

**'GIVING HONOUR TO THE SPIRIT': A CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND
EVALUATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF PNEUMATOLOGICAL UNION
IN THE TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS IN
DIALOGUE WITH KARL BARTH**

W. Ross Hastings

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**‘Giving Honour to the Spirit’: a critical analysis and evaluation
of the doctrine of pneumatological union in the Trinitarian
theology of Jonathan Edwards in dialogue with Karl Barth**

Submitted by W. Ross Hastings

**in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of St. Andrews**

May, 2004



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Abstract

The extent to which the 'honour' of the Spirit influenced the theology of Jonathan Edwards is a hitherto underdeveloped theme. Against a backdrop of Patristic thought and in dialogue with the theology of Karl Barth, evaluation is made of pneumatological union in Edwards' Trinitarian theology as this centres on the nature and inter-relatedness of the 'three unions' that characterize his theology: the union of the three Persons of the Trinity, the union of the saints with God, and the union of the divine and human natures of Christ.

Edwards' seeks to honour the Spirit as the mutual love of the Father for the Son within his Augustinian, Lockean model of the immanent Trinity, and as 'Person' in the economy. The challenges of doing so within the limits of this psychological model of the Trinity are evaluated in dialogue with the Cappadocian Fathers and Barth.

In a manner patterned after union in the Trinity, Edwards gave prominence to the concept of the pneumatological union of the saints with God in Christ, in fulfilment of the self-glorifying purpose of God in creation and redemption. Edwards' experiential theology of conversion, and his elevation of subjective sanctification by the Spirit over objective justification in Christ, for assurance, is contrasted with Barth's greater emphases on the Christological union of God with humanity and objective justification in Christ. Barth's more contemplative approach is contrasted with the overly introspective spirituality of Edwards.

Edwards' view of the role of the Spirit in the hypostatic union of God with humanity in Christ, which is reflective of the other unions, is also evaluated in light of Patristic, Reformed-Puritan and Barthian thought on the nature of the humanity Christ assumed, and the doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ. A more emphatic incarnational emphasis may have saved Edwards' Spirit-honouring spirituality from an anthropocentricity which is ironical given that the glory of God is his ontic doxological concern.

Introduction

The context of this study...

A.M. Allchin in his book *Participation with God* states that for the Welsh Anglican hymn-writer William Williams (1719-1791), as for other teachers of *theosis*, "the doctrines of Trinity, incarnation and deification belong together in an indissoluble knot."¹ This thesis is an attempt to evaluate the 'knot' of Spirit-union which draws together the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation and the transforming union of the saints with God in the mature thought of the New England theologian of the Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards.

The conclusion of contemporary Trinitarian theology, built upon the foundation of Cappadocian thought is "that the doctrine of the Trinity, properly understood, is the affirmation of God's intimate communion with us through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. As such, it is an eminently practical doctrine with far-reaching consequences for Christian life."² A premise of Trinitarian theology is that the doctrine of the Trinity of divine persons in communion is the foundation for the participation of humans in the life of God through the Son who assumed humanity, and whose revelation and redemption by the Spirit draw us into personhood in communion. Within Trinitarian scholarship, how the Trinitarian being of God, as revealed in the economy of salvation, relates to the eternal being of God is a critical concern.³ In addition, the extent to which the doctrine of the Trinity is shown to be the "proper source for reflection on theological ethics,

¹ Allchin, A.M. *Participation in God* (Wilton, Connecticut: Morehouse-Barlow, 1988), 45.

² LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), ix (foreword) (hereafter this work will be referred to as "LaCugna, 1991a"). It is the stated intent of LaCugna to demonstrate this. Her book is a development of a Trinitarian theology built upon the Cappadocians and refined to overcome the deficiency in Cappadocian theology of the distance between the *theologia* (the inner essence of God, Godself, the self-relatedness of the Trinity) and the *oikonomia* (the self-communication of God through the economy of salvation in the person of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit). The union of soteriology and theology proper is critical to biblical Trinitarianism for LaCugna who argues that "an ontological distinction between God *in se* and God *pro nobis* is, finally, inconsistent with biblical revelation, with early Christian creeds, and with Christian prayer and worship" (LaCugna, 1991a, 6).

³ LaCugna (1991a) traces the relationship between these throughout the history of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in both Eastern and Western traditions.

spirituality, ecclesiology, and the liturgical and communitarian life of the church”,⁴ is a diagnostic criterion for the assessment of the Trinitarianism of a theologian. The purpose of this thesis will be to elucidate Edwards’ understanding of the nature and place of the Trinity within his doctrine of God, Christ, and the sanctification of man, drawing attention to the special emphasis Edwards placed on pneumatology, and specifically the role of Spirit-union within his Trinitarian theology. This will be assessed with an eye towards the Trinitarian theology of a leading Reformed theologian of recent times, namely, Karl Barth, whose stronger incarnational focus removes the potential dichotomy between Christology and pneumatology.

The Barthian comparison context

Barth’s theology will provide a context for retrospective assessment of Edwards’ putative Trinitarianism, and especially his strong emphasis on the Spirit in his theology of unions. A number of authors have commented in recent literature on a ‘community of interest’ between these theologians.⁵ The appropriateness of this

⁴ LaCugna, 1991a, 1.

⁵ Barth does not ever mention Edwards, but several authors have commented on a ‘community of interest’ with respect to Trinitarian theology. References include the following: Clarke, F. Stuart. “Christocentric Developments in the Reformed Doctrine of Predestination,” *Churchman* 96, No.3 (1984), 229-245. Gunton, Colin. *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2, No.1 (2000), 112-125. “Immanence and Otherness: Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom in the Theology of Robert Jenson,” *DIALOG* 30, No.1 (1991), 17-26 (see especially p.21: “But this section on the sovereignty of God must end with a return to Barth, between whom and Edwards Jenson sees some community of interest” (reference is given to p.106 in Jenson, *America’s Theologian*), Jenson, Robert W. *America’s Theologian*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) (hereafter “Jenson 1988a”), 4, 42, 45, 63, 78, 106, 107, 133, 198; “The Hidden and Triune God,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2, No.1 (2000), 116-123., *Alpha and Omega: A Study in the Theology of Karl Barth*, (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963), *God after God: the God of the Past and the God of the Future, Seen in the work of Karl Barth* (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), Johnson, James T. The Ethics of Paul Ramsey, *Journal of Religious Ethics* 19 (Fall 1991), 1-239., O’Donovan, Oliver. “Karl Barth and Ramsey’s ‘Uses of Power’.” *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 19 (Fall 1991), 1-30., Ramsey, Paul. “A Letter To James Gustafson,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 13 (Spr. 1985), 71-100., *Reviews In Religion and Theology* 7, No.2 (2000), 162-222., Willis, David; Welker, Michael; Goekel, Matthias (Eds.). *Towards The Future of Reformed Theology: tasks, topics, traditions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), Wolterstorff, Nicholas. Liturgy, Justice and Holiness, *Reformed Journal* 39 (D 1989), 12-20; Holmes, Steve. *God of Grace and God of Glory* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001) (hereafter “Holmes, 2001a”); Plantinga Pauw, Amy. *The Supreme Harmony of All: the Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002) (Hereafter “Pauw, 2002a”); Lee, Sang Hyun. *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); “Edwards on God and Nature” in *Edwards In Our Time* (Lee, Sang Hyun & Guelzo, Allen C. Eds.) (Grand Rapids, MI:

comparison lies in the fact that the outstanding feature of Barth's theology is its starting point, centre and frame of reference in Christology and the Triune nature of God. This had a profound impact on his anthropology, and specifically on his doctrine of the Christian life.

Although these theologians worked out their theologies in significantly different philosophical and cultural contexts, and will be seen in chapter one to have demonstrated contrasting methodological approaches, their common Reformed heritage and the way in which each, in their own way, sought to bring the doctrine of the Trinity to bear on that heritage, and that as a central, rather than a peripheral emphasis, make this a fruitful exercise. Regrettably, Edwards' reflections on the Trinity were never systematized due to his premature death, and this comparison is somewhat disadvantaged thereby.

A particularly interesting point of contrast is that whilst the tendency in Edwards' Trinitarian thought, as I shall attempt to show, is to place emphasis on the third person in the Trinity in the unions within Godself and between God and man, Barth's tendency is rather to interpret this within the context of the second person in the Trinity, and on Christological participation in humanity. With respect to union of the saints with God specifically, and the relative weighting of justification and sanctification, the pneumatological and experiential emphases of Edwards will be found to be in contrast with the more Christocentric, objective approach of Barth, in an interesting and perhaps counter-balancing manner.

It is surprising, given the stature of Edwards and the commonalities of his Reformed heritage, that Karl Barth never appears to engage Edwards in any of his written works. Equally surprising is the relative infrequency of comparison of the theologies of Edwards and Barth in the literature. It is perhaps explicable partly in terms of language differences. Bernard Ramm has noted that "Barth's

Eerdmans, 1999). Daniel, Stephen H. *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards: A Study in Divine Semiotics* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994); "Postmodern Concepts of God and Edwards's Trinitarian Ontology," in *Edwards In Our Time* (Lee, Sang Hyun & Guelzo, Allen C. Eds.) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

reference to non-German language books is very scarce”,⁶ including English literature on both sides of the ocean. The paucity of theological comparisons also reflects cultural and theological parochialism in both the North American and European continents. Just as, apart from the Scottish nation, Edwards has had little impact on Europeans, so in turn, Americans have not readily accepted Barth.

This ambivalence of evangelical American theologians toward Barth is illustrated by the nature of the questions and the tone of the questioning of evangelical scholars, Drs. Clark, Klooster and van Til, who in 1968 desired a response from Barth in *Christianity Today*, as reflected in Barth’s correspondence with G.W. Bromiley.⁷ Barth’s refusal to comply reflected both his belief that they had not read his work, and that their attitude was less than charitable. This suspicion of Barth had perhaps been invoked by the earlier outright rejection and animosity reflected in the appraisal of Barth by Cornelius van Til. Sadly, in two separate works,⁸ one of which possesses the inflammatory title “*Christianity and Barthianism*”, van Til accused Barth of being “a heretic, possibly the worst heretic of all time”.

A survey of responses to Barth within “American Evangelicalism” and an analysis of Barth’s relation to it, has been offered by Gregory Bolich.⁹ An overview of a variety of responses to Barth in the English-speaking world in general has also been provided by Richard H. Roberts.¹⁰ Bernard Ramm in

⁶ Ramm, Bernard. *After Fundamentalism: the Future of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 203.

⁷ Bromiley, G.W. (ed. and trans.), Fangmeier, J. and Stoevesandt, H. (eds.), *Letters 1961-1968/Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1981), 7,8, 342.

⁸ Van Til, Cornelius, *Christianity and Barthianism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1962); *The New Modernism* (Philadelphia: 1946).

⁹ Bolich, Gregory. *Karl Barth and Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980). See also Muller, Richard A. The Place and Importance of Karl Barth in the Twentieth Century: A Review Essay, *Westminster Theological Journal* 50 (1988), 127-156, and references therein, and Thorne, Philip, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth: His Reception and Influence in North American Evangelical Theology* (Pickwick: 1995).

¹⁰ Roberts, Richard H. The reception of the theology of Karl Barth in the Anglo-Saxon world: history, typology and prospect, *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays* (ed.) S.W. Sykes, (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1989), ch.6.

“*After Fundamentalism*” has provided penetrating insights on Barth’s potential contribution to evangelical theology.

Herbert Hartwell, one of Barth’s popular English commentators, acknowledged that “in the Anglo-Saxon countries, at least in the past, no continental theologian has been more widely misunderstood and misinterpreted than Karl Barth.”¹¹

Despite this reaction, Hartwell viewed Barth’s anthropology to be “the most powerful and most timely prophetic message of his theology”.¹² Some time later, Thomas Oden also reviewed Barth more favourably, stating that “Barth holds special promise for us today precisely at the point at which he is most frequently dismissed, i.e. his ethics, his understanding of the Christian life, Christian freedom and ethical responsibility.”¹³ More recently, Stuart McLean has expounded Barth’s theological anthropology, and argues the case that “Barth’s discussion of humanity is among the most profound in Western literature.” He bemoans the frequent “distortions” and “caricatures” of Barth that arise from incomplete study of and second-hand knowledge of his corpus, and states his aim to rectify these “distorted images of Barth’s theology.”¹⁴ It is with Barth’s theology of the Trinity, his Christological focus, his theology of justification and sanctification, and his ontology of relations in mind, that the theology of Edwards in these areas will be evaluated.

The Edwardsean Trinitarianism context

Within recent Edwardsean scholarship,¹⁵ there has been some variance in the manner in which Jonathan Edwards has been assessed with respect to Trinitarian

¹¹ Hartwell, Herbert. *The Theology of Karl Barth: An Introduction* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1964), (hereafter “Hartwell, 1964a”), vii.

¹² Hartwell, 1964a, 182-183.

¹³ Oden, Thomas. *The Promise of Barth* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1969), 36.

¹⁴ McLean, Stuart. *Humanity in the Thought of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd; 1981), vii.

¹⁵ The renaissance in Edwardsean scholarship in the past 50 years since the publication of Perry Miller’s reinterpretation (*Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Sloane, 1949; reprint Amherst, U. Mass. Press, 1981)) of Edwards as an artist who was “infinitely more than a theologian,” has been well documented by Michael J. McClymond in *Encounters With God: an approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, (New York: Oxford : OUP, 1998) (hereafter “McClymond, 1998a”), Introduction, and throughout. McClymond in his advocacy of Edwards as, above all, a theocentric theologian, brings a necessary correction of tendencies since Miller’s work, to detheologize Edwards’ ideas. McClymond contends that Edwards’ artistry was “ever at the service of his theology rather than vica versa” (4).

influence in his theology. The claim has been made by Robert Jenson, for example, that Edwards' approach to theology in general, and sanctification in particular, is profoundly Trinitarian. He sums up his study of Edwards in *America's Theologian*, in this manner: "As we have had occasion to note in almost every chapter, the very template of his vision is that God as Triunity is 'the supreme Harmony of all.' ... Indeed, he did not merely maintain trinitarianism; he renewed it."¹⁶ Jenson does qualify this initial, apparently resounding endorsement, by bemoaning the fact that Edwards did not fully work out his trinitarianism in terms of ontological relations:

We cannot pretend that Edwards worked out a complete doctrine of triunity, covering the agenda of the classical systems. Most notably missing is any use of the concept which had become central to all successfully developed trinitarianism and which one would have expected to be immediately congenial to Edwards: of ontologically foundational relations. What Trinitarian questions and solutions would have appeared in his full systematic theology, in its "entire new method", we do not know.¹⁷

Stephen Post also opts for the view that there is a strongly Trinitarian influence on Edwards' understanding of Christian life. Post does so in a work on love and community contrasting Edwards with Samuel Hopkins. Following Edwards' argument that there is no place for self-love if defined as the pursuit of one's own separate good outside of relationship, but that there is a place for self-love in its participation in and subordination to the good of communion and community, Post points to Edwards' justification of this by analogy with the Trinity:

Within God, contends Edwards, Father and Son share in a reciprocal relationship which results in an overflowing divine happiness imparted to the Christian through the Holy Spirit.¹⁸

¹⁶ Jenson, 1988a, 91.

¹⁷ Jenson, 1988a, 97.

¹⁸ Post, Stephen G. *Christian Love and Self-Denial* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), ch.V, The Meaning Of Christian Love, p.88.

