given to us must be accommodated to our capacity so that we may understand it. Now the mode of accommodation is for him to represent himself to us not as he is in himself, but as he seems to us. Although he is beyond all disturbance of mind, yet he testifies that he is angry with sinners. Therefore whenever we hear that God is angered, we ought not to imagine any emotion in him, but rather to consider that this expression has been taken from our own human experience; because God, whenever he is exercising judgment, exhibits the appearance of one kindled and angered.[1106]

Calvin is following mainstream Christian tradition in rejecting any claim that God can change, or that he is in any way affected by creation in such a way as to have emotions as a consequence of creation. Rejection of this possibility is part of the traditional Christian account of God, known as classical theism.

[1102] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles: Volume 1*, trans. by the English Dominican Fathers (New York, NY: Benziger Brothers, 1924), 189-190.
[1103] Ibid, 186-190.
[1104] See, e.g., Ibid, 190.
[1105] Ibid.
[1106] Calvin, *Institutes I*, 227.

Edwards' and Divine Impassibility

Nonetheless, it has been a matter of active controversy within Edwards studies as to whether or not Edwards' writings are compatible with the doctrines of classical theism, particularly with respect to concepts such as aseity and impassibility,[1107] and this chapter will argue that there are strong reasons to believe that Edwards' scheme in *The End of Creation* is incompatible with them. In fact, it seems that the first feature of Edwards' understanding of love is applied to God in such a way that God appears to become dependent upon creation for some of His happiness.

In order to evaluate this claim, it will be worthwhile to examine the broad approach taken by recent scholarship to these questions about Edwards' God's relation to creation. In particular, one of the most influential accounts of Jonathan Edwards' theology has been Sang Hyun Lee's *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards.*[1108] It argues that at the centre of Edwards' system of thought lies an original philosophical idea, which contradicts "[t]he traditional Western doctrine of God, the so-called classical theism"[1109] – namely, a "dispositional ontology."[1110]

Much of Lee's book is devoted to examining this dispositional ontology within Lee's Edwards' understanding of creation,[1111] but Lee also thinks that it has profound consequences for Edwards' doctrine of God. Within the dispositional ontology, dispositions – or tendencies towards some kind of action – have ontological content. Not only does disposition belong to the essence of that which has the disposition,[1112] but a being cannot be fully actualised without that disposition becoming active in doing whatever it is disposed to do.[1113]

[1107] Scholars such as Beilby (See "Divine Aseity, Divine Freedom: A Conceptual Problem for Edwardsian-Calvinism", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47:4 (December 2004), 647-658.), Lee (See *Philosophical Theology*, 181-183 & 187-189.), and McClymond (See *Encounters With God*, 56.) have advocated for a reading of Edwards whereby his thought is incompatible with this understanding of divine aseity, while figures such as Crisp (*God and Creation*, 77-93) and Strobel (*Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 83-94.) have put forward readings whereby Edwards' thought can be reconciled with the concept.

[1108] Lee, *Philosophical Theology*.

[1109] Ibid, 4.

[1110] For a brief introduction to this concept, see Lee, *Philosophical Theology*, 48-51.

[1111] See Ibid, 47-169.

[1112] Ibid, 48-51.

[1113] Lee applies this in a number of ways – for example, suggesting that the loving relationships of the Trinity are manifestations of this underlying ontology. See Lee, *Philosophical Theology*, 184.

Within this scheme, "the divine being himself [is] essentially dispositional and thus inherently dynamic".[1114] Although (as we have seen) Lee recognises that this is incompatible with classical theism, it does not require as radical a departure from traditional doctrines of God as one might expect: "it is Edwards' central concern to view the divine being as inherently dynamic without compromising God's absolute prior actuality and aseity."[1115]

Lee's Edwards does this by means of an interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity. God is said to have a disposition towards self-communication, so that "God's self-communicating act in creating the world is consistent with God's own internal being."[1116] Within this scheme, this self-communication is manifest within the Trinity:

> Through the ontologically productive exertion of the Father's dispositional essence, the Father's primordial actuality is repeated in the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus, the immanent Trinity is the eternal exertion of God's dispositional essence and, therefore, the eternally perfect increase or the fullness of God's primordial actuality.

> The inner-Trinitarian fullness of the divine being, however, does not exhaust the divine disposition. The exercise of this disposition ad extra, according to Edwards, constitutes God's creation of the world. Created existence, then, is the spatio-temporal repetition of God's inner-Trinitarian fullness[1117]

Lee's scheme involves God's disposition becoming actualised in history by repeating that which is actualised within Himself. This, says Lee, means that "God is really involved in time and space"[1118] – God's dispositional nature meaning that this involves His being actualised – "without being in any way deficient or in need."[1119]

An exhaustive account of Lee's interpretation of Edwards would be far beyond the scope of this thesis, but what is most important for our purposes is that Lee's Edwards does, ultimately, go on to assert that God is influenced by creation in such a way as is incompatible with classical theism. The disposition being manifested *ad extra* is only a repetition of a communication of the divine essence which God

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[1114] Ibid, 170.
[1115] Ibid, 173.
[1116] Ibid, 172.
[1117] Ibid, 173.
[1118] Ibid.
[1119] Ibid.

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already manifests *ad intra*, but this repetition is nonetheless a real expansion of the divine being. Lee summarises this aspect of his interpretation of Edwards:

> God's actuality … includes God's eternal fullness ad intra and his external repetition of that fullness. And God's external repetition is still an ongoing process. God's actuality as God and his self-sufficiency, however, is still preserved because God as the immanent Trinity is an essential and eternal actuality and also because God's self-repetition in time is God's own activity of repeating his own prior actuality. Nevertheless, the created existence is the exertion of God's own dispositional essence. Therefore, what happens in time and space is really and internally related to God's own life – not in the sense of adding anything to God's being ad intra but rather in the sense of constituting the external extension of God's internal fullness. In this limited and yet real sense, the created world affects God's own being.[1120]

This account, then, places great stress on the divine self-sufficiency – and yet does so in a way which contradicts the ideas of classical theism when it comes to divine impassibility. On this reading, Edwards' God is in a sense self-sufficient, and yet is in another (much more limited) sense, affected by creation. Furthermore, in this mechanism of affecting creation, God's happiness is enlarged. Lee writes, summarising and quoting Edwards:

> God has a "real and proper delight" and even "more delight" as God's essential disposition is further exercised in creating the world. "God would be less happy if He were less good, or if it were possible for Him to be hindered in exercising His goodness or to be hindered from glorifying Himself."[1121]

Therefore, on Lee's influential interpretation, Jonathan Edwards' God does gain happiness from creation and – while He is self-sufficient in one sense – this is not an unqualified self-sufficiency, and God's essence is (in a highly qualified sense) affected by creation. Lee himself acknowledges that on this reading Edwards contradicts classical theism.[1122]

[1120] Ibid, 209.
[1121] Ibid, 202. Citing Edwards works, which are available in WJE 18:237,238 and WJE 8:447. It should be noted, although Lee does not specify this, that the latter quote was found in Edwards' notes but did not make it into the final version of the thesis. It is in the footnotes of the Yale edition.
[1122] Ibid, 173.

Lee's reading has been both very influential and highly controversial. Stephen Holmes' response to the work[1123] argued against it on the grounds that it is implausible for the Edwards presented by Lee to have existed, due to Edwards' commitment to conservative, Reformed theology:

> No attentive reader can be unaware of a basic theological conservatism within Edwards's thought: he inherited a relatively stable Reformed tradition of theology, which he knew well, generally upheld, and where he made minor amendments was both clear and defensive about the fact.[1124]

By contrast, Holmes observes, the account of God which Lee develops is strongly at variance with Reformed tradition. It lies in tension with an orthodox doctrine of the Trinity,[1125] and its more dynamic account of the divine essence is irredeemably incompatible with classical theism.[1126] Holmes therefore argues that Lee's account is unlikely because it requires one to assume that Edwards' ontology was strongly at variance with Reformed tradition, and therefore that this makes Lee's reading of the evidence significantly less likely than a reading which suggested that Edwards was following the theological tradition.[1127] Nonetheless, this requires there to be at least one plausible reading of Edwards which is compatible with Reformed tradition – and he argues that, while Lee's reading of the text shows a "scholarship and argument [which are] impressive",[1128] there are nonetheless alternative readings – "I have offered my own alternative account … in my *God of Grace*; I submit that this is at least as adequate to the text as Lee's".[1129]

Regardless of which interpreter of Edwards one might favour, the question of whether Edwards' thought is compatible with classical theism is an active one. This means that this thesis is not a great outlier when compared with other scholarship, even when it suggests that the first feature of Edwards' account of love is incompatible with classical theism. However, to explore the details of whether either

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[1123] Stephen R. Holmes, "Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee", in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, ed. by Paul Helm & Oliver D. Crisp (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 99-114.
[1124] Ibid, 101.
[1125] Ibid, 104-107.
[1126] Ibid, 107-108.
[1127] Ibid, 100.
[1128] Ibid, 100.
[1129] Ibid, 109.

Holmes or Lee (or some other thinker) give better accounts of the data concerned would require extensive discussion on a level that is well beyond what could be possible within this thesis.

For the purposes of the contribution which the argument of this chapter makes to this thesis, it will not be necessary to demonstrate that Edwards' writings are consistently as at variance with classical theism as Lee proposes. Instead, all that needs to be demonstrated is that this is true, in *The End of Creation* specifically, of Edwards' ideas of love seeking the happiness of the lover.

In fact, it is my own judgment that Edwards' account in *The End of Creation* is inconsistent with his earlier work; Miscellany 332 puts forward a version of Edwards' scheme which is more compatible with mainstream Christian tradition:

> The great and universal end of God's creating the world was to *communicate* himself. *God is a communicative being*. … God created the world for the shining forth of his excellency and for the flowing forth of his happiness. It don't make God the happier to be praised, but it is a becoming and condecent and worthy thing for infinite and supreme excellency to shine forth: 'tis not his happiness but his excellency so to do.[1130]

This, it seems to me, is compatible with classical theism in a way in which Edwards' later writings in *The End of Creation* are not. There are at least two possible explanations for this contraction – one is that Edwards' thought could have changed,[1131] while the other is that Edwards incompletely or inaccurately explained his ideas in *The End of Creation*, perhaps in view of the needs of his imagined audience.[1132]

Edwards' account in The End of Creation

Regardless of the reason why *The End of Creation* differed from Edwards' statements elsewhere, it certainly includes several elements which appear to

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[1130] WJE 13:410.

[1131] For a discussion of the changes in Edwards thought concerning how God gaining happiness might relate to a more traditional account of the divine attributes, see Holmes, *God of Grace*, 37-43.

[1132] My own view is that the latter explanation is more plausible. While it would defend Edwards himself from the accusation of inconsistency with classical theism, it would leave the subject of our study – the theology presented in *The End of Creation* – still inconsistent in this way.

suggest that God's emotions are tied up with creation in a way which is inconsistent with classical theism. In Chapter 1 Section 4 of *The End of Creation*, Edwards responds to several potential objections to his overall theory in the dissertation;[1133] the first of these objections is put forward as that:

> Some may object against what has been said, as inconsistent with God's absolute independence and immutability: particularly the representation that has been made, as though God were inclined to a communication of his fullness and emanations of his own glory, as being his own most glorious and complete state. It may be thought that this don't well consist with God's being self-existent from all eternity; absolutely perfect in himself, in the possession of infinite and independent good. And that in general to suppose that God makes himself his end, in the creation of the world, seems to suppose that he aims at some interest or happiness of his own, not easily reconcilable with his being happy, perfectly and infinitely happy in himself.[1134]

Edwards goes on to state this objection at greater length, but the general content of it is clear at this point – Edwards is responding to a claim that Edwards' position (that God's goal is Himself) suggests that God is not fully complete in Himself, but instead needs creation in order to be so. Edwards goes on to give three answers to this objection, again referring a great deal to God's happiness and how He might possess it.[1135]

The first answer is that God gains happiness from God Himself, and that the happiness that God gets through creation is ultimately happiness in God Himself, *ad extra*.[1136] It is a delight in His own glory in creation, rather than in creation in itself.[1137] He states that "the pleasure that God hath in those things which have been mentioned, is rather a pleasure in diffusing and communicating to the creature, than in receiving from the creature."[1138]

This answer is not dissimilar to previous arguments within Christian tradition. Aquinas addressed a similar question (answering the argument that "If, therefore,

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[1133] WJE 8:445-463.
[1134] WJE 8:445.
[1135] WJE 8:445-450.
[1136] WJE 8:445-448.
[1137] WJE 8:446-447.
[1138] WJE 8:448.

God wills anything apart from Himself, His will must be moved by another; which is impossible"[1139]), giving a similar answer:

> In things willed for the sake of the end, the whole reason for our being moved is the end, and this it is that moves the will, as most clearly appears in things willed only for the sake of the end. He who wills to take a bitter draught, in doing so wills nothing else than health; and this alone moves his will. It is different with one who takes a draught that is pleasant, which anyone may will to do, not only for the sake of health, but also for its own sake. Hence, although God wills things apart from Himself only for the sake of the end, which is His own goodness, it does not follow that anything else moves His will, except His goodness.[1140]

This is similar to Edwards' own response, insofar as both insist that when God wills something to exist outside of Himself, He maintains His divine independence because His goal is Himself. It is therefore possible to maintain that Edwards' scheme is compatible with divine aseity for the same reason as Aquinas' is: because God is ultimately dependent solely upon himself.

This is essentially the approach taken by Kyle Strobel in his argument for the compatibility of *The End of Creation* and aseity.[1141] Strobel cites texts including *Miscellanies* 1208 (which Edwards wrote while preparing *The End of Creation*) and *The End of Creation* itself,[1142] including a key passage which reads:

> Nor do any of these things argue any dependence in God on the creature for happiness. Though he has real pleasure in the creature's holiness and happiness; yet this is not properly any pleasure which he receives from the creature. For these things are what he gives the creature. They are wholly and entirely from him. … God's joy is dependent on nothing besides his own act, which he exerts with an absolute and independent power.[1143]

Following from this, Strobel goes on to argue that "God's real relations are intrinsic to himself and are therefore 'full'. God's inner life is an interpersonal fountain of knowledge and love, which cannot be added to."[1144] While God may gain joy from

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[1139] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae Prima Pars, 1-49*, trans. By Fr. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), 208-209.
[1140] Ibid, 209.
[1141] See Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 75-104.
[1142] Ibid, 92.
[1143] WJE 8:447.
[1144] Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 93.

seeing His glory in the creation, it is a joy that is ultimately rooted in Himself – and not in the creation – "God delights in the creature's happiness and praise because it is an actual instance of his own happiness, glory and delight."[1145]

This is not dissimilar to the traditional view, represented by Aquinas. However, there is a notable distinction between the two: within Aquinas' scheme, God is motivated by Himself *ad intra* (that is, His internal goodness), whereas Edwards' God is motivated by Himself *ad extra* (or of His attributes existing outside of Himself and within creation). At this point, it seems that he "wishes to have his cake and eat it too",[1146] with his account of creation requiring God to be aiming at that which is outside of himself, while his understanding of divine self-sufficiency requires God to be aiming at that which is inside of Himself.[1147] It is difficult to see how Edwards' first feature of love could be maintained in this system.

While Edwards is correct that this does involve God gaining His happiness from Himself, nonetheless within his scheme (and not within Aquinas') God does so by means of creation. Even if creation is not active but only passive, creation nonetheless is necessary within the scheme, and therefore it places God as being dependent upon the existence of creation for some of His happiness.

Furthermore, it is not obvious how Edwards' defence can be consistent with the third feature of his understanding of love. If the good of the creature is itself an ultimate end, then it seems especially hard to see God's act of creation as solely involving His own delight in Himself.

However one might work out the details of his scheme, or whatever words one might use to describe it, if the third feature of Edwards' account of love is true, then the goal of Edwards' God is for some state to exist outside of Himself – and within that, for us to receive within that state. If God existing *ad extra* is necessary for God's goal to be achieved, and if the logic of the first feature of Edwards' understanding of love is true, then Edwards' God is dependent upon the existence of something other than God in order to be as happy as He could be.

[1145] Ibid, 99.
[1146] McClymond, *Encounters With God*, 56.
[1147] See Ibid.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Edwards attempts to resolve various problems with this scheme by developing an eccentric interpretation of *theosis* whereby human beings tend towards infinite and complete union with God after an infinite amount of time has passed. God is eternal and therefore from His perspective this infinitely-future reality is actual, and so God is able to aim at it as His goal in creation.

Using this idea, Edwards might argue that when God aims to use creation for His goals, in God's mind what He is aiming at is itself God. It would not constitute God depending on something other than God. However, had Edwards adopted this argument to address this problem, it would be extremely easy to show how unsuccessful this would be when applied to the question of how God can be independent of creation within Edwards' scheme. Within Edwards' scheme, the infinitely-future state of the human being is both temporally and logically subsequent to the state of the human in the present – and thus this state of future identity with God is itself dependent upon human beings in the present.

Oliver Crisp gives an alternative answer, citing elements elsewhere in Edwards arguing for a union between God and creation to argue that Edwards' thought in *The End of Creation* is compatible with aseity.   (In Crisp's language, making a distinction between "metaphysical" and "psychological" aseity.) He cites other ideas elsewhere in Edwards whereby creation exists ultimately as ideas in the divine mind – "[a]ll created entities are divine ideas".   While creation "exists 'ad extra' in that it is not a part of the divine nature … it exists 'within' God in another sense because the creation is an ideal world, a kind of motion picture that plays in the divine mind, and unfolds as God sees fit."   (He cites Miscellanies 533 in support of this idea.) This means that "God's overflowing of himself ad extra is 'virtually contained' within himself".   As a consequence of this, Crisp argues that "[i]f there is a problem with Edwards's doctrine of God and creation it is not that his position compromises divine aseity … [b]ut it might be thought that when we take his metaphysics as a whole, he does seem at times to end up with a rather diminished account of the creation".

To this already significant concern, one can also add the fact that Edwards does not actually make this argument in The End of Creation. Instead, it is something which Crisp deduces from several of Edwards' other works. Indeed, Crisp appears to make this observation himself when speaking of writers who take a position more

like my own, arguing that "[our position] is an easy mistake to make if one does not factor in Edwards's wider metaphysical commitments". However, this observation is of limited value given the purposes of this thesis, which is to focus upon Edwards' argument in The End of Creation. While Crisp's reading may or may not be a good interpretation of Edwards as a whole, it cannot be found within this dissertation itself. When Edwards, within this dissertation, answers the charge that his position is incompatible with divine aseity, his arguments have nothing to do with Crisp's view. This therefore does nothing to undermine the claim of this chapter that Edwards' argument in the dissertation itself can be strengthened by using resources from within Balthasar – it only suggests that there are other places within Edwards which could also be used in this way.

We can be confident that Edwards' first answer to the objection does not do anything to remove the objection that Edwards' God in *The End of Creation* is somehow dependent upon creation, and that the position which he puts forward is therefore incompatible with classical theism. Nor does Edwards' answer remove the specific consequences of this objection: that it is a barrier to adopting the first feature of Edwards' view of love (at least, when speaking of God), and additionally a barrier to holding the first and third features of Edwards' view of love. We will see that neither of the remaining two answers which Edwards gives do any more to lessen the difficulties of this objection.

In the second answer to the objection, Edwards lays down a challenge to his hypothetical interlocutors: "let them consider whether they can devise any other scheme of God's last end in creating the world, but what will be equally obnoxious to this objection in its full force".[1148] His belief that any other scheme would have the same weakness is rooted in his belief that any hypothetical aim of God will, if completed, end in God's happiness: "if there be something that God seeks as agreeable, or grateful to him, then in the accomplishment of it he is gratified."[1149] Edwards' reasoning here is that, in any possible goal that God may have had in creation, He would be dependent upon the realisation of that goal for His own happiness.[1150] In fact, Edwards' scheme is better, in that Edwards' God's goal is

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[1148] WJE 8:448.
[1149] WJE 8:449.
[1150] WJE 8:449.

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Himself, and thus Edwards' God is not dependent upon anything outside of Himself.[1151]

This argument is not an argument that Edwards' God is not dependent upon creation, but rather that any other hypothetical God would also be dependent upon creation – that is, that all possible answers would contain the same potential problem to *at least* the same extent, so one ought not to reject Edwards' argument on this account. This would not remove the problem that we are raising, but would potentially weaken the ability to use it to critique Edwards' position.

However, it only works to weaken this objection if one assumes the first feature of Edwards' understanding of love, and thereby grants his assertion that every other potential aim of God would involve God seeking His own happiness. Given this, it is noteworthy that this feature is not, in fact, universal in all accounts of love, and when discussing it above I have already raised objections to it. Furthermore, it is precisely this feature of Edwards' understanding of love which I am maintaining cannot be upheld with Edwards' third feature of love. Therefore, Edwards' argument here is not only unsuccessful as a defence, but in fact supports my claim that the first feature of Edwards' understanding of love is problematic when applied to God.

