

## Jonathan Edwards on Nature: An Example for Christian Ecospirituality

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Bringing the conference to Korea will provide a decisive opportunity for the restoration of Korea's ecology-centered thought, as well as a boost to Korea's ecological economy, but the issues the conference is attempting to address are ultimately ones of civilization's transformation. The prodigal son of humanity, having absconded from the house of nature, must once more make his way back home, claim his filial spot, and embrace a spirit of fraternity with his siblings.<sup>1</sup>

In 2006, Kim Young Ho, president of Yuhan College, wrote a guest editorial in a newspaper in the hopes of South Korea hosting the UN Forum on Climate Change. His remarks not only showed that the ecological concern has been rising in South Korea, but that it is also a matter of spirituality. Read again the last sentence of the quotation: "The prodigal son of humanity, having absconded from the house of nature, must once more make his way back home, claim his filial spot, and embrace a spirit of fraternity with his siblings." Human beings are like "the prodigal son" who have left the house of nature by causing the loss of biodiversity. Transformation should occur both in human beings and in civilization as soon as possible in order to survive and to fulfill the purpose of creation. How should we Christians respond to this ecological challenge?

As an attempt to answer this question, this essay will explore Jonathan Edwards's thoughts on Nature. Edwards (1703-1758) was a Puritan and Calvinist who wrote numerous writings and notes regarding nature, especially "The Beauty of the World," "The 'Spider' Papers," "Images of Divine Things," "Miscellanies," "Personal Narrative," and "The End for Which God Created the World." His nature-affirming attitude affected the American wilderness movement in the United States through Henry

1. Kim Young Ho, "Looking to Korea's future in fight to protect ecology," *Hankyoreh (Seoul)*, 26 December, 2006. Accessed on December 3, 2011, from [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_editorial/180476.html](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_editorial/180476.html).

D. Thoreau, Ralph W. Emerson, and John Muir.<sup>2</sup> Edwards is an example of Christian Ecospirituality in the eighteenth century. Before examining Edwards's writings on nature, this paper will define what Nature is, and what Christian Ecospirituality is.

### Some Definitions

Nature is *jayeon* (自然) in Korean, based on the Eastern philosophies, which means "being itself" or "being as it is." Human beings are considered to be a part of *jayeon*. *Jayeon* itself is not the object of judgment, right or wrong. In the meantime, Creation is different from Nature. Creation is a concept with a belief system which presupposes Nature as being created by a transcendent Being or God. For example, a Christian in a Korean Presbyterian Church believes through the Scriptures that Nature is created by God who is omnipotent and omnipresent. While Nature and creation originally include human beings, this paper will use Nature as meaning *non-human* Nature because the writer could not find a more adequate term; Edwards also uses Nature as meaning non-human Nature in his writings.

Ecology is "a study of relationship that exists between living organisms and their environment."<sup>3</sup> Christian Ecospirituality consists of spirituality, Christian spirituality, and ecology. Spirituality is a lived experience of an individual or a community in everyday life, in which one can encounter oneself as one is and the ultimate being beyond oneself in a transformative way through the relationship with other human beings and Nature. Likewise, Christian spirituality is a lived experience of an individual or a church in everyday life, in which one who believes in Christ can encounter oneself as one is and God beyond oneself in a transformative way through the relationship with other human beings and Nature. Christian spirituality is also an affective process of knowing God and oneself. Finally, Christian Ecospirituality is a lived experience of an individual or a church in everyday life, in which one who believes in Christ encounters oneself as one is, Nature as a colleague, and God beyond oneself in a transformative way through the relationship between oneself and Nature.

2. J. Baird Callicott, "The Puritan Origins of the American Wilderness Movement," National Humanities Center, [<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntwilderness/essays/puritan.htm>], Accessed on December 3, 2011; Gordon Miller, "Jonathan Edwards' Sublime Book of Nature," *History Today*, July, 1996, 6-8.

3. Ray Maria McNamara, "Ecospirituality," unpublished class notes for SPCE 4061 (Graduate Theological Union, Spring Semester, 2003).

How does Edwards think about God, human beings and Nature and how do they relate to a contemporary ecological model? First, the writer will discuss who God is for Edwards. That is, what is the Nature of God for Edwards? What is God's end in creation? Second, the writer will explore Edwards's thoughts on the relationship between Nature and human beings. Describing these subjects, the writer will largely rely on the article, "Edwards on God and Nature," written by Sang Hyun Lee, a renowned scholar on Edwards. Finally, the writer will briefly adapt Edwards's thoughts on Nature into H. Paul Santmire's ecological model.