Much attention has also been given to the concepts of glory and beauty and sensibility which have been put forward as primary motifs¹⁹ in the theology of Jonathan Edwards, with particular attention to the Trinitarian undertones of these concepts. McClymond, who has written convincingly of the artful theocentrism of Edwards, has noted the importance of the distinctive notion of “consent” within his doctrine of being. This, he points out “finds its paradigmatic instance within the very being of God, that is, in the society of persons of the Holy Trinity.” In a manner which supports a key element of this thesis, McClymond indicates Edwards’ debt to Augustine “by taking the Holy Spirit to be the subsistent bond of love connecting Father and Son.”²⁰

James Torrance²¹ and Michael Jinkins²², have assessed Edwards differently. They place him within the Scholastic tradition of federal Calvinism, influenced

¹⁹ Delattre, Roland A. *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: an essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1968), especially 148-162. See also Jenson, 1988a, Holmes, 2001a, Plantinga Pauw, 2002a.

²⁰ McClymond, 1998a, 32. McClymond goes on to point out that the “two great exercises of consent by God” are first, *ad intra*, that of the Trinity, as “God’s consent to Godself” which formed the basis for the second or *ad extra* exercise of consent, the act of creation. Thus in Edwards, “every creaturely consent is a miniature echo of the Trinity, the perfect archetype of harmonious diversity, and also an echo of creation, the perfect model of disinterested regard for highest worth” (32). McClymond also offers occasional comparisons of Edwards with Barth. He favourably compares their theocentrism, for example (29, fn. 23).

²¹ Torrance believes that in Barth lies the true interpretation and succession to Calvin (and that Barth is indeed even more rigorous than Calvin in presenting a Trinitarian Christological critique of every doctrine), as opposed to Scholastic Federal Calvinism originating primarily in Ursinus and Beza, and becoming explicit in Puritan England, covenanting Scotland, and New England. He persistently critiques the Law-Gospel model of high Federal Calvinism, its nature-grace interpretation, along with the *ordo salutis* (Man-Law-Sin-Repentance-Grace), as being inconsistent with the New Testament God who is love in His innermost being, and therefore in His work and ways as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. See Torrance, James B. “Interpreting the Word by the Light of Christ or the Light of Nature? Calvin, Calvinism, and Barth,” *CALVINIANA* (ed.) R.V Schnucker, Vol.X, 255-267; *Worship, Community And The Triune God Of Grace* (The Didsbury Lectures) (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1996), “Covenant or Contract? A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23 (1970), 51-76; “Covenant or Contract? The Contribution of McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26 (1973), 295- 311; “The Incarnation and Limited Atonement,” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 2 (1984), 32-40., “The Doctrine of The Trinity In Our Contemporary Situation,” *The Forgotten Trinity*, (ed.) Alasdair Heron (London: BCC/CCBI, 1991), 3. A Selection of Papers, 3-17.

²² Jinkins, Michael. *A comparative study in the theology of atonement in Jonathan Edwards and John McLeod Campbell: atonement and the character of God*. (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993) (hereafter “Jinkins, 1993a”). See also Jinkins, Michael. “‘The Being of Beings’: Jonathan Edwards’ Understanding of God As Reflected in his Final Treatises,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 46 (1993), 161-190 (hereafter “Jinkins, 1993b”). It should be noted that Jinkins does concede that in his final treatises, Edwards did develop a more Trinitarian approach:

by Beza, Perkins, John Owen and the New England Puritans. This viewpoint is fuelled by the way in which Edwards has been interpreted in Scotland, where his impact on Scottish Calvinism has been well documented.²³ As such, their contention is that Edwards' starting point in theology is not the triunity of Divine Persons, but the justice of God. As Torrance states:

... Edwards, like John Owen before him in England, started with a prior scholastic definition of God and the divine attributes, derived in measure from natural theology, and then fitted his doctrine of atonement into it. Justice is the essential divine attribute (interpreted in terms of jurisprudence) by which God is related to all, but the love of God, shown only to the elect, is arbitrary.²⁴

Justification thus becomes primarily judicial rather than filial, and the conversion experience and sanctification become the major evidences of election. Assurance and sanctification thus become primarily subjective and individualistic. *The Religious Affections* are interpreted in this light by Jinkins.²⁵

Torrance and Jinkins go so far as to argue that repentance, which is an aspect of, if not synonymous with, sanctification in Edwards, is legal rather than evangelical, in that for Edwards, repentance is logically prior to forgiveness, rather than the converse. These authors see Edwards in this area of theology as having departed from Calvin's theological method, with the triune God of grace as starting point. These and other authors have pointed to the resultant inward focus on, even obsession with, sanctification in the Reformed tradition, which arguably reached its zenith in the work of Edwards.

"In his final treatises, Edwards moves well beyond the view he shared with Federal Calvinism in his discourses and sermons, of a contractually bound Godhead." Jinkins, 1993b, 182.

²³ Mitchell, Christopher W. *Jonathan Edwards' Scottish Connection and the Eighteenth Century Revival, 1735-1754* (Ph.D. thesis, St. Andrews University, 1998).

²⁴ Torrance, James B. in a Commendatory Preface to the Ph.D. thesis of Michael Jinkins, *A Comparative Study in the Theology of Atonement in Jonathan Edwards and John McLeod Campbell* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1990, San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993), x.xi.

²⁵ Jinkins, 1993a, 170ff.

David Weddle appears to confirm this interpretation in his treatment of *The Life of David Brainerd*²⁶ which Edwards edited and presented as a desired model for spirituality. Weddle does suggest, however, that Edwards did advance beyond the depressive piety of melancholy and resolution into a spirituality shaped more by a vision of divine beauty, and the delights of consent to the harmony of the universal being.²⁷

The key questions emerging from this scholarship which seek some resolution in this thesis are as follows: did Edwards' view of sanctification and spirituality grow to become Trinitarian, and if so, what model of the Trinity shaped this theology? Is Edwards' theology Trinitarian in its determination as in Barth, or is the Trinity, and especially the Spirit, merely a dominant influence among other influences? A key issue is to assess whether Edwards ever moved beyond a Scholastic Calvinistic, Federal Covenant view of salvation and whether his view of sanctification, personhood and religious experience ever became ontologically

²⁶ Edwards, J. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol.7 (ed.) John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). The *Yale Works* (gen. ed.) John E. Smith, volumes 1-22, are hereafter referred to as *YE* with the appropriate volume number indicated.

²⁷ Weddle analyses differences between Edwards' self-understanding in his "Diary" and that expressed in the *Personal Narrative*, in Weddle, David L. *The Image of The Self In Jonathan Edwards: A Study of Autobiography and Theology*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43 (1975), 70-83. In a further article, Weddle admits the 'pernicious effects' of Brainerd's biography on the subsequent evangelical tradition, but argues that "they are out of harmony with Edwards' own analysis of religious experience." (Weddle, David L. *The Melancholy Saint: Jonathan Edwards's Interpretation of David Brainerd As A Model of Evangelical Spirituality*, *Harvard Theological Review* 81 (1988), 297-318 (hereafter, "Weddle, 1988a"). Edwards and his reviewer show compassionate insight into Brainerd's depression, and Weddle aptly describes Brainerd, in the way in which Kierkegaard spoke of Luther, as "an extremely important patient for Christianity" Dru, Alexander (ed.) *The Journals of Kierkegaard* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), 239, cited in Weddle, 1988a, 298). Edwards' affirmation of Brainerd as "a remarkable instance of true and eminent Christian piety in heart and practice (*YE* 7, 96)", intended as a testimony to Brainerd's experience of the grace of God through his depressive illness, appears, however, to be a commendation of Brainerd as a model of spirituality. This seems to reinforce the view that Edwards valued this introspective approach to spirituality. Weddle admits this, but reveals that some twenty years after a bout of depression he himself experienced, Edwards moved into a form of spirituality shaped by the beauty of a more Trinitarian vision. Weddle maintains that it was his ambivalence towards Brainerd's spirituality that accounts for Edwards' reticence to write the biography, for as Ola Winslow notes: "Such morbid reflections and melancholy self-torturings concerning an inward state of grace were strangely out of key with his own recent thought upon the nature of the Christian's experience. Yet they were also strangely similar to his own agonizing after assurance of salvation in his younger days." (Winslow, Ola Elizabeth. *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 238). Nevertheless, Weddle concedes that Edwards in the end edited Brainerd's diary "to present Brainerd as an example of the sort of mature spirituality he himself achieved, or at least described with persuasive eloquence in his extensive writings on religious experience" (Weddle, 1988a, 299).

shaped by the Trinity and Trinitarian relations as in the case of Barth. And, as such, is it primarily subjective and self-centred rather than objective and Christ-centred, individualistic rather than relational or communal, legalistic and fear-based rather than filial and grace-based?

The preponderance of scholarship since Jenson's work²⁸ advances the notion of a more Trinity-centred Edwards. Especially notable is the exposition of Edwards' theology by Steve Holmes²⁹ who summarizes his work *God of Grace and God of Glory*, in this manner: "I have argued that Edwards described God's act of self-glorification using Trinitarian grammar, and so suggested that this was an act of divine *ekstasis*, of the sending of the Son and Spirit by the Father." Holmes explains that this *ekstasis* "is directed towards a sharing or enlargement of the triune life, as the Church, finding its being in the Son and filled with the Spirit, shares God's own life and joy." He further comments that "the surprisingly strong doctrines of immanence and *theosis* present in Edwards' account are a direct result of the Trinitarian nature of that account."³⁰

Holmes has rightly noted that a prominent theme in Edwards' theology is the glory of God. However, he also has recognized that the theme of glory is fulfilled in a profoundly Trinitarian way, at least in the positive stream of Edwards' theology, that is, his theology of the salvation of the elect. We note that this is a theology of union with a triune God by the Spirit. This pneumatological union in God that becomes pneumatological union with God is particularly important to Edwards' crafting a doctrine of creation and salvation that does not threaten the aseity of God, because by union of believers by the Spirit in the Son, and therefore in God, God himself is glorified in their redemption. When it comes, however, to the theme of reprobation, Holmes notes that it is the glory of God, which includes the revelation of his just wrath as Edwards sees it, and not the

²⁸ Jenson, 1988a. Reference to Edwards is also made with some frequency by Jenson in his *Systematic Theology, Vol. 1* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

²⁹ Holmes, Steve. Review of McClymond, M.J., *Encounters With God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, in *International Journal of Systematic Theology* (2000); "Edwards on the Will," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 1, No.3 (1999), 266-286., *God of Grace and God of Glory* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), hereafter "Holmes, 2001a."

³⁰ Holmes, 2001a, 241-242.

Trinitarian themes of the gospel, which prevail in Edwards. Holmes makes a strong case for the notion that Edwards went much further than his Scholastic Reformed predecessors in a number of areas, including that of a Trinitarianism emphasis. He points to a number of comparisons with Barth,³¹ and even claims at one point that “Edwards is more thoroughly Trinitarian in his discussion of the divine perfections than is Barth.”³²

Significantly, Holmes observes some progression in Edwards’ theology by which the starting point in his early theology, God’s decree to glorify Himself, “in his mature thought” comes to be interpreted “in terms of Christological (and pneumatological) participation.”³³ My contention is that the pneumatological is more prominent. In *God of Grace and God of Glory*, Holmes reflects on

³¹ Holmes numbers Edwards with Barth on the side of the supralapsarians, for example. Holmes indicates that this is a surprise because Edwards’ favoured dogmatics text was that of Turretin (33), but in fact, it should be noted that Edwards explicitly states his preference for Mastricht in a letter to Joseph Bellamy (*YE* 8, 743). Edwards calls his readers to “See Turretinus ... and Mastricht” with reference to their thoughts on predestination. Edwards does refer to these continental Reformed theologians frequently and in this has a common interest with Barth. Interestingly though, in this instance, both opt for supralapsarianism against the opinions of Mastricht, who seeks to reconcile infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism (see footnote 6 in *Miscellanies* 292, *YE* 13, 384), and Turretini who finds the supralapsarian view “God’s plan for humanity’s salvation or damnation would have to be formed before he decreed its being and fall, which would be absurd.” (*Institutio*, IV.ix.12.) It is my conclusion, however, that Edwards’ position as supralapsarian has no more than a nominal similarity with that of Barth. The form of supralapsarianism that Barth opts for is a fundamentally revised one. As Bromiley notes, it “can fulfil this promise, however, only if it is reinterpreted christologically along the lines that Barth has attempted. Barth might be described, then, as a reconstructed supralapsarian.” (Bromiley, G.W. *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979) (hereafter “Bromiley, 1979a”), 88. Bromiley is referring here to *Church Dogmatics* (Bromiley, G.W. and Torrance T.F., eds.) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2nd edn. 1975). (hereafter “CD” unless otherwise stated) II/1, 127-145). Holmes (133) draws a significant comparison between Barth and Edwards (election is of Christ first, then of His spouse or body, and only third, of members of that body) on the doctrine of election, citing Jenson (*America’s Theologian*, 106), who claims that “Edwards’ doctrine of election anticipates at most points the justly praised ‘christological’ doctrine of election developed by Barth.” I believe this to be optimistic. Barth’s concept of the union of Christ with humanity determines his theology of election in a way that does not find a parallel in Edwards, for whom the individual nature of predestination remains a strong emphasis. Barth does not subscribe to the concept of a mysterious or secret predestinating decree. Barth learnt this from the *Scots Confession* of 1560 and also from Pierre Maury at the International Congress of Calvinist Theology of Geneva in 1936 (CD II/1, 154f.). Holmes does note the interesting parallel discussions in Barth and Edwards of the freedom of God (He does not have the freedom not to be God, not to be the Father of the Son, for example) (CD I/1, 434, cf. *The Freedom of the Will* (ch.4, Holmes).

³² Holmes, 2001a, 66.

³³ Holmes, 2001a, 134.

Edwards' *Miscellanies*³⁴ and the first of the posthumously published *Two Dissertations*, the *Dissertation Concerning The End For Which God Created The World*.³⁵ He interprets Edwards as resolving the tensions in his discussions of the purpose of creation by a 'conscious invocation of Trinitarian doctrine.'³⁶ This alleviates any threat to God's aseity in that the communication and self-glorification and happiness within the Triune Godhead renders it appropriate for God to create, rather than necessary for His perfection. All God's communication of glory is to be construed, therefore, as an overflow in the dynamics of His own intra-Trinitarian life. He issues a caution concerning the *Miscellanies* in particular, to the effect that they are provisional in nature, and cannot be considered to be Edwards' last word on any subject.³⁷ That Edwards did not work out his Trinitarianism in the *End of Creation*, Holmes puts down to his intention to do so in the full theology he hoped to write. The role of pneumatological union in God's self-glorification will receive our considerable attention as we seek to note the drive in Edwards' theology to 'honour the Spirit'.

Holmes never refers to Edwards' Trinitarianism in terms of a fully-developed Trinitarian ontology of relations. In consideration of Holmes' work, comment will be offered with respect to the appropriateness of his invocation of perichoresis to defend Edwards' 'radical' appropriating of different perfections of the divine *phusis* to particular *hypostases*.³⁸ Holmes' assertion that Edwards superseded Barth with respect to a Trinitarian treatment of the divine perfections merits close examination, as do numerous evocative references to the impact of Trinitarian theology on some aspects of Edwards' doctrine of sanctification.