Similarly to Edwards' second answer, Edwards' third answer lays down a challenge to other potential answers to the question of why God created the world, arguing that his position is better than any other possible answer.[1152] However, on this occasion, Edwards does not mention God's happiness being dependent. Instead, however, whatever aim God had, Edwards' God would "[depend] on this end in his desires, aims, actions and pursuits"[1153] – if God is to have his goal realised, Edwards says He is therefore in a sense dependent upon that goal, in that for His goal to be realised something in creation must exist or be in some particular state – otherwise "he fails of his end."[1154]

In the first instance, we should note that this is an answer which is very similar to the preceding one, but which does not refer to divine happiness. It therefore has nothing

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[1151] WJE 8:449.
[1152] WJE 8:450.
[1153] WJE 8:450.
[1154] WJE 8:450.

to say directly to the question of how Edwards' different references to love relate to one another. However, since it is an argument that all other possible answers – even those which do not share Edwards' understanding of divine happiness – would have the same problems, it would (if successful) establish that any account of God's goals in creation which was not aimed at God's happiness would have the same problems, and therefore that the problems which I have identified with the first feature of Edwards' understanding of love are in fact present in every single possible explanation of God's goals in creation, not just those which share this feature.

However, Edwards' suggestion does not really justify his claim that God is dependent upon the outcome of His decisions – His goals. One could simply say that God's goals are the outcome of His will, and the cause of states in the universe, but that God is in no way dependent upon states in the universe. The flow of causes goes entirely one way – the thing which God wills is dependent upon God's will, but God's will is not dependent upon the thing which God wills. Edwards' brief paragraph attempts to argue that if God has a goal, He is dependent upon the outcome of that goal – but he asserts this without adequately proving it.

The closest thing which Edwards gives to a proof of this statement is observing that God's "exercises and operations" aim at God's goal.[1155] However, it is not clear what Edwards can mean by these "exercises and operations" – if Edwards' doctrine is compatible with classical theism, and if these are things which are within God then, according to the doctrine of divine simplicity,[1156] they can only be another way of speaking of God Himself, and thereby add nothing to the conversation. However, if one understands them as being not part of God but instead something else, then there is no way to involve them as an argument for how God (or something within Him) is dependent upon creation in any way. This means that Edwards' third answer to the objection says nothing which lessens the problem of how Edwards' different understandings of love relate to each other, even in the limited way of showing that all other explanations would have the same weaknesses.

[1155] WJE 8:450.

[1156] Edwards was committed to divine simplicity, although his interpretation was somewhat eccentric. Oliver Crisp, who usually offers a sympathetic reading of Edwards, finds it very problematic – see Oliver D. Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards on Divine Simplicity", *Religious Studies*, 39:1 (Mar 2003), 23-41.

As a consequence of this, we can say with confidence that – when applied to God's relation to creation – one cannot uphold the first feature of Edwards' account of love. If one holds to a classically Christian understanding of God, the first feature is therefore untenable within Edwards' scheme.

Relating Feature 2 and Feature 3

This presents a problem for Edwards' scheme, as he links the second and third feature through the first feature.

Edwards, when discussing the first feature, explains that it connects to the third by means of a unity whereby "the human being reaches out to embrace others in affection and concern".[1157] This gives a clear account of how feature 2 and 3 connect to one another – the union of feature 2 is the link between feature 1 and feature 3, and so the three features are united as an organic whole. However, since we have already seen that – in the case of God – feature 1 cannot be upheld, this account of the connection between feature 2 and feature 3 cannot be maintained.

This raises the question of how feature 2 and feature 3 may otherwise relate. It does not mean that feature 2 and feature 3 are necessarily contradictory. They could be linked in a different way, which has not been previously suggested. (In theory, they could also exist separately as distinct accounts of two separate things, both of which were called 'love', but which were otherwise separate. However, this would be difficult to square with Edwards' claim in *The End of Creation* that it is not possible for something to be love if feature 3 is not present in an ultimate sense.[1158])

In fact, we will now see that adopting elements of Balthasar's theological aesthetics can make sense of how these concepts are linked. This will be seen by examining Balthasar's understanding of love, particularly as addressed in the previous chapters.

[1157] Davidson, "The Four Faces of Self-Love", 93.

[1158] "if indeed this [divine love for humanity] was only from love to something else, and a regard to a further end, entirely diverse from our good; then all the love is truly terminated in that, its ultimate object! … For if our good be not at all regarded ultimately, but only subordinately, then our good or interest is, in itself considered, nothing in God's regard or love" - WJE 8:504-505.

Love in Balthasar

As we have seen, for Balthasar love is seen supremely at the cross.[1159] At the cross, God manifests a love which is kenotic – or self-emptying.[1160] It is a matter of debate as to which elements of this concept of self-emptying are a contingent response of love to a fallen world, and which elements are present in God in eternity – with some theologians suggesting that Balthasar's ideas in this area are particularly problematic.[1161] The previous chapter has already discussed why this thesis is not supporting the elements of Balthasar which apply kenosis to the inner life of the Trinity, and instead is simply using Balthasar's other language of self-giving love.

We saw Balthasar's account of love in action in the previous two chapters. The intra-Trinitarian love of the persons of the Trinity reflected this self-giving, or self-emptying, love; in it, we see God the Son emptying Himself – not in order to negate Himself, but in order to allow the glory of the Father to live in Him.[1162] In the inverse, we saw God the Father honouring this by giving Himself and His glory to the Son, thereby ensuring that the Son is not ultimately negated by His self-emptying to the Father.[1163] We also saw how this flows out through the Spirit into humanity.[1164]

Balthasar and Edwards

In this model, it is easy to see how Balthasar's understanding of love can combine the second and third features of Edwards' account of love. It is a concept of love which has to do with an orientation towards union (the second feature of Edwards' understanding of love), insofar as the persons are emptying themselves in order to

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[1159] See Part 2, especially Chapter 4.
[1160] See Chapter 6.
[1161] For a more sceptical account, see Kilby, *Balthasar*, 115-122. For a more positive account of Balthasar, see O'Hanlon, *The Immutability of God*.
[1162] See Chapter 6.
[1163] See Chapter 7.
[1164] Again, see Chapter 7.

give themselves to the other, the Son allowing the Father to take His place within Himself, and the Father seeking to glorify the Son in the way that He does so.[1165]

At the same time, it is also an orientation towards the good of the other (the third feature of Edwards' understanding of love). The Son is seeking to empty Himself for the sake of the Father; the Father responds to this by affirming the Son in glorifying Him.[1166]

This means that Balthasar's account of love gives a good account of how the second and third features of Edwards' understanding of love may be combined. Furthermore, it is an account which is rooted in revelation in the cross and the Bible, thereby making it more consistent with Protestant theological commitments. Adopting it could be said to address the above problem of how the second and third features of Edwards' account relate to one another, 'healing' Edwards' account.

Glory and Love

Furthermore, it does so by cohering well with the general structure of Edwards' account of the relationship of glory and love. Fundamental to Edwards' account is a stress upon divine glory spilling out of God and existing *ad extra*. We saw in Chapter 2 how this is central to Edwards' argument in *The End of Creation*. This coheres very well with Balthasar's understanding of love and glory – in Balthasar, when the Father begets the Son, He gives Himself in such a way that He allows Himself to exist outside of Himself in the Son, and divine relationships with humanity is patterned after this.

Edwards' resolution to the tension is rooted in the concept of God communicating Himself, or His glory, to humanity. This concept of divine communication of Himself flows through his theology in several different ways,[1167] and is itself deduced from Edwards' biblical interpretation.[1168] However, it is not inherently present within

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[1165] See Chapters 6 and 7.
[1166] See especially Chapter 6.
[1167] A detailed analysis of the numerous ways in which the concept of divine self-communication plays in Edwards' theology can be found in William Schweitzer, *God is a Communicative Being*.
[1168] We have already seen in chapter 2 of this thesis how Edwards justifies his account from scripture. For a detailed account of how Edwards relates scripture and the concept of divine communication – both devising

Edwards' concept of beauty as proportion – indeed, it must be reconciled with Edwards' concept of moral beauty, which requires God to be oriented towards Himself.

By contrast, it is not only present in Balthasar's theological aesthetics, but love as a communicating of the self is in fact a central element. Adopting this would therefore make it easier to see these aspects of the divine action in Edwards' scheme as being beautiful.

Balthasar and Edwards' First Feature

However, there is one potential flaw in this proposal for the reconstruction of Edwards. This is that it is not easy to see how Balthasar's account of love might make sense of the first feature of Edwards' account of love; indeed, Balthasar's account contradicts this element.

While it is a matter of debate as to how restricted self-negation is within Balthasar's understanding of love (and the previous chapter has already argued for a less fundamental concept of kenosis than that which Balthasar maintains), it is nonetheless unambiguous that – for Balthasar – love requires the negation of the self in some circumstances. This is true even if one does not see it in eternity, but only in the Son of God suffering in His human nature through the incarnation. At the cross Jesus does not seek His own joy but prefers the good of the other. This is irreducibly incompatible with the first feature of Edwards' account of love, which argues that all love is ultimately rooted in the lover seeking his/her own happiness.

However, I have already raised several concerns with this feature of Edwards' theology of love on its own terms, and as it relates to the doctrine of God.[1169] This means that there is already a strong case for not maintaining this feature, even before one seeks to draw from Balthasar's understanding of love. This therefore does not weaken my claim that Balthasar's account can help to heal Edwards' account and make it more internally self-consistent.

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his account of divine communication from scripture, as well as explaining his understanding of scripture as a form of divine communication – see again William Schweitzer, *God is a Communicative Being*, 53-112.
[1169] See above in this chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have identified three interrelated features of Jonathan Edwards' account of love in the *Two Dissertations*. I have not suggested that they are the only features to be found in Edwards' understanding of love (whether in the *Two Dissertations* or elsewhere), but I have argued that they are all present, and shown how they are related to one another. I have also shown that there are problems with the first feature, at least when speaking of God (according to the rules of classical theism), since God cannot gain happiness from creation. However, without this feature there is no natural connection between the second and third features.

However, I have also shown that Balthasar's account of beauty in love and glory can make sense of how the second and third features can be held together. As such, this approach heals the problem which we saw in Edwards' understanding of love, enabling love to simultaneously tend towards a communication of good and glory, and union with the beloved.

In the next chapter, we will explore how, in the light of this, Edwards' ultimate resolution to the question of glory-seeking and love – a union between God and humanity – might be reconstructed in the light of the contents of this chapter and the preceding ones.

Chapter 9: Union

In the previous three chapters, we have seen that Balthasar's account of divine beauty allows us to say a number of things about the relationship between glory and love. In particular, we have seen that his reading of divine beauty involves every element of knowledge which we have about God being (re-)interpreted so as to be integrated around a centre that is found in the self-giving love of God – a self-giving love that exists before creation in the Trinity.

While these chapters have raised the possibility of several ideas which might help to answer the dilemma of glory-seeking and love, they have not yet succeeded in providing a resolution which addresses the same points as Edwards. Instead, they have helped address several different sub-parts of this question. This chapter will complete the thesis, by drawing on these ideas and connecting them together, while also pointing to another concept which can be drawn from Edwards (and potentially reconstructed using Balthasar) to help resolve the questions: the concept of a union between God and humanity.

We will begin by examining this concept of union. While I observed in Chapter 2 that Edwards' specific understanding of union in *The End of Creation* is dependent upon natural theology, I will observe that there are other ideas about union in Edwards which are instead built upon scripture and Reformed tradition. I will suggest that these concepts, or similar ones, need not be rejected as incompatible with Protestantism.

Instead, I will argue that they can be integrated as a central part of a new system, which coheres around Balthasar's ideas about the centre of God's beauty, as seen in Christ on the cross. While the general structure of Edwards' answer to the question of glory and love will be maintained, the details will be changed because of placing a different concept of beauty at the centre. The solution which this chapter puts forward will draw together elements from both Edwards and Balthasar, resolving the question using many of the same concepts as Edwards, and addressing Edwards' concerns (apart from those which I have critiqued as being based on natural theology), but without incurring the same problems as Edwards. I will argue that

there are several reasons why this reconstruction is stronger than Edwards' original answer.

Divine-Human Union in Edwards

As we saw in Chapter 2, Jonathan Edwards' final resolution to his question (of how God's love for humanity relates to His theocentric seeking of His own glory) is centred on an account of a union between God and humanity. This union between God and humanity means that, when God loves human beings, He is acting out of love for Himself. This unites God's love for humanity and His self-love, and thereby addressed the question which the previous three chapters have not yet answered from Balthasar.

There are two elements of Edwards' account of union between God and humanity. One is that any divine attributes that exist outside of God reflect God and are a participation in Him, and so for God to value His own attributes *ad extra* is an example of His theocentric love. According to the details of Edwards' argument, this union is real but insufficient to answer everything that he requires, and this leads him to develop a second account of a union between God and humanity - an eschatological union, which results in an account of *theosis.* This union is not only currently located in the future, but will be perpetually in the future, as it will only be realised in the infinite future rather than at any specific point in future time.[1170]

We saw in Part 1 how the details of Edwards' account of *theosis* in an infinite-future appear to be based substantially upon natural theology, and are a natural outgrowth of Edwards' understanding of beauty, without which they are unnecessary. However, this does not mean that Edwards' understanding of a union between God and humanity is entirely based upon this natural theology, in the sense that he has no other reason for adopting any account of union between God and humanity. Nor does it mean that it is only natural theology which causes this concept of a union between God and humanity to be cited as a potential explanation for why God

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[1170] See Chapter 2.

created humanity (or the universe), or as an explanation of how love and theocentric glory-seeking relate.

While I have argued that the details of Edwards' account are rooted in his natural theology, this does not mean that there is no account of union at all between God and humanity which could be derived from revelation. There are numerous ways in which a different, or less precise, account of union between God and humanity might be given. For example, not all accounts of union need to be realised eschatologically, still less only realised in the infinite future.

A Revealed Divine-Human Union

In fact, Edwards elsewhere argues for a concept of a union between humanity and God on grounds which cannot be said to be rooted in natural theology, but are instead rooted in scripture and Reformed theological tradition. While *The End of Creation* was the only place where he developed the problematic details of *theosis* which we have examined in this thesis, there are numerous other places within his corpus where he discusses concepts which similarly echo the eastern doctrine.[1171]

In a sermon from December 1744[1172] (that is, over a decade before the writing of *The End of Creation*), which was entitled "Approaching the End of God's Grand Design"[1173] (hereafter, "Approaching the End"), Edwards explored the same question he addressed in *The End of Creation* – what God's goal was in creating the world (a goal which is identified with His goal in subsequently acting within the world.)

Edwards' answer in "Approaching the End" is in several respects similar to that which he developed in his later dissertation. He argues that "God's design in all his works is one, and all his manifold and various dispensations are parts of one scheme."[1174] As in *The End of Creation*, "God's end in the creation of the world

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[1171] Edwards' understanding of *theosis* has been widely discussed in scholarship over the past few decades. One of the most interesting texts discusses how Edwards' ideas in this area could be used constructively by contemporary evangelicals – see W. Ross Hastings, *Jonathan Edwards and the Life of God: Toward an Evangelical Theology of Participation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015).
[1172] Wilson H. Kimnach, "Introduction to 'Approaching the End of God's Grand Design'", WJE 25:111-112.
[1173] WJE 25:113-126.
[1174] WJE 25:114.

consists in these two things, viz. to communicate himself and to glorify himself."[1175] And furthermore, these apparently distinct goals are actually one: "God's communicating himself and glorifying [himself] ought not to be looked upon as though they were two distinct ends, but as what together makes one last end... For God glorifies himself in communicating himself, and he communicates himself in glorifying himself."[1176] While – unlike in *The End of Creation* – he does not spell out exactly how the two concepts are related, or why they are ultimately the same goal, he is clearly insisting that there is a sense in which they are united into one goal.

As in *The End of Creation*, Edwards develops a concept of union between God and humanity in "Approaching the End", which he places at the centre of his answer to the question. However, he develops this understanding of union in a different way to how he later describes it in *The End of Creation*.

One difference concerns the relation of this union to time. In both works, the union is one which is found in the future. However, in "Approaching the End" – unlike in *The End of Creation* – it is a union which will be achieved at a specific point in the future. Edwards writes that "the time is coming – and certainly will come – when it will be seen, actually finished."[1177] This is an explicit contradiction with the position which Edwards later takes in *The End of Creation*, which is that the union at which God aims will always be in the future.[1178]

Other similarities and differences between the two understandings of the union will be seen by looking more closely at what Edwards says in "Approaching the End." Edwards summarises God's one goal in the following section:

> *Inq*. What is this one great design that God has in view of all his works and dispensations?
> *Ans*. 'Tis to present to his Son a spouse in perfect glory from amongst sinful, miserable mankind, blessing all that comply with his will in this matter and destroying all his enemies that oppose it, and so to communicate and glorify himself through Jesus Christ, God-man. ...[1179]

[1175] WJE 25:116.
[1176] WJE 25:116-117.
[1177] WJE 25:121.
[1178] See Chapter 2.
[1179] WJE 25:116.

In this answer, we see immediately that God's one goal of self-glorification and self-communication is to be realised by "present[ing] to his Son a spouse".[1180] Reformed theology already had a tradition of following scripture[1181] in using the language of marriage to refer to the relationship between Christ and the Church, with Christ as the bridegroom and the Church as the bride.

Edwards is clear that this status as the (future) spouse of Christ means that the church is to be united to Christ. He speaks of the spouse "be[ing] presented [to] him in perfect union".[1182] He writes:

> God the Son, having the infinite goodness of the divine nature in him, desired to have a proper object to whom he might communicate his goodness: to have this object in the nearest, strictest union with himself, and therefore desires (to speak of him after the manner of men) a spouse to be brought and presented to himself in such a near relation and strict union as might give him the greatest advantage to communicate his goodness to her.[1183]

This passage makes it clear that, for Edwards, the marriage analogy is speaking about a union between God the Son and humanity. Indeed, phrases like "the nearest, strictest union"[1184] make it clear that the union which is being spoken of is a very strong union, and call to mind phrases in *The End of Creation* (e.g. "the most perfect union with God"[1185]).

As in *The End of Creation*, this union is closely associated with God communicating His goodness to the creature (or, in this case, the creatures, since the church contains a number of them). We saw in Chapter 2 that the union between God and humanity in *The End of Creation* consists in the fact that the creature is participating in the divine attributes, which is itself a union with God and a communication of His attributes. We similarly see here that the close union between the spouses exists so that God the Son "might give him the greatest advantage to communicate his goodness to her."[1186] In both cases the union between God and humanity is closely

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[1180] WJE 25:116.

[1181] See, for example, Ephesians 5:22-33, or Revelation 21:2, 21:9 & 22:17.

[1182] WJE 25:117. Note: the first set of angular brackets were added by me, the second were added by Wilson H. Kimnach, the editor of the 25th volume of the Yale edition of the Works of Jonathan Edwards.

[1183] WJE 25:117.

[1184] WJE 25:117.

[1185] WJE 8:534.

[1186] WJE 25:117.

associated with the communication of the divine goodness to them (which is, as we have seen, identified with divine glory), although in "Approaching the End" the exact relation is not discussed in the same amount of depth.

A key difference between "Approaching the End" and *The End of Creation* lies in how the concept of union is understood. As we saw in Chapter 2, Edwards there understands the union between God and humanity in a very precise way, according to which concepts such as "understanding" and "will" can be identified not only with divine attributes, but also with human faculties. These human faculties are so precisely definable that when Edwards applies mathematics to them (regarding his understanding of infinity), he feels able to calculate the outcome in such a way that Edwards' argument can legitimately be described as a mathematical formula.

By contrast, in this sermon Edwards does not operate with the same sense of clarity. While it is possible that part of this is because the format of a sermon is different to that of a dissertation, it seems probable that something else is also going on. In this sermon, Edwards understands the union to be analogous to the union between human spouses. This analogy does not operate in a precise way, but instead helps to illuminate something that we do not know or understand by saying it is roughly like something which we do have experience of.

For our purposes, there is one other difference between the understandings of union in the two works that is especially important: their source. I have already argued that the understanding of union in *The End of Creation* owes a great deal to natural theology.[1187] It is notable, however, that this is not true of that found in "Approaching the End."

There is little explicit reference in this sermon to Edwards' sources for the language of marital union (although there is one occasion where he gives a quote from Ephesians 5 which, if put in its context, is discussing an analogy between human marriage and Christ's relationship with the church[1188]), but this is something which is found in Reformed tradition and therefore it seems likely that Edwards is drawing on the broader concept. The concept of the church as being the bride of Christ came

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[1187] See Chapters 1 and 2.
[1188] WJE 25:118.

into the Reformed tradition as a result of it being woven through a number of biblical texts, and in the absence of further evidence one can be reasonably confident that Edwards himself is an example of this tradition, and so built on its scriptural sources.