### Edwards's Thoughts on God and Creation

For Edwards, God exists as the Trinity who is dispositional, communicating and active: "We have a lively image of this Trinity in the sun. The Father is as the substance of the sun; the Son is as the brightness and glory of the disk of the sun; the Holy Ghost is as the heat and continually emitted influence, the emanation by which the world is enlightened, warmed, enlivened and comforted."<sup>4</sup> Edwards reformulated the doctrine of God and God's relation to the world. His understanding of God can be summarized in philosophical language as "a dynamic trinitarian actuality and the eternal disposition to repeat that actuality."<sup>5</sup> Here, the notions of "disposition" and "actuality" are important. The being of God, for Edwards, is essentially "a disposition" and "the internal exercises of the divine dispositional essence" constitute "the inner-trinitarian actuality of the Divine Being." To understand God as "actuality," we need to look over Edwards's articulation of the Trinity. Edwards articulates the Trinity as "God, the idea of God, and the love of God." Edwards uses the analogy of the human self as knowing and loving as well as the Lockean notion of the self's reflexive knowledge of its internal acts, which Lee describes as:

The Father is the eternal actuality of the divine knowing and loving and the disposition to repeat or communicate this divine actuality . . . The second person of the Trinity is the Father's reflexive knowing of his own knowing and loving, and the third person, the Father's reflexive loving of

4. Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": entry nos. 1-500*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 13, ed. Thomas A. Schafer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 434.

5. Sang Hyun Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," in *Edwards in Our Time*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee and Allen C. Guelzo (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 18.

his reflexive knowing and loving. So the full exertion of the divine disposition constitutes “God, the idea of God, and the love of God.”<sup>6</sup>

From this “inner-trinitarian actuality,” we can see that God is “a dynamic being.” For Edwards, the notion of “a dynamic being” means that God is “actuality and its repetition or self-communication.”<sup>7</sup> According to Lee, this conception of God as at once fully actual and dispositional enables Edwards to see God as internally related to the world and also independent of the world in God’s prior actuality.

God’s creation of the world, for Edwards, is the exercise of God’s original dispositional essence: “God, who delights in his own perfection, delights in seeing those exercises of his perfection explicitly in being, that are fundamentally implied.”<sup>8</sup> God’s end in creation is “to communicate or repeat God’s internal dynamic fullness now in time and space.”<sup>9</sup>

The Son is the adequate communication of the Father’s goodness, is an express and complete image of him. But yet the Son has also an inclination to communicate himself, in an image of his person that may partake of his happiness: and this was the end of the creation, even the communication of the happiness of the Son of God; and this was the only motive hereto, even the son’s inclination to this. And man, the consciousness or perception of the creation, is the immediate subject of this.<sup>10</sup>

The creatures, in other words human beings and Nature, are created so that “they can know and love God’s beauty, thereby repeating in time and space God’s inner-Trinitarian knowing and loving of beauty.”<sup>11</sup> In this sense, “the beauties of nature are really emanations or shadows of the excellencies of the eternal Son of God.”<sup>12</sup> So far, Edwards’s description about God’s end of the creation seems to be very anthropocentric because he emphasizes the primary role of human beings rather than Nature in communicating with God.

6. Lee, “Edwards on God and Nature,” 18-19.

7. Lee, “Edwards on God and Nature,” 19.

8. Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”*: entry nos. 501-832, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 18, ed. Ava Chamberlain (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 97.

9. Lee, “Edwards on God and Nature,” 24.

10. Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”*: entry nos. 1-500, 272.

11. Lee, “Edwards on God and Nature,” 24.

12. Jonathan Edwards, “Covenant of Redemption: ‘Excellency of Christ,’” *Jonathan Edwards: Representative Selections*, ed. Clarence H. Faust and Thomas H. Johnson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962), 373.

## Nature and Human Beings

### *Nature and Humanity: Distinctiveness and Mutuality*

In consideration of Nature's relation to humanity in Edwards's theology, Lee refers to "distinctiveness" and "mutuality." For Edwards, human beings are unique, following the tradition that human beings are created in the image of God. The uniqueness of humanity is its consciousness or perception: "The state of [the] inanimate, unperceiving part of the world, is nothing regarded any otherwise, than in a subserviency to the perceiving or intelligent [part]." <sup>13</sup> Edwards states that "intelligent beings are created to be the consciousness of the universe, that they may perceive what God is and does." <sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, we can see the "mutuality" between Nature and humanity also in Edwards's thought. Human beings are the "end of creation," but this end is qualified by a more ultimate end to recognize and praise the works of God. The uniqueness or superiority of human beings does not give them any right to dominate other parts of the universe. In their ultimate responsibility toward God, Nature and humanity are equal partners. Human beings and Nature are dependent on each other. Nature is dependent on human beings to attain "a knowledge of God," because, as Edwards says, human beings are "the consciousness of the creation." <sup>15</sup>