³⁴ The "*Miscellanies*" is a series of notebooks of Edwards' lifelong theological reflections. They are available in the *Yale Works*, vol.13, *The "Miscellanies"*, a-500, (ed.) Thomas A. Schafer (1994) ; vol.18, *The "Miscellanies"*, 501-832, (ed.) Ava Chamberlain (1994); vol.20, *The "Miscellanies,"* 833-1152, (ed.) Amy Plantinga Pauw, (2002).

³⁵ This *Dissertation* first published posthumously in 1765 will be referred to hereafter as *End of Creation* or *End*. It is found in *YE* 8, 405-536. *Dissertation II, The Nature of True Virtue*, *YE* 8, 537-628 will be referred to as "*True Virtue*".

³⁶ Holmes, 2001a, 40.

³⁷ Holmes, 2001a, 36.

³⁸ Holmes, 2001a, 71.

Sang Hyun Lee³⁹ and Stephen Daniel,⁴⁰ with slightly different nuancing, have also been strong advocates of Edwards as a dispositional and Trinitarian theologian, going beyond Jenson and Holmes in their conviction about this.⁴¹ Most recently, Amy Plantinga Pauw has offered a well-written and comprehensive account of the Trinitarian theology of Edwards entitled *The Supreme Harmony of All*,⁴² which provides strong evidence for the influence of the Trinity on Edwards' theology, with some reference to Barth, coupled with a realism concerning the remnants of tensions therein. She has suggested that Edwards' model of the Trinity is principally that of Augustine, but that at certain points Edwards moves beyond the psychological Trinity to invoke a social Trinity. Thus Edwards is characterized by a "cobbled Trinitarianism". She also points to tensions that remain within even the mature theology of Edwards in which his Trinitarian tendencies compete with a more decretive and justice-based Theology Proper. Plantinga Pauw's work will serve to corroborate the conclusions reached in this thesis that Edwards' mature theology has become significantly centred on the Trinity. She has in doing so pointed out the importance of *union* in Edwards' theology:

³⁹ Lee, Sang Hyun. *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) (hereafter "Lee, 1988a"); "Edwards on God and Nature" in *Edwards In Our Time* (Lee, Sang Hyun & Guelzo, Allen C. Eds.) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) (hereafter "Lee and Guelzo, 1999a").

⁴⁰ Daniel, Stephen H. *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards: A Study in Divine Semiotics* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994) (hereafter "Daniel, 1994a"); "Postmodern Concepts of God and Edwards's Trinitarian Ontology," in Lee and Guelzo, 1999a).

⁴¹ In *Edwards In Our Time* these authors counter the view that the Edwardsean corpus presents an undeveloped theology of the Trinity. These authors go much further than Jenson or Holmes, closely aligning the work of Barth and Edwards on the Trinity. Of special note are the claims of Daniel, who, building on the "dispositional ontology" that Lee finds in Edwards, asserts that the God of Edwards does not exist apart from communication, and that God is the discursive space in which everything else has its identity. In supportive comment on Daniel's work, Harry Stout avers that "In holding this view, Edwards resembles not only Karl Barth but more recent 'postmodern' theologians who have rejected what Daniel calls the Aristotelian-Cartesian-Lockean 'substantialist ontology' (or language of subjects and predicates) still dominating much theology." (Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, intro, xi, xii). Daniel repeatedly joins the names of Barth and Edwards together as joint champions of the postmodern notion of God as the space of intelligibility, and of God and the Trinity as communication (Edwards) or revelation (Barth). Oliver Crisp ('How Occasional was Edwards' Occasionalism?' ch.5, 61ff.) and Steve Holmes ('Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology?' ch.7, 99ff) in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian* (Helm, Paul and Crisp, Oliver, eds.) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003) (this book is hereafter designated "Helm and Crisp, 2003a", and the chapter as "Holmes, 2003a") have recently provided penetrating critiques of the proposed 'dispositional ontology' of these authors. Lee and Daniel appear to be guilty of examining the texts of Edwards outside of his orthodox, Reformed context, and of thereby reading into his theology elements of process theology such as 'divine self-enlargement' which are incompatible with the classical theism Edwards espoused.

⁴² Plantinga Pauw, 2002a.

For Edwards, at the root of both the inner life of the Trinity and its great work of human redemption was the notion of union. Union was for him an important theological correlate of his relational ontology. Ultimate reality concerned the dynamics of union – within God, between God and creatures, and among creatures themselves. Union was both the end and the means of God’s work of redemption. ... Christ through the power of the Spirit brings the saints to progressively intimate union with God and other creatures.⁴³

What we will confirm is the centrality of these unions in Edwards’ theology, but in particular the fact that their commonality and what unifies the unions, therefore, is the commonality of the Spirit in each. This for Edwards helped to redress the neglect of the Spirit within the covenant of redemption in which he was not even a ‘covenanting partner.’ Plantinga Pauw comments on how Edwards raised the honour of the Spirit by moving beyond the bounds of traditional covenant theology in order to invoke the Spirit’s role in the psychological model of the Trinity as the Love of God. Just as the Spirit is the bond of the immanent Trinity, so he becomes the bond in the two natures of the incarnate Christ, and so he becomes, by infusion into them, the bond between those in Christ, and God. Thereby they share in the love between the Father and the Son. This serves for Edwards to bring about “an exact equality in each [Trinitarian] person’s concern in the work of redemption.” To the assertion that “more glory belongs to the Father and the Son because they manifested more wonderful love,” Edwards would counter that “the Holy Ghost *is* that wonderful love.”⁴⁴ The peculiar personal glory of the Spirit which is of equal glory to that of the Father and the Son, is to be “the end of the Father in electing” and “the end of the Son in all his suffering.” He goes so far as to say that the Spirit “was the great precious thing to which all [that] the other two do is subordinated.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 120.

⁴⁴ Miscellany 402, *YE* 13, 467.

⁴⁵ Cited in Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 122. *Fragment on the Trinity*, Boston Public Library. Used by permission of the Works of Jonathan Edwards, Yale University.

Plantinga Pauw's treatment of this theme paralleling my own was published in the midst of the development of this thesis. We will build on her material to establish the case for the notion that of all the Reformed theologians, Edwards, in his far-reaching theology of pneumatological union, may be argued to be *the* theologian of the Spirit. Her work will also provide a context for comparison and contrast with our thesis on three counts: (a) that the driving force in Edwards' Trinitarian theology is the elevation of the Spirit, (b) that Edwards' Trinity in its definition and especially in its outworking within sanctification is more predominantly Augustinian and psychological ('speckled,' at best, rather than 'cobbled' with Cappadocian influence, still less by the putative influence of the obscure model of Richard of St. Victor), and (c) that the social components within it can be accounted for within an Augustinian framework. Her brief references to Barth will also serve our further development of this comparison.

The essence of this study...

What has not been emphasized before is the extent to which pneumatology drives and even dominates Edwards' Trinitarian approach to the doctrine of God, and human transformation. The importance of the theme of union and harmony in his theology has been observed, but the pneumatological prominence within that theme is the dimension of his theology which we will endeavour to demonstrate.

The work of the Spirit whose power enables us to hear the Word of God and who unites us to Christ was, as Alasdair Heron has indicated, "a specifically Reformation concern."⁴⁶ The two primary themes in this were the Spirit's enlightenment to enable the reception of the Spirit-inspired Word in faith, and the application through faith of the benefits purchased by Christ resulting in new spiritual life and experienced sanctification. Calvin most prominently represented these concerns, thereby levelling a perceived imbalance in Luther's under-emphasis on sanctification with respect to justification. Since Calvin, there has been a great diversity of emphases within post-Reformation pneumatology,

⁴⁶ Heron, Alasdair. I.C. *The Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 106. This work hereafter referred to as "Heron 1983a."

ranging all the way from neglect, and even suspicion of the Spirit, to triumphalistic enthusiasm. Heron traces this development that includes the Puritan moderates like John Owen and John Goodwin, the quite different emphasis of the Quaker doctrine of the ‘inner light,’ and then, as Heron puts it, “the sense of the vital activity of the Spirit in conversion, conviction, witness, and ‘Christian perfection’ in the eighteenth century Methodist and Evangelical revivals,”⁴⁷ and on into charismatic movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries associated first with Edward Irving and the Catholic-Apostolic Church, and then Classical and Neo-Pentecostalism (and, we might add, in our day, the Vineyard movement and charismatic renewal in many traditional denominations).

Heron’s summary statements about Post-Reformation pneumatology provide an apt matrix within which the theology of the Spirit in Edwards and Barth may be located. Firstly, he states that “An uneasy oscillation between objectivism and subjectivism has marked a good deal of Protestant theology and piety ever since, as indeed it has also marked wider Western culture.”⁴⁸ Secondly, he makes reference to the work of John McLeod Campbell whom he sees as an example of someone who sought *to integrate Christology and pneumatology* in a manner that recovered this sense of integration present in the Greek fathers as well as their expectations with respect to the dynamic activity of the Spirit in Christ, sanctifying his *sinful* humanity and therefore in the people of God, sanctifying them. Much of my discussion will revolve around the objectivity/subjectivity index with regard to the soteriology of Edwards and Barth, and the degree to which they achieved appropriate integration of Christology and pneumatology.

I will seek to argue that Edwards worked to achieve this integration by ‘honouring the Spirit’ more than was the tendency within his Reformed theological heritage, and that in so doing he overemphasized pneumatology and sanctification, at the expense of objective Christology, and justification. I will contend that he thereby elevated the subjective over the objective in his

⁴⁷ Heron 1983a, 110. Presumably this includes the Edwardsean era and Edwards’ theology (without the “perfection”), though Heron does not ever mention him.

⁴⁸ Heron 1983a, 110.

soteriological and pastoral theology. Edwards' Trinitarian theology, despite his acknowledged theocentricity and, in fact, his "God-intoxicated"⁴⁹ approach, will thus be seen, ironically, to be imprisoned somewhat within an anthropocentric orientation. I will attempt to demonstrate that this is evident in his hermeneutical methodology in chapter I, and that it works its way out into the doctrines of the Trinity (chapter II) and the union of saints with God, and their consequent sanctification (chapter III, Conclusion). Barth has, by contrast, sometimes been adjudged to be christologically dominated in his theology, at the expense of pneumatology⁵⁰ and has been charged with espousing an inadequate anthropology (apart from that of the One Man).⁵¹ An opinion will be expressed about the validity of these assessments of Barth, but more importantly for our purposes, considerations of his christologically weighted Trinitarian theology of transformation will provide an excellent means by which to assess and temper the Edwardsean perspectives to help forge a balanced Trinitarian theology of transformation which might benefit the contemporary Christian.

The outline of this study...

The distinctiveness of the mature theology of Jonathan Edwards lies in the fact that it is a Trinitarian theology of union focused around three spiritual unions - union within the immanent Godhead, union of the two natures of Christ, union of the believer with God - each achieved by the Spirit. It lies in his elevating to an

⁴⁹ McClymond, 1998a, 29.

⁵⁰ The inadequacy of Barth's doctrine of the personhood of the Holy Spirit, according to Smail, is so glaring that it leaves open the opportunity for Berkhof to quote "so Trinitarian a theologian as Karl Barth to support his own binitarian position." See Smail, Thomas. *The Giving Gift: The Holy Spirit in Person* (London: 1988) (hereafter, "Smail, 1988a"), 43. The discussion will be engaged in a later chapter, noting the contribution of Heron in Heron, 1983a, and Mangina, for example. See Mangina, Joseph L. *Karl Barth on the Christian Life: The Practical Knowledge of God* (Issues in Systematic Theology; vol. 8) (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2001)) (hereafter "Mangina, 2001a").

⁵¹ Notably R.H. Roberts, who criticized Barth for "epistemological and ontological repression" leading to "the most profound and systematically consistent theological alienation of the natural order ever achieved." Roberts, R.H. "Barth's Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications," in *Karl Barth: Studies in his Theological Methods*, (ed.) Stephen Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 124-5. The way in which Webster and Mangina, for example, have countered this will be considered in a later chapter. See Webster, John. *Barth's Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth's Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) (hereafter "Webster, 1998a"); *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) (hereafter "Webster, 1995a"), chapter 6, 'The Christian Life,' and Mangina, 2001a.

extent even more so than Calvin, the prominence of the Spirit, and the concern for experiential sanctificational transformation in the Christian life, in a manner that ultimately affected human relationality.

It is specifically as a consequence of his hallmark as a theologian of the Spirit, that Edwards might be considered as a candidate for recognition as *the* theologian of transformation within the Reformed realm, albeit with some anthropocentric tendencies, as I will attempt to show. The phenomena which characterized the Great Awakening were of a wide variety that included physical shaking and falling, raised emotions, fervent evangelism and zeal in Christian duty. In the aftermath of this awakening and criticisms of its excesses, Edwards crafted his most mature reflections in *Religious Affections* of what were true signs of a work of the Spirit. His findings unveil a theology of character and behavioural transformation. In his conclusions with respect to new spiritual perception, the renewed affections, and that which was the ultimate evidential test of spiritual reality, loving Christian actions, Edwards gives evidence of his thorough Trinitarian orientation, with a particular concern for the work of the Spirit in particular.

The development of these facets of his theology might in all probability have been an accommodation to experiences and observations in the Great Awakening that he could not account for within the bounds of his Reformed, Scholastic Calvinist heritage. In observing the “surprising” work of the Spirit in the revivals, Edwards may well have felt compelled to elevate the place the Spirit had within Reformed theology. Edwards’ experience of the person and power of the Holy Spirit in the Great Awakening was in a manner unusual even to his Puritan-Reformed *milieu*. He was thus driven to search for a theology in which the Spirit was more greatly ‘honoured’ than in the theology he inherited. Edwards did so by revisiting and radicalizing the Augustinian psychological model of the Trinity employing philosophical Idealism, and especially by utilizing the notion of the Spirit as the *vinculum caritatis* within that model.

First, therefore, Edwards espoused a view of the immanent Trinity which was essentially held together by the Spirit of Love. Building on this, he proposed a radicalized pneumatology, a Trinitarian theology of the union of God with his redeemed people, a union achieved by the infusion and indwelling of believers by the Spirit. In so doing, his design was not merely to elevate the economic role of the Spirit, but to link humanity with the immanent Trinity. In this way he facilitated a genuine participation of human souls in the life of the Trinity by enabling them to participate in the mutual love of the Father for the Son. This translated into a theology of experienced and vibrant sanctification of the regenerate, even in this life. It was especially real within seasons of revival when the Spirit sovereignly worked, so that by His immediate indwelling as the Spirit of love, there would be manifest in the Christian spirit, lively affections, and in the Christian life, progressive holiness, particularly revealed in the harmony of human relationships and active love to the ‘other’.

Following an initial chapter on methodology, therefore, we will develop in chapter II, Edwards’ doctrine of the Spirit as the means of *union within the immanent Trinity*. Edwards adapts the Augustinian model within an Idealist framework, and employs this to define the Spirit as the Love of God shared between the Father and the Son. In this manner, the Spirit becomes the means by which there is a social dimension in the Trinity. I will challenge the notion that Edwards’ Trinity was a “cobbled” one intertwining the psychological model of Augustine with a “social model” derived from either Richard of St. Victor (as suggested by Amy Plantinga Pauw) or the Cappadocians. Instead I think that it is more accurate to suggest that Edwards adapted the psychological model to emphasize social components within it, which he does by means of the notion central to the psychological model, that the Spirit is love or relationality or sociality. The social dimension of his Trinity becomes so pronounced in his description of the covenant of redemption that he appears to violate the “simplicity” criterion of his Reformed tradition and even verge on tritheism. It is perhaps his groundedness within the ‘One Mind,’ psychological model which in his mind kept his Trinity from becoming one which effected “redemption by committee.”