This presumption is reinforced if one considers other places where Edwards uses this analogy of marriage to describe a union between God and the church. Edwards preached another sermon in September 1746[1189] (that is, two years later), which was called "The Church's Marriage to Her Sons, and to her God"[1190] (hereafter "The Church's Marriage"). In this sermon, Edwards discusses at length this analogy of marriage as explaining the union between God the Son and humanity in the church. In this sermon, he describes a number of similarities which he identifies between the relationship between a church and its new minister, and the relationship between newlyweds,[1191] before arguing "[t]hat this union of minister with the people of Christ, is in order to their being brought to the blessedness of a more glorious union, in which God shall rejoice over them as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride."[1192] As he begins to discuss this theme of a marriage between Christ and the church, he gives the following explanation for adopting it:

> Of all the many kinds of union of sensible and temporal things that are used in Scripture to represent the relation there is between Christ and his church; that which is between bridegroom and bride, or husband and wife, is much the most frequently made use of in both the Old and New Testament. The Holy Ghost seems to take a particular delight in this, as a similitude fit to represent the strict, intimate and blessed union that is between Christ and his saints.[1193]

He then goes on to cite the marriage metaphor of Ephesians 5 specifically in describing this union.[1194] It is noteworthy that Edwards draws on the marital analogy from Ephesians 5 in both sermons – not only because he draws on the same biblical text (which is only one of a number of texts which refer to a marital union between God and His people) on multiple occasions, but because Ephesians 5 contains the following text:

[1189] Wilson H. Kimnach, "Introduction to 'The Church's Marriage'", WJE 25:164-166.
[1190] WJE 25:167-196.
[1191] WJE 25:172-176.
[1192] WJE 25:176.
[1193] WJE 25:176-177.
[1194] WJE 25:177.

> [28]In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29]For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, [30]because we are members of his body.[b] [31]"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." [32]This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.[1195]

This text is significant for several reasons. One is that it is an example of a biblical text which links a union between God and the church with the marital union. Perhaps more important for our purposes is that this union is also one that grounds the *love* between husband and wife. Verses 28 and 29a suggest that husbands should love their wives because they are united, before verses 29b and 30 suggesting that Christ loves the church because He is united to it. As such, the text which Edwards draws on (in both texts) is one which roots divine love for the church in the union which Christ and the church have. Since Edwards did not explicitly cite these verses to this point in either sermon, we cannot know for sure that he was using this biblical material, but the fact that Edwards repetitively cited Ephesians 5 in a context in which this would naturally fit would seem to indicate so.

What is certainly true is that in "The Church's Marriage" – that is, in a sermon written only two years after "Approaching the End" (and still 12 years before Edwards death brought an end to his writing of *The End of Creation*) – we see that Edwards is arguing that scripture contains a number of images for a union between God and the church, but that the frequency of the image of marriage suggests that it is the most important. Edwards is clearly relying on biblical material for this understanding of a union between God and humanity. While the details of Edwards' account of union between God and humanity are based on natural theology in *The End of Creation*, this does not mean that any concept of this union at all needs to be. In fact, in "Approaching the End," Edwards acts more consistently with his Protestantism in placing a different union between God and humanity at the heart of his account of God's goal of communicating good and glorifying Himself. Edwards presumably built on these ideas as he developed *The End of Creation*, but used natural theology to

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[1195] Ephesians 5:28-32, NRSV.

alter them – and thereby made them less consistent with his Protestant epistemology.

We can therefore say with confidence that, while natural theology accounts for the details of Edwards' solution in *The End of Creation* (to the problem of the relationship between glory, love and theocentricity) with reference to a concept of union between God and humanity, it does not necessarily explain the idea of using this union on its own. Instead, the concept of a union between God and humanity – and of it making sense of God's goal in creation, which is simultaneously glory and the communication of His own goodness – is present earlier, and without being deduced from natural theology. This means that there is no reason why our reconstructed Edwards should not hold to this core idea, without some of the details.

Other Accounts of Union and Distinction

Having seen that an account of union between God and humanity is not necessarily derived from natural theology in Edwards, but that the account in *The End of Creation* is, we will now examine this account in the light of the many different understandings of union which could have alternatively been developed.

The history of Christian thought presents us with a number of different ways of describing union between God and humanity. We have already seen two different approaches within Edwards himself (one of which was considerably more definite and precise, the other more vague and analogical) – but there have been many others.

One example is the analogy of being. According to this approach, all created being has similarities (while "there can be no similarity so great that a greater dissimilarity cannot be seen between them"[1196]) with divine being,[1197] with created being gaining

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[1196] "Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council", in *English Historical Documents III: 1189-1327*, trans. by H. Rothwell (London: Routledge, 1975), 661-691.

[1197] Given the argument of this thesis (and particularly chapter 4), it is valuable to observe that this similarity has been interestingly combined with Balthasar's crucicentric account of beauty and revelation in Stephen Fields, "The Beauty of the Ugly: Balthasar, the Crucifixion, Analogy and God", *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 9:2 (April 2007), 172-183.

its being through participation.[1198] This gives an account of human beings having a union with God while also maintaining a strong distinction between the two: an insistence that, whatever the similarities, the dissimilarities are always greater.

Another concept is to be found in the Reformed tradition, and is the concept of union with Christ. Reformed theology adopts the classical Christian doctrine of the incarnation, whereby God (in the person of the Son) is united with the human nature of Jesus. As a consequence of this, other human beings may be united by faith to Jesus.[1199] This concept requires humans to be united to Jesus through the human nature, but also involves human beings sharing in the divine nature. (There are obvious similarities between this approach and that of accounts of *theosis* which are more classically associated with eastern orthodoxy.) One of the most relevant consequences of this, from the point of view of this thesis, may be that Reformed theology classically has the sinner gaining justification through union with Christ[1200] – the sinner gains the righteousness of God through this union, despite not becoming identical with God or in any way breaking down the creator-creation distinction. Regardless of the validity or otherwise of this formulation (which is, of course, the subject of centuries of controversy), to adopt something like this as an explanation of a union that might unite God's self-love and love for humanity would, at the very least, not add any problems to Protestant theology which are not already present in this concept itself.

Alternatively, one could simply use the language of participation in God. This is present in various places within Edwards,[1201] and allows a kind of union between God and humanity. It has previously been used to explain the distinction between the human possession of divine attributes in *theosis* and the divine possession of attributes.[1202] However, since Edwards' Trinitarian theology involves the divine

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[1198] Bruce D. Marshall has explored in depth the connection between analogy and participation in Aquinas, arguing that the relationship between the two leads to an account of analogy which Aquinas holds is dry and limited unless it is brought alive by revelation - see Bruce D. Marshall, "Christ the End of Analogy", in *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or Wisdom of God?,* ed. by Thomas Joseph White (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 280-313.

[1199] See, e.g., Calvin, *Institutes I*, 733-738.

[1200] See, Ibid, 736-738.

[1201] See, for example, WJE 8:459.

[1202] See A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 100-101.

persons gaining their own attributes through participation,[1203] then to make this an explanation one would either have to alter Edwards' Trinitarian theology, or develop some clarification of it. Nonetheless, there is no fundamental reason why some account of participation could not sufficiently explain how their might be a union between God and humanity which contained a sufficient distinction, although there would be problems posed for this by elements of Edwards' theology.

Finally, one could take an explanation from the work of Balthasar, who himself holds to a kind of "divinization of creaturely reality"[1204] which nonetheless insists that "creaturely being … must always remain relative and subordinate to uncreated being."[1205] In my MA dissertation, I suggested that an account could be developed whereby Balthasar's understanding of distance between the Trinitarian persons – and of creation existing within that distance – allows for creation to be united with God in a way, but without compromising the creator-creation distinction.[1206]

Regardless of how one addresses all of the details, each of these options allow one to hold to Edwards' belief in union between God and humanity, and in each case one could use them to the same purpose as Edwards – that is, to explain how divine love for humanity can be integrated into a concept of divine self-love. In each case, after all, the human embodies, shares in or reflects something of God, and it is therefore reasonable to see the value of the human as embodying, sharing in or reflecting the value of the divine, and thereby being loved with the same love with which God is loved.

At the same time, none of these accounts possess the same flaws which Chapter 2 identified in Edwards' account in *The End of Creation*. For example, I raised the question of how, if God is moral in treating a complete union in an infinite future as being real (as he must in order for the union to solve the problem which Edwards puts forward), this does not mean that the creator-creature distinction breaks down. While these flaws are found in Edwards' account in *The End of Creation*, they do not need be found in the alternative accounts of union between God and humanity.

[1203] See Chapter 1 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix to this thesis.
[1204] Johnson, *Christ and Analogy*, 171.
[1205] Ibid, 171.
[1206] See Chapter 2 of my previous dissertation, in the appendix to this thesis.

However, it is more difficult for Edwards' later account to address some of the points which Edwards' account in *The End of Creation* did, without drawing on a number of the specific details of Edwards' account. As we saw in Chapter 2, Edwards' understanding of these things is deeply influenced by his understanding of beauty and an application of this to his account of how God should act. According to Edwards' argument, God must supremely respect Himself because He is obliged to respect being in accordance with the 'size' of being which it has, and God possesses infinite being.[1207] This means that, regardless of what human beings and God have in common – or what unity there may be between the divine and human – the infinitely greater nature of God himself will always mean that God must be valued infinitely more than the human, and therefore the human must not be valued in an ultimate sense.[1208]

This argument requires the details of Edwards' account to be maintained. As we saw in Chapter 2, Edwards adopts his account of the eschatological unity (an infinite unity after an infinite time) in order to give an account of how human beings can be infinitely united with God and thereby possess the infinity of the divine being. Edwards' account allows God to treat human beings not only as united to Himself in some sense, but as infinitely united to Himself and accordingly possessing infinite quantities of the divine excellencies. If one is to maintain Edwards' argument from beauty to divine theocentricity, then it is difficult to see how a concept of divine-human union could resolve tension between love for humanity and theocentric glory-seeking, unless it is precisely the account of union which Edwards himself puts forward.

However, this need cause no problem for the purposes of this thesis. This part of Edwards' argument is precisely the element which this thesis has already argued is most problematically inclined towards natural theology, and therefore in tension with Edwards' Protestantism. The fact that the details of Edwards' account of *theosis* are necessary in order to maintain this does not indicate that there is necessarily any reason for the Protestant to keep the details of Edwards' account of *theosis*. We have seen that Edwards elsewhere puts forward valid, non-natural, theological

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[1207] WJE 8:411-426.
[1208] See Chapters 1 and 2 for discussion of this argument from proportion.

arguments for using some kind of union between God and humanity as a resolution to tension between love for humanity and theocentric glory-seeking – but there is no reason why one needs to adopt the details of Edwards' account, rather than one of the other possible accounts.

Modifying Edwards

All of this means that a version of Edwards reconstructed by Balthasar to be more consistent with Protestant principles would have good reason to adopt the general thrust of Edwards' overall approach of reconciling apparently distinct divine loves with reference to a concept of union between God and humanity. This key idea was derived from revelation before being derived from natural theology, and so makes sense within classical Protestantism. However, there is no reason to adopt the details of Edwards' account, and there are numerous other ways of describing a union between God and humanity.

This does, however, leave open the question of how exactly a concept of union between God and humanity might address the problems which have been raised. However, the ideas which we have examined over the past few chapters will, when considered together, be able to be integrated into an overall structure which enables these different loves to be reconciled as one, drawing on elements from both Balthasar and Edwards.

Self-Giving Love and Union Between God and Humanity

In all of the three previous chapters, we have seen different perspectives on Balthasar's understanding of love. For Balthasar, self-giving love is at the centre of the divine nature, and all other aspects of God's nature must find their centre in it.[1209] We have also seen that this self-giving love is originally manifest within God –

[1209] We have also seen how Balthasar's own work closely associates this self-giving love with kenosis, which Balthasar finds to be internal to the Trinity. However, we have seen that there are problems associated with this, and that this element can be laid aside without compromising the elements of Balthasar which are of use to this thesis, such as this divine self-giving love. The use which this chapter is making of Balthasar's account of self-giving love is therefore built on this modified version of Balthasar which does not contain this element of kenosis.

embodied within the primal Trinitarian relations. When God the Father begets the Son, the Father is giving Himself to God the Son, in order that God the Son may entirely possess the Father while at once being distinct. This is a relation of self-giving love, and – as we have seen in the previous chapter – it gathers two key features of Edwards' account of love to cohere around it. It is a love that is oriented towards the communication of goodness to the other, while at the same time it is at once a tendency towards union with the other. And all of this is reconciled in the nature of love being to give from the goodness of the self to the other, which means that this movement contains a communication of good – and that communication of good is itself a union with the other.

This means that for God to communicate His own goodness to the creature – to manifest this self-giving love which, according to Balthasar's understanding of divine beauty, is central to the divine nature – is already, by definition, a form of love for the creature, and at the same time for the creature to be united to Himself. This would naturally lead to the suggestion that this union may, in some way, indicate that this act of love for the creature is also an act of love for God.

That this act of love for the creature is also an act of love for God seems particularly likely given that, as we saw in Chapter 7, the intra-Trinitarian love of the divine persons results in them mutually communicating each other's glory motivated by love for each other. The Father's love for the Son leads to Him communicating the Son's glory, and likewise the Son's love for the Father causes Him to make way for the Father's glory to be communicated. Each divine person is manifesting an intra-Trinitarian love, in seeking for this divine glory to be manifest and communicated.

If this is the divine persons' motivation, it seems to manifest an intra-Trinitarian love. But it again raises the question of in what sense the divine persons are seeking to love humanity, since if their motivation is mutual Trinitarian love, this seems to preclude their motivation being love for humanity. We already saw a similar dilemma in Chapter 7, when discussing my proposal of intra-Trinitarian love magnification, which I argued does not explain how the original love exists which is magnified.

However, this can be revisited again with further reflection upon what we have already said. In Chapter 6, we saw that Balthasar argues that the divine nature is identified with self-giving love. As such, this intra-Trinitarian love magnification is not

simply to magnify either the divine glory, or one divine goal that happens to be love, but that the two are both identified with the same underlying thing – self-giving love, within which is a propensity towards union with the other. The Trinity by its nature *is* this love, and the persons' mutual relationship comes *from* this love and *magnifies* this love. This self-giving love by its nature brings about the Trinitarian union and distinctiveness.

For God to be self-giving in creating the world, or in saving humanity, is not some separate goal or element of God, but is a manifestation of the same love that is the origin of the intra-Trinitarian life. Just as within the divine life, this goal ends in union between the lover and the beloved. The nature of this union means that love for humanity is a natural expression of love for God, for several reasons – because humanity (when God has created it) is united to God and grounded in him; because the persons love each other and therefore love the objects of their love; and because through salvation humanity is drawn into the relationship of love that exists within the Trinity.

Comparison with Edwards' Own Ideas

The explanation which we have developed is like that of Edwards in that it explains how love for humanity, the seeking of glory, and love for God can all be united as one. It also follows Edwards in drawing on a union between God and humanity to give an account of how these ideas can all be united in one goal, and manages to do almost everything that the second chapter of *The End of Creation* attempts to do.

What is different is that, because (building on Balthasar's understanding of the beauty of revelation) it understands self-giving love as involving a tendency towards union, it is able to ground the divine life and the Trinitarian unity in this self-giving love. This means that the one goal into which all else integrates can be identified with this one movement of self-giving love, which is at the root not only of God's intra-Trinitarian love for Himself, but even at the root of the divine life itself. All other elements of love may be integrated within this.

However, there is one of Edwards' points which this account does not address. We have seen that, for him, (due to his understanding of beauty) God must honour

beings in proportion to the extent to which they possess being, and therefore that God may only honour human union with Him if it is an infinite union (since otherwise it would be as nothing compared with his infinity).[1210] However, since Edwards' account of beauty is precisely the element which I have argued is incompatible with Protestantism, there is no need for this kind of union that tends towards infinite one-ness, and thus identity. A much looser or less complete kind of union may be reached at, and is something which these ideas can be said to achieve.

This reconstruction of Edwards follows in the broad methodology of Balthasar's approach. As we saw in Part 2,[1211] Balthasar argues that all truths and facts of reality should be seen as being reintegrated around the nature of God, revealed in Jesus, and uniquely at the cross. Ideas may be sourced from elsewhere in revelation, or from the partial accounts of truth that can be found in non-Christian religions, but unless something centres on the cross, it is never fundamentally complete or true. What this theory does is to take what Edwards puts forwards in Chapter 2 of *The End of Creation*, and reintegrate it around Balthasar's understanding of the loving centre of the Jesus revealed at the cross. This therefore meets Balthasar's expectation for how his ideas might interact with those of other people.

At the same time, as I argued in Parts 1 and 2, to do this with Balthasar's ideas is not foreign to the logic of Edwards' position, but ultimately makes him more consistent with his own theological tradition. The bulk of Chapter 1 must be abandoned for this reconstruction of Edwards to take place, but as I argued in Part 1 this is precisely the element of Edwards which is not consistent with the epistemology of his own Protestant tradition. Furthermore, as I argued in Part 2, the equivalent ideas from Balthasar are much more naturally coherent with Edwards' Protestantism. Accordingly, to reconstruct Edwards in this fashion is not to do violence to Edwards' theology in service to Balthasar's ideas, but in fact makes Edwards more coherent with aspects of his own thought and tradition.

At the same time, while this adjustment of Edwards' ideas does draw on a number of equivalent ideas within Balthasar, it maintains the broad structure of Edwards'

[1210] See Chapter 2.
[1211] See especially Chapter 3.

answer to the question of how glory-seeking and love relate: that is, by using an understanding of union between God and humanity to explain how the two ideas are identified, and so that love for humanity and love for God and His glory are not in competition. To my knowledge, Balthasar never explored the question of how these two themes are connected. While one could turn to the answer which we have put forward within this thesis, and argue from this that one could adopt a similarly structured account using only the resources found within Balthasar and without the details of Edwards' account, this is not something which Balthasar himself ever did. One could speculate about a number of different ways in which Balthasar may have answered the question, had he ever explored it in writing – in reality, however, he did not. Therefore, the answer which we have given is one in which the structure is given by Edwards.

Distinction Between God and Creation

All of this raises one of the questions which we raised of Edwards in Chapter 2. If, as the above sections argued, this union between God and humanity is sufficient to ground a union between love for humanity and theocentric glory-seeking because God's acts in creation and redemption are part of the same movement that exists within the Trinitarian processions, this raises the question of in what sense the creator-creature distinction may be maintained. If the union emerges in the same way as the intra-Trinitarian union, how then is the distinction greater than the Trinitarian distinction?

There are several points which may be made in this respect. To begin with, one should note that the fact that God is giving of Himself out of self-giving love does not always require that God is giving Himself in the same sense. Within Balthasar's Trinitarian theology, it naturally happens in a more absolute and unqualified sense than is required towards humanity; this is necessary in order to maintain Trinitarian orthodoxy, since if God were to give Himself to humans in the same absolute sense in which the Father gives Himself to the Son, then human beings would become divine persons in the same sense as the Son. This is different to Edwards' scheme where, due to his understanding of beauty, it is necessary for any union to be unqualified and not limited in this way, which leads towards Edwards' God's bringing

about an infinite union (albeit in an infinitely future time). This is not necessary if one instead adopts something more like Balthasar's account of beauty.

One could see this distinction as a purely quantitative one: that God gives Himself in the same sense to humanity as the Father does to the Son, but that a distinction exists because Father gives Himself entirely (and thus infinitely) to the Son, while God gives Himself partially (and finitely) to humanity. However, this would not be the only way of making the distinction, and there could also be a way in which the self which God gave to humanity is qualitatively different to the self which Father gives to Son. This qualitative distinction might correspond to one of the accounts of union-in-distinction in Christian history which were discussed earlier in this chapter – or it might be some other qualitative distinction.

Regardless of how the details are precisely worked out, there is no reason that a union of the type which was described in the above two sections needs to compromise the creator-creation distinction. This would only be necessary if it were combined with Edwards' account of divine beauty and his consequent understanding of why God must possess theocentric self-love.

Comment on Similar Elements in Edwards

There is one further advantage to this reconstruction of Edwards' ideas, using Balthasar. We have already seen a number of areas where this final resolution mirrors ideas in Edwards, while altering them and reinterpreting them within a system that centres on Balthasar's understanding of divine love. At this juncture, it seems wise to comment that there is another element which comes close to some of these ideas, but which ultimately failed to work in Edwards system. This concerns suggestions within Edwards that God's act of creation was an extension of the same kind of thing that was happening within the Godhead in the begetting of the Son.