However, human beings are also dependent upon Nature in the sense that it is as much God's self-revelation as Scripture is. There are two "books" which can help human beings know God: the book of Nature and the books of Scripture: "And as the system of nature and the system of revelation are both divine works, so both are in different senses a divine word, both are the voice of God to intelligent creatures, a manifestation and declaration of Himself to mankind." <sup>16</sup> Concrete physical images of Nature make it easy for God to communicate to human beings. Natural images, according to Lee, are "emanations, communications or embodiments of God's beauty and God's truth." <sup>17</sup> Therefore, human beings can experience God's beauty and God's truth by meditating upon natural images. For Edwards, humanity and nature are very

13. Edwards, "Covenant of Redemption," 29; Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": entry nos. 501-832*, 95.

14. Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": entry nos. 1-500*, 252.

15. Edwards, *The "Miscellanies," a-500*, 252.

16. Harvey G. Townsend, "Miscellanies," no. 1340, *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards from His Private Notebooks*, ed. Harvey G. Townsend (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1955), 233.

17. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 36.

much integral parts of one system.<sup>18</sup> Here, while Edwards' thoughts on creation seem to be still anthropocentric, Nature finds its own role in some sense.

### *Beauty of God versus Beauty of Human Beings and Nature*

Beauty is one of the important terms which enable us to discover Nature's meaning in Edwards's thoughts. For Edwards, an essential aspect of an entity is "beauty."<sup>19</sup> In his reflection upon the Great Awakening, Edwards became convinced that the experience of beauty was the key to an encounter between God and persons, and that it was fundamental to human motivation.<sup>20</sup> According to Richard C. Austin, Edwards believed that the experience of beauty created a relationship which itself motivated ethical behavior.<sup>21</sup> Conrad Cherry also describes well the moral beauty and cosmic beauty based on Edwards's thought: "*Moral beauty* is the chief quality of essential human being, and *cosmic beauty*, a reflection of the former, is the chief quality of the being of the material world."<sup>22</sup> Edwards also acknowledges the relationship between beauty and morality. In his article, "Chapter One: Jonathan Edwards and Sovereign Beauty," William Spohn reflects on Edwards's thought: "Values are experienced in emotion, and they appeal to agents through beauty, the most accessible manifestation of goodness . . . . When the experience of beauty is most profound, it links moral and religious experience."<sup>23</sup>

Edwards divides beauty into *primary beauty* and *secondary beauty*. *Primary beauty* means *spiritual beauty* which "lies in virtuous principles and acts . . . that they imply *consent* and *union* with Being in general" - that is, God.<sup>24</sup> Spiritual beauty is shown in virtues and practices gener-

18. Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 74.

19. "The Life of Jonathan Edwards," The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, [http://www.yale.edu/wje/html/life\\_of\\_edwards.html](http://www.yale.edu/wje/html/life_of_edwards.html), (Accessed on December 3, 2011).

20. Richard Cartwright Austin, *Beauty of the Lord: Awakening the Senses* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 16.

21. Austin, *Beauty of the Lord*, 16.

22. Conrad Cherry, *Nature and Religious Imagination: from Edwards to Bushnell* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 53.

23. William Spohn, "Chapter One: Jonathan Edwards and Sovereign Beauty," Santa Clara University Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, <http://scu.edu/SCU/Centers/Ethics/publications/submitted/spohn/jonathanedwards.html>, (Accessed 3 December, 2011).

24. Jonathan Edwards, "The Nature of True Virtue," *A Jonathan Edwards Leader*, ed. John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 250.

ated from the union with God. “This spiritual beauty is the ground not only of benevolence but of *complacency*.”<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, *secondary beauty* is based on the presence of true virtue in the object and forms the basis of common morality, which includes self-love, conscience, and kindly affections. The importance of *secondary beauty* stems primarily from the fact that it is an image of divine beauty—regularity, order, symmetry, harmony, and proportion—and is the source of other virtues.<sup>26</sup> Beauty also proves created beings’ relation to the Divine Being:

Material entities possess what Edwards calls the ‘secondary beauty,’ the sort of harmony or regularity that does not involve the consent or love between perceiving beings or the ‘primary beauty.’ But the reason why ‘secondary beauty’ is beautiful, according to Edwards, is its resemblance to consent between spiritual beings and ultimately its analogical relation to the beauty of God.<sup>27</sup>

The recognition of the beauty of the whole universe affects our appreciation of the beauty of the parts in nature and vice versa: “Those who have glimpsed the beauty of the whole universe appreciate the full beauty of the parts.”<sup>28</sup> In sum, even though the division between *spiritual beauty* and *secondary beauty* seems to be dualistic or hierarchical, the recognition of beauty in Nature could be an encounter with the primary beauty of God and this has benefits for us to have a Nature-affirming attitude.