The frame of reference for these discussions will be the Eastern and Western Trinitarian traditions. Affinities with Augustine or the Cappadocians will be assessed. However, within this patristic frame of reference, Edwards' Trinitarian theology of pneumatological union and transformation will be described principally with an eye towards the theology of Karl Barth. Barth's doctrine of the Trinity and of the Christological union of God with humanity will be the background against which Edwards' Trinitarian theology with its pneumatological emphasis will be assessed and located theologically. Specifically, in the second chapter the immanent Trinity of Edwards will be assessed in dialogue with Barth's Trinity and in particular Barth's concerns about tritheism as reflected in his aversion to the term 'person'. Edwards' pneumatological emphasis will also be compared with that of Barth in light of the latter's perceived weakness in this area.

The Spirit is, secondly, for Edwards, the means of effecting *union between God and the saints in their salvation*. This theme will therefore occupy chapter III. The importance of the theme of union for Edwards' doctrine of God as Creator and Redeemer will be noted. Of critical importance is how the Trinity and especially pneumatological participation shaped the doctrine of sanctification for which Edwards is so well known through the popularizing of the *Treatise on the Religious Affections*⁵² and *The Life of David Brainerd*.⁵³ Salvation happens by means of the infusion of the Spirit at conversion into the believer such that, according to the psychological analogy, believers are thereby placed in direct union with the immanent Godhead. This doctrine of union with God achieved for Edwards what he desired in a theology of conversion which could account for the unusual work of the Spirit he had observed in the Great Awakening, and which could provide him with a basis for assessing the true and the false professions within his pastoral experience during which he progressively developed an

⁵² Edwards, Jonathan. *The Religious Affections*. (London: Andrew Melrose Publishers, 1902) (Reprint, 1st pub. 1898); also YE 2.

⁵³ Edwards, Jonathan. *The Life of David Brainerd*, YE 7. This work is adjudged to be Edwards' most popular by Weddle, David L. in "The Melancholy Saint: Jonathan Edwards' Interpretation of David Brainerd as a Model of Evangelical Spirituality," *Harvard Theological Review* 81:3 (1988), 297-318.

aversion to nominalism. The impact of the prominence of pneumatological union of the saints over the Christological union of Christ with humanity on Edwards' theology of justification and sanctification will also be noted. His 'union with God by the Spirit' model achieved his pastoral purpose of wishing to lay greater stress on sanctification than justification,⁵⁴ as the means of the believer's assurance. Here Edwards will be seen to be in conflict with Barth, who, like Luther, placed greater emphasis on the work of the One for the many, that is, on justification in Christ, and for whom justification is not a state at all, but a history, that of the man Jesus in whom God has justified his creation by putting it to death and raising it up in a new form. For Barth, justification is therefore an alien history to our own but which we discover to be our own, and "which projects us into the crisis of eschatological transition, living out the Kingdom of God in the midst of the world, living by faith in that reality *which lies beyond our experience*, but which stands over against us as our reality nevertheless."⁵⁵ The Edwardsean doctrine of pneumatological participation also left Edwards open to the accusation of monism, a charge which a robust Christology might have overcome. Whether this was in fact the case will be probed in this and the fourth chapter.

Thirdly, in chapter IV, we will explore the role of the Spirit as the means by which the hypostatic *union of the human and divine natures* of Christ is effected in Edwards' theology. Edwards reflects a tempered doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ, but this differs from that of Barth in that the humanity of Christ is purified by the Spirit from conception in an immediate rather than mediated way. Consideration will be given to where these two Reformed theologians stood with regard to the controversial issue of the state of the human nature which the Son of God assumed at the incarnation. Reference to the work of John Owen will serve to define the nuances of this discussion.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ McClymond (1998a, 41) indicates support for the notion that Edwards' "focus was sanctification rather than justification."

⁵⁵ Hart, Trevor. *Regarding Karl Barth: Essays Toward a Reading of his Theology*. (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), 62. This work hereafter designated "Hart, 1999a."

⁵⁶ Kelly M. Kopic has in a recent article entitled "The Son's assumption of a Human Nature," (*International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3 (2001), 154-166, hereafter "Kopic, 2001a") attempted to summarize and at least clarify the issues and fine nuances of the 'heated theological

In the Conclusion, the consequences of the nature and relative weightings of the unions in Edwards' theology of salvation and transformation will be explored. The conclusion will therefore sum up the assessment and location of Edwards' pneumatologically weighted, but somewhat anthropocentrically prone, Trinitarian theology of transformation, with reference to the Reformers, but especially the work of Karl Barth.

The benefits to the contemporary Christian ethos of the pneumatology of Edwards within his Trinitarian approach will be assessed, by way of conclusion, along with recommendations for how a Barthian perspective can temper the anthropocentric and introspective liabilities in that ethos, which Edwards' has to some extent influenced.

debate' concerning whether the Son of God assumed a *fallen* or an *unfallen* human nature. This article will provide an excellent context in the task of determining where Edwards and Barth may be located in this debate, especially with regard to the role of the Spirit in preserving the sinlessness of the Son. The inadequacy of the 'fallen'-'unfallen' category will be noted and the finer nuancing related to the mediacy-immediacy of the work of the Spirit will be suggested as a more helpful category to distinguish the views of Owen and Barth on the one hand, and Edwards, on the other.

I. Foundations for Elevating the Spirit through Trinitarian Union – Edwards’ Motivation and Theological Method

A. The motivation

It is difficult to ascertain what came first: did the experience Jonathan Edwards gained of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Great Awakening cause him to search for a theology that honoured the Spirit more, or did his already high theology of the Spirit give him a paradigm for interpreting the renewal which the experiences only confirmed and refined? That his pneumatology and soteriology were shaped in some sense by the Awakening is beyond question. The thing he found to be most remarkable about those awakenings, which is not surprising given his penchant for perception of the beauty of spiritual consents, was the creation of new unities in the churches. The nature of the ‘surprising’ work of the Spirit was that the manifestation of his presence had power “to destroy old grudges, and make up long continued breaches...”⁵⁷ Edwards recalls his new awareness of the ministry of the Spirit in the revival in the *Personal Narrative*:

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of Sanctifier; in his holy operations, communicating divine light and life to the soul. God, in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full, and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; ...⁵⁸

This new awareness of the Spirit and the impression Edwards gained of the Spirit’s essential work as that of bringing about union seemed to have motivated his development of a theology which he believed would honour the Spirit. An important idea that Edwards expressed was that the role of the Spirit is not one of equality with the Father and the Son if He is merely the ‘applier’ of salvation to

⁵⁷ *YE* 4, 327.

⁵⁸ *Personal Narrative*, from *The Works of President Edwards*, (ed.) Samuel Austin (Worcester: 1808), Vol. I, 28.

the elect.⁵⁹ More will be said of this later, but for now suffice it to say that Edwards was convinced that if the Spirit is to receive equal honour in the outworking of the economy of salvation, He must be the 'Gift' *itself* that grace brings to the convert. His identity within the immanent Trinity as the Love that is shared between the Father and the Son (who is the perfect Idea the Father has of Himself), becomes the corresponding means for elevating his role within the economy of salvation. By his infusion of believers, the Spirit of God as 'Gift' brings about their regeneration, and they are thus brought into direct union with the Trinity *ad intra*.

This new pneumatology was an advance on other Reformed thought on the Trinity to date, though arguably still within the tradition. The Spirit as an immediate and distinct 'Gift' to the converting soul would naturally be expected to have profound consequences in the transformation of the saint, given it was transformation by pneumatological participation and therefore, transformation in union with God. This became one of the most defining and distinctive themes of Edwards' Trinitarian theology.

In chapter II we will begin to trace the development of this pneumatology of union by observing its roots in the manner in which Edwards constructed his immanent Trinity and as that is developed in the economy and covenant of redemption, with an eye towards its impact on the nature of the divine-human union of the saints, and then the hypostatic union of Christ. At the most fundamental, ontological level, Edwards uses Idealistic categories to refine an originally Augustinian understanding in order to craft a model of the Trinity which is held together in unity by the community of the Spirit who is defined, most fundamentally as Love shared between the Father and the Son. Edwards does not only honour the Spirit in the maintaining of the unity of the Godhead, however. Edwards will also permit sufficient differentiation in his Trinity to facilitate the possibility of 'covenant' conversations within the Godhead by which the Spirit will be honoured both in the 'individuating' of his person, and in

⁵⁹ *Essay*, 125. In fact, honouring the Spirit seems to drive Edwards' writing in the *Essay* from pp. 108-131, which is two-thirds of the work.

the role he will be given within the covenant of redemption, a central concept in Edwards' Trinitarian theology. It is this covenant in which Edwards explicitly stated his desire to maintain "the honour of the Holy Ghost" by ensuring that he is given "equal part of the glory"⁶⁰ in the work of redemption.

Prior to embarking on this discussion however, we will engage the pivotal issue of the theological method which Edwards employed.

B. The theological method

The writings of Jonathan Edwards on the subject of the Trinity are interesting for a number of reasons. Not the least of these is that following his death, Edwards was accused of heresy regarding this doctrine. The way in which he was cleared of this charge and deemed to be orthodox in terms of traditional Trinitarian doctrine is illuminating.⁶¹ Secondly, it could be said that Edwards' 'relevance' as a preacher was demonstrated by his sermons on the Trinity. He brought to his pulpit in Northampton not only an awareness of local and provincial issues, but also of theological controversies raging in Europe, including anti-Trinitarianism, which, in the forms of Arianism and Socinianism, was increasingly prevalent especially in England.⁶² Thirdly, the epistemological approach that Edwards

⁶⁰ Edwards, J. *Treatise on Grace, and other posthumously published writings* (ed. and intro.) Paul Helm (Cambridge and London: James Clarke and Co., 1971), 69. This work hereafter referred to as "*Treatise on Grace*". '*An Essay on the Trinity*' contained in this compilation by Helm (pp. 99-131) is referred to as "*Essay*." The recently published 21st volume of the *Yale Works* (ed. Sang Hyun Lee), 109-144) contains a revised version of this work under the title Edwards' intended for it: '*Discourse on the Trinity*' (it is referred to as such by Edwards in *Miscellany 621*). My references to this work as *Essay* will be from Helm's 1971 edition, unless otherwise indicated.

⁶¹ This controversy has been recorded in the following works: (i) Park, Edwards Amasa, *Remarks of Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity*. (Andover, Mass.: Andover Press, 1881); (ii) Smith, E.C., "The Trinity", Appendix I in *Exercises Commemorating the Two-hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Jonathan Edwards* (Andover, Mass.: Andover Press, 1904). (iii) Fisher, George P., *An Unpublished Essay of Edwards on the Trinity, with Remarks on Edwards and His Theology*, 1903.

⁶² Kenneth Minkema, in *YE 14, Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 43 makes reference to John Redwood as having documented this in *Reason, Ridicule, and Religion: The Age of Reason in England, 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 156-173. William Whiston is responsible for a resurgence of Arianism through his 'primitivist' campaign, whereas Socinianism arose in Rakow, Poland and reached England via Holland. The lengthy Trinitarian Controversy of the seventeenth century arose in England as a result of these influences, finding ultimate expression in Anglican Samuel Clarke's *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* in 1712, in

adopted is interesting, on the one hand because of its strong affirmation of the ultimate authority of revealed language about God in Scripture, and on the other hand because of his originality in the exercise of reason under this revelational authority. The consequences of this originality and genius in Edwards provide the chief reason for interest in his works on the Trinity. He believed himself to have made a new contribution to the Christian understanding of this doctrine. This is revealed in the conclusion of *An Essay on the Trinity*:

I am far from pretending to explaining the Trinity so as to render it no longer a mystery. I think it to be the highest and deepest of all Divine mysteries still, notwithstanding anything that I have said or conceived about it. I don't intend to explain the Trinity. *But Scripture with reason may lead to something further of it than has been wont to be said, tho' there are still left many things pertaining to it incomprehensible.*⁶³
(emphasis mine)

The contribution of 'something further' does not imply that Edwards believed himself to have crafted a doctrine of the Trinity out of harmony with the predominantly Augustinian tradition on which he drew. Rather it was his development of the doctrine of the Trinity employing philosophical principles of his own time, specifically along Idealist and Lockean lines, that he possibly considered to be an advance on, or a contextualisation of, the Augustinian tradition. Edwards' debt to Locke has been noted by Lee,⁶⁴ but Helm in particular has shown recently that Edwards' Lockeanism in the *Essay* is "much more pervasive than has so far been appreciated."⁶⁵ In consideration of other contributions Edwards made, such as his contention that the ontological Trinity is

which he renounced the Athanasian Creed as unscriptural and non-essential to the faith. Although it had waned in England by the time Edwards assumed the pulpit in Northampton, the residual effects did reach the colonies in his time. This explains why in the late 1720's, Edwards was grappling with the doctrine of the Trinity in an ongoing way, even though he did not write his most explicit apologies against anti-trinitarianism until later in life. As Minkema notes (p.44), "The 'Discourse on the Trinity' started in 1730, was actually a reworking of passages culled from notebook entries and sermons written up to that time, among them *The Threefold Work*."

⁶³ *Essay*, 121-2.

⁶⁴ Lee, Sang Hyun. *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Expanded Edition) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 185.

⁶⁵ Helm, Paul. *The Human Self and the Divine Trinity*, unpublished essay, 2003 (hereafter, "Helm, 2003a").

a logical necessity, and that the economic Trinity and its revelation were vital to the doctrine of redemption, we shall attempt to show that his claims were neither conceited nor spurious.

The Psychological Analogy

Most importantly for our purpose in this chapter, however, will be to note that the central tenet in Jonathan Edwards' distinctive view of the Trinity is his belief that the human soul is an image of the Trinity, and that it is, in fact, the clearest image of the Trinity in all creation. This Edwardsean psychological view of the Trinity presented here invites consideration of the methodology behind it, and is of interest for its obvious similarities with Augustine's Trinity. The use of analogy in the Augustinian tradition is very much in evidence in Edwards' introduction to his *Essay on the Trinity*. "Though the divine nature be vastly different from that of created spirits, yet our souls are made in the image of God, we have understanding and will, idea and love as God hath, and the difference is only in the perfection of degree and manner."⁶⁶ It is by using Augustine's Trinity and developing it with the presuppositions of Idealism as well as Lockean philosophy that Edwards crafted a theology of the Spirit in which he received equal honour with the Father and the Son. This also prepared the way for his theology of the union of God with humans in a way that facilitated God's self-glorification in that they are redeemed and glorified as one with and in the Son. Edwards' conviction was that a basic continuity exists between the consciousness or psychology of God and that of human beings. As Helm has pointed out, "For Edwards the Godhead is not *like* a Lockean mind, it is a *case* of a Lockean mind, tweaked by the application of the principle of perfection, and modified by the recognition of the pure spirituality of God."⁶⁷

The critical elements of his view of the Trinity are discerned through consideration of his works on this theme, which were all published posthumously. In that his reflections on the Trinity were therefore preliminary

⁶⁶ *Essay*, 99.