Before *The End of Creation*, there were a number of occasions when Edwards wrote of a similarity between the begetting of the Son by the Father and the creation of the world by the Godhead. Some of these occurred relatively early in Edwards' writing

(for example, in Miscellany 104,[1212] Edwards argues that the divine persons have an "inclination to communicate"[1213] themselves, which is satisfied by the Father in begetting the Son, and satisfied by the Son in creating the universe.[1214]), but there were also several occasions in the run up to Edwards' writing of *The End of Creation* (Holmes describes this period as a "burst of activity that accompanied his desire to publish his conclusions in *End of Creation*."[1215]) when Edwards makes this link in the Miscellanies – numbers 1082,[1216] 1151,[1217] 1218,[1218] and 1266[a].[1219] In these texts, we see "a repeated insistence on the parallel between the twofold external going forth that Edwards sums up with the word 'glory' and the twofold internal going forth of the Father's substance which is the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit."[1220] The reason for creation was thus in order that God the Son could do in creation the same thing that God the Father had already done within the Trinity. This kind of logic would fit quite well with that which I have suggested Edwards could be reconstructed towards.

There is some evidence that Edwards may have rejected this idea because he did not view it as compatible with doctrines of classical theism.[1221] He appears to have been concerned that this account would involve God being required to create in order to be in some way complete. In the above example, he appears to be suggesting that God is already complete because the Godhead contains a communication from Father to Son, but that God creates so that the Son specifically can communicate Himself. He presumably later came to realise that this was not sufficient, since it would involve the person of the Son being incomplete, and if any person of the Trinity is incomplete then this would stand in contrast with classical theism and an orthodox Christian view of God.

[1212] WJE 13:272-274.
[1213] WJE 13:272.
[1214] WJE 13:272-273.
[1215] Holmes, *God of Grace*, 43.
[1216] WJE 20:465-466.
[1217] WJE 20:525.
[1218] WJE 23:150-153.
[1219] WJE 23:213.
[1220] Holmes, *God of Grace*, 54.
[1221] See Holmes, *God of Grace*, 35-44, which explores how Edwards' private notes show him increasingly developing, over the course of his life, his account of why God created the world, growing it largely in order to counter the possibility that God was somehow dependent upon creation in some way.

Balthasar would no doubt object to much of this line of reasoning by suggesting that God does not gain anything by communicating Himself, but instead solely gives for the sake of the other. Indeed, there are places in Edwards where he writes similar things. However, this would not ultimately be compatible with the general structure of Edwards' understanding of both love and what it means to have a will. We saw in the previous chapter that, when discussing the first feature of Edwards' understanding of love, Edwards is clear that both love – and all expressions of will – result in a person gaining joy if their goals are achieved. Edwards' God would be dependent upon any goal He had for His happiness.

This kind of logic seems unavoidable within Edwards' understanding of love, but given that the previous chapter has already argued for this reconstruction of Edwards' ideas, this therefore provides another example of how my proposed reconstruction of Edwards can be seen as a way of reintegrating Edwards ideas around the centre of Balthasar's understanding of beauty, thereby 'healing' Edwards' thought.

Strengths of This Account

There are a number of ways in which the version of Edwards' theology which I have reconstructed using Balthasar's account of glory is to be preferred to the original version of Edwards, which I discussed in Chapter 2.

To begin with, and significantly, this version of Edwards does not adopt an account of beauty that lies in tension with Protestant theology. God, by this reading, is beautiful in a way which is not derived from natural theology. This therefore addresses one of Edwards' fundamental beliefs – that God must be seen to be beautiful – without presenting a tension between Edwards' theology and his Protestant commitments.

Secondly, this version of Edwards does not need to adopt the problematic details of his account of *theosis*. While there is strong Reformed tradition of union with Christ, and Eastern Orthodoxy propounds a different version of *theosis*, what is much more original – and contentious – are the details of Edwards' understanding of absolute union with God after an infinite period of time. However, as we have seen above,

there are a number of other potential ways that a different understanding of union with God can be adopted, and can serve to solve the same problem in Edwards, as long as one's understanding of God is not bound by Edwards' understanding of beauty. This means that it is possible to avoid Edwards' more mathematical interpretation of how God operates, whereby he reasons that God must operate according to various laws of infinity.

Connected to this is a third key difference, which concerns the nature of human knowledge of God. Our reading of Edwards has revealed a tendency towards a God who is much more precise, and who can be understood through careful application of correct terminology. This is not to say that Edwards does not himself have an apophatic side – in fact, he frequently makes reference to things which he does not understand.[1222] At the same time, fundamental to his understanding of knowledge of God is an understanding that it must be understood as a spiritual sight or knowledge[1223] which is limited and "prior to heaven … [is] as in a glass darkly".[1224] In one of his sermons, he wrote:

> Now the saints see the glory of God but by a reflected light, as we in the night see the light of the sun reflected from the moon, but in heaven they shall directly behold the Sun of Righteousness, and shall look full upon him when shining in all glory.[1225]

However, while granting that there are these elements within Edwards which acknowledge the limits of human knowledge of God (especially when dealing with the knowledge which humans can have in this life), we should at the same time observe that these elements in Edwards are not relevant to his ultimate conclusion with regard to how love and glory relate in *The End of Creation*. In this work, Edwards gives a detailed and precise account of God.

[1222] Illustrating this point, Edwards wrote a number of times about the difficulty of comprehension experienced by a boy to whom he demonstrated that a cube with sides of 2cm is eight times the size of a cube with sides of 1cm. If something like this was impossible for this boy to understand, Edwards reasoned, it seemed likely that there were many things of God which are beyond current human comprehension and knowledge. See, e.g., WJE 18:192-193.

[1223] For a detailed discussion of the central role this plays in Edwards' theological framework, see Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 149-176.

[1224] Ibid, 153.

[1225] From an unpublished sermon by Jonathan Edwards on Revelation 14:2, quoted in Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 163 (footnote 44.)

Furthermore, the understanding of God put forward in *The End of Creation* is so precise that an argument based upon mathematics becomes the central, controlling answer to how one makes sense of love, glory and theocentricity. This is very clearly a strong form of cataphatic theology. This mathematical nature also demonstrates that it is a form of theology which understands God in an abstract way, in terms of concepts which can be precisely defined but which one may suggest become thereby somewhat impersonal.

By contrast, this is not present in either Balthasar or the reconstructed version of Edwards which I propose. In these cases, God is understood on the model of art – and the Christian is like "a spectator standing transfixed before a great work of art – a painting, perhaps, or a statue – who is caught up, taken out of himself or herself, by its beauty."[1226] It lacks the precision of Edwards' account, instead using an artistic style to convey truth. Within this, analogies from human beings play a significant part – for example, in Balthasar the Trinitarian persons are understood to be analogous to human relationships,[1227] while the account of union developed in this chapter is rooted in an analogy with human marital relations. In both cases, we see God being interpreted by analogy with humanity.

There are two advantages which this analogical approach might be said to have. One is that it might be preferred to have a concept of God that seems personal rather than impersonal. It might seem preferable – perhaps more intuitively valuable, or more reverent – to have an image of God as being like a person, rather than as like an object.

The other reason that this analogical approach might be preferred has to do with the nature of the question. Fundamental to the argument of this thesis is a belief that for God to glorify Himself involves human beings reflecting, embodying or participating

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[1226] Kilby, *Balthasar*, 42.

[1227] Having said that, it is worthy of note that Balthasar's account of the Trinity has been critiqued by Thomas G. Dalzell as being insufficiently social –he argues that, contra social Trinitarians, Balthasar's understanding of the Trinity is more impersonal. This means that his doctrine does not support social justice in the same way that social Trinitarianism allegedly does. While the reader's perception of the value of such a critique will be influenced by their overall view of debates around social Trinitarianism, it is worthwhile to note that this illustrates the fact that while Balthasar uses extensive analogies from human relationships to describe the Trinity, this should not be misunderstood as being indistinguishable from trends towards social Trinitarianism that have been popular in recent decades. See Thomas G. Dalzell, "Lack of Social Drama in Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics", *Theological Studies*, 60 (1999), 457-475.

in the divine nature. From this perspective, it seems inevitable that human beings might be seen to be analogous to the divine: since their telos involves them being like God, it would be a matter of great surprise if we did not find ourselves seeing something of God when (with the 'right' eyes) we look at human beings. Following this kind of analogous logic would therefore seem to be a natural expression of the ideas of both Edwards and Balthasar concerning how human beings glorify God, and should therefore be preferred if one is to adopt the ideas of either Edwards or Balthasar concerning glory.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that Edwards' attempt to resolve the question of love and glory-seeking by using a concept of union between God and humanity is not entirely based on natural theology. Instead, while the details of it as proposed in *The End of Creation* are clearly based on a natural theology derived from a natural concept of beauty, the idea of resolving it through a union between God and the church (using the analogy of marriage) was already present in Edwards beforehand, and appears to be based on scriptural sources. This base account is much more compatible with Protestantism, and since there are numerous other ways of developing the details of an account of a union between God and humanity, there is no reason not to adopt this element as part of the resolution of the question.

We have seen that this conclusion can be combined with other elements from the previous three chapters to produce an answer which addresses all the issues which Edwards raised in Chapter 2, without incurring the same problems. On this account, the divine self-giving love is the origin of all else: including both the union and distinction within the Trinity, as well as the love which the Trinitarian persons display for one another when glorifying themselves in creation. For God to love us in this way belongs to the same movement of God that originates his own intra-Trinitarian union. This makes it much easier to conceptualise all of these distinct loves as part of one greater whole.

We see this when we see how this plays out in creation. When intra-Trinitarian love magnification magnifies this love, it does not magnify some separate element or

other divine goal, but instead magnifies the very movement of God that itself constitutes the divine life – both as persons individually, and also in their union. And when, by its self-giving nature, this love spills out of the Trinitarian God (and is magnified by intra-Trinitarian love), it also by its nature forms a union with God, being united with the Trinity in love. The intra-Trinitarian love of God roots God's actions in spilling out in love of the other, and this act of loving the other in turn returns to that intra-Trinitarian love. All of this is an exhibition of the fundamental centre of God's divine nature: that is, self-giving love.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined Jonathan Edwards' account of the relationship between glory-seeking, love, and theocentricity as found in *The End of Creation*. It has demonstrated that this account contains great strengths, but is damaged by its relation to an account of divine beauty which is inconsistent with Edwards' Protestantism. It subsequently argued for reconstructing Edwards by using the account of beauty developed by Hans Urs von Balthasar, which – ironically, given Balthasar's Catholicism – can be used to make Edwards more consistently Protestant. It then argued for a reconstruction of Edwards using this account, which contains his strengths without the associated weaknesses, while gaining strength and richness from Balthasar.

Summary of Thesis

This thesis has argued for a reconstruction of Edwards' understanding of glory-seeking and love as a result of a different interpretation of beauty. We will first summarise this thesis' findings about beauty, before turning to its findings about glory and love.

Beauty

We have seen in this thesis that Jonathan Edwards developed an account of God's beauty which is fundamentally influenced by natural theology. Edwards' understanding of spiritual beauty (in God and in humans) can be summarised as God having love in proportion to the being of the beloved. While it is not difficult to develop scriptural arguments for Edwards' identification between divine beauty and love (and, indeed, Balthasar makes this argument extensively), it is much harder to imagine an argument on scriptural grounds for his account of proportion. As we have seen, this is instead derived from natural theology, and seems to examine divine beauty almost as if God could be calculated using mathematical formulae. This

account of divine beauty is problematic for the classical Protestant tradition represented by figures such as Luther and Calvin.

There are, however, elements of a stronger account of beauty within Edwards. In particular, his sermon "The Excellency of Christ" argues on the basis of scripture for a vision of Jesus' beauty which is found in him expressing union between paradoxical statements, such as being simultaneously humble and authoritative. Although this sermon was atypical within Edwards, it does have a great deal of similarity with the account of divine beauty developed within Balthasar.

For Balthasar, divine beauty is revealed in the person of Jesus, and especially the specific event of the cross of Christ. As in "The Excellency of Christ", fragments which would otherwise appear disparate are united in and around the cross, therefore displaying greater beauty. I have argued that Protestant principles suggest an extension of this principle from that present in Balthasar himself (as well as in "The Excellency of Christ"), so that the fragments are not only partial and incomplete but actually actively broken, and even ugly. However, the revelation of the cross redeems these fragments, making them into a beautiful whole that coheres around the self-giving love that is manifest in the cross.

The thesis has demonstrated at length that the theology of beauty found in Balthasar is more compatible with classical Protestant ideas than the equivalent of Edwards. In particular, it has shown that it is epistemologically closer, being built on a reading of biblical texts rather than on natural theology. It has also shown that it is itself not contradictory to Protestant commitments (with a handful of minor exceptions which, if altered, do not compromise the overall pattern). Therefore, integrating these ideas within Edwards' work makes him more consonant with Protestantism, rather than less.

Glory and Love

This thesis has also demonstrated how adopting Balthasar's account of beauty would alter, and improve, Edwards' account of how glory-seeking and love relate.

Edwards' account of glory-seeking and love has significant strengths. It is built on a detailed engagement with scripture, both directly through engaging with specific biblical texts and indirectly through reflection on doctrines which the Christian tradition finds in the Bible. It is an answer with considerable richness, drawing on themes such as Trinity, *theosis*, beauty, and eschatology, as well as building towards a separate dissertation that demonstrates its impact on ethics. It builds towards a resolution in a doctrine of *theosis* that resolves the question of glory-seeking and love while drawing on a biblical theme of union with Christ. Edwards is also unlike Balthasar – and, indeed, rare within Christian tradition – in even engaging the question of how glory-seeking and love relate. Finally, Edwards' desire to ensure that God meets his criterion of beauty is commendable: one of the obvious intuitive objections to an account of glory-seeking is that it seems an unpleasant or even ugly idea, and it is therefore of value that Edwards held that the God who seeks His own glory should be seen as beautiful in doing so.

However, this emphasis upon beauty also leads to various weaknesses in his argument. It requires Edwards' God to follow a set of quasi-mathematical rules for how to act. This means that, when Edwards draws on Reformed and Orthodox traditions (which are themselves rooted in the Bible) to build a concept of *theosis* that allows divine self-love and love for humanity to be unified, the kind of unity between God and humanity which Edwards posits must follow a mathematical logic deduced from his theory. This results in an account of *theosis* whereby, after an infinite amount of time has passed, human beings and God will be as infinitely united as the persons of the Trinity. This account of *theosis* is problematic in several ways, but seems a necessary logical outworking of Edwards' account of beauty.

This thesis has therefore reconstructed Edwards' account of the relationship between glory-seeking and love by using (a slightly modified version of) the account of beauty found in Has Urs von Balthasar, and especially in the final two volumes of *The Glory of the Lord*. Through engagement with the way in which Balthasar sees divine beauty as at centre being God's love which is manifest in the cross, and exists within the Trinity, this thesis developed an account of divine love. This account was shown to be capable of reconstructing Edwards' account of love – allowing several features of it to be reoriented around the love of the cross, thereby removing

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problems in Edwards account regarding God's apparent dependence upon creation. This reconstructed account of love involved a union between the lover and the beloved, with the lover giving Himself to the beloved – and the thesis suggested that this union is a better account than the mathematical approach which Edwards' account of beauty required. This allowed an account of the union between God and humanity which claims less knowledge of the reality, but which is to be preferred as it lacks the incoherence inherent to Edwards' own account.

Implications

There are numerous ways in which the findings of this thesis might be said to have implications for other fields of theological study. Indeed, given the centrality and relevance of concepts of divine love and glory to virtually every area of systematic theology, one could even argue that, if anything like the approach developed in this thesis is true,[1228] then it would have applications for all questions of Christian theology (not to mention its implications for Christian spirituality and discipleship.)

However, in this conclusion I wish to draw attention to four specific points where there may be specific, direct and significant implications of my work in this thesis. I will not adequately explore any of these four points, which all engage with broad areas of theology which have been discussed at great length. As such, the critical reader may be able to find non-negligible weaknesses in each point as I present it. I include these implications here not as developed arguments, but instead as illustrations of the breadth of implications of my argument and the potential for the ideas found in this thesis to bear further fruit if they continued to be engaged.

Protestant Engagement with Catholicism

The first implication which I suggest that the work in this thesis may have for Protestant theology in general, and Reformed theology in particular, is that it shows that there are resources present in Roman Catholicism that can be used from within

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[1228] It is worth noting, however, that this is a claim which this thesis has not made. Instead, this thesis has argued that the position is closer to classical Protestant theology than that advocated by Jonathan Edwards on his own, and that it lacks some of the flaws contained in Edwards' own account.

the Reformed tradition. In particular, Jonathan Edwards is a Reformed theologian who is of particular interest to the more conservative end of the Reformed tradition, who was very sceptical of Catholicism, and who (while he has a range of admirers who come from a wide variety of theological traditions) is often treated as a model theologian by Conservative Evangelicals who share his scepticism of the Catholic Church. It is therefore notable that his own theology can be strengthened by using resources which are found within Catholicism.

This is especially interesting given that the position which I have developed over the course of this thesis would in no way weaken Edwards' commitment to Protestant ideas, but would instead strengthen them. This thesis therefore provides a model of a kind of engagement between Christian traditions which neither serves as any kind of threat to the Reformed faith, nor as any kind of ecumenism of the lowest common denominator, but which instead allows Reformed theology to engage with other traditions in such a way that it is able to deepen and grow on its own terms.

Implications for Edwards' approach to Ethics

A second implication which this thesis may have concerns approaches to ethics. For Edwards, the goals of God are intrinsically related to the nature of human ethics - in the words of Delattre:

> Jonathan Edwards' ethics is so radically theological and theocentric that it cannot properly be discussed except by approaching the subject of the conduct of human life by way of the subject of the nature and conduct of the divine life in which it participates.[1229]

As we have seen, the sequel to *The End of Creation* was *True Virtue*, which sets out many of Edwards' thoughts on ethics. Any alteration to the argument and conclusion of the first dissertation could easily lead to changes to the content of the second dissertation, and this is undoubtedly the case regarding the conclusions of this thesis.

[1229] Roland A. Delattre, "The Theological Ethics of Jonathan Edwards an Homage to Paul Ramsey", *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 19:2 (Autumn 1991), 71-102.

As we saw in the first chapter, Edwards' argument in *True Virtue* is dependent upon the same concept of virtue which this thesis has argued is incompatible with Protestant epistemology, and which can be improved with reference to Balthasar's theological aesthetics. This is the root of Edwards' argument in *True Virtue* that supreme love for God should lie at the root of all other loves, and that we should analyse the virtue or otherwise of other loves on the basis of whether they are aspects of love for God.[1230] We also find in *True Virtue* a statement by Edwards that the consequence of such love will be based upon, and determined by, God's goal in creation:

> By these things it appears that a truly virtuous mind, being as it were under the sovereign dominion of *love to God*, does above all things seek the *glory of God*, and makes *this* his supreme, governing, and ultimate end: consisting in the expression of God's perfections in their proper effects, and in the manifestation of God's glory to created understandings, and the communications of the infinite fullness of God to the creature; in the creature's highest esteem of God, love to God, and joy in God, and in the proper exercises and expressions of these. And so far as a virtuous mind exercises true virtue in benevolence to created beings, it chiefly seeks the good of the creature, consisting in its knowledge or view of God's glory and beauty, its union with God, and conformity to him, love to him, and joy in him.[1231]

Inevitably the argument of Edwards' sequel would be altered if one were to work through it the consequences of the position which I have put forward in this thesis. To adequately explore how the argument of *True Virtue* might be influenced would itself require another thesis. However, short of doing this, I will make brief remarks on how the account of the end of humanity developed in this thesis might influence the understanding of ethics.

According to the account which has been developed throughout this thesis, one could summarise the *telos* of humanity as being to glorify the divine love by participating in God's self-giving love for both Himself and for creation. This *telos* is discovered not in a quasi-mathematical calculation, but rather in perceiving how human beings are to reflect and embody the love that is seen at the cross of Jesus. A view of the many strands of beauty which find their centre in the love of the cross

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[1230] Edwards explicitly states this at WJE 8:557-560, and then uses it as an analytic tool later in the work when considering the merit or otherwise of different apparent virtues.
[1231] WJE 8:559.

is likely to lead to new approaches to many ethical questions, perhaps including an assumption that, following the adjusted version of Balthasar developed in Part 2, any impulse which humans see as ethical is likely to be like most created beauties in being originally good but broken and in need of healing by being centred on the cross. Reflection upon this could lead to fruitful engagement with numerous ethical questions and would alter (and, I suspect, improve upon) Edwards' conclusions in *True Virtue*.

Love as Gift of Grace

Orthodox forms of Christianity share the affirmation that humans can only love as the result of the divine gift which enables us to do so. Protestant Christianity has typically underlined this belief by stressing the extent to which sin has warped humanity, therefore stressing that it is received through divine grace in re-creation as well as that required in creation. I would posit that the ways in which ideas have been adopted from Balthasar in this thesis could further reinforce this stress on grace, in a way which may reinforce a Protestant spirituality of the reception of salvation as a gift.