### *Fall and Conversion of Human Beings and Beauty of Nature*

The capability of human beings’ recognition of divine beauty through the beauty of Nature depends on human beings’ status: the Fall or conversion. Edwards believed that God imparted an ability to perceive divine beauty, that is, “a sense of the heart,” to human beings before the Fall. However, after the Fall the ability was destroyed. For Edwards, human beings require “spiritual knowledge” to properly discern images of divine things within themselves and in their world; however, there is an obstacle to spiritual knowledge, which is “sin.” Based on Edwards’s thought, Conrad Cherry explains:

25. Edwards, “The Nature of True Virtue,” 251.

26. John E. Smith, “Introduction,” *Jonathan Edwards Reader*, ed. John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), xxxi.

27. Lee, “Edwards on God and Nature,” 31.

28. Spohn, “Edwards and Sovereign Beauty,” 22.



Every person's fallenness causes his/her spiritual seeing to be founded on the principle of self-love rather than on the principle of non-self-seeking benevolence. . . . The Fall has affected the entire system of creation, turning it from an harmonious structure that gains divine symbolic meaning from human beings' intellect and will, into a chaotic swarm of idols arising from human beings' self-love.<sup>29</sup>

The essence of sin is self-love: "Self-love which plays a legitimate role in experience becomes cancerous once it is unchecked by the higher principles of benevolence and love for God."<sup>30</sup> The Fall destroyed the ability to "sense" divine things, in Edwards's theology, according to Diana Butler: "[B]y the Fall, human beings can in no way discern the primary purposes of God's revelation in nature."<sup>31</sup>

The Fall has badly affected human beings' responsibility toward Nature. Lee approaches in Edwards' thought the heavy influence of the Fall in relation to human beings' responsibility toward Nature:

The responsibility of perceiving beings toward nature is weighty. But fallen humanity, with the narrowness of its imagination, cannot fulfill this responsibility toward nature, according to Edwards. It takes nothing less than the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for human minds to apprehend the wider meanings of things. Only sanctified minds with their widened imagination are able to experience things "in their true relations and respects to other things, and to things in general." So, without such a widening of the imagination, human beings do not "consent to being" but fall into a narrow or deformed perspective on reality. Such a narrowness of vision is none other than sin, according to Edwards. And sin has a serious effect on nature.<sup>32</sup>

Conversion can be said as "a widening of the imagination," or "corrected sense." The regenerate person has his own conversion experience only by grace. By grace, Christians can acknowledge Nature as an image of God's beauty. God's grace liberates the person by expanding the range of concern, of the heart, and of the affections.<sup>33</sup> Edwards could understand that by his own conversion experience and he described it as an encounter with God's beauty:

The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm sweet cast or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything.

29. Cherry, *Nature and Religious Imagination*, 56-58.

30. Spohn, "Edwards and Sovereign Beauty," 7.

31. Diana Butler, "God's Visible Glory: The Beauty of Nature," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 15 (April 1991), 122.

32. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 34.

33. Spohn, "Edwards and Sovereign Beauty," 6.



God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity, and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon and stars, in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature.<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, one's ability in recognizing the divine beauty through Nature can be a criterion for discerning the truth of one's conversion. Contemplating Nature can lead a person to encounter God's beauty and, in that sense, be transformative.

### *Typology*

Typology is one of the essential methods of Edwards's interpretation of Nature. Edwards extended typological interpretation beyond Scripture to history in general as well as to Nature. The sun, the moon, stars, the flocking of birds, and indeed "the whole outward creation," according to Edwards, "are images or shadows, that is, types, of divine things."<sup>35</sup> For Edwards, a type points to its antitype "not because a type is a mere reflection of some meaning that transcends the spatio-temporal world but rather because a type in its own earthly nature has within itself the intentionality for relations."<sup>36</sup> The ultimate antitype is Christ "who was not to be restricted to temporal boundaries, but is eternal and atemporal."<sup>37</sup>

In the typology of Edwards, created existence would have to be a beautiful system or network of relations which repeats God's inner-Trinitarian glory such as all the coherence, harmony, or excellence of God's own being.<sup>38</sup> According to Lee, Edwards's doctrine of the world as a repetition of God's own life "enables us to respect the integrity of the immanent harmony of the world without compromising the reality of the eternal God as the source and foundation of that immanent harmony."<sup>39</sup> On the one hand, typology as a hermeneutic method for Nature could make human beings disregard Nature's intrinsic value through pointing to only its antitype. On the other hand, it can be helpful for them to approach Nature respectfully in order to search for the antitype in it.

