

considered it to be a necessary consequence of it. In other words, an understanding of the infinite simplicity and incomprehensibility in Trinitarian multiplicity could not but produce a response in the life of the believer individually and within the church corporately, and across 146 pages Cheynell showed his audience what he believed would be the result. This consisted in a faith in, worship of, and obedience to God through Christ. By marrying a Reformed Christology with a Trinitarian divinity, Cheynell sought to “promote Reformed trinitarianism as the apex of faith and true communion with God” (227).

Slavinski’s monograph offers a model of one way to successfully engage in the study of historical theology. By taking a discourse such as Cheynell’s *Divine Trinunity* and closely reading it within the theological, historical, and social dynamics of its time, one is able to add depth to our understanding of important texts from the history of the church. Not only can this shed light on an important question regarding the religion of seventeenth-century England, but it also allows such works to speak to us with great power today. Altogether, this volume is a significant contribution to the scholarship on the religious controversies of the early modern period, and an essential one for those seeking to understand this often-overlooked pastor and theologian.

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David Van Brugge. *That Which They Can’t See: A Retrieval of Jonathan Edwards’ Homiletical Use of Imagination*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2025.

*That Which They Can’t See* is an insightful book, yet it is complex and deserves careful attention to assess its contribution to Edwardsean studies. Van Brugge divides this study into three main parts. Part 1 recalls the modern skepticism toward the imagination in homiletic textbooks. Part 2 focuses on the topic, particularly the rationale for studying Edwards’s use of the imagination. In Part 3, the book conveys “The Benefit of Strengthening a Homiletical Use of Imagination with Edwards,” along with an appendix listing all of Edwards’s relevant sermons from Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

In the introductory chapters, Van Brugge laments the disparaging treatment of imagination in modern preaching. He writes, “The primary

challenge is that the intersection of imagination and homiletic for expository preachers in the twenty-first century remains under-recognized" (24). He supports this by pointing to the relative lack of importance ascribed to imagination in modern homiletical textbooks. As a pastor of a Heritage Reformed Congregation in Ontario, Canada, he understands the intricacies of the preaching ministry and the general skepticism toward imagination. This book challenges that skepticism by outlining the problem, the method, the rationale for studying Edwards, and the goal. The goal is to recruit Jonathan Edwards as a resource for his use of imagination in twenty-first-century preaching. He suggests that we use Edwards as a test case for the use of imagination in his sermons preached in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He also claims that we should consider him as representative of the Baroque Puritan for his imaginative preaching.

From the reviewer's perspective, part 3, encompassing chapters 3 through 6, stands out as the most significant part of this study. Edwards's use of imagination is especially compelling. Building upon previous work, he distinguishes himself by offering a truly original contribution. In chapter 3, Van Brugge examines Edwards's characterization of imagination as an active process initiated in the mind, where an individual can receive external things and elevate them into a spiritual realm. The mind is not merely passive, absorbing information; rather, it is an active faculty, with imagination constituting a core aspect of a person's heart and soul. Consequently, the will and affection are inherently interconnected, not separate faculties. Nevertheless, because the imagination holds power and influence, it also bears the potential for error, underscoring the crucial sense of responsibility that accompanies its use (90–92).

Van Brugge appeals that there is, in Edward's view of imagination, what he describes as mediating, liberating, and transforming aspect. He discusses the mediating role, arguing that it must be logical and capable of mediating (92). Edwards was convinced that imagination could be employed in evil, bearing in mind original sin, and even in the regenerate person, which could sometimes be immoral or spiritually deceptive. However, imagination can be used for spiritual good (95).

Then, Van Brugge addresses the imagination as liberating, as "unrestrained by... the sensible external and outward objects. In other words, it pictures immaterial things to the human eye, such as atoms, the characters of persons, and invisible things such as ideas and affections." This power of the mind is accessible to believers and unbelievers alike. Therefore, imagination must not be restricted because one day the mind will behold the glory

and the loveliness of Christ, which “will be ten thousand times greater than ever was impressed on the imagination of either saint or sinners” (96–97). The liberated imagination allows the mind to think about God, His activity, His care for creation, and the gospel of Christ. But it is of preeminent importance that the person remains humble (98).