The theory of love which we have developed in this thesis involves God giving love to us, and in doing so precisely giving Himself to us. His identity is found in His love, and so by giving us His love, He is enabling us to share in the dignity of the divine nature. This reinforces the Protestant sense of seeing one's own love as something that is received – not only by saying that we cannot love on our own, but only with divine action, but furthermore by stressing that this divine action is actually a gift of the honour of sharing in the divine essence. The emphasis on the gift of divine love is thereby underlined by it not solely having a negative connotation which stresses human inability on its own, but also by giving it a positive connotation of how valuable a state it is to have been given it.

The Spiritual Value of Reconciling Divine Glory-seeking and Love

Having said all of the above, the most significant implication of this thesis is likely to be found in the resolution it gives to God's goals of glory-seeking and love. This is of value, not only as an explanation of an apparent difficulty which Christian ideas present to the theologian, but also as an exploration of the divine nature and an account of the God in whom the Christian believes. It is therefore not only of value to the theologian, but potentially of value to the Christian disciple and worshipper.

Christian spirituality is rooted around a concept of receiving love from God, and therefore necessitates a robust belief in a God who loves the believer. Given the centrality to which Christianity calls a person to place their belief in God, the capacity of that God to love may be of immense importance to the Christian's sense of spiritual and emotional health. One would therefore expect a healthy doctrine to give a good account of the love of God.

At the same time, Christian worship involves the impulse to ascribe glory and praise to God Himself, and an assumption that this is somehow in keeping with the nature of reality. If God were not Himself committed to the glory of God, then it would be difficult to see how the importance of glorifying God could be in keeping with reality as it is, or indeed how it could be moral to centre one's life on the glorifying of a God who did not seek His own glory. However, any divine commitment to the glory of God could seem to undermine the love of God without a resolution of these two ideas, which this thesis has found in a God whose love is His glory, and whose glory is His love.

Appendix:

"The Love of Glory

and

The Glory of Love:

Love, Glory and Trinity in Jonathan Edwards and Hans Urs Von Balthasar"

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the degree of MA in Biblical Interpretation and Theology at the University of Nottingham.

Written by: John Fricis Ievins

Submitted September 2012

Summary

This dissertation examines the thought of Jonathan Edwards regarding the relationship between God's love and His seeking His own glory, critiquing it with several elements from Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Edwards grounds his argument is the idea that God must love Himself supremely because He is the most worthy object of love. However, God's self-love is an intra-Trinitarian love. Furthermore, Edwards' eccentric doctrine of the Trinity grounds a version of theosis which allows this intra-Trinitarian love to incorporate humans.

There are several problems with Edwards' attempt to resolve the question in this way, which cannot simultaneously incorporate human beings within the Trinity and give an adequate account of the distinction between creator and created. However, if Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity were integrated into Edwards' system, it would do the same work as Edwards' approach, without incurring the same problems as Edwards'.

Similarly, this approach would improve both theologians' understanding of the meaning of glory. Edwards' and Balthasar's differ about what God's glory most fundamentally is, and according to Luther's "theology of the cross" Balthasar's understanding is (mostly) preferable. Since within both theologians the concepts of glory and Trinity are closely connected, this supports the claim of chapter 2 that Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity would improve Edwards' system if integrated within it. It also reduces tension between glory and love because the glory that God seeks is itself the manifestation of His love.

Introduction

Throughout Christian history, the church has consistently taught two things which appear to stand in tension, if not contradiction. One is that God is a God of love, whose supreme works, the incarnation and the cross, are acts of love for humanity. As well as being a consistent part of Christian teaching, this is a major theme of the Bible.

The other is that God seeks His own glory. The word glory, which translates the Hebrew *kabod* and the Greek *doxa*,[1232] can be defined as roughly encompassing three connected things. God's greatness, Him revealing that greatness so that it is known, and human beings' appropriate worship and honour of God in response to that greatness.[1233] Christianity has consistently taught that this something which motivates God, and the Bible says this many times.

These two things appear to be in tension. Seeking one's own glory seems self-centred, whereas love is inherently other-focused. It is not necessarily the case that any specific acts of God would be different if motivated by the desire for glory rather than love, or vice versa. It could easily be argued that for God to seek to manifest His glory to us would be the most loving thing God could possibly do. However, this would not address the question of how these two motivations relate to one another.

One answer would be to say that one of these motivations is ultimate, and the other is only pursued with the intention of achieving the other. However, the Bible appears to rule out the idea of God seeking His own glory as a consequence of His love for us (e.g. In Ezekiel, Yahweh states: "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name".[1234]) On the other hand, if God's acts of love for us are ultimately motivated by something other than love for us, then it would not in fact be love as we would ordinarily define it – just as we would not say that marrying someone for their money is the same thing as marrying for love.

A key Christian thinker who addressed this question Jonathan Edwards, who lived in eighteenth century New England and was highly both influential and controversial in

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[1232] G. Henton Davies, *Glory* in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 401-403.
[1233] Ibid.
[1234] Ezekiel 36:22,ESV.

his own life.[1235] Edwards was a radical Calvinist who was highly influenced by the Enlightenment.[1236] Prior to Edwards, Reformed theologians had taught that God created the world for His glory, but had not discussed very much what this meant.[1237] Edwards' discussion of glory is closely related to his doctrine of the Trinity, which identifies Son and Spirit with God's "understanding" and "will" in a very literal sense,[1238] and in an original way which may have caused various weaknesses in his theology.[1239] Towards the end of his life, Edwards wrote two connected works now known as the *Two Dissertations*. Both of these are expressions of Edwards "God-entranced worldview"[1240] (or theocentric theological perspective).

The first of these, *A Dissertation Concerning The End For Which God Created the World*[1241] (hereafter *The End*) contain a detailed argument that God's reason for creating the universe, and his subsequent aim in acting within it, is summed up as seeking His own glory. Se addresses the above tension, arguing that glory-seeking is not an ultimate aim to which love is subordinate, nor is it one of several ultimate aims of God. Instead, Edwards uses his own interpretation of various Christian doctrines (notably, the Trinity and theosis) to argue that love and glory-seeking are not, in fact, separate aims at all, but rather ultimately different ways of saying the same thing.

Another theologian, the twentieth century Roman Catholic Hans Urs von Balthasar, also had a strong stress on God's love and glory, which he also connected to the Trinity. Balthasar, whose theology was profoundly influenced by the mystic

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[1235] James D. German, "The Social Utility of Wicked Self-Love: Calvinism, Capitalism and Public Policy in Revolutionary New England", *The Journal of American History* 83:2 (December 1995), 965-998.

[1236] Kenneth P. Minkema, "A 'Dordtian Philosophe': Jonathan Edwards, Calvin, and Reformed Orthodoxy", *Church History and Religious Culture* 91 (2011), 241-253.

[1237] Stephen R. Holmes God of Grace and God of Glory (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 241.

[1238] Brian K. Sholl, "On Robert Jenson's Trinitarian Thought", *Modern Theology* 18:1 (January 2002), 27-36.

[1239] E.g. see Oliver D. Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards on Divine Simplicity", *Religious Studies* 39:1 (March 2003), 23-41.

[1240] Mark Noll, "Jonathan Edwards, Moral Philosophy, and the Secularization of American Christian Thought", *Reformed Journal* 33 (February 1983), 22-28.

[1241] Jonathan Edwards, *A Dissertation Concerning the End For Which God Created the World* in *God's Passion For His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (ed. John Piper) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 125-251.

Adreienne von Speyr,[1242] talked a great deal about glory in connection to his aim to restore the idea of beauty to a central place in Christian thought.[1243]

There are large differences between the two theologians. Most notable is the fact that they come from different centuries and different theological traditions. Edwards was an eighteenth century Reformed Baptist; Balthasar was a twentieth century Roman Catholic. Although Edwards belonged to an age and a theological tradition which was extremely suspicious of Roman Catholicism, I believe he would have been willing to listen to Balthasar's ideas. Edwards was heavily influenced by the work of Isaac Newton, incorporating many of his ideas into his sermons[1244] despite the fact that Newton was a heretic by both Catholic and Protestant standards.[1245]

This dissertation will explore the way Edwards tackles the question of God's glory and love, before identifying specific weaknesses which can be improved upon by taking specific elements of Balthasar's theology and incorporating them into Edwards' system. In particular, Edwards' distinctive doctrine of the Trinity leads to several weaknesses in his argument, which can be rectified by replacing it with version of Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity.

In order to argue this, I present three chapters. Chapter 1 looks at Edwards' most relevant work, *The End*, arguing that it is a work which is implicitly (and occasionally explicitly) Trinitarian. Edwards' God seeks His own glory out of intra-Trinitarian love, which is other-centred enough to qualify as genuine love. Edwards tries to reconcile God's glory-seeking with His love for the redeemed by using his unique doctrine of theosis, which will be seen to be a natural outcome of Edwards' own unique approach to the Trinity.

Chapter 2 identifies several problems with Edwards' doctrine of theosis and his attempt to use it to resolve the issue of glory-seeking and love. It therefore proposes an interpretation of Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity as an replacement to be

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[1242] Adam Nichols, *Divine Fruitfulness: A Guide through Balthasar's Theology beyond the Trilogy* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 109.

[1243] Louis Dupre, *The Glory of the Lord: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetic* in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work* (ed. David L. Schindler) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 183-206.

[1244] Jerome Bruner, *Frames for thinking: Ways of Making Meaning* in *Modes of Thought: Explorations in Culture and Cognition* (ed. David R. Olson, Nancy Torrance) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 93-105.

[1245] Stephen D. Snobelen "Isaac Newton, heretic: the strategies of a Nicodemite.", *The British Journal for the History of Science* 32 (1999), 381-419.

integrated within Edwards' system. This doctrine can do much of the work which Edwards' approach to theosis performs, without incurring the same problems.

Finally, Chapter 3 looks more closely at the concepts of glory proposed by both Balthasar and Edwards, and tests them against Martin Luther's "theology of the cross." It argues that Edwards' account of glory fails Luther's test, while Balthasar's definition of glory (mostly) meets it. Since both concepts of glory are connected to the Trinity, this supports the argument that Edwards' theology can be improved by substituting Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity for Edwards'.

In this essay, there are a number of questions which cannot be dealt with. In particular, Edwards' Calvinist scheme has been criticised about the lack of love God shows to those who are not elect.[1246] This dissertation will avoid dealing with questions of election, and instead focus on God's love for whoever God intends to redeem. Furthermore, Balthasar has sometimes been accused of heresy.[1247] Addressing these charges will be beyond the scope of this dissertation, so I will assume throughout that his theology lies within the scope of Catholic orthodoxy, and read him in this light.

[1246] E.g. Holmes, *God of Grace,* 242-243.
[1247] E.g. Alyssa Lyra Pitstick *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ's Descent into Hell* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007).

Chapter 1: Jonathan Edwards

In *The End*, Edwards' stated goal is to give an account of the reason "for which God created the world".[1248] However, he identifies God's intention in creating the world with his general intention in working within creation subsequently,[1249] all of which he sees as God's glory.[1250] This dissertation explores the relationship between God's glory-seeking and love. As such, it will pay minimal attention to how Edwards' addresses his primary question, instead asking questions about how he relates his idea of God seeking His own glory to his belief in God's love.

This chapter will begin by summarising Edwards' overall argument before moving on to examine specifically how Edwards relates God's love to His glory-seeking. Edwards states that God's self-love is, in fact, His intra-Trinitarian love, and this chapter will argue that this argument is implicit but central to his thought. It then asks how Edwards reconciles God's intra-Trinitarian self-love with His love for humanity, observing that he does so on the basis of a version of theosis which is connected to his own eccentric approach to Trinitarian theology.

He begins with an introduction which carefully defines different kinds of "ends" (or goals), and discusses the relationship between them.[1251] In particular, He carefully notes the difference between an "ultimate" or "last" end, which is aimed at for its own sake, and a "subordinate" end which is aimed at for the sake of another end (either an ultimate one, or one which itself is aimed at for another end).[1252] He then writes two chapters arguing carefully that God has only one ultimate end in creating the world, namely his own glory. In the first, he argues on the basis of philosophical arguments;[1253] in the second, he puts forward various scriptural arguments.[1254]

His second chapter begins by arguing that biblical texts directly support his claim that God makes Himself His end in creating the world.[1255] He then identifies several

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[1248] Edwards, *The End*, 125.
[1249] Ibid, 185-186.
[1250] Ibid, 191-220.
[1251] Ibid, 125-136.
[1252] Ibid, 125-127.
[1253] Ibid, 137-181.
[1254] Ibid, 183-251.
[1255] Ibid, 183-184.

things which he expects to display God's ultimate end in creation,[1256] before showing that scripture says these specific things aim at God's glory,[1257] God's name and praise,[1258] and at "communicating good to the creature"[1259] - all of which ultimately mean the same thing.[1260] Finally, he brings his argument together in a dense section arguing how all the previous things he has said about God's ultimate aim can all be described as one aim, which he calls the glory of God.[1261]

The first chapter argues from the idea of God's theocentricity: if God was able in some way to make Himself His goal, this would be appropriate because God is the greatest entity and therefore infinitely most worthy of being made a goal.[1262] It is not appropriate to make any other entity His ultimate goal, because He is infinitely greater and more worthy than anything else, and therefore any other entity has zero significance in comparison to His.[1263]

From what has been said so far, one would have very little reason to see God as genuinely loving, rather than selfish. Edwards has stressed that God seeks His own glory out of self-love, and that God's ultimate aim must only be self-love.

This seems to be in tension with what Edwards writes elsewhere. In his *Discourse on the Trinity*, Edwards states that "all love respects another, that is, the beloved."[1264] Love, in the proper sense of the word, is "something beside that which is commonly called self-love". [1265] However, this work itself resolves this issue when it argues that God's self-love is the love between the Trinitarian persons.[1266] This chapter will suggest that Edwards holds that it is this intra-Trinitarian self-love which Edwards holds as behind God's glory-seeking.

[1256] Ibid, 185-191.
[1257] Ibid, 191-210.
[1258] Ibid, 210-181.
[1259] Ibid, 220-229.
[1260] Ibid, 229-241.
[1261] Ibd, 241-151.
[1262] Ibid, 140-146.
[1263] Ibid, 143.
[1264] Jonathan Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity* in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 21* (ed. Sang Hyn Lee) (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 113-145.
[1265] Ibid, 114.
[1266] Ibid, 113-114.

There are a number of places in Edwards where he stresses greatly the love within the Trinity. Edwards' Trinitarian theology makes extensive use of the psychological analogy,[1267] following in the Augustinian tradition. However, Edwards develops this in a radical way, which we will explore in various ways throughout this chapter and later in this dissertation.

At this point, let us note that Edwards is very unusual among reformed writers of his time in the fact that he made significant usage of social analogies of the Trinity in a way which appears to prefigure modern social Trinitarianism. He "emphasised relationality within God by depicting the Godhead as a society or family of persons."[1268] For example, he describes the Trinity as "a family of three"[1269] and "a society of three persons".[1270]

Futhermore, even when using the psychological analogy, he uses the language of other-centred love between Father and Son. Edwards applies this stress on sociality and intra-Trinitarian love to his understanding of God's self-love displayed in glory seeking. In the first two chapters of *True Virtue* (the second dissertation of the two-dissertation set of which *The End* is the first), Edwards reiterates his central points in *The End*. He summarises his findings in the following way:

> the divine virtue, or the virtue of the divine mind, must consist primarily in love to himself, or in the mutual love and friendship which subsists eternally and necessarily between the several persons in the Godhead, or that infinitely strong propensity there is in these divine persons one to another.[1271]

In other words, God seeking himself supremely is in fact a manifestation of other-centred love: the persons of the Trinity love each other, so the Godhead as a whole loves itself. God can therefore act for His own glory, out of self-love, without being self-centred.

This idea has the potential to answer a significant number of issues which one might otherwise raise with Edwards' thought. For example, in chapter one section four, he

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[1267] Amy Plantinga Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 11.
[1268] Ibid, 11.
[1269] Jonathan Edwards, *Miscellanies 94* in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 13* (ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw) (London: Yale University Press, 1994), 257.
[1270] Ibid.
[1271] Jonathan Edwards, *A Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue* [online]. 1755 [viewed 27 September 2012]. Available from: http://depts.washington.edu/lsearlec/TEXTS/EDWARDS/VIRTUE.HTM.

answers a hypothetical observer's objections that his theory might imply that God is selfish.[1272] Had Edwards mentioned this Trinitarian other-centred love in response to this, Edwards' argument could have been considerably strengthened. Danaher writes: "Had Edwards placed his Trinitarian reflection at the forefront of his argument in *God's End*, he could have better articulated his theocentrism, as well as offered an account of God's love".[1273]   In view of this, it is worth considering why he does not.

One could argue that this means that it is an unrepresentative quote which slipped into part of *True Virtue* without being something that Edwards truly, or at least consistently, believes. Such a case would only be strengthened by the fact that this quote could be so useful for Edwards.

However, the location of this quote is also revealing. While it is a single quote, it occurs at a specific location (a summary of his argument and conclusions in *The End*) which makes it particularly significant. While it is possible to introduce new or inconsistent ideas into a conclusion, it is also possible to use it to state something which one has present throughout (explicitly or implicitly).

In fact, I want to argue that Edwards is consistently thinking in deeply Trinitarian ways throughout *The End*, and that this quote in the sequel is Edwards stating explicitly what has been implicit throughout the prequel. While it is true that he rarely explicitly mentions the Trinitarian elements of his thought, I would suggest that this is because he is consciously deciding not to mention this.

There are a number of indications that Jonathan Edwards is thinking a great deal about the Trinity as he writes *The End*. To begin with, one should note that he mentions the subject in his contemporaneous writings on the same subject. We have already mentioned that he brings the subject of the Trinity to bear on the nature of God's self-love (manifest in glory-seeking) in the beginning of *True Virtue*, the second of the two dissertation set of which *The End* is the first. He also mentions it a number of times in his own notes at the same time as he is preparing and writing the dissertation.[1274] On four separate occasions (entries 1082, 1151, 1218 and 1266a),

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[1272] Edwards, *The End*, 168-171.
[1273] William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 210.
[1274] Holmes, *God of Grace*, 54.

he states there is a similarity between the Son's procession from the Father and God's manifesting his glory in creating the world.[1275]

Furthermore, there are numerous elements within *The End* itself which indicate that the Trinity is something he is concerned with when writing the subject. These are either brief or implicit, but put together they seem to me to be absolutely decisive.

Firstly, let us turn to section 6 of chapter 2, which Edwards to look at what meanings the terms ("the glory of God"[1276] and "the name of God"[1277] hold. In both cases, he very briefly (taking only a single sentence in each instance) claims that the terms can refer to the second person of the Trinity, before skipping onto other meanings of the words.[1278]

This therefore establishes once again that he was thinking of glory as connected to Trinitarian theology. The fact that he states it in a sentence without going into any more detail could indicate that this thought only briefly occurs to him and is not a big part of his thought, but this is likely since he does it in both cases.

This is reinforced by section 7 of chapter 2,[1279] which functions as a conclusion of his argument, not only by summarising his overall position but also by building his previous arguments together and generating one overall theory. In this section, he uses the terms "understanding" and "will" to refer both to God's understanding and will[1280] and human beings' understanding and will[1281] (which, he specifies, are reflections of God's understanding and will.[1282])

These terms will be familiar to anyone with any knowledge of Trinitarian theology as being (together with memory) what Christian tradition since Augustine has thought of as the *vestigia trinitatis* – the elements of a human being which can, after reflection, be seen as traces reflecting the triune creator.[1283] This combination of words would

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[1275] Ibid.
[1276] Edwards, *The End*, 230-239.
[1277] Ibid, 239-241.
[1278] Ibid, 230&239.
[1279] Ibid, 241-251.
[1280] E.g. Ibid, 243.
[1281] E.g. Ibid, 245-246.
[1282] Ibid, 245-246.
[1283] Maarten Wisse, *Augustine's Trinitarian Aesthetics in 'De Trinitate'* in *Aesthetics as a religious factor in eastern and western Christianity* (ed. Jonathan Sutton & William Peter van den Bercken) (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishers, 2005), 405-415.

be provocative as a potential "hint" of Trinitarian undertones in almost any theological context. In this case it is particularly convincing because there are numerous other indicators which point in this direction.

One is, of course, that there are already other reasons for suspecting that Edwards is being implicitly Trinitarian in this section. Another is the fact that (as we shall shortly see) when Edwards explains his understanding of the Trinity, he strongly identifies God's "understanding" and "will" with the Son and the Spirit. A third is the fact that this passage explicitly states that the human understanding and will reflect the divine understanding and will, in accordance with point of the *vestigia trinitatis*. A fourth is the fact that he does not naturally need to use the language of "understanding" or "will". He introduces the language of understanding and will in a single sentence, before immediately explaining that this means God's "knowledge", "holiness" and "happiness":

> Now God's internal glory, is either in his understanding or will. The glory or fullness of his understanding is his knowledge. The internal glory and fullness of God, having its special seat in his will, is his holiness and happiness.[1284]

He then goes on to develop an argument on the basis of these three divine attributes, which does not require him to have mentioned "understanding" or "will" at all. Nonetheless, he not only chooses to use the language of understanding and will, but in fact repeats it numerous times.