34. Edwards, "Personal Narrative," *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, 285.

35. Edwards, "Images of Divine Things," *Typological Writings, The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 11, ed. Wallace E. Anderson, Mason I. Lowance, Jr., and David Watters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 65-66, 81.

36. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 38.

37. Lowance, "Editor's Introduction," *Typological Writings*, 181.

38. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 39.

39. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 39.

### Edwards and Ecology

Until now, we have searched Edwards's thought on Nature in terms of God's creation of Nature and human beings' relation with Nature. Having all those understandings in mind, let us now deal with them from the perspective of contemporary ecology. H. Paul Santmire is a renowned theorist in the field of ecology. In his book, *The Travail of Nature*, Santmire refers to three metaphors related to ecology: the metaphor of ascent, the metaphor of fecundity, and the metaphor of a migration to a good land. Among them, the metaphor of ascent tends to show a disregard for Nature because in that metaphor, Nature should be left behind and does not contribute to the spiritual life of human beings. Santmire argues that there are theologies affirming of Nature with the help of two metaphors: the metaphor of fecundity and the metaphor of a migration to a good land.<sup>40</sup> The metaphor of fecundity and the metaphor of a migration to a good land represent world-affirming perspectives, so they fit into the ecological concern.

We can find all three metaphors in Edwards's thoughts. Even though there is the metaphor of ascent in Edwards's view on Nature, it is for a good purpose, that is, "for a fuller apprehension of the fecundity of the mundane" rather than a denial of it:

God's end in creating the world is that God's own life be extended and repeated *ad extra* in time and space. Thus, time and space have an ultimate significance in Edwards' perspective. And the fulfillment of the world has to be within the matrix of time and space and not outside of them. The regenerate person's religious experience which constitutes the actualization of his or her own being and also of God's end in creation involves an ascent - an ascent, however, that has the purpose of returning.<sup>41</sup>

The movement of ascent-and-return-to-earth is dramatically illustrated in Edwards's account of his own experience of God:

As I walking there, and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious *majesty* and *grace* of God, that I know not how to express.... After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used to

40. H. Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 13-29.

41. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 40.

fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the mean time, singing forth, with a low voice my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer.<sup>42</sup>

As seen in Lee observation, Edwards's ascent to his inexpressible experience of God in Nature did not remove him from the earth but rather brought him right back to it—but with a difference.<sup>43</sup> Edwards' religious experiences in Nature simultaneously show us the mystical aspects of his encountering God through Nature and his Nature-affirming perspective.

### Conclusion

So far, the writer has studied Edwards's thoughts on Nature as a part of searching for resources in establishing Christian Ecospirituality, and specifically for setting Protestant Ecospirituality. According to Edwards, Christian Ecospirituality is based on the belief that God exists as Trinity who communicates or repeats His internal beautiful fellowship through creation with creatures. In Christian Ecospirituality, human beings as a part of Nature and creatures of God, are unique in terms of recognizing the divine beauty in Nature and in being responsible for conserving Nature as types of the divine Being. Only the regenerated, who experience conversion by God's grace, can recognize and sense *spiritual beauty* in Nature as types of God's work. Christian Ecospirituality emphasizes Nature-affirming attitudes. Nature, like Scripture, is the other "book" of revelation. Edwards shows us a Nature-affirming perspective through his writings which were encouraged by his inexpressible experiences in Nature. Nature has an important and positive place in Edwards's framework of thought.<sup>44</sup>

Christian Ecospirituality should be recognized and practiced in the contemporary Protestant churches. Edwards's scientific attitude examining the phenomena in Nature and his own experiences in Nature as well as his hermeneutical methods on Nature using the terms "beauty" and "typology" in his Calvinistic theological background helps contemporary Korean Protestant churches to have a Nature-affirming perspective. Even though it is a fact that he emphasizes more God and human beings than Nature, in his day, his Nature-affirming thoughts should be considered as a breakthrough in the field of Reformed theology on Nature.

42. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 41; Edwards, "Personal Narrative," *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, 284-285.

43. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 41.

44. Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature," 43.

Edwards's own experiences in Nature as shown in his writings are precious in the sense that they were the places in which God, humans, and Nature encounter, deeply understand and respect each other.