⁶⁷ Helm, 2003a, 2. This, it should be noted, would be to subsume the Godhead and human minds under the common genus 'mind'.

strands of a work in progress, they are consequently somewhat disjointed. Given the not yet fully developed state of his arguments, therefore, my attempt to elucidate his methodology in arriving at his particular view of the Trinity on the basis of the presuppositions which constitute his hermeneutic, must therefore be understood to be somewhat provisional. The work, *An Essay on the Trinity*, will receive primary attention, with supporting reference from other works (another essay⁶⁸ and multiple *Miscellanies*⁶⁹). We begin by considering Edwards' epistemological approach.

The High Place of Reason

Edwards predates the crisis in theological language⁷⁰ and his work in this area, as in all others, reflects that he had little doubt about the meaningfulness of statements about God as divinely revealed in the words of scripture. He also believed in the ability of regenerate man to understand those words, having been created in the divine image,⁷¹ and in his ability to arrive at meaningful theological conclusions by applying himself to reason, within the limits of the authority of divine revelation. Therefore, when the regeneration of the Spirit of God creates "a new sense of the heart", this causes one willingly to submit to the Bible as God's revelation and to subordinate one's intellect to it.⁷² The Biblically revealed notion that created man reflects the divine image was for Edwards, sufficient grounds for seeking to understand the ontological Trinity on the basis of analogies in the nature of man.

That Edwards should profess the submission of reason to divinely revealed truth was significant in view of the fact that he lived in an era when Enlightenment

⁶⁸ Edwards, Jonathan. "Observations Concerning the Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption," in *Treatise on Grace*, 77-98. Hereafter this work referred to as *Observations*.

⁶⁹ The "Miscellany", a-500, *YE 13*, (ed.) Thomas Schafer (1994) includes a list of all entries on the Trinity, p.149). *Miscellany 94* in particular is an excellent statement of his view of the Trinity, which in many ways states, sometimes in clearer ways, the main arguments of the *Essay*.

⁷⁰ For a survey of this crisis in theological language see Toon, Peter and Spiceland, James D. (Eds.), *One God in Trinity* (Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone Books, 1980).

⁷¹ The nature-grace distinction in Edwards is clearly more pronounced in Edwards than in Barth. More will be said of this below.

⁷² *Treatise on Grace*, 22; Helm comments that Edwards differed from his mentor Locke here in that for Edwards, it was possible to test the reasonableness of various interpretations of scripture, but not to test scripture itself.

rationalism had seriously infiltrated orthodoxy.⁷³ In this aspect of his thinking, he has been dubbed as one who “‘took orders’ from the Bible as truly and indeed more so than any Scholastic theologian of the Middle Ages.”⁷⁴ This basis for his reasoning was evident with regard to his consideration of the Trinity, just as in other areas of theology. In the *Essay* there is frequent reference to Scripture and he closes his meditations with the following comments:

It seems to me that what I have here supposed concerning the Trinity is exceeding analogous to the gospel scheme and agreeable to the tenour [sic] of the whole New Testament and abundantly illustrative of gospel doctrines, as might be particularly shewn, would it not exceedingly lengthen out this discourse.⁷⁵

However, the fearless application of reason to revelation is what is most characteristic of Edwards. He believed that there is “perfect harmony” between reason and revelation, that reason, for the regenerate person with a new sense of perception, verifies revelation as genuine.⁷⁶ Although with other Puritan or Reformed theologians he acknowledged mysteries (partially understood doctrines), he was less content than his theologically orthodox peers to await heaven for their unveiling. His son Jonathan boasted that he was more rational than most of his fellow Calvinists.⁷⁷ In this aspect of his thought he resembled the philosophers of the Enlightenment in their belief in man's ability to reason properly, and observation has been made that his philosophical Idealism was Lockean and therefore *avant-garde* in the 1700's.⁷⁸ It should be noted, however,

⁷³ Gerstner, John H. *Jonathan Edwards: A Mini-Theology* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1987). Hereafter “Gerstner, 1987a”. See Holmes (2001a, 29, fn.61) for comment on Gerstner's work on Edwards.

⁷⁴ Tomas, Vincent. The Modernity of Jonathan Edwards, *New England Quarterly* 25 (March 1952), 82.

⁷⁵ *Essay*, 122.

⁷⁶ *Miscellany* 1337.

⁷⁷ *YE* 1, ccxxxiv. He is also acknowledged by McClymond as a strong candidate as the champion of this approach within the Western Reformed/evangelical heritage in his *Encounters with God* (NY/Oxford: OUP, 1998, hereafter “McClymond, 1998a”), 95. McClymond puzzles over “Edwards' strictures against deism ...” given that Edwards “clearly relies on reason while he asserts its insufficiency.” The Edwardsean corpus testifies to what McClymond calls a “tremendous rational confidence.”

⁷⁸ The development in Edwards' early philosophy has been documented by Wallace E. Anderson in *YE* 6.

that Edwards understood the limits of reason. For instance, although he added to the Calvinistic doctrine of depravity a special emphasis on the depravity of the *heart*, he believed that the reasoning of an unregenerate person could not lead him to a salvific knowledge of God or to apprehension of truth, in a manner consonant with the Calvinistic tradition.⁷⁹ He also acknowledged that not all mysteries of either natural or revealed religion could be solved in this life.

Nevertheless, Edwards' remarkable intellectual vigour and his commitment to the 'reasonableness' of Christianity, plays a prominent role in his theology, and nowhere more prominently than in his use of both natural reasoning and revealed truth to vindicate the historic and orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and in his new contributions to a partial unveiling of its mystery. In *Miscellany 94*, written early in his ministry. Edwards wrote:

There has been much cry of late against saying one word, particularly about the Trinity, but what the Scripture has said; judging it impossible but that if we did, we should err in a thing so much above us.⁸⁰

Disagreeing vehemently with this Biblicist approach, Edwards expressed that he was "not afraid to say twenty things about the Trinity which Scripture never said," and that he believed "that it is within the reach of naked reason to perceive certainly that there are three distinct [persons] in God, each of which is the same [God]... ."⁸¹

With some important qualifications, Edwards' reasoning in fact reflects methodological assumptions about the relation of Scripture and reason inherent in what Herbert Richardson calls "the principle of univocity,"⁸² that is, that there is a consonance between the truths revealed by the application of reason to special and general revelation. This principle, which seems to function as a

⁷⁹ Faust, Clarence H. and Johnson, Thomas H. (eds.) *Jonathan Edwards: Representative Selections* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1962), II, i.xiv.

⁸⁰ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 257.*

⁸¹ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 257.*

⁸² Richardson, Herbert. *The Glory of God in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards in the Doctrine of The Trinity*, (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1962).

fundamental ontological presupposition for Edwards, connotes three concepts: (1) ontologically, that there is an essential continuity of being between God and the world, resulting from the creation of the world by God, not in a way that is pantheistic, but such that the creation reflects its Creator (the existence of a basic continuity between the consciousness or psychology of God and humans becomes Edwards' fundamental presupposition in crafting his doctrine of the Trinity, for example); (2) linguistically, that there is univocity of meaning in language about God and the world (cf. types and images), meaning that there will be a consonance between propositions deduced from Scripture, and truths revealed by the images and types in nature that Edwards was so fond of unfolding; and (3) methodologically, that "whatever is acknowledged to exist must be studied with a view to showing its continuity to all other events" for "there is no part of reality which is irrelevant for an understanding of God (or world)."⁸³

The close relationship between reason and biblical revelation in a way that reflects univocity, is demonstrated in the text of the *Essay on the Trinity* in which Edwards intentionally argues for his view of the Trinity by means of a pattern of argumentation that alternates between reason and scripture. We may delineate the reasoning in this section as follows:

- (i) a rational argument for the necessity of the Divine Idea, given God's eternal, self-conscious enjoyment of Himself (an *a priori* argument for the Trinity) (*Essay*, 99-103), is followed by a biblical argument (confirmatory evidences) that the Divine Idea is the Son of the God of the Scriptures (103-108);
- (ii) then a rational argument for the necessity of the Divine Love, the Deity of pure act proceeding from the mutual love between the Father (God) and the Son (the Idea of God)(108), is followed by a biblical argument (confirmatory evidences) that the Divine Love is the Holy Spirit (108-118);

⁸³ Richardson, 36. This principle is illustrated in Edwards' early work in *The Mind*, YE 6, 363ff.

- (iii) and finally, a rational argument that the “true Trinity” is “God (absolutely considered), the Idea of God, and love and delight, for these distinctions must be and only these can be thought as real distinctions” (118-119), is followed by a biblical argument (confirmatory evidences) that this is so (119-120).

The last part of the *Essay* (120-131) is less ordered, but still reflects an alternation between reason and Scripture as the basis for argument. This last third of the essay consists of “responses to possible objections, caveats about the limits of his argument, further implications of his concepts, and observations regarding how things that the divines would “want to say” are better illustrated and facilitated by his model of the Trinity.”⁸⁴

This principle of univocity makes it possible for Edwards to move from the being which the creature perceives, sensually, to the eternal being of God, using a modified Platonic *analogia generis*, an analogy of generic predication. Parallels with Aquinas have been drawn at this point,⁸⁵ though in fairness to Aquinas, by contrast with him, Edwards’ prime analogate tended to be the creature rather than the Creator, and for Edwards the chain of causation, rather than a principle of proportionality or correspondence, became the pivotal mechanism by which he comprehended God’s manner of being.

Even though he would contend that his reflections from general revelation are safeguarded by the content of Scripture, Edwards’ methodology is at this crucial point, therefore, open to criticism. The idea that one “must know the being of God through the system of attributing to Him those perfections, capacities and properties which one believes should belong to an infinitely great being, the supreme deity”⁸⁶, if unchecked especially by Christological revelation, cannot stand scrutiny. As Jinkins aptly states:

⁸⁴ I am indebted to Todd Pokrifka for this analysis presented in an unpublished essay, “The Soul As An Image of the Trinity: Jonathan Edwards’ Distinctive View.”

⁸⁵ Jinkins, 1993b, 175.

⁸⁶ Jinkins, 1993b, 176.

One collects a variety of impressions from one's experience and combines these according to one's set of assumptions concerning what kind of being the deity must be in order to be the cause of all things. One removes limitations and changeableness, magnifies the attributes by the power of infinity, and thus arrives at the nature of the being of God (premonitions of Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums!*).⁸⁷

What is notably missing in Edwards is any clear statement with respect to analogy, that God's self-disclosure of His 'Being-as-Trinity,' in relation to humanity, comes through the event of revelation, as God becomes incarnate in the Son, by the Spirit's power. In other words, there is no evidence of the *analogia relationis*, in which God is the prime analogate rather than man or nature, in the manner in which Jüngel⁸⁸ and Barth⁸⁹ have expressed this. Comparison with the methodology of the latter theologian is appropriate at this point.

C. Critical Comparison with Barth - The Methodological Divide

Revelation and reason

Having established Edwards' relatively high view of reason, some critical questions arise which all who use reason, including those who claim to use it in response to revelation, must answer. These will lead us to compare the methodological approach of Edwards with that of Barth.

(i) The first, which has to do with the purity of reason, concerns the presuppositions and 'way of seeing' that influence reason. To what extent in the case of Edwards did his dependence on 'general revelation' and his use of

⁸⁷ Jenkins, 1993b, 176.

⁸⁸ Jüngel, Eberhard. *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming* (Horton Harris, Transl.) (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976) (hereafter, "Jüngel, 1976a").

⁸⁹ Barth, K. *CD I/1, II/1*.

natural theology and the philosophy of Idealism become his predominant hermeneutic?

(ii) The second is, that if reason is under revelation, to which form of revelation does one give most weight? Edwards would argue that Scripture, or special revelation, was his ultimate authority, as no doubt would Barth also. The issue however, is that with Edwards, his primary analogy for elucidating the nature of the Trinity, the psychological analogy, comes from the realm of 'general revelation,' rather than what must surely be the most obvious source of revelation, that of the gospel unveiling of the Son and the Spirit. There is of course a submission to the text of Scripture, the applying of the literal hermeneutic and much emphasis on the 'plain sense of Scripture'. The road from text to the theology of the Trinity for Edwards, however, involves the use of an analogy from nature such that reason thereby sits over the content of the 'broad strokes' of Scripture as they reveal the Christological and pneumatological events.

A decisive difference between the epistemology of Edwards and that of Barth relates to the area of reason and natural theology. Edwards does use what he considers to be the biblical data for the Trinity, but his focus is rather on "rational" arguments to elucidate the Trinity, arguments concerned with the link between humans and God, and between God and his creation in general.

A favourable comparison?

A more favourable assessment of the commonality between Barth and Edwards with respect to methodology has been made by Sang Hyun Lee and others who have taken up his thesis,⁹⁰ especially with respect to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Lee seeks to understand what it "is in Edwards' theological mind that could so boldly put nature on the same level with history and even with Scripture" and what led a theologian who so consistently emphasized the eternal sovereignty of God "to appreciate the significance, not

⁹⁰ Lee, 1988a; Daniel, 1994a; Lee and Guelzo, 1999a.

only to humanity but even to God, of the temporal and spatial factuality of the earthly images of divine things.”⁹¹ Lee’s resolution is found in understanding Edwards’ conception of the nature of God and the corresponding nature of creation, that is, what Lee calls Edwards’ fundamental dispositional ontology.⁹² Lee asserts that “it is in the light of Edwards’ highly innovative dispositional reconception of the nature of God and God’s relation to the world that the meaning of Edwards’ appreciation of nature can be properly understood.”⁹³ With the help of this ontology, Lee suggests that Edwards worked out “an innovative reconception of the nature of God as at once actual and also eternally disposed for self-communication and self-enlargement.”⁹⁴ This dynamic understanding of God involved the conception of God’s creation of the world as the everlasting process of God’s repetition of His prior actuality now in time and space, so making the created realm internally related to God’s own life. Lee is careful to point out that Edwards maintained that the ontological status of the physical dimension has a reality of its own, distinguishable from that of God and humanity. The critical issue for Lee however, was that “in light of his theocentric understanding of the entire created realm as repetition of God’s own glory,”⁹⁵ Edwards justified his use of nature as typology.

Lee even attributes to Edwards, by his conceiving of the nature of God as at once fully actual and also dispositional, the spawning a “new beginning of Christian theology.”⁹⁶ His replacement of the age-old, Aristotelian notion of substance with the idea of disposition and habit was critical to this new beginning. This metaphysical reformulation arose from Edwards’ realist, as opposed to nominalist, idea of habits and dispositions. He thus saw the human soul as consisting in “powers and habits.”⁹⁷ Hence Lee’s conclusion that, “The being of

⁹¹ Lee, in ch.1 of Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 16.

⁹² Lee, 1988a, 34-114, expounds this notion. The view of Lee and that of Daniel (in Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 45ff.), is that Edwards’ ontology was far ahead of its time, in that Edwards conceived of God as at once fully actual and fully dispositional, or simultaneously being and becoming.

⁹³ Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 16.

⁹⁴ Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 16-17.

⁹⁵ Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 17.

⁹⁶ Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 17.

⁹⁷ Edwards reflects these notions in the following quotations: “In memory, in mental principles, habits, and inclinations, there is something really abiding in the mind when there are no acts or

God, for Edwards, is also a disposition.”⁹⁸ Edwards in fact stated that God’s essence is a “disposition to communicate Himself.” What distinguishes the nature of God from created reality for Edwards is that God’s being is not only a disposition but also a full actuality – “that is, an infinitely perfect exercise of the divine dispositional essence.”⁹⁹ The importance of the Trinity becomes evident from the further conclusion of Edwards that the internal exercises of the divine dispositional essence constitute the inner-Trinitarian actuality of the divine being.