Put together, these points already seem decisive, but there is another. This is the fact that all these factors point together, along with other elements of Edwards that speak of a Trinitarian interpretation, towards the same overall theory. As well as being a theory which explains these phenomena, it also fits well together with Edwards' overall theology in other works.

At this point, it is worth briefly introducing Edwards' theology of the Trinity. In *An Unpublished Essay on the Trinity* (hereafter *Unpublished Essay*), Edwards presents his views on the Trinity. In *Unpublished Essay*, he combined the aforementioned

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[1284] Edwards, *The End*, 243-244.

Augustinian tradition with idealist philosophy,[1285] arguing that the Son constitutes God's own understanding of himself. He writes:

> if it were possible for a man by reflection perfectly to contemplate all that is in his own mind in an hour, as it is and at the same time that it is there in its first and direct existence; if a man, that is, had a perfect reflex or contemplative idea of every thought at the same moment or moments that that thought was and of every exercise at and during the same time that that exercise was, and so through a whole hour, a man would really be two during that time, he would be indeed double, he would be twice at once. The idea he has of himself would be himself again.[1286]

In a similar way, God's idea of Himself (His self-understanding) becomes a second person in the Godhead. The Spirit is identified with the love which exists between Father and Son. Edwards' theory causes Edwards to state that the divine persons do not *in themselves* possess the attributes of the others, but only by union with one another[1287] (e.g. the Father is wise and loving because he participates in the Son's wisdom and the Spirit's love.[1288]) This is a radical development of the Trinitarian tradition, and its orthodoxy has been questioned.[1289]

It is clear from Edwards' views on the Trinity that the identification of divine attributes of "understanding" and "will" with the persons of the Son and Spirit are not just images which bear a similarity with divine things. Instead, the absolute identity of the Son and Spirit with God's "understanding" and "will" is central to Edwards' theology of the Trinity.

Given this, the fact that the final section of chapter 7 talks a great deal about understanding and will (including God's understanding and will) certainly indicates that Edwards is speaking of the Son and the Spirit. He states that "God's internal glory is partly in his understanding, and partly in his will"[1290]: in other words, that God's internal glory is partly in the Son, and partly in the Spirit.

[1285] Plantinga Pauw, *Supreme Harmony*, 12.
[1286] Jonathan Edwards, *An Unpublished Essay on the Trinity* [online]. [viewed 27th September 2012]. Available: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/trinity/files/trinity.html.
[1287] Edwards, *Discourse*, 134.
[1288] Ibid, 134.
[1289] For a discussion of these suggestions, see Richard M. Weber, "The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards: An Investigation of Charges Against Its Orthodoxy", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44/2 (June 2001), 197-318.
[1290] Edwards, *The End*, 245.

Furthermore, his overall theology is about this glory "existing in its emanation".[1291] By this, Edwards means the creature reflecting or participating in God's understanding and will. He writes:

> God's internal glory is partly in his understanding, and partly in his will. And this internal glory, as seated in the will of God, implies both his holiness and his happiness: both are evidently God's glory … God communicates himself to the understanding of the creature, in giving him the knowledge of his glory; and to the will of the creature, in giving him holiness, consisting primarily in the love of God: and in giving the creature happiness, chiefly consisting in joy of God. These are the sum of that emanation of divine fullness called in Scripture, the glory of God.[1292]

In other words, God's glory in creation is the emanation of his understanding (the Son) and his will (the Spirit).

In *The End* Edwards has been at pains to point out that God's love of the emanation of something is a consequence of loving the thing itself.[1293] This would seem to indicate that Edwards' theory of divine glory is about God loving the Son and the Spirit in their emanation in creation.

For example, a few pages after the above, we find the following statement about why God values His glory in creation:

> And God had regard to it in this manner, as he had a supreme regard to himself, and value for his own, infinite, internal glory. It was this value for himself that caused him to value and seek that his internal glory should flow forth from himself. … Thus, because he infinitely values his own glory, consisting in the knowledge of himself, [ie. understanding] love to himself [ie. will], and complacence and joy in himself [ie. will again]; he therefore valued the image, communication, or participation of these in the creature.[1294]

In this quote, God is acting out of love for His internal glory – His understanding and will. As we have seen, Edwards makes an absolute identity between God's understanding and will, and the persons of the Son and Spirit. Therefore, when, as above, God is acting out of love for His own internal glory, consisting in these attributes, Edwards must mean by this that He is acting out of love for the divine persons that are identified with these attributes.

[1291] Ibid, 247.
[1292] Ibid, 245-246.
[1293] E.g. Ibid, 157-159.
[1294] Ibid, 248.

At this point, it is worth considering how each of the three persons are involved in this intra-Trinitarian love. The argument described above, that God's glory-seeking is His love for the Son and the Spirit, could mean that the Father's seeking of glory is an expression of the Father's other-centred love of the Son and the Spirit, but that the Son and the Spirit love themselves.

This would not help resolve a tension between God's love and His glory-seeking, and I want to argue that this is not what is happening here. In *The End*, Edwards is analysing the overall reason for the divine plan of creating the world (and, as part of this, for subsequently redeeming it). For Edwards, the three persons of the Trinity have distinct roles to play in the immanent Trinity, reflecting their relations in the essential Trinity.[1295] According to this theory, "as the Father is first in the order of subsisting, so he should be first in the order of acting",[1296] while the Son and the Spirit "act from Him and in a dependence on Him." [1297] Within the economy the persons mutually agree to reflect these roles; Father "is appointed by the Son and Spirit to act as head",[1298] and the "Son and Spirit undertake their roles … as a fitting reflection of their order of subsistence".[1299]

Therefore, as a result of Edwards' views on the relations between the persons in the essential, immanent and economic Trinities, the Father is ultimately the origin of God's actions in the world, such as creation. Therefore, when in *The End* Edwards attempts to understand the reason why God chose to create, it is appropriate for him to deal with the motivations of the Father, and not the Son or the Spirit. The fact that *The End* appears to contain an implicit motivation of love for the Son and Spirit, therefore, indicates a model of intra-Trinitarian love of the Father for the other persons.

While it might perhaps have been appropriate in an explicitly Trinitarian work for Edwards' to address the distinctive ways the three persons love, this is much harder in an implicitly Trinitarian work. It is appropriate for Edwards to concentrate on the

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[1295] Plantinga Pauw, *Supreme Harmony*, 106.
[1296] Jonathan Edwards, *Miscellanies 1062* in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 20* (London: Yale University Press, 2002) (ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw), 431-433.
[1297] Ibid, 433.
[1298] Plantinga Pauw, *Supreme Harmony*, 107.
[1299] Ibid.

Father, since the purpose of Edwards' work is the ultimate origin of God's decisions and actions – which is to be found, in Edwards' theology, in the Father's role as head of the Trinity.

It is not clear why Edwards does not speak directly about the Trinity more often, but plausible hypotheses can be put forward. For example, Holmes suggests that Edwards did not feel able to give an explicit account of the Trinitarian elements without explaining the full details of his Trinitarian theology, and therefore skipped over these elements while intending to explain these details in a subsequent work covering the whole of Christian doctrine.[1300] Alternatively, Danaher explains it by arguing that Edwards' goal in writing the work is apologetic and therefore that any mention of the Trinity would be counterproductive.[1301]

Regardless of why Edwards does not talk very much about the doctrine of the Trinity, it is clear that the idea is present in his mind throughout *The End*. Throughout it, he sees God's self-love as being an intra-Trinitaian love. The Trinity therefore enables Edwards to see God's glory-seeking as a manifestation of love, reducing tension between love and glory-seeking. However, this does not fully resolve the issue. It does not explain God's love for humanity. In section 5 of chapter 2,[1302] Edwards sets out an argument that:

> According to the Scripture, communicating good to the creatures is what is in itself pleasing to God. And this is not merely subordinately agreeable, and esteemed valuable on account of its relation to a further end, as it is in executing justice in punishing the sins of men; but what God is inclined to on its own account, and what he delights in simply and ultimately.[1303]

One potential position could have been that God's acts of love are a by-product of God seeking his own glory: God wants to manifest his own beauty to his creatures for his glory; a consequence of this is that we have joy in experiencing his own beauty. However, Edwards is adamant in rejecting this interpretation, on the basis that it is incompatible with what scripture says about God's love for humanity:

> The work of *redemption* wrought out by Jesus Christ is spoken of in such a manner as, being from the grace and love of God to men, does not well consist with his

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[1300] Holmes, *God of Grace*, 55.
[1301] Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 201-202.
[1302] Edwards, *The End*, 220-229.
[1303] Ibid, 220-221.

> seeking a communication of good to them, *only subordinately*. Such expressions as that in John 3:16 carry another idea. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." [He then gives two further examples of biblical texts supporting God's love for humanity.] But if indeed this was only from a regard to a *further* end, entirely diverse from our good, then all the love is truly terminated in that, its ultimate object, and *therein* is his love manifested, strictly and properly speaking, and not in that he *loved* us or exercised such high regard towards us. For if our good be not at all regarded ultimately, but only subordinately, then our good or interest is, in itself considered, *nothing* in God's regard.[1304]

If God is not "seeking a communication of good to"[1305] humans as an ultimate end, scripture is wrong to speak of God loving us.

Given that Edwards recognises that acts of love must be an ultimate end of God, and not simply a subordinate one, how does he reconcile this with his claim that "all that is ever spoken of in the Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works, is included in that one phrase, the glory of God"?[1306]

This depends on the precise understanding of what one means by God's glory. Edwards defines God's desire to bring glory to Himself in creation as thus:

> The thing signified by that name, the glory of God, when spoken of as the supreme and ultimate end of all God's works, is the emanation and true external expression of God's internal glory and fullness; or, in other words, God's internal glory, in a true and just exhibition, or external existence of it." [1307]

In other words, for God to seek his own glory is for Him to seek for the wonderfulness of His own nature to be expressed outside of Himself in creation. "The same disposition that inclines [God] to delight in his glory causes him to delight in the exhibitions, expressions, and communications of it."[1308] He does not desire to receive praise because he is somehow in need of praise, but because He values the holiness of the creature, and praise is an expression of virtue.[1309]

God himself is the definition of this virtue, and indeed of all goodness: His glory contains knowledge, holiness and happiness. Therefore, "the emanation of his glory

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[1304] Edwards, *The End*, 222.
[1305] Ibid.
[1306] Ibid, 242.
[1307] Ibid.
[1308] Ibid, 170.
[1309] Ibid, 173-174.

… implies the communicated excellency and happiness of his creatures."[1310] This means that "God's glory and the creature's good" should not "be viewed as if they were properly and entirely distinct".[1311] In fact, they are effectively the same thing. For God to seek their good is the same thing as seeking his own glory, because the definition of their good and his glory is identical.[1312]

God always seeks the highest good for all of his creatures. The definition of the highest possible good is His own goodness – His glory. Therefore, seeking the expression of the highest good for a being is exactly the same thing as seeking God's glory in that being. It is not that one is ultimate, and the other subordinate: they are two different ways of saying the same thing.

This, however, raises another question. One of the main arguments which Edwards has put forward earlier that God's glory is his ultimate end in the creation of the world is that this is appropriate because it is theocentric – it is appropriate for God to make Himself his own ultimate end, because He is most worthy of being made an end of. This argument, however, might appear to be in tension with what I have just said. If God's glory is God manifesting his goodness outside of Himself, that would not appear to be theocentric. While the good could be said to originate with God, it could not be said to finish in God or to have God as its aim. He therefore feels the need to explain how, "in making this his end, God testifies a supreme respect to himself and makes himself his end."[1313]

Edwards' answer involves the fact that his theory depends upon his understanding of creation as being intrinsically one with God. If God is to value the expression of Himself in creation because He values solely Himself (as we have seen), then this seems to indicate that this expression of Himself is Himself.

This can tend towards pantheism. For example, he states that God "comprehends all entity and all excellence in his own essence. The eternal and infinite Being is, in effect, being in general, and comprehends universal existence."[1314]

[1310] Ibid, 176.
[1311] Ibid.
[1312] Ibid, 177.
[1313] Ibid, 159.
[1314] Ibid, 179.

There are a number of other occasions in *The End* where Edwards makes statements which appear to be pantheistic. Nonetheless, Edwards "escapes simple pantheism".[1315] He does so by being very precise about what he says; in the above example he stated not that the pantheism was true, but that "in effect"[1316] it was true.

In both cases, he appears to be using these words to prevent his words from being pantheistic. However, one should note that while these forms of words deny pantheism, they do it despite appearing to use pantheism to solve the problem which he poses.

However, there are several specific points in *The End* where he attempts to explain the distinction between human beings. He does this by developing a doctrine which, although not using the terminology of "theosis", "deification" or "divinization", clearly contains these ideas: "it is considered virtually axiomatic in Edwards studies that Jonathan Edwards holds, however improbably, to a robust doctrine of theosis."[1317]

Any account of theosis needs to explain both how the creature becomes deified and how it retains a distinction between God and humanity. Eastern Orthodoxy has followed Palamas, whose explanation was dependent upon the Orthodox distinction between God's energies and essence and a belief that human communion with God is rooted in the latter rather than the former.[1318] This was not helpful to Edwards, who did not hold an Orthodox distinction between essence and energies.

In the west, Thomas Aquinas proposed a theory whereby the human being can acquire divine attributes through participation, but finds distinction between God and humanity in the fact that divine attributes are never inherent to the creature, but only present through participation.[1319] Edwards could not possibly have adopted this approach, as his doctrine of the Trinity held that the divine persons themselves acquire divine attributes through their mutual participation in one another.

[1315] Paul R. Baumgartner, "Jonathan Edwards: The Theory behind His Use of Figurative Language", *PMLA* 78:4 (September 1963), 321-325.

[1316] Edwards, *The End,* 179.

[1317] Kyle Strobel, "Jonathan Edwards and the Polemics of *Theosis*", *Harvard Theological Review* 105:3 (July 2012), 259-279.

[1318] A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 6-7.

[1319] Ibid, 100-101.

Instead, Edwards opted for an original approach involving the concept of infinity. For Edwards, the constant communication of divine glory to a redeemed creature means that for all of eternity that creature will grow towards "greater and greater nearness and strictness of union with himself, in his own glory and happiness, in constant progression, throughout all eternity."[1320]

This will continue for all eternity; for infinity a human being will be moving towards union with God.[1321] This union will never be complete at any specific point in time, but will after an infinite duration.[1322] He uses the analogy of an object moving upwards at a steady speed for all eternity, which therefore means that at any moment an object will not be infinitely high, but that after eternity it will.[1323] However, "God, who views the whole of this eternally increasing height, views it as an infinite height." [1324]

Because God can see the future, for Him "the creature must be viewed as in an infinitely strict union with"[1325] God. This means that "God's respect to the creature, in the whole, unites with his respect to himself."[1326] This allows him to say that there is still an absolute distinction between God and the creature, but that God is right to treat them as one because they will be one. This enables him to reconcile the idea of divine love for human beings with all of God's actions being ultimately and solely based upon His self-love.

This is one of the few occasions in *The End* when Edwards uses explicitly Trinitarian language. He speaks of this progressively greater union as moving "nearer and more like to that between God the Father and the Son; who are so united, that their interest is perfectly one." [1327] In other words, Edwards is explicit that this union with God which we tend towards is the same union that God the Father and God the Son possess. This theology is a natural outworking of Edwards' unique approach to the Trinity, for reasons we will now explore.

[1320] Edwards, *The End*, 177.
[1321] Ibid, 250.
[1322] Ibid, 177.
[1323] Ibid.
[1324] Ibid.
[1325] Ibid.
[1326] Ibid.
[1327] Ibid, 249.

For Edwards, the Son is identified with the Father's idea of Himself. He argues that the Father has such exceptionally good self-knowledge that it becomes a distinctive person.[1328] It has been argued that his position gives a good explanation for the plurality, but not for the unity – that if "a perfect idea of *x* entails that *x* exists then Edwards has proved too much – not the second person of a Trinity of persons but a second *theos.*"[1329] However, Edwards himself certainly holds that his theory is a form of monotheism.[1330]

The grounds of Edwards' assertion of monotheism are not completely clear, but they appear to be on the basis of the fact that God's "perfect clearness, fullness and strength, understands Himself, views His own essence".[1331] The perfection of his complete self-knowledge ensures a unity between the Father and his self-knowledge, the Son. In *Unpublished Essay*, when speaking of the three persons as God, understanding and will, Edwards writes of their union:

> there is such a wonderful union between them that they are, after an ineffable and inconceivable manner, One in Another, so that One hath Another and they have communion in One Another and are as it were predicable One of Another; as Christ said of Himself and the Father "I am in the Father and the Father in Me," so may it be said concerning all the Persons in the Trinity, the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, … and the Father understands because the Son Who is the Divine understanding is in Him, the Father loves because the Holy Ghost is in Him…[1332]

In other words, he identifies the union between the persons as a union of mutual participation, whereby the persons find their divine attributes in their union with the other persons (who *are* those attributes). The Father's union with His self-understanding, and His possessing self-understanding, are the same thing.

Given this theology of the Trinity (and the fact that Edwards also identifies our possession of attributes such as knowledge with a degree of God's attributes being within us), it is natural for Edwards to interpret any increase in human understanding of God as an increase in union with God the Son which tends towards the same union which God the Son and God the Father have. If projected into infinity, it is

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[1328] Edwards, *Unpublished* [online].
[1329] Paul Helm, *Treatise on Grace and other posthumously published writings including Observations on the Trinity* (Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1971), 21.
[1330] Edwards, *Unpublished* [online].
[1331] Ibid.
[1332] Edwards, *Unpublished* [online].

therefore natural to assume that we will have the same kind of union with God that God the Father has with God Son; and if this is true, it is reasonable for Edwards to use this idea to solve his dilemma about the relation between love and glory-seeking. Therefore, Edwards' idea of God treating us according to our infinitely future state can reasonably be read as a natural outgrowth of his doctrine of the Trinity and his theological need to unite God's self-love with His love for humanity.

To summarise, this chapter has looked at Edwards' *The End* and how it attempts to unite God's glory-seeking and His love. It has observed, first of all, that Edwards' thought stresses the theocentricity of God, arguing that it would be unjust for God to do anything other than value Himself above all else.

It has also argued that Edwards' thought is inherently Trinitarian, and that when Edwards' God acts out of self-love it is an intra-Trinitarian love. While Edwards rarely explicitly addresses the Trinitarian aspects of His thought, he frequently does so implicitly, most notably by using the language of the *vestigia trinitatis*. This helps to resolve the question of how God's glory-seeking relates to His love.

It does not, however, resolve the question of how God's love for humanity fits in. Here, Edwards draws on two concepts. One is the idea that for God to communicate His own self is effectively the same thing as to act out of love for creation, because God is the definition of good and therefore to glorify Him (by which Edwards means to cause His glory to exist outside of Himself) is to communicate good to His creatures.

This does not fully satisfy Edwards, so he adds that over all of eternity God will continue to glorify Himself, and therefore that the redeemed will over time increasingly possess the divine attributes which Edwards identifies with the persons of the Trinity. This therefore means that after infinity the redeemed will be one with God, in the same way as Edwards' Trinity are.

Chapter 2: Union and Distinction in Trinity and Creation

The previous chapter examined Jonathan Edwards' theology of God seeking his own glory, and how it relates to his idea of divine love. It showed a radical theocentricity is central to the vision of Edwards, who sees it as appropriate that God loves Himself above all, and therefore seeks His glory in everything.

It also showed that Edwards attempts to resolve tension between God's love for humanity and His glory-seeking. These involve adopting a version of theosis that is based on his rather eccentric Trinitarian theology.

In this chapter, I will introduce another theologian who addresses similar themes to Edwards in a very different way. Hans Urs von Balthasar shares with Edwards a stress on God's love and his manifesting his own glory, as well as seeing this as connected to his doctrine of the Trinity.

Central to Balthasar's understanding of God in Himself is the idea that it is characterised by intra-Trinitarian self-giving love; "the infinite self-giving which takes place between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this exchange of love, each person surrenders all that he possesses to the other two."[1333] Creation manifests this God of love to human beings, displaying his glory and beauty[1334] (terms which for Balthasar are "often closely identified"[1335].) Above all, this is manifest in "the supreme revelatory event of the crucifixion."[1336]

In this chapter, I will raise concerns which I have with elements of Edwards' proposed resolution to the question God's love and glory-seeking, and I will use elements of Balthasar's theology to address these issues. In particular, in this chapter I will address questions regarding the relation between Father and Son, and the analogous relation between God and creation.