Finally, the author speaks to the transformative aspect of imagination in Edwards’s use. In this way, Edwards meant that a person must have a regenerated heart to truly have a transformed imagination. While unbelievers can imagine truthfully, their imaginations are fleeting. The regenerated heart includes “all spiritual and gracious affections,” so that this person will “view nothing as it did before” (100). It must undergo regeneration by the Spirit to be transformative. In other words, “it is a transformed-heart, [and a] sanctified manner of operating” (101).

The author demonstrates quite ably that imagination was extremely important to Edwards. According to Van Brugge, in Edwards, “The imagination should not be neglected, because God knows ‘what affections may arise from imagination, and how far imagination may be mixed with spiritual illumination’” (107). He cites potential sources from his own time, including theological, biblical, and philosophical sources that may have influenced his theory of imagination. Van Brugge relies on previous Edwardeans, sometimes critiquing them at other times praising them, for example, the contributions of Conrad Cherry, Wilson Kinmach, Michael McClymond, Sang Hyun Lee, Joe Rigney, Harold Simonson, and many more, and Van Brugge makes a significant contribution to this scholarship.

In chapter 5, Van Brugge characterizes Edwards as a “baroque preacher.” He admitted that to consider him “Puritan baroque is not a common label” (141). To explain reasons why, he stands on the work of several scholars who have proposed the Baroque style in preaching. Generally, the term “baroque” is associated with music, art, architecture, poetry, and theater; it has been applied only recently to preachers and sermons. He attributes these characteristics to Puritan preachers and “Other Puritan-era Protestants have been identified as baroque. The English Poets John Donne (1572–1631) and John Milton (1608–1674) have both been referred to as baroque” (173). Given that the select Puritans were associated with the term “baroque,” Van Brugge attributes this to Jonathan Edwards.

He supports his argument by noting six characteristics of baroque imagination: imagery, light, space (interior and exterior), movement, affections, and glorification. He freely admits this could be seen as anachronistic (177):

It cannot be said that Edwards intentionally applied baroque characteristics to his preaching, because there is no record of his awareness of the term. Suggesting so would be impossible; it would be anachronism at its worst. The term baroque was only identified as applying to the stylistic characteristics a century later, long after the greatest demonstrators of baroque art were dead. However, like Rembrandt, Bach, and others, Edwards did use certain characteristics in his preaching that were later identified as baroque. It is helpful to recognize that, in order to retrieve from Edwards' homiletical use of imagination.

However, the attempt to characterize Edwards as a baroque figure is less convincing. In reality, this classification was not crucial to the core of the book, as it appears only in a few chapters. The author emphasized the importance of reconnecting with Edwards's imagination and how it could enrich preaching in the twenty-first century, without relying on the label "baroque." I would describe Edwards as a biblical, Reformed, revivalist, and expositional preacher, but I remain unconvinced that he should be labeled a baroque preacher.

Overall, this was a fascinating book full of thought-provoking, stimulating information on evoking the imagination, especially in preaching and sermons. Preaching could use a little more imagination, and that is the point of Van Bruggé's book.

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Van Wyk, John R. *To Understand Things as Well as Words: An Examination of Jonathan Edwards and His Pedagogical Methodology*. Pickwick, 2025.

John R. Van Wyk is a former doctoral student of noted Edwardsean scholar Douglas A. Sweeney, who brings both historical acumen and theological sensitivity to a topic that has received surprisingly little sustained attention in the vast corpus of Edwards scholarship. While there exists an almost unbroken stream of works on Edwards's metaphysics, ethics, theology, and many other topics, few have considered how he taught or conceived of teaching. Van Wyk's study attempts to fill that gap by illuminating Edwards "as an educational theorist and as an educator" (263).