Stephen H. Daniel has suggested that there is a significant degree of similarity between Edwards and Barth with respect to methodology in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Daniel employs the “dispositional ontology” concept of Lee, and insists that the disposition of God to communicate himself is a consequence of God’s intrinsic relationality expressed in the Trinity. He goes so far as to suggest that God is the discursive space in which everything else has its identity, a tenet he finds in both Edwards and Barth.¹⁰⁰ Both Edwards and Barth are compared at this point with “postmodern”¹⁰¹ theologians who have rejected what Daniel calls the still prevalent Aristotelian-Cartesian-Lockean “substantialist ontology”. Favourable comparison is thus made between Edwards and Barth in that their search for the solution to the issue of God’s being was based on the “primacy of revelation as that in which *the beginning* was truly *the Word* – expressive creativity – not some transcendental subject who uttered the Word.”¹⁰² This led each to “immerse themselves in the divine semiotics of scripture.”¹⁰³

exercises of them.” (Edwards, Jonathan. *YE 6, Scientific and Philosophical Writings*. (ed.) Wallace E. Anderson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 385); and “[The soul’s] essence consists in powers and habits.” *Miscellany* 241, *YE 13*, 358.

⁹⁸ Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 18.

⁹⁹ *Miscellany* 107, *YE 13*, 277-278.

¹⁰⁰ Daniel, in Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 45ff. Barth is cited as speaking of God as “Himself space,” that discursive space in which all else comes to have identity (*CD II/1*, 470), and Edwards similarly in “Of Being,” in *YE 6*, 203, 207.

¹⁰¹ Although the increasingly dispositional, relational emphasis in Edwards’ theology is a cherished element within postmodernity, in his trust in and use of reason Edwards seems much more ‘modern’ than ‘postmodern.’

¹⁰² Lee and Guelzo, 1999a, 48.

¹⁰³ Stout, Harry S. in introduction to *Edwards In our Time*, xii.

This latter statement highlights a failure to distinguish between the methodologies of Edwards and Barth at a key point. Both Lee and Daniel do correctly point to the commonality of the prominence of the Trinity in the theology of these theologians. However, they appear to fail to avoid the trap of reading into Edwards more than may be there, ascribing a ‘dispositional ontology’ and concepts from process theology that would be unfamiliar and probably unpalatable to Edwards. They especially fail to hear Barth in the crucial area of methodology. In the way in which he will defend the ontological or essential Trinity, Edwards' starting point in, and prominent use of natural theology and reason will clearly be in evidence. It is from the human and Idealist notions of "excellence" and "happiness", and on the basis of analogies from nature, and especially the being of man (in God's image), that he approaches this subject. For Edwards, God's 'being' is considered as existing somehow in relation to the general category of being, so that He shares this category with the 'intelligent creatures'.¹⁰⁴ Edwards fundamental methodology in looking to nature first in elucidating the Trinity, would, we think, have evoked great suspicion from Barth as representative of the kind of 'theology from below' he eschewed.¹⁰⁵

A Critique of Dispositionalism

The viewpoint of the Lee school of thought that there are similarities of conception and methodology between Edwards and Barth with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, based on the hypothesis that both reflect a ‘dispositionalism’ with respect to the essence of the Godhead, runs aground if it can be shown that this hypothesis is a flawed one. The views of Oliver Crisp,¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ In addition to a concern with the starting point in Edwards' theological endeavour that Barth might have registered, Plantinga Pauw also maintains that "Edwards' Idealism threatened the integrity of the intelligent creation." Her concerns with regard to incipient monism in Edwards' thought are supported by reference to the work of Thomas Schafer (*YE* 13, 49). George Rupp ("The Idealism of Jonathan Edwards." *Harvard Theological Review* 62 (April, 1969), 209ff.) attempts to exonerate Edwards from charges of pantheism and panentheism, not altogether convincingly with respect to the latter (see Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 135).

¹⁰⁵ This in light of Barth's work '*Nein!*' in which he so firmly discounts natural theology.

¹⁰⁶ Crisp, O. unpublished essay, "Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity and Individuation." See also Crisp, O. "Jonathan Edwards on Divine simplicity" in *Religious Studies* 39 (2003), 23-41

Steve Holmes¹⁰⁷ and Paul Helm¹⁰⁸ present a significant challenge to this ‘dispositional’ ontology ascribed to Edwards. Helm’s critique is presented here, and that of Crisp and Holmes will be referred to in the next chapter.

The influence of John Locke on Edwards has been widely acknowledged, and this is apparent in Edwards’ use of the human self as an analogy for the Trinitarian nature of God. Here Edwards articulates the inner-Trinitarian exercise of the divine essence by means of both the analogy of the human self as knowing and loving, and by employing the Lockean and Idealist notion of the self’s reflexive knowledge of its internal acts.¹⁰⁹ Helm believes that there is confusion in Edwards’ interpretation and usage of Locke’s notion of an idea. This will be discussed in the chapter on the Trinity. What is relevant in this context is that there is little ambiguity about the assertion that the Edwardsean understanding of the knowledge God has of himself “is a perfect exemplar of a Lockean idea of reflection.”¹¹⁰ The knowledge God has of himself, according to both Locke and Edwards is different to that in man in that (a) it is purely that of reflection and not also of sensation, and (b) that the spirit that is in God is not an unknowable substratum. Helm also points out that “these essences of God have powers, dispositions.”¹¹¹ There is no ambiguity therefore around the issue that both Locke and Edwards considered dispositions to be possessed by substances in the Aristotelian manner in which dispositions arose from formed matter. Thus Helm concludes:

If we are inclined to think that in his theology Edwards abandons
'substance metaphysics in favour of a more dispositional view of divine

(hereafter “Crisp, 2003a”). In that Crisp defends the idea that Edwards remained within the *actus purus* tradition, his views represent a challenge for dispositionalism in Edwards.

¹⁰⁷ Holmes, Stephen R. “Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee,” in Helm and Crisp, 2003a, 99-114 (“Holmes 2003a”).

¹⁰⁸ Helm, 2003a.

¹⁰⁹ Locke, John. *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (ed.) John Yolton (London: J.M Dent and Sons, 1961), (hereafter “Locke, *Essay*” with book no. and chapter in Roman numerals) II, I, 1-5; Edwards, J. *Essay*, 120-131.

¹¹⁰ Helm, 2003a, 7.

¹¹¹ Helm, 2003a, 7.

reality on the grounds that he objects to Locke's idea of an unknowable substratum, then this last point should make us pause.¹¹²

That Edwards did not use a dispositional ontology is a fly in the ointment of the notion cherished by Lee and Daniel, that there is a commonality between Barth and Edwards in this methodological aspect of their work on the Trinity.

Edwards' development of the doctrine of the Trinity by the employment of Lockean and Idealist philosophy, albeit within a largely Augustinian framework, provides evidence of an approach that Barth would not have favoured. Helm's description of the particular Lockean influence on Edwards, in which he highlights some serious problems for the doctrine of the simplicity of the Godhead,¹¹³ as well as the work of Crisp specifically on the issue of Edwards' non-traditional view of divine simplicity,¹¹⁴ serve to illustrate well how much Edwards engaged in contemporary philosophy in his attempts to contextualize the doctrine of the Trinity, and defend its metaphysical abstruseness in the age of reason. His engagement in this arena, competent and admirable though it was, would not, I suggest, have been an exercise which Barth would have been concerned to pursue.

Furthermore, in Helm's discussion of Edwards' employment of the Lockean understanding of knowledge and will, he anticipates the objection that Edwards might have drawn from Calvin in the latter's use of the distinction between understanding and will in the human mind.¹¹⁵ Helm points out that Calvin

¹¹² Helm, 2003a, 7.

¹¹³ In his conclusion, Helm, writes, "It has often been said that while Locke became a source of latitudinarian ideas in England and indeed in Europe more generally, Edwards used those very same ideas to buttress Puritan orthodoxy. This paradox is clearly to be seen at work in the case of the Trinity. ... But if what I have argued is along the right lines, in pursuit of his project Edwards was not altogether successful; but nor did he, in this pursuit, go as far as to overturn the lineaments of the doctrine which he inherited from his Puritan and Reformed Scholastic forbears." Helm, 2003a, 15.

¹¹⁴ Crisp states: "In fact, Edwards's metaphysical commitments, pursued in the belief that they shore up his doctrine of the Trinity, present him with several serious problems when it comes to his doctrine of divine simplicity." Crisp, 2003a, 37.

¹¹⁵ Calvin states, for example: 'Let us, therefore, hold, as indeed is suitable to our present purpose - that the human soul consists of two faculties understanding and will.' *Institutes of the Christian Religion* trans. F.L. Battles (London, SCM Press, 1960) I.14.7.

understood these entities to be ‘faculties’ in a manner which Locke argued against.¹¹⁶ Helm adds significantly, that “Calvin, Augustinian though he was, is cautious about using analogies drawn from human nature to elucidate the Trinity.”¹¹⁷ I would contend that in this methodological arena, contrary to Lee’s assertions, therefore, that Barth shows little affinity with Edwards and has more in common with Calvin.

The Trinity as Emphasis or as Methodology?

In some important aspects, in the reckoning of Karl Barth, Jonathan Edwards would perhaps have been the prototype of all that he considered to be wrong with Western Christianity. T.F. Torrance has lucidly demonstrated an affinity between Athanasius in the fourth century, with Barth in the twentieth, in matters that relate to the most fundamental substratum of the evangelical Christian faith.¹¹⁸ This alignment of Barth with Eastern theology as defined in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed serves to show some measure of divergence between Edwards and Barth in matters epistemological, and therefore, in matters Christological and soteriological.

As Torrance indicates, both Athanasius and Barth were required to battle “*contra mundum*” against the dominant structures of thought within which theology was being expressed in their times, the “alien preconceptions” of dualism and Platonism. Each sought to reground dogmatics in the incarnate self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ mediated to us through the Apostolic Scriptures. Barth’s historical context may have been slightly more complex than that of Athanasius, in that Western culture and the Western church of his time had undergone the

¹¹⁶ Locke contends in his discussion of the relation between the understanding and the will in his Chapter ‘Of Power’ (Locke, *Essay* II, XXI) that the understanding and the will are not to be considered as distinct ‘faculties’ in that this conveys ‘the confused notion of so many distinct agents in us, which had their several provinces and authorities, and did command, obey, and perform several actions, as so many distinct beings.’ Rather, the will is a power of the mind, he argues.

¹¹⁷ See Helm, 2003a, 6-7. Helm cites the *Institutes*, I.18.13 at this point.

¹¹⁸ Torrance, T.F. *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1990) (hereafter “Torrance, 1990a”), chapters 6, 7.

Christological-soteriological correction of the Reformation, as well as the rationalist dualism of the Enlightenment, which guided the framework of human knowledge and the advances in civilization after the Reformation. However, Barth shared this conviction in common with Athanasius, that “theology had become detached from its controlling objective ground in the Word of God and had become anthropocentric.”¹¹⁹

It would have struck Edwards as passing strange that he could be accused of being anthropocentric. In that he considered himself to belong to the Reformed tradition with its “high view” of God and its emphasis on the all-prevailing decree of God, and its doctrine of human depravity or inability, Edwards would have had difficulty wearing this accusation. Notwithstanding this, when it comes down to the essential basis and framework for doing theology, Barth would have maintained his ground, and perhaps he may even have commiserated that Edwards became, in a sense, one with “The Protestant Scholastics of the seventeenth century,” who Mangina suggests, “undertook a sad return to the fleshpots of philosophy.”¹²⁰ As Amy Plantinga Pauw so aptly puts it, “Edwards’ philosophical Idealism exacerbated the prevalent theological anthropocentrism of his day.”¹²¹ Though the Trinity and a theology of union may be dominant in Edwards, his methodology is philosophical and based strongly on the human psychological analogy. A crucial distinction, therefore, is that whilst in Barth, the Trinity is methodological, that is, it is his way of ‘doing theology’, in Edwards it is merely a prominent theme. The Trinity does increasingly influence the way Edwards viewed other doctrines, and especially sanctification, but I think it fair to say that it never became his controlling hermeneutic.

The desire of Barth, following in the train of Athanasius, was to ground theology in the Christological revelation, in the perfect and eternal oneness of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ with the Father in being and nature, such that God himself has really become man, and has not merely indwelt man. Their common concern was to demonstrate that the incarnate Jesus Christ is of one and

¹¹⁹ Torrance, 1990a, 162.

¹²⁰ Mangina, 2001a, 15.

¹²¹ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 135.

the same being as the Father (*homoousios*), and to make this consubstantiality the basis for revelation. The argument is that, only if this is true, can we be certain that what God has revealed of himself to us, is what He *is* eternally and inherently in Himself. The essentially Nicene notion of God *not merely indwelling* man in Christ, but really *becoming man* in Christ led to the conclusion that the life and activity of Christ from incarnation through redemption, resurrection and on into exaltation was “profoundly *vicarious*.”¹²²

Barth particularly stressed the notion which prevailed in the Nicene period of the church that the unassumed is the unhealed. God had in Christ appropriated humanity in all its weakness, corruption, bondage and condemnation, and thus taken upon himself guilt and alienation *for us*. Thus as Torrance declares, “In Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man, person and work, incarnation and atonement, revelation and reconciliation, are inseparably one.”¹²³ Edwards’ understanding of the incarnational union of the divine and human natures of Christ as a Spirit-union analogous to the other unions, will, when it comes under scrutiny in chapter IV, be seen to fall a little short of this Nicene perspective.

Both Athanasius and Barth were concerned that the prevailing structures of thought within which the Gospel was being expressed in their times were at odds with what should have been their controlling motif and basis - God’s self-revelation and saving grace in Jesus Christ. Torrance has described how this radical Christological hermeneutic caused both fundamentalists and liberals to react negatively to Barth’s theology. Barth’s theological formulation critiqued the liberal camp for its tendency to derive ideas from historico-critical analysis of the religious consciousness, reflected in the Scriptures, in that it obviated the self-revealing activity of God. Barth’s method also critiqued the conservative theology of the evangelical/Reformed background in that it subordinated the

¹²² Torrance, 1990a, 161.

¹²³ Torrance, 1990a, 161.

living Word of God “to a corpus of logical propositions deduced from statements in the Holy Scriptures.”¹²⁴

Edwards might easily have received both barrels of this Barthian critique, at least in his methodology for the construction of his doctrine of the Trinity to ‘honour the Spirit’. Barth would certainly have placed him in the latter camp, but given the use of the psychological analogy and the Idealist and Lockean philosophical presuppositions of Edwards which influenced the particular way in which he “deduced” his logical propositions, he might also have incurred the same indictment as the liberals. In support of this opinion, McClymond has stated that Edwards “showed none of the fear and distrust of philosophy that one senses in the writings of Luther, Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Barth.”¹²⁵ McClymond does seek to exonerate Edwards in placing him within the Anselmian tradition, that described by the adage, ‘faith seeking understanding.’ He maintains that Edwards “saw vast scope for the exercise of reason, but only after reason had embraced the truths of revelation by faith.” This may be true in Edwards’ theological endeavours in general. He saw “no contradiction in his reliance on reason” because he was convinced that “reason was no substitute for revelation.”¹²⁶ However, when it came to the specific area of the doctrine of the Trinity, I fear this was not so. Edwards chose to engage in a philosophical approach in a manner which may not contradict any particular text of Scripture. However, it did neglect the most significant revelational event in history, that which is given massive weight in the Scriptural revelation, that is, the incarnational revelation of Christ, as the proper place to begin.