For Edwards, as we have seen, the Father's begetting of the Son is analogous to God's work of creation.   The creature is not only derived from God, but after an infinite amount of time it will be one with God. Across infinity, "the union [between

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[1333] David Luy, "The Aesthetic Collision: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Trinity and the Cross", *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 13:2 (April 2011), 154-169.
[1334] Ibid, 156-158.
[1335] Ibid, 156.
[1336] Ibid, 160.

God and creature] will become more and more strict and perfect; nearer and more like that between God the Father and God the Son; who are so united that their interest is perfectly one."[1337] God seeks this ultimate good, and His love for us is therefore one with His love for Himself.[1338]

I argued in the previous chapter that it is the natural outworking of his doctrine of the Trinity. This means that his theology of the Trinity and his approach to this question are connected. If his solution, or his approach to the Trinity, are strong, the other one is likely to be; if either one is weak, then the other one probably is. As it happens, I think there are a number of problems with his proposed solution.

This resolution depends upon finding a union between God and humanity, but Edwards is unwilling to fundamentally reject Christian tradition by asserting that human beings become one with God in any absolute sense. He must therefore find some way of demonstrating that there is still a fundamental distinction between creator and creature. However, the means he has chosen to avoid this prospect does not appear to be able to do so without also losing his theory's ability to reconcile glory-seeking and love.

His view requires God to treat the redeemed as if they are (or will be) one with God. This either necessitates that humans will genuinely be one with God, or that God treats us on the basis of an untruth. The latter would be tantamount to saying that God is in error: unthinkable for any orthodox Christian. The former would not allow the kind of distinction between the creation and the creator which is necessary for any kind of Christian orthodoxy.

It is true that, from the perspective of a God who is outside of time, all things (past, present, or future) must be seen as currently actual. To God, the future is actual, so things can be actual from his perspective which are not actual from ours. However, if something is actual from God's perspective, it must be, in truth, actual. If something that will occur after an infinite period of time is not actual but only a hypothetical construct, it is not appropriate for God to treat it as possessing moral significance. If it is actual, even if only actual after infinite time has elapsed, it

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[1337] Edwards, *The End*, 249.
[1338] Ibid, 177.

removes the necessary divide between creature and creator, at least somewhere in God's reality.

Furthermore, it seems to me that this proposal stands in tension with a reformed doctrine of justification by faith. For a proponent of the Reformed position, a Christian's righteousness (which is the legal or moral standing which God regards them as having) is grounded in their union with Christ in the present.[1339] Calvin wrote:

> We must always return to this axiom: the wrath of God rests upon all so long as they continue to be sinners. ... For this reason, the Apostle teaches that man is God's enemy until he is restored to grace through Christ [Rom. 5: 8-10]. Thus, him whom he receives into union with himself the Lord is said to justify, because he cannot receive him into grace nor join him to himself unless he turns him from a sinner into a righteous man. We add that this is done through forgiveness of sins; for if those whom the Lord has reconciled to himself be judged by works, they will indeed still be found sinners[1340]

In mainstream reformed thinking, the change in God's regard (from being seen as unrighteous to being seen as righteous) occurs at a moment of change (the moment when a person comes to faith), before which God regards the sinner as unrighteous. This seems incompatible with a claim that God's regard is always based upon God's foreknowledge of a state which is future to both states.

If God loves me based upon the fact that, in the infinite future, I will be one with him, then two significant differences arise with the classic reformed position. One is very basic: the fact that, in Edwards' scheme in *The End*, a human being's ultimate status before God is grounded in their union with God in the infinite future. By contrast, for the mainstream reformed doctrine of justification, a believer's righteous status before God is grounded in their present union with Christ. This appears to be a contradiction.

If a believer's present union with God is sufficient to justly establish his righteous standing before God, it should be sufficient to justly establish the appropriateness of God loving the believer. Edwards' argument in *The End* for the necessity of God's theocentricity[1341] is based upon his belief that God's love for an entity should mirror

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[1339] Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 254-255.
[1340] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Volume One* (trans. Ford Lewis Battles) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 751.
[1341] Edwards. *The End*, 137-146.

that entity's worth according to justice.[1342] If, as the Reformed tradition states, a believer has righteousness imputed to them, then God should love them on this basis.

Another problem with Edwards' scheme is that, if God gives regard to human beings on the basis of their future, it makes little sense to identify a change in a human's status before God at the moment of a Christian's regeneration. It would make more sense to adopt a position whereby the believer has always been seen as justified on the basis of their future faith.

Here it is worth noting that there is indeed a minority opinion within reformed theology of "justification from eternity" [1343] whereby this is true – this is an adaptation of a Calvinist doctrine of predestination, whereby elect human beings are seen as justified from eternity rather than from the moment of belief.[1344]   However, mainstream reformed thinking has strongly rejected this approach,[1345] which seems very hard to reconcile with biblical texts which indicate a change in God's attitude towards the believer.[1346]

Therefore, we can see that Edwards' argument (for the unity of divine love for us and divine love for himself manifest in glory seeking) on the basis of infinite union in an infinite future is flawed, and stands in contradiction to other beliefs one would expect him to hold: in particular, justification by faith.

Since there are problems with Edwards' scheme, it is worth seeing how to avoid adopting it. Since it is rooted in Edwards doctrine of the Trinity, exploring another approach (that of Balthasar) will give us a different way of approaching these ideas.

Balthasar is another theologian who presents a specific account of an analogy between divine begetting and human existence. Central to Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity is the concept of "distance". Distance, for Balthasar, is not intended to be taken literally. He writes (quoting Pannenberg):

[1342] Ibid, 140-145.
[1343] Dewey D. Wallace, Jr. Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525-1695 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 119.
[1344] Ibid, 118.
[1345] Ibid, 119-120.
[1346] E.g. Ephesians 2:12-16

> It is a question of "that area of freedom which is necessary for keeping the relationship alive". Of course "in God no spatial separation is possible or necessary …"[1347]

The idea of distance does, however, establish "the personal distinctness of each Person both in being and acting".[1348] For Balthasar, the distance arises when the Father chooses to give all that He is to the Son, while nonetheless retaining everything of Himself.[1349]

As a result, although these persons both possess divine attributes, they each do so distinctly. This is different to Edwards, in whom the Son and Spirit are identified with attributes (wisdom and love), which the other persons have through union with them.[1350] This difference means that in Balthasar the union between the persons cannot be found in the fact of sharing of attributes in the same way as is found in Edwards.

This therefore means that, were one to attempt to modify Edwards' theory in *The End* to fit in with Balthasar's theology of the Trinity, rather than Edwards', one would not need to adopt the elements of Edwards thought which involve identifying humanity's interest with God's on the basis of our infinitely-future union with God. This therefore enables one to avoid the various problems which we have seen with Edwards' approach.

Furthermore, as well as preventing it from being necessary to resolve the tension in the same way as Edwards does, an application of Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity itself provides another way of resolving the same tension. Balthasar is like Edwards in holding that the relation between creation and God is similar to the relation between God the Father and God the Son. However, a key difference here is the fact that Balthasar stresses that the *distinction*, rather than the *union*, is mirrored. He writes that "the infinite distance between the world and God is grounded in the other,

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[1347] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory: Volume V – The Last Act* (trans. Graham Harrison) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 94.
[1348] Ibid.
[1349] Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory: Volume IV – The Action* (trans.Graham Harrison) (San Francisco:Ignatius Press, 1994), 325.
[1350] Edwards, *Discourse,* 134.

prototypical distance between God and God".[1351] Distance between God and Man is a reflection of distance between God and God.

However, this is qualified in that Balthasar's theology allows him to say that the world exists within God, but not within the persons[1352]; Larry Chapp writes of distance allowing that the "world finds its 'place' within the 'spaciousness' opened up in the trinitarian relations."[1353]

This language therefore gives Balthasar a way to regard creation as simultaneously united with God, and distinct from Him. It can therefore resolve the tension within Edwards' thought between a need for humanity to be one with God for Him to love us, and between the need for a genuine distinction between creator and creature.

Balthasar's view of creation, including human beings, existing within God would enable Edwards' God to regard them and dignify them with love, without undermining his fundamental commitment to theocentricity. However, by not identifying creatures with divine persons, or implying that they possess divine attributes, he nonetheless retains an orthodox distinction between the creator and the created (and we will shortly explore further ways in which this is true). This account could therefore be inserted into Edwards' account and do the work which is currently done by his eccentric version of theosis.

Of course, a doctrine of the Trinity which adequately answers the question is not useful unless that doctrine is itself justifiable. It is therefore necessary to briefly look at how strong the grounds are for Balthasar's doctrine.

Balthasar is original in using the language of "distance", which had been almost completely unused prior to him. However, the precise meaning of this language is unclear and could be interpreted in different ways.[1354]

Balthasar explicitly rejects a literal interpretation of "distance" as physical space, but it is hard to see how it could be interpreted in a way which does not require that it is

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[1351] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory: Volume II – Dramatis Personae: Man in God* (trans: Graham Harrison) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 266.

[1352] John O'Donnell, *Hans Urs von Balthasar* (London: Continuum, 1991), 143.

[1353] Larry Chapp, *Revelation* in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar* (ed. Edward T. Oakes and David Moss) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18.

[1354] Karen Kilby, *Balthasar: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012 - forthcoming), 109-110.

in some sense real (perhaps a distance in some "realm" other than the physical) while allowing that creation exists in God but not in the persons because God contains empty "space" between the persons.

However, this would raise difficult issues for any reading of Balthasar as an orthodox theologian. It indicates that "space" exists which is both not occupied by the Father, and occupied by the Son. This would appear to contradict the spirit, if not the letter, of the doctrine of divine omnipresence, by undermining the divine absoluteness which omnipresence supports. Furthermore, it would raise Trinitarian problems, as the Father would possess attributes (occupying "space" A) which the Son did not share (as he occupied "space" B). For these reasons, if we are to use these elements of Balthasar's work while remaining orthodox, we must avoid taking this language as in any sense literal or real.[1355]

Instead, the language of "distance" could correspond to "otherness" could be used as a way of saying something else which is already common within Christian tradition. For example, Augustine speaks of the distinction within the Godhead arising as a result of love – using the analogy of a human being loving himself and arguing that three distinct elements exist (the lover, the loved, and the love), he suggests that these three elements correspond to the persons.[1356] Augustine has been followed in this respect by many within the tradition[1357] (including, as we have seen, Edwards himself.)[1358]

Furthermore, this kind of "otherness" can easily be found within the pages of the New Testament. There are numerous times when things are stated which do not make sense if the Father and Son do not relate to one another as the "other". To

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[1355] For a fuller discussion of this see my earlier essay, *Hans Urs von Balthasar's Trinitarian account of Divine Immutability in the Atonement*. Submitted to the University of Nottingham's Department of Theology on 17 May 2012.

[1356] Saint Augustine of Hippo, *The Trinity (De Trinitate)* (trans: Edmund Hill) (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991), 255 & 270-75.

[1357] Richard Price *Augustine* (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1996), 87.

[1358] Again, I have discussed this in greater detail in my earlier essay, *Hans Urs von Balthasar's Trinitarian account of Divine Immutability in the Atonement*.

take a handful of examples, the Father is said to love the Son;[1359] the Son prays to the Father;[1360] the Father glorifies the Son and the Son glorifies the Father.[1361]

However, questions can be raised as to whether the more orthodox interpretations of Balthasar's language of "distance" can support the case which I have been making. If this language ultimately means something like "otherness", can it be said to provide space in which a human being can be united with God, so that the human being's interests become united with God's own?

I would suggest that the answer to this question is yes. We are assuming that Balthasar is orthodox, and therefore that his account of the Trinity is compatible with monotheism. Most, if not all, Trinitarian theologies fail to fully explain how the unity and the multiplicity are related to one another, and Balthasar's is no exception. However, his account does necessitate some kind of union between the persons. For example, he describes a "closeness" between the persons.[1362]

Balthasar, like Edwards, is clear that the relation between Father and Son is echoed in the relation between God and the World.[1363] While he speaks of "distance" providing space wherein something external to God can exist, this "distance" can be seen as providing the grounding of a capacity within the Godhead to generate, and relate to, a world which is "other" to Himself.

While the language of "distance" is original, the idea that the creation of the world (the "other" to God) is rooted in the procession of the Son (the "other" within God), is common. That the procession of the Son from the Father is reflected in the creation of the world by God is an established part of Christian tradition supported by numerous theologians previously. For example, Aquinas supported this,[1364] (and was a major pre-reformation figure who, while being especially important in Catholicism, has also been influential in Reformed theology).

[1359] E.g. Matthew 3:17, ESV.
[1360] E.g. Luke 6:12, ESV.
[1361] E.g. John 17:1, ESV.
[1362] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama V*, 94.
[1363] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama II*, 266.
[1364] Peter Harris, "Esse, Procession, Creation: Reinterpreting Aquinas", *Analecta Hemeneutica* 1 (2009), 136-167.

While precisely what this capacity consists of may potentially be beyond human language or understanding, it is not unreasonable to see it as similarly providing grounds within the divine being for an analogous union between creation and God. It may, however, be that we cannot understand the meaning of this fully.

This lack of clarity prevents us from giving a clear account of how the "distance" between God and humanity is different from the "distance" between Father and Son. However, it does not prevent us from holding to the existence of a difference. It would be natural for the relationship of "otherness" to be different when it is between two eternal persons who possess divine attributes from when it is between a God who does and a human race who does not. This does not prevent one from claiming that the language of "distance" and "closeness" allows human beings to be in some sense incorporated within the Trinity while maintaining a creator-creature distinction, but it does mean that a theologian talking in this way should acknowledge that they do not know the details of the relationships which constitute this reality.

Interpreting the language of "distance" in a more general way limits our clarity in understanding what we mean when we use this terminology. This is not, however, the same thing as saying that the ideas which it represents are untrue. If there were an argument which could be presented which could demonstrate that there is no way in which the language which is being used could coherently be used to describe the reality of God, that would be a greater problem. However, the mere fact that the language does not provide a clear, or exhaustive, description of all aspects of the question does not necessarily indicate that it is poor or untrue – only that it is incomplete. Given that the subject under discussion is God, this should not be a matter of great surprise.

According to the adapted version of Edwards' theory that this chapter proposes, our relation to God is rooted in God's intra-Trinitarian relationship with Himself, and therefore part of the same mystery of the Trinity. While adopting Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity reduces clarity about how creation relates to God, it does so by making it a part of the greater mystery of the Trinity. Since Trinitarian theologies are consistently unclear, it does not increase the number of mysteries or ambiguities which are present in theology.

It is true that Edwards provides a greater detail than Balthasar about how his idea of an infinitely-future state resolves the issues he raises regarding the relationship between glory-seeking and love, and a very precise account of the workings of the Trinity. However, we should note that while Edwards provides a significant amount of precision and detail in how he addresses the question, we have already seen a number of problems in accepting the detail he gives as true. Agnosticism is to be preferred to belief in even a very clear and precise error.

To summarise, this chapter has shown that there are a number of problems with Edwards' proposed solution to the question of how God's love for the world can be reconciled with a need for him to be theocentric. He posits a very clear account of union between God and creation, rooted in his doctrine of the Trinity. He teaches that creation tends towards infinity over time, and therefore from a divine perspective can be seen as having already arrived, despite the fact that there will be no point when it is true. However, this theory raises a number of problems.

We have also seen that Balthasar has a different account of the Trinity. I have proposed an interpretation of it which provides acceptable grounds to do the work which Edwards' doctrine of theosis does without incurring the same problems. I have not argued that this doctrine of the Trinity is the only one that improves Edwards' account, but only that it is an example of a doctrine which does so.

I have observed that this involves acknowledging that there are things about this which we do not know. However, they are located in the doctrine of the Trinity, often regarded as the most mysterious article of the Christian faith, so this is to be expected. It does not add another mystery to Christianity, but only shows another manifestation of an existing one.

Chapter 3: The Meaning of Glory

The previous chapters have shown how Edwards' understands the relation between God's love and His glory-seeking, suggesting that His glory-seeking is an expression of an intra-Trinitarian love extending into creation. They have also shown that Edwards' account of how this intra-Trinitarian love extends into creation could be improved if his concept of the Trinity were replaced with that of Balthasar.

In this chapter, we will look at the nature of "glory" itself. We will explore the ways which both Edwards and Balthasar define glory as itself involving love, at least in part. In previous parts of this dissertation, we have already defined the word "glory" in part. We have seen that it involves God's nature, or the facts about God which make him good (in effect, all the truth about God's nature). We have seen that it can mean this nature in itself, this nature in action, this nature being displayed and recognised, and this nature being honoured.

However, we have not yet undertaken much reflection on a more fundamental question: what precisely is God's nature? What things are we to say about God? And of these things, which are the more fundamental or important aspects of God's glory, and which are the secondary manifestations of more primary aspects?

This chapter will compare how Edwards and Balthasar answer these kinds of questions. It will show that both of them have an idea of glory which is connected to their understanding of the Trinity. Furthermore, it will argue that Balthasar's is to be preferred, on the basis of Martin Luther's "theology of the cross."

Fundamental to Luther's thinking was the contrast between a "theology of glory" and a "theology of the cross".[1365] Luther describes this contrast as follows:

> *19. The man who looks upon the invisible things of God as they are perceived in created things does not deserve to be called a theologian.*
> *20. The man who perceives the visible rearward parts of God as seen in suffering and the cross does, however, deserve to be called a theologian.*[1366]

[1365] Robert Kolb, "Luther on the Theology of the Cross", *Lutheran Quarterly* 16 (2002), 443-466.
[1366] Martin Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* – as cited and translated in: Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 148.

In this passage, Luther maintains a distinction between those who try to "perceive" God through His creation, and those who look to the cross as the source of their theology.

In the cross God lowers into our sinfulness His "rearward parts" – this phrase draws upon the story of Moses being able to see God's back but not his face.[1367] Luther regards the cross as the appropriate place to go to in order to understand the nature of God. In this chapter, I will test any approach to the understanding of God's glory against the criterion of Luther's "theology of the cross."

Of course, this somewhat begs the question, since we have not established that the "theology of the cross" is the best way of doing theology. A full defence of this position would be far beyond the scope of a dissertation of this length, but I will present a brief argument in favour of this position with respect to the language of glory.

A commonly cited biblical text in support of this kind of theology is the Gospel of John. Central to John's gospel is the teaching that "the unique revelation of God takes place in Jesus Christ",[1368] and the cross is undoubtedly a key part of Jesus' life in John's gospel (and elsewhere). Furthermore, there are specific passages which indicate that the cross is the focal point of Jesus' glory – for example at John 17:1, Jesus identifies his "hour"[1369] (a definite reference to the cross[1370]) with the point at which he will be glorified.[1371]

However, the cross involves various things which are not ordinarily associated with God and his glory: suffering, humiliation, and death. Not only are these not themselves associated with glory, they in fact initially seem to be the opposite.

Throughout Christian history there have been two different interpretations of this tension: one of which supports Luther's reading, and one of which does not.[1372]

[1367] McGrath, *Luther's*, 146.
[1368] Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Collegeville, MI: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 22.
[1369] John 17:1, ESV.
[1370] Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 157.
[1371] John 17:1, ESV.
[1372] Todd Larsson, *Glory of Persecution: The God of the Gospel of John in the History of Interpretation* in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (ed. Richard Bauckham & Carl Mosser) (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 82-88.

Luther[1373] (with Balthasar[1374]) interprets the Fourth evangelist as teaching that, while the cross does not appear glorious, the meaning of God's glory is redefined by the cross. By contrast, John Ashton argues that the cross glorifies God because at Jesus' death "he simply passes to another mode of glorification",[1375] meaning the change in his circumstances is important rather the details of the cross in itself.[1376] The cross therefore, in fact, "reveal[s] the victorious God untouched by earthly realities",[1377] and does not reveal "a persecuted and dying God."[1378]

While this approach has been a significant one in Christian history, it is notable that even Ashton (a notable proponent among modern biblical scholars) considers his view to be a "fresh and provocative alternative"[1379] to the mainstream, indicating that even its proponents recognise that it is rare in the modern period.

Furthermore, Ashton also acknowledges that similar ideas are found in both Paul and Mark.[1380] This would give the view the authority of the canon of scripture, even if not the authority of John's gospel.

Over history, the tendency seems to be to move away from Ashton's approach - the church Fathers seem to generally be closer to Ashton's view (e.g. with Augustine taking a middle-way approach and Chrysostom on Ashton's side[1381]), and the Reformation more divided (with Luther on one side and Calvin on the other[1382]) until the present, when biblical scholars generally reject the thesis. There are good reasons for treating the older interpretations with suspicion in this case.