Barth is certainly not averse to reason ‘under revelation,’ as his ample theological corpus indicates. What ultimately is the determinative node or point of departure between Edwards and Barth is not just that Barth gives greater weight to personal, Christological and pneumatological revelation. It is the extent to which that revelation ontologically determines and shapes the reasoning process. Christ and the Trinity become Barth’s primary hermeneutic.

¹²⁴ Torrance, 1990a, 163.

¹²⁵ McClymond, 1998a, 95.

¹²⁶ McClymond, 1998a, 95.

Edwards' use of reason and deduction depends on a divinely imparted concept of spiritual sense or perception, which enable his extensive use of concepts and analogies from general revelation as a means for interpreting Scripture. Thus Christ, the Spirit and the Trinity are interpreted through creation, and especially the human mind. By contrast, Barth's matrix for reason is the ontological/Christological revelational construct, such that creation, covenant and everything else in theology is seen through Christological eyes.

From economic to immanent Trinities?

Another way of coming at this is to say that methodologically, Barth begins with the revelation of Christ and the economic Trinity. The knowledge of God as the triune God comes from revelation. This is true both of the statements of revelation and of its very structure. Bromiley cogently summarizes Barth's methodology by indicating that he believed that "what we know of the persons, or modes of being, may be read off from the divine activity in revelation, both in the general sense that this activity takes the form of creation, reconciliation, and redemption, and also in the more detailed sense that the incarnation points to the Father-Son relation and the outpouring of the Spirit carries a hint of the twofold procession." Bromiley adds that "At the final extreme, individual biblical statements give direct evidence of the Trinity, although they obviously do not develop the doctrine of the divine Trinity."¹²⁷ Barth's way of developing this doctrine is to start with Christological, pneumatological revelation, and in general terms to move from the economic Trinity at each point to the immanent Trinity, demonstrating that what God is, is what He reveals Himself to be. "Revelation in its three moments leads us to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."¹²⁸ Creation moves us toward God the Father, reconciliation to God the Son, and redemption toward God the Holy Spirit. As Bromiley asserts again, "God does not just become Father to be our Father, or Son to be the incarnate Son, or Spirit to be the Spirit poured out on the church. He is Father, Son, and Spirit in his dealings with us because He is already Father, Son, and Spirit eternally and

¹²⁷ Bromiley, 1979a, 21.

¹²⁸ Bromiley, 1979a, 21.

antecedently in Himself.” He concludes that for Barth, “Noetically the economic Trinity forms the starting point, but the eternal Trinity has ontic priority.”¹²⁹

By contrast, Edwards’ method is to begin with the ontological Trinity as constructed in accordance with the psychological analogy. In the opening page of the *Essay*, Edwards showed his methodological cards right away by stating the following: “Tho [sic] the Divine nature be vastly different from that of created spirits, yet our souls are made in the image of God, we have understanding and will, idea and love as God hath, and the difference is only in the perfection of degree and manner.”¹³⁰ There is a point in the same work where Edwards sounds much like Barth in that he appears to appeal to the economy as the source of his doctrine of the ontological Trinity,¹³¹ but this is in retrospect only. His deductions about the Trinity are determined by the psychological analogy. In Augustinian fashion he derives a Trinity in which the Son is the perfect “understanding” and “idea” of the Father and the Spirit is the “will” and the “love” shared between the Father and the Son, and this permits Edwards to develop a theology of participation in the ontological Trinity because “when men are regenerate and sanctified, God pours forth His Spirit upon them and they have fellowship or, which is the same thing, are made partakers with the Father and Son of their love, i.e. of their joy and beauty.”¹³² It is my contention that this desire to articulate a theology of pneumatological participation, thereby ‘honouring the Spirit,’ was what motivated Edwards to adopt an anthropocentric methodology in this area of his theology.

Edwards’ pastoral theology is greatly concerned with the accounting for and evaluating of the authenticity of the work of the Spirit in Christian life and community. The psychological and anthropocentric methodology by which he crafts his pneumatologically weighted model of the Trinity and the incarnation

¹²⁹ Bromiley, 1979a, 21.

¹³⁰ *Essay*, 99.

¹³¹ Edwards states, “ It seems to me that what I have here supposed concerning the Trinity is exceeding analogous to the gospel scheme and agreeable to the tenour [sic] of the whole New Testament and abundantly illustrative of gospel doctrines, as might be particularly shewn, would it not exceedingly lengthen out this discourse.” *Essay*, 122.

¹³² *Essay*, 111.

corresponds to his psychological and anthropocentric emphases in soteriology and the Christian life. Edwards' articulates a view of the Christian life that is firmly and richly rooted in participation in God by the Spirit, but its introspective and subjective tendencies, would, as I will suggest, have been tempered by the more incarnational Christological and objective emphases of Barth.

Christological privileging?

It might reasonably be objected that this assessment seems to be a somewhat arbitrary privileging of Christ and Christology in the way in which Barth claims it in theological methodology. It might also be objected that Barth's decision to elevate the Christological revelation in methodology is itself an exercise in the metaphysics he eschewed. It could be argued in favour of the Edwardsean approach that at least his metaphysical assumptions are made plain. His approach in corroborating an *a priori* approach to 'how things are' with what is reflected in the plain sense of Scripture seems hard to fault. It must be conceded that Edwards and Barth are not markedly different in their views of the Trinity *per se*. Though perhaps it could be said that Barth shows more Eastern and Cappadocian leanings, both are well within the realm of theological orthodoxy, and therefore this point may even seem moot.

In response to these objections, it might firstly be said that there seems intuitively to be something right about discovering the nature of the Trinity in a primary way from the incarnational Christological and pneumatological revelational events. Surely special revelation, and especially the Logos revelation event must have more weight than general revelation, but all the more so when it comes to elucidating the nature of the triune God. To begin with the Word made flesh, the only begotten of the Father, "who has made Him known" (John 1:1, 14, 18), and to observe the interactions of the Father and Son and Spirit in the window of the incarnational event and phenomena, seems to me to be a superior approach to the theology of the Trinity than an *a priori* philosophical approach.

It may also be said that a Christological approach might well be justified given that it was Christology, and specifically the deity of Christ, that was the impetus for the historical formulation of the Trinity at Nicea and Chalcedon. Most critically, it is how Edwards' approach to the Trinity carries over into his anthropology and soteriology, and specifically the doctrine of the assurance of salvation, that makes this methodological issue more than an esoteric issue without consequence. A more Christological approach in the area of assurance and one's orientation in the Christian life in Barth is consistent with how he approaches the Trinity. Similarly, and crucially for my purpose, a more anthropocentric, inward and introspective approach to assurance and spirituality in Edwards, will be seen to be consistent with his anthropocentric approach to the Trinity.

Summation

In summary, Barth's primary emphasis with respect to participation will be seen to be that of divine participation of Christ in humanity, whereas Edwards' attention is more focused on human participation in God by the Spirit. This will influence the focus in and nature of conversion, assurance and progressive sanctification in the Christian life as conceived by each theologian, with respect to issues such as law and gospel, nature and grace, the degrees of subjectivity and objectivity, activity and passivity, self- versus community- or Christ-orientation, and expectations of change in this life.

II. Union Within the Trinity - by the Spirit

“While saying less about the Father and much more about the Son, he pays greatest attention and makes his greatest contribution to the concept of the Spirit.”¹³³ J. Gerstner

“But what he does say represents a profound advancement over the Western church’s typically underdeveloped doctrine of the agency of the Holy Spirit in the intra-trinitarian life of God.”¹³⁴ Sang Hyun Lee

In this chapter I hope to demonstrate that the honour of the Spirit is a primary motivation behind, and concern within, Edwards’ discussions of the Trinity. In the initial, largely descriptive section, I will attempt to demonstrate this first of all, implicitly, in considering Edwards’ chosen Augustinian model of the immanent Trinity, as adapted within an Idealistic and Lockean framework, in which the Spirit is depicted as ‘Love,’ the locus of the union and communion of the Godhead. The honouring of the Spirit will be shown, secondly, in how the hypostatic uniqueness of the Spirit as ‘person’ is secured. It will be apparent that Edwards reflects a degree of individuation of the persons within the Trinity that rationalizes the Spirit’s relative freedom in operating with equality within the economic Trinity. This will lead, thirdly, to consideration of the explicit honouring of the Spirit as ‘Gift’ in Edwards’ discussions of the economy and in fulfilment of the covenant of redemption.

In the second, more analytical section, I will seek to assess and locate Edwards’ doctrine of the Trinity with respect to six critical issues that have arisen within recent Edwardsean scholarship.

¹³³ Gerstner, 1987a, 32-3.

¹³⁴ Lee, *YE 21*, 19, in his editor’s introduction, with reference to the hitherto unpublished fragment, *On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity* (*YE 21*, 146-8).

(i) The first, which has already arisen in chapter one, concerns Edwards' understanding of the essence of the Godhead, and claims that he employed a dispositional ontology as opposed to an ontology of substance. I will conclude that although there is a high degree of relationality within Edwards' 'mutual love' psychological ontology of the Trinity, he does not move beyond the scholastic understanding of substance and form, to adopt "a strikingly modern conception of reality as a dynamic network of dispositional forces and habits."¹³⁵

(ii) A second issue, arising within Edwards' articulation of the differentiation of the persons of the Trinity, concerns his view of the doctrine of the simplicity of the Godhead. A dispositional ontology inherently threatens the *actus purus* tradition of orthodox faith. That Edwards would adopt such an ontology therefore seems unlikely given Edwards' orthodox Reformed and Puritan heritage.

Whereas it is therefore not likely that Edwards did use a dispositional ontology, his method of differentiation of the persons, nevertheless, does seem to reflect an idiosyncratic understanding of simplicity, or perhaps a myopia with respect to the consequences of his way of securing the hypostatic uniqueness of the persons, for the doctrine of simplicity. Specifically, Edwards has a tendency to discuss the covenanting of the persons of the Godhead in ways that reflect a degree of individuation that compromises the oneness of the Godhead. When considered with his novel Trinitarian, but idiosyncratic and somewhat problematic version of the doctrine of simplicity,¹³⁶ it is difficult not to see in Edwards' doctrine of God, a tendency towards incipient tritheism. My contention is that Edwards fell into this end of the threeness-oneness tension of the doctrine of the Trinity as a consequence of his aim of honouring the full personhood and equality of the Holy Spirit. The possibility that Edwards may have seen the dangers of tritheism within an Augustinian understanding of the Trinity, and that he may have

¹³⁵ Lee, 1998a, 4.

¹³⁶ Oliver Crisp has in the article, "Jonathan Edwards on Divine Simplicity" in *Religious Studies* 39 (2003), 23-41, assessed Edwards' novel Trinitarian simplicity arguments "as an instance of an *actus purus* account of perfect-being theology" (23). He considers it to be "idiosyncratic" with respect to the tradition of this doctrine, in light of its idealism and its "way of individuating the divine persons of the Trinity by subsuming some of the divine perfections under individual persons of the Trinity, whilst leaving other perfections as part of the divine essence," (28) which entails the distinction he creates between 'real' attributes and 'modes or relations of existence'. Crisp concludes that his approach is innovative but "mired in difficulties," particularly with respect to the *opera extra sunt indivisa* principle.

adopted elements of the Cappadocian model for personhood of the Spirit within the Trinity, has been suggested by Plantinga Pauw and others, as noted in the Introduction. This anticipates the third area of controversy surrounding Edwards' doctrine of the Trinity.

(iii) The third area of controversy surrounding Edwards' Trinity is with respect to the nature of its Patristic origins. I will contend that it reflects a purely Augustinian ontology rather than a 'cobbled' mix of Augustinian and Cappadocian influences. Edwards' uses one model of the Trinity and not two, that of the Western, Augustinian 'mutual love' model,¹³⁷ along with his own innovations. His invocation of a perichoresis of procession at the ontological level to maintain the unity of the Godhead, as well as the personhood of each person, will also be noted to be typically Augustinian. Although undoubtedly the influence of Idealism and of Locke are evident in the innovative way in which Edwards expresses his method of differentiation of the persons of the Trinity, so that he does attempt to 'say something more than had been said,' his approach does not move beyond its framework of the 'mutual love' Augustinian psychological tradition.

Three further issues that arise from consideration of Edwards' Trinity that are of interest within scholarship of the Trinity are as follows: (iv) the coalescing of the immanent and economic Trinities; (v) the question of subordinationism; and (vi) the concern that Edwards' great concern for an 'honouring' pneumatology may not be coupled with a balancing emphasis on Christology, and enhypostatic, incarnational Christology, in particular.

I will contend that a major motivation that drove Edwards' theology of the Trinity and which created its tensions, was his desire to secure the honour of the

¹³⁷ Studebaker confirms what seems obvious, that Edwards specifically made use of the 'mutual love' variant of the Augustinian psychological model. The use of psychological analogies in their various forms by Augustine may be found in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, (gen. ed. Rotelle, John, E.) vol. 5, *The Trinity* (ed. Hill, Edmund) (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991), bks. 9,10,14. The formulation of the specific 'mutual love' model is found in *The Trinity* 15.28 (419), 15.39 (426), 15.47 (432). See Studebaker, Steve. "Jonathan Edwards's social Augustinian trinitarianism: an alternative to a recent trend." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56 (2003), 268-285 (hereafter "Studebaker, 2003a").

Spirit as a person with hypostatic uniqueness, and as equal with the Father and the Son, in the *ad extra* works of God, as well as essentially. In exposing the absence of key concepts from the Cappadocian tradition in Edwards' ontology, I will attempt to show how these, and perspectives from that tradition might have advanced Edwards' concerns with greater theological legitimacy. As indicated in the Introduction, comparisons have been made between the work of Edwards and Karl Barth in the area of the Trinity and Trinitarian relations. The similarities between the Trinitarian theologies of Edwards and Barth arise from both the influence of Idealism,¹³⁸ but especially from the influence of the theology of Augustine, and how both in their own way sought to escape from the strictures of his model. Comparative reference to Barth's work will thus be made throughout the evaluative section, with a view to suggesting how Edwards' concerns with hypostatic uniqueness and freedom with regard to the Spirit, might have been advanced by the Eastern or Cappadocian influence which was present, albeit imperfectly, in Barth's 'ontology of relations' theology of the Trinity. The possibility will also be raised that Edwards' elevated pneumatology, as well as his doxological priorities, might in turn, have benefited Barth.

A. Edwards' Trinity Described

1. The Logical Necessity of the Immanent Trinity – the Spirit as “Love”

In his apologetic works in defence of the Trinity against the Deists and Unitarians of his day, Edwards was concerned that the churches' prevailing approach was to adhere to this doctrine for pragmatic reasons. The most common defences were on the basis of the utility of the economic Trinity. The doctrine of the deity of Christ was needed to validate the atonement, and the

¹³⁸ It is the opinion of Moltmann, Torrance T.F. and Torrance A. that Barth took over the concept of 'modes of being' (*Seinsweisen*) from Dorner (Dorner, I.A. *System der christlichen Glaubenslehre*, 1, (Berlin, 1879)). This, according to the A. Torrance, was more than a semantic borrowing, and is in fact indicative of the wider influence of philosophical idealism on Barth's doctrine of God. Barth's interpretation of the divine *monas* as the absolute, *identical subject*, leading to his primordial stress on self-revelation and his implicit use of idealism's 'reflection logic', is, according to Moltmann, a consequence of the influence of modern German idealism. Torrance tempers this view somewhat. For references and discussion see Torrance, A. 1996a, 242ff.. Torrance favours the view that Barth's preferred use of the term 'modes' did not infer modalism and he is critical of Moltmann's insinuations in this direction.

doctrine of the Spirit's co-equality was required to explain sanctification. Edwards, however, felt that the doctrine should be defended because it was an integral part of understanding the nature of God.¹³⁹

The reasoning that Edwards employed in determining the logical necessity of the ontological Trinity is found in his early work *Miscellany 94*,¹⁴⁰ the later *Miscellany 308*¹⁴¹ and in his posthumously published *An Essay On the Trinity*¹⁴² and *End of Creation*. The thought processes that gave way to these works were, however, already in evidence in his first entry in *The Mind* entitled "Excellency". Edwards stated:

But in a being that is absolutely without any plurality, there cannot be excellence, for there can be no such thing as consent or agreement.¹⁴³

Excellency

Excellency was a key concept within the Idealist philosophy Edwards espoused from his formative years. This Idealist argument from the concept of excellence entails the notion that for God to be excellent, there must be relationality, and therefore plurality, within the Godhead. This is an argument which is grounded in another key foundational philosophical influence in Edwards, that of his aesthetics. Excellence is that which is 'beautiful', and that which is most beautiful is that with 'complex beauty,' which involves the beauty of aesthetic relations between one thing and another. Excellence in God for whom one must attribute complex beauty must therefore require harmony, but for there to be

¹³⁹ Barth shares Edwards' conviction concerning the necessity of the essential Trinity as is noted by Richard Roberts in Toon, P. and Spiceland, J.D. *One God in Trinity* (Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone Books, 1980), chapter 6, "Karl Barth", Richard Roberts.

¹⁴⁰ *Miscellany 94*, *YE 13*, 256-263.

¹⁴¹ *Miscellany 94*, *YE 13*, 392-3.

¹⁴² That the deity must be 'plural' in the first place, is a conviction that is largely only implicit in the *Essay*, however. This assumption derives from Edwards' earlier assertion in the opening section of *the Mind* as indicated below.

¹⁴³ *YE 6*, 363; cf. "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." (Townsend, Harvey G. (Ed.). *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards from His Private Notebooks*. (Eugene, Oregon: The University of Oregon Press, 1955), 26; cf. *Miscellany 117*, *YE 13*, 283.

harmony there must be 'consent' and therefore a plurality of persons.¹⁴⁴ As Crisp and others¹⁴⁵ have indicated, this notion of excellency was not new in Edwards having been used by others in his Puritan heritage. What was innovative was the Idealist content he gave it, and the central place it assumed within his ontology. It was a development in keeping with Edwards' tendency towards neo-Platonism.¹⁴⁶

In *Miscellany 94*. Edwards expanded this thought by reference to love, rather than mere harmony. He writes:

Again, that image of God which God infinitely loves and has His chief delight in, is the perfect idea of God. It has always been said, that God's infinite delight consists in reflecting on himself and viewing his own perfections or, which is the same thing, in his own perfect idea of himself; so that 'tis acknowledged, that God's infinite love is to, and his infinite delight [is] in the perfect image of himself. But the Scriptures tell us that the Son of God is that image of God which he infinitely loves.¹⁴⁷

The fact that Edwards viewed the Son of God existing as "Idea" in the mind of God was what led to the misunderstandings concerning his orthodoxy and accusations of Unitarianism. However, the key to clarifying this matter lies in the fact that Edwards understood both the love between the Father and His Idea, the Son, as substantial. As *Miscellany 94* explains:

¹⁴⁴ Oliver Crisp has provided a more thorough analysis of the Idealist-aesthetic ontology of Edwards and his unique way of conceiving the individuation of the divine persons by means of the divine attributes in an unpublished essay, "Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity and Individuation." Whilst lauding the originality and rigor of Edwards' approach ("Theologians may balk at Edwards' idealism, but the fact remains that his revisionist metaphysic (revisionist in the Strawsonian sense) is at heart Trinitarian, in a way that most contemporary theistic metaphysics (at least among philosophical theologians) are not"), the shortcomings of this approach especially with respect to the unity and simplicity of God are highlighted in this article as well as in his more detailed treatment of this theme in "Jonathan Edwards on Divine simplicity" in *Religious Studies* 39 (2003), 23-41.

¹⁴⁵ Crisp, O. unpublished essay, "Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity and Individuation"; Anderson, W. *YE* 6, 81ff. and Erdt, T., *Jonathan Edwards, Art and The Sense of the Heart*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), p. 35 ff.

¹⁴⁶ Crisp, O. unpublished essay, "Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity and Individuation."

¹⁴⁷ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 259.*

And I believe it will be plain to one that thinks intensely, that the perfect act of God must be a substantial act... the perfect delights of reasonable creatures are substantial delights; but the delight of God is properly a substance, yea, an infinitely perfect substance, even the essence of God.¹⁴⁸

Happiness

The aesthetic idea of 'happiness' in God also enters the thinking of Edwards in a closely related comment regarding the object that God infinitely loves:

Otherwise He could not be happy, because happiness is consent to Being or God. Therefore, this other Being must be of the same essence as Himself.¹⁴⁹

In other words, Edwards' speculative theology begins with the assumption that happiness in mankind made in God's image must correspond to the existence of happiness as an infinite reality in God. God must be infinitely happy from all eternity because he is a perfect being. This happiness is wrapped up in the harmony and love that is experienced in an idea that corresponds to Himself, which idea must be both personal and a perfect image of Himself, if it is to satisfy Him. Edwards is so convinced of his reasoning that he concludes that, if the "word 'begotten' had never been used in Scripture, it would have been used in this case" because "there is no other word that so properly expresses it."¹⁵⁰

In answer to the possible accusation that this is to humanize God, or to misinterpret anthropomorphic biblical references, Edwards, consistent with the univocity hermeneutic outlined in the previous chapter, would have pointed out that moral qualities are the bases for these analogies, and that this analogy is safeguarded by the Scripturally-based axiom that man is created in God's image (Genesis 1:22). On this basis, Edwards saw a clear image of the Trinity in the

¹⁴⁸ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 261.*

¹⁴⁹ *Miscellany 117, YE 13, 283.*

¹⁵⁰ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 258.*

soul of man, in a manner that is very much an echo of Augustine.¹⁵¹ The mind, its understanding (idea) and the will (or affection) correspond to God the Father, the Idea of God (the Son), and the Love of God (the Spirit). This latter concept of the Spirit's procession is amplified in *Miscellany 94*:

The Holy Spirit is the act of God between the Father and the Son, infinitely loving and delighting in each other... if the Father and the Son do infinitely delight in each other, there must be an infinitely pure and perfect act between them, an infinitely sweet energy which we call delight.¹⁵²

Edwards' view of the Trinity, in summary, therefore is that the Father is "the deity in its direct existence;" the Son is "the Divine Idea;" and, the Holy Spirit is "the Divine Love."¹⁵³ Despite the fact that one does not usually think of an 'Idea' or 'Love' as a living being, this, Edwards is convinced, is the only conceivable form of the plurality of the Deity. Edwards is primarily concerned in *The Essay* with the ontological Trinity in general, and the preponderance of it with pneumatology, in particular. Edwards' concise statement of the Trinity there is thus:

And I believe the whole Divine essence does truly and distinctly subsist both in the Divine idea and Divine love, and that each of them are properly distinct persons.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Augustine's fundamental human analogy of the Trinity is employed by Edwards. This involves the self, its knowledge, and its love (*De trinitate*, Bks. IX-X (esp. chs. 15-18), XV (chs. 27-37). Heinrich Heppé suggests that Melancthon and Keckerman developed the Augustinian model (*Reformed Dogmatics*, (Thomson, G.T. rev.ed. transl.) (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950), 106-08). Edwards may have drawn on this source or perhaps, as Schafer suggests in *YE 13*, 256, JE's more proximate source may have been Cotton Mather's *Blessed Unions* (Boston: 1692), 46-48 which he describes as "remarkably similar" to Edwards' account.

¹⁵² *Miscellany 94*, *YE 13*, 260.

¹⁵³ *Essay*, 118. In this context Edwards explains what these terms mean in more detail: (1) "The Father is the deity subsisting in the prime, unoriginated and absolute manner..."; (2) "The Son is the deity generated by God's [the Father's] understanding, or having an idea of Himself and subsisting in that idea"; (3) "The Holy Ghost is the deity subsisting in act, or the divine essence...breathed forth in God's infinitive love to and delight in Himself."

¹⁵⁴ *Essay*, 118.

He goes on to state his conclusion that “it confirms in me that this is the true Trinity because reason is sufficient to tell us that there must be these distinctions in the deity.”¹⁵⁵

Pneumatology of love

Central to Edwards’ pneumatology, therefore, was the notion of the procession of the Spirit arising from the love God has for the Idea (the Son) of himself that he delights in, and of the love the Son returns to the Father. The Holy Spirit is required as that perfect act of love subsisting mutually between the Father and the Son. This act of delighting in and loving each other is distinct from both the Father and the Son since, “the delight and energy that is begotten in us by an idea is distinct from the idea.” This distinct delighting or loving could not, Edwards maintained, “be confounded in God, either with God begetting or [with] his idea and image, or Son.” It is

“distinct from the other two, and yet it is God. For the pure and perfect act of God is God, because God is a pure act. It appears that this is God, because that which acts perfectly is all act, and nothing but act.”¹⁵⁶

Thus the Holy Spirit is honoured as fully Divine, as a distinct person in the Trinity, and indeed as the expression of love between the Father and the Son, that is the *vinculum caritatis* between the Father and Son.¹⁵⁷

This high view of the Spirit’s essential equality with God and the Spirit’s specific characterization as the love of God will be foundational to Edwards’ seeking to ‘honour’ the Spirit in the economic working of the Trinity for salvation of humans. He acts in His full personhood and Deity, as “the perfect act of God” not only essentially, but in his functioning as the “activity, vivacity and energy of

¹⁵⁵ *Essay*, 118. Edwards continues “...and there are no other real distinctions in God that can be thought. Whatever else can be mentioned in God are nothing but mere modes or relations of existence.”

¹⁵⁶ *Miscellany 94, YE 13*, 260.

¹⁵⁷ *Essay*, 108.

God” that befits his name as “Spirit”, and in his office “to actuate and quicken all things, and to beget energy and vivacity in the creature.”¹⁵⁸ Evidence of this pneumatology, arising from this ontology of the Trinity, is present in a number of the *Miscellanies*. There is ample evidence also that Edwards, in opting for this ontology, had an eye towards how this would facilitate union of the saints with the immanent Godhead.¹⁵⁹ His doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Spirit in particular, appears to be preparing the way for his doctrine of conversion and transformation through union and loving communion with God. For example, in *Miscellany 94* Edwards’ exposition of the procession of the Spirit as “the act of God between the Father and the Son infinitely loving and delighting in each other”¹⁶⁰ creates images of a dynamic and loving intimacy which will be prototypical for the loving intimacy that Christians will experience as a result of the indwelling of that Spirit who is that Love poured out into us.

Reflection

Initial reflection on Edwards’ approach to the immanent Trinity is that his is an *a priori* argument which stands in contrast with the consistently *a posteriori* approach in Barth. Barth makes this clear in *CD I/1* in the section in which he discusses the place of the Trinity in dogmatics. Any apparent similarities with Edwards’ method in Barth’s statements that “*God* reveals Himself,” that “He reveals Himself *through Himself*,” that He reveals *Himself*,” and that God the Revealer in revelation is “identical with His act in revelation”¹⁶¹ must be understood with the proviso that God in freedom chooses to so reveal Himself.

¹⁵⁸ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 261.*

¹⁵⁹ The joint *Miscellanies 224-225 (YE 13, 346)*, for example, together reflect a correspondence between the Spirit within the Trinity, the Spirit as given to Christ on earth, and the Spirit as given to believers. *Miscellany 396 (“Trinity”)* and *397 (“Conversion, Spiritual Knowledge”)* (*YE 13, 461-463*) taken together also present conversion as an “alteration of the temper and disposition and spirit of the mind” which is “nothing but conferring the Spirit of God,” for the Spirit is the divine disposition in God.

¹⁶⁰ Edwards links the Trinity, by means of the Spirit who is the love between the Father and the Son, with the Christian experience in the following significant sentence: “When Christ says to his Father (John 17:26) that he would declare his name to his disciples, ‘that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,’ I can understand nothing else by [it] but that the Holy Spirit might be in them and dwell in them, *which is the love of the Father to the Son* (emphasis mine).” *Miscellany 98, YE 13, 265.* Christians are by the Spirit thus brought into the love experienced within the immanent Trinity.

¹⁶¹ *CD I/1, 296.*

In clarification of the misunderstanding of his use of the three questions “about the subject, predicate and object of the short statement: ‘God speaks,’ ” Barth expresses regret that “these words have been taken amiss,” and that “the serious and mocking charge” had been brought against him” that here is a grammatical and rationalistic proof of the Trinity.” Barth remonstrates that this would be doing “the very thing I attack elsewhere, namely deriving the mysteries¹⁶² of revelation from the data of generally discernible truth.” Admitting that he used the words unguardedly and ambiguously, he stresses that they were not meant to indicate a proof. They were in an *a posteriori* fashion derivable from the revealed truth of the dogma of the Trinity. These three questions when understood in this fashion, merely help “to understand the Trinity.”¹⁶³

2. Differentiation in the Immanent Trinity - The Spirit as “Person”

What is surprising about Edwards’ development of the psychological model of the Trinity along Idealist lines is that it emerges into a Trinity with a robust view of the “members” as distinct “persons”. If Edwards desired to conceive of an immanent Trinity which then correspondingly permitted the expression of the Spirit’s person in the economy of creation and salvation, he believed himself to have found it. This is surprising because it is a model based on a singular soul or mind, and involves, by definition therefore, intrapsychic categories (mind and emotion) rather than inter-psychic or relational categories. The individuation of the persons and the way in which he describes their working within the Trinitarian counsels has even evoked the criticism of tritheism.

It is this increased emphasis by Edwards on the three persons in union, as opposed to the unity of the Godhead, that has caused scholars such as Ramsey¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² “Mystery” in Barth does not mean mystification as in Edwards but the “freedom of God.”

¹⁶³ *CD* I/1, 296.

¹⁶⁴ Paul Ramsey comments extensively on similarities between Gregory of Nyssa and Edwards in *YE* 8, 706-738.

and Jinkins¹⁶⁵ to suggest that Edwards was influenced by the Cappadocians, and it is this that leads Plantinga Pauw, alternatively, to appeal to the putative influence of Richard of St. Victor.¹⁶⁶ However, it should be noted that in the *Miscellany 94* in which Edwards developed his Trinity along the lines of the psychological model there is no reference to these influences. Edwards' Idealism enabled him to establish a differentiation of the Idea and the Love into the 'persons' of the Son and the Spirit without any of the reticence Barth will show in this regard. Our contention is that Edwards may have felt protected from the accusations of