The interpretation of the Church Fathers can easily be explained by reference to things which we are familiar with about their approach to biblical exegesis. It was common in the early church to use "partitive exegesis" to explain the relation between the two natures of Christ by attributing certain scriptural statements to only

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[1373] Ibid, 86.
[1374] Anthony Kelly & Francis Moloney, *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), 9-14.
[1375] John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 509.
[1376] Ibid, 486.
[1377] Larsson, *Glory*, 84.
[1378] Ibid.
[1379] Ibid.
[1380] Ashton *Understanding*, 492.
[1381] Larsson, *Glory*, 88.
[1382] Ibid, 84-88.

one of them (divine or human).[1383] This approach has subsequently become regarded as highly dubious, modern works exhibiting "incredulity in the claims of such exegesis",[1384] regarding it as a curiosity of a specific age and rejecting the idea that one can separate out human or divine in a single person in this way.

However, this approach was very common among the Fathers, and would naturally lead someone to support Ashton's view. If biblical witness to Christ should be divided in this way, then it is obvious that those aspects of John's Jesus which speak of glory are divine, while those aspects which speak of death and suffering in crucifixion are human. The way which the Fathers read the Bible would therefore prevent them from seeing crucifixion and glory together in any way that could support a claim that John's gospel redefines glory. Anything which does not support the existing account of glory would be seen as referring to the human nature.

The reformation, being more divided on this issue, could be said to be in tension between the traditional reading and the correct one. The magisterial reformation did not reject Christian tradition outright as a source of knowledge, so the fact that the Fathers supported Ashton's reading could be responsible for a tendency to adopt these views, even if Luther's approach is better rooted in the text.

The most notable proponent of Ashton's position at the time of the Reformation, John Calvin, argues for it by means of his doctrine of accommodation. According to this view, some scriptural statements about God are seen as "not absolutely true, but accommodated to the circumstances under which they were uttered."[1385] "Calvin acknowledges that the text portrays Christ as weak and suffering, but since this can impossibly be the true state of Christ, Calvin continues by de-accommodating the text".[1386] In other words, Calvin maintains this interpretation of John by employing a hermeneutic which allows him to reject certain aspects of the text which are incompatible with his theological commitments, even though he acknowledges that they are present. Therefore, even he sees that the text seems to point this way – he simply has a theology which allows him to ignore this.

[1383] John Behr, *Formation of Christian Theology: Volume 2: The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 476.
[1384] Ibid, 13.
[1385] Larsson, *Glory*, 87.
[1386] Ibid.

We can therefore see that, while the interpretation of John put forward by Luther and Balthasar has been rejected by various figures in Christian history, they appear to have done so as part of a broader theological framework in which details of the textual description of Christ can be separated from Christ's divine nature when it fails to fit in with their presuppositions about what God is like. This, I would submit, is something which should be avoided: we should seek to take seriously even truths which we find difficult to understand or fit within our system.

Furthermore, something similar appears to occur in Ashton. While he does not draw on theological presuppositions which allow him to ignore textual features, his whole consideration of the subject is shot-through with equivalent examples from redaction criticism. For example, a central plank of Ashton's reading is that, while noting previous scholars' claim that the cross displays God's love (in particular, he cites Kasemann's claim that "[Jesus'] death is rather the manifestation of divine self-giving love"[1387]), he denies it[1388] in order to maintain that the connection between glory and cross refers solely to the "lifting up".[1389]

However, in order to do this, he must give some explanation for numerous passages which appear to imply what Ashton calls a "sacrificial interpretation of Jesus' death",[1390] and therefore require that Jesus' death was for the sake of the other. He cites a numerous examples: "the Good Shepherd";[1391] "Caiaphas' prophecy",[1392] "the saying concerning the grain of corn";[1393] the "washing of the feet";[1394] and several more.[1395]

The fact that he is capable of citing so many examples would appear to indicate that this theme is not only present, but also important. To deny Kasemann's claim about the cross manifesting God's self-giving love, he needs not only to give an account of

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[1387] Ernst Kasemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17* (London: SCM Press, 1968) (trans. Gerhard Krodel), 10.
[1388] Ashton, *Understanding*, 490.
[1389] Ibid, 495.
[1390] Ibid, 490.
[1391] Ibid.
[1392] Ibid, 491.
[1393] Ibid.
[1394] Ibid.
[1395] Ibid.

these passages which allows him to avoid a theory of, say, penal substitution, but in fact must give an account that allows him to avoid the idea of love altogether.

However, just as the Fathers used their theological exegesis involving "partitive exegesis" to avoid uncomfortable facts about Jesus, and Calvin used his theory of divine accommodation, so Ashton uses his own methodology to argue that certain elements of John's gospel can be ignored. In Ashton's case, it is redaction criticism: he asserts that the material cited above appears to "have been included in the Gospel at a fairly late stage"[1396], and as such suggests that one passage "belongs to a second edition of the Gospel",[1397] while another is an "editorial insertion."[1398] As such, he is able to argue that this content can be ascribed to a different author to the person who wrote the rest of the gospel.

Ashton may, or may not, be correct in his reconstruction of the process of redaction which went towards the construction of John's gospel. The fact that those passages which provide evidence against Ashton's theory (which are several, and found throughout John's gospel) also happen to be those which Ashton considers to be later redactions, does raise suspicions that he may be forcing the evidence to fit the theory. However, barring any archaeological findings of earlier editions of the gospel, we cannot comprehensively prove his theory right or wrong, and we should expect that such theories about editorial processes will remain both debatable and debated. It is therefore possible that Ashton's theory is correct – but the same could be said of any number of other, contradictory, theories.

Furthermore, we should note that it is the text as it stands which belongs to the canon, and not any hypothetical reconstruction of an earlier edition. A Christian theologian should follow the canonical scriptures rather than hypothetical and disputed accounts of potential previous editions of those scriptures. For this reason, I conclude that it is reasonable to see the cross as (re)defining the nature of divine glory, and adopt a theology of the cross which challenges any system of thought which stands in contradiction to the God who is seen on the cross.

[1396] Ibid.
[1397] Ibid.
[1398] Ibid.

Turning to the approaches taken by the theologians we are using to the nature of divine glory, Jonathan Edwards' understanding of the priority of different divine attributes was not consistent in different stages of his life. There are occasions where attributes of power appear to be primary aspects of glory, and attributes of character to be secondary: for example, on one occasion he reasoned that God must have perfect character because a being of absolute power etc would not be subject to temptations because he does not need anything.[1399]

However, this was not the case when he was writing *Two Dissertations*. In *The End*, he states that all of God's attributes can be reduced to his knowledge, holiness, and happiness. He writes:

> The whole of God's internal good or glory, is in these three things, viz. his infinite knowledge, his infinite virtue or holiness, and his infinite joy and happiness. Indeed there are a great many attributes in God. According to our way of conceiving them: but all may be reduced to these; or to their degree, circumstances, and relations. We have no conception of God's power, different from the degree of these things, with a certain relation of them to effects. God's infinity is not properly a distinct kind of good, but only expresses the degree of good there is in him. So God's eternity is not a distinct good; but is the duration of good. His immutability is still the same good, with a negation of change. So that, as I said, the fullness of the Godhead is the fullness of his understanding, consisting in his knowledge; and the fullness of his will consisting in his virtue and happiness.[1400]

God's glory is hereby identified with three specific attributes, which are in turn identified with God's understanding and His will, or God the Son and God the Spirit. This identification of the divine glory with these attributes is therefore a fairly clear outcome of Edwards' doctrine of the Trinity.

However, if we use the Lutheran criterion outlined above, then Edwards' distinctive approach to doctrine of the Trinity bears the marks of what Luther would have called a "theology of glory". It is built on the work of Augustine, which explicitly attempted to explain the Trinity on the basis of a human mind loving itself.[1401] This is a fairly

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[1399] Jonathan Edwards, *The Sole Consideration, That God Is God, Sufficient to Still All Objections to His Sovereignty*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 2* (ed. Edward Hickman) (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), 107-108.

[1400] Edwards, *The End*, 244.

[1401] Mary T. Clark *De Trinitate* in *The Cambridge Companion to St Augustine* (ed. Eleonore Stump & Norman Kretzmann) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 91-102.

obvious example of perceiving God on the basis of creation, which Luther identifies with the theology of glory.

Furthermore, Edwards' account seems much more open to Luther's critique than Augustine himself is. In Augustine the theory is very tentative - there are all sorts of qualifications and he is clear that there are severe limitations in his understanding of the Trinity;[1402] he does not make a claim for the truth of his psychological image of the Trinity, but merely that it is an "image of that supreme trinity"[1403] and stresses that "the trinity as a thing in itself is quite different from the image of the trinity in another thing."[1404] However, over time this tradition hardens so much that by the time it is manifest in Edwards, while he acknowledges that there are limitations on his knowledge, he still maintains that his approach is effectively true.[1405] Edwards' own approach (whereby the Son is so identified with God's understanding, and the Spirit with God's love, that the other persons only possess these attributes through their union with one another) is taking this approach further still from Augustine's tentative image.

However, this approach is still based on reasoning from created things upwards – rather than from the cross. In other words, it is that which Luther was warning against. The definition of divine glory which he derives from it is therefore suspect.

By contrast, Balthasar agrees with Luther on the need for a "theology of the cross",[1406] and as such attempts to meet Luther's challenge by building his doctrine of God on his interpretation of the cross. For Balthasar, the cross defines the nature of glory, integrating into one the many disparate elements which had previously been known in the Old Testament.[1407]

Balthasar states, of studying God's glory, that: "every path that we took directed us to this goal: to the hiatus of the Cross, and to the plumbing of the depths of this

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[1402] Augustine, *The Trinity*, 434-435.
[1403] Ibid, 435.
[1404] Ibid, 428.
[1405] Edwards, *Unpublished* [online].
[1406] Rowan Williams, *Balthasar and Rahner* in *The Analogy of Beauty* (ed. John Riches) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 11-34.
[1407] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume VII: Theology: The New Covenant* (trans. Brian McNeil) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 33-34.

hiatus when Hell gapes open."[1408] In other words, Balthasar identifies the cross with the place where every other manifestation of glory from the previous scriptures is brought together and integrated. (Balthasar links his discussion of the cross to his discussion of hell, which is "essentially the working out of this same idea",[1409] and therefore will not be addressed here.)

In contrast to Edwards, who we have seen builds his understanding of glory upon his understanding of the Trinity, Balthasar builds his understanding of glory upon a theological interpretation of the historic event of the cross, and then builds his understanding of the Trinity upon this. At the centre of Balthasar's doctrine of the cross is the concept of divine love: "the love of Christ … which proves itself in his giving-up of himself for us."[1410]

For Balthasar, this giving-up is kenotic; Jesus radically empties himself in the incarnation and the cross.[1411] He describes this by using the term "distance" (as we saw in the previous chapter), which he also applies to the Trinity. This distance, too, is kenotic. He writes of:

> a first, intratrinitarian *kenosis*, which is none other than God's positive "self-expropriation" in the act of handing over the entire divine being in the processions[1412]

Balthasar is clear that he holds to this doctrine of "distance" as a result of his approach to the cross. He writes that the idea of "distance" is necessary:

> in order to establish the basis within the Trinity for what, in the economic Trinity, will be the possibility of a distance that goes as far as the Son's abandonment on the Cross.[1413]

In other words, he derives his approach to the Trinity from his account of *kenotic* love found on the cross. From this, we can see that Balthasar's account appears to meet Luther's challenge more effectively than Edwards.

[1408] Balthasar, *Glory VII,* 202.
[1409] Kilby, *Balthasar*, 101.
[1410] Balthasar, *Glory VII*, 205.
[1411] Luy, *Aesthetic Collision*, 160.
[1412] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory: Volume II - Truth of God* (trans. Graham Harrison) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 177-178.
[1413] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama V*, 94.

This also supports the argument put forward in the previous chapter, which suggested that Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity would improve Edwards' system, as Balthasar's Trinitarian approach to the union between God and creation is preferable to Edwards because it performs the same role without incurring the same problems. This union was rooted in Balthasar's idea of a relationship involving "distance" occurring within the Trinity. We have just seen that this idea arises from Balthasar's attempt to derive his understanding of divine relationships from the Christ revealed at the cross. We can therefore note that the ideas which Balthasar adopts are also preferable methodologically because it is closer to Luther's doctrine of the cross.

Chapter 2 argued that Balthasar's "distance" language, if interpreted as "otherness", is supported by scripture and tradition. There are also elements of both which support Balthasar's argument that something like *kenotic* love is present in the Trinity. The idea that the love which God expresses at the cross reflects, or is analogous to, the love which is found between Father and Son is certainly not novel.

This is not surprising, given that in Scripture Jesus explicitly states "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you",[1414] before defining his love for the disciples in terms which "must refer primarily to the love of Jesus shown on the cross"[1415]: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."[1416] Balthasar's idea of the cross revealing a self-giving otherness between Father and Son appears to be well grounded.

However, there may also be a significant problem with Balthasar's approach. For Balthasar, love is kenotic: rather than simply self-giving, it is self-emptying. He understands the "distance" between Father and Son to be:

> an incomprehensible and unique "separation" of God from himself that it includes and grounds every other separation – be it never so dark and bitter.[1417]

The distance within the Trinity includes the darkness of other separations, i.e. the cross. This has been critiqued as appearing to require some kind of adoption of darkness or suffering within God. Karen Kilby writes that:

[1414] John 15:9, ESV.

[1415] Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John: Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 598-599.

[1416] John 15:13, ESV.

[1417] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama IV*, 325.

> Balthasar is fundamentally blurring the distinction between love and loss, joy and suffering. If love and renunciation, suffering (or something like it) and joy, are linked, not just in the Christian life, but eternally in God, then ultimately suffering and loss are given a positive valuation: they are eternalized, and take on an ultimate ontological status.[1418]

Given my overall argument that problems with Edwards' account of the relationship between God's glory-seeking and love can be reduced by adopting Balthasar's Trinitarian doctrine, I should note that this kind of approach would cause significant problems within Edwards' theology. Edwards' doctrine is concerned with the idea of God's glory (that which is within God) being expressed and communicated outside of God. If God in any sense contains darkness or suffering, especially if it is as fundamental as to be this central to God's relationship with Himself, then Edwards' God would be compelled to spread suffering and misery amongst humanity.

It is also worth noting that adopting this idea of suffering within God represents a major change in Christian tradition. It is therefore something which Balthasar would have to specifically argue for himself. His argument is based around the idea that, if one is to adopt a model of the cross which involves suffering and the Son's alienation from the Father, without asserting a fundamental change within God, "we are bound to suppose that there is *something* eternally present in the life of the Trinity which anticipates it".[1419] Nonetheless, Kilby observes that caution should be maintained in saying very much about what this "something" is.[1420] In a previous essay I gave an example of an alternative potential "something" and while noting that there could other possibilities, thereby meaning that Balthasar's is not necessary to do this.[1421]

Nonetheless, Chapter 2 supported the idea that a relationship constituting distance, if by distance one means something like a relation of loving "otherness", must be contained within the Trinity. Furthermore, since the Cross is an example of God's kenotic love, we can deduce from this that God contains within himself a giving love

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[1418] Kilby, *Balthasar*, 120.
[1419] Ibid, 111.
[1420] Ibid, 111-112.
[1421] See my earlier essay, *Hans Urs von Balthasar's Trinitarian account of Divine Immutability in the Atonement*. Submitted to the University of Nottingham's Department of Theology on 17 May 2012.

which has the capacity of motivating kenosis: a love that means that He is willing to undergo self-emptying in humiliation and suffering if the situation calls for it.

Kilby notes that "Balthasar is impressive, perhaps unsurpassed, in the integration he achieves between soteriology and Trinitarian theology. But the cost turns out to be high."[1422] I would suggest that this is where he ceases to reflect Luther's theology of the cross.

For Luther, "the sole authentic *locus* of man's knowledge of God is the cross of Christ, in which God is to be found revealed, and yet paradoxically hidden in that revelation. Luther's reference to the *posterior Dei* [visible rearward parts of God] serves to emphasise that, like Moses, we can only see God from the rear: we are denied a direct knowledge of God, or a vision of his face (cf. Exodus 33:23 …)."[1423] The cross has a certain paradoxical quality whereby, while it reveals God, the knowledge it reveals is incomplete.[1424]

In this respect, it seems that Balthasar's desire to fully integrate the cross into his doctrine of the Trinity does not follow Luther. According to the theology of the cross, Balthasar does not have access to all the information he needs in order to do this. The cross reveals incomplete information which should lead us to humility regarding what we can claim.

While chapter 2 argued that Balthasar's idea of "distance" (if interpreted as an "otherness" of self-giving love between the Trinitarian persons) is a legitimate deduction of Balthasar's on the basis of the theology of the cross, it is something which (chapter 2 argued) he has resources to support from both scripture and tradition. This cannot be said of his conclusion that darkness itself must be grounded in God's nature, where it certainly stands in tension with these authorities.

However, if one avoids taking these problematic elements on boad, Balthasar's theory helps to reduce the tension between glory-seeking and love because it identifies glory and self-giving love. Whereas previous chapters have explored a

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[1422] Kilby, *Balthasar*, 122.
[1423] McGrath, *Luther's*, 149.
[1424] Ibid.

position whereby glory-seeking is motivated by love, adapting Edwards' thought to include this would mean that the glory that God seeks is itself love.

For Edwards, glorifying includes God exercising his attributes of glory[1425] as well as "diffus[ing] his glory in a created world".[1426] Therefore, seeking God's glory contains the idea of God exercising His love. Seeking God's glory, in the sense of seeking for God's attributes to be manifest outside of Himself, means to seek for God's love to be manifest.

To summarise, this chapter has argued that Balthasar's understanding of God's glory is preferable to Edwards', because it meets the standard of Luther's "theology of the cross". According to Balthasar's understanding, God's glory can be identified with love.

This supports the argument made previously, whereby replacing Edwards' doctrine of the Trinity with Balthasar's would improve Edwards' system. It reduces the tension between the idea of glory-seeking and that of love. The very glory that Edwards' God would seek to manifest would itself be His self-giving love.

[1425] Edwards, *The End*, 147-148.
[1426] Douglas J. Elwood, *The Philosopical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 92-93.

<u>**Conclusion**</u>

This dissertation has examined the thought of Jonathan Edwards regarding the relationship between God's love and His seeking His own glory, critiquing it with several elements from Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Chapter 1 examined the thought of Edwards, who grounds his argument is the idea that God must love Himself supremely because He is the most worthy object of love. This chapter observed that the Trinity is fundamental to Edwards' thought, including the concept of intra-Trinitarian love, which explains how God's self-love can be genuine love. It also observed that Edwards unites God's love for Himself with His love of humanity by adopting a version of theosis, rooted in his eccentric doctrine of the Trinity.

Chapter 2 observed several problems with Edwards attempt to asserting that God can treat us as entirely one with Himself while maintaining an orthodox distinction between creator and creature. It proposes that Balthasar's doctrine of the Trinity, if integrated into Edwards' system, can provide an explanation for humanity's simultaneous unity with God and distinctiveness from him, without incurring the same problems as Edwards'.

Chapter 3 then examines Edwards' and Balthasar's understanding of what God's glory most fundamentally is. It argues on the basis of Martin Luther's "theology of the cross" that Balthasar's understanding is (mostly) preferable. Since within both theologians the concepts of glory and Trinity are closely connected, this supports the claim of chapter 2 that Balthsar's doctrine of the Trinity can be integrated within Edwards' system. It also reduces tension between glory and love because the glory that God seeks is itself the manifestation of His love.

Overall, this dissertation has observed that Edwards tried to reconcile glory-seeking and love by making both of them ultimately one thing, using the doctrine of the Trinity. He did this through firstly implying in *The End* that the self-love which ground's God's glory-seeking is intra-Trinitarian love. Secondly, he did this through arguing for a kind of unity between human beings and God.

However, this dissertation has also suggested that the eccentricities of Edwards' doctrine of the Trinity cause problems with his scheme. It therefore suggests that

the scheme could be improved by replacing Edwards' doctrine of the Trinity with a version of that proposed by Balthasar, modified to reduce the level of confidence with which it speaks of divine things. This doctrine of the Trinity would perform all the tasks which Edwards' scheme requires of the doctrine, but it would do so without incurring the problems found in Edwards' thought.

This approach does so at a cost of some degree of clarity. Nonetheless, there is a difference between a mystery which is merely something that one does not know, and a statement which is shown to be in error or self-contradictory. This approach involves the former, rather than the latter.

Furthermore, this approach finds this mystery in the doctrine of the Trinity. The things which are mysterious about the modified version of Edwards' scheme are things about the Trinity. Christian theologians consistently consider God Himself to be beyond human understanding, and the Trinity is widely viewed as perhaps the greatest mystery there is about God. The modified version of Edwards' scheme, therefore, does not increase the amount of mystery in the Christian faith.

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Note: This bibliography serves as a bibliography for the dissertation itself, but does not necessarily cover the books used in the preparation of the appendix, which was itself submitted as a dissertation for a former degree. The bibliography for this dissertation is, however, available at the end of the appendix itself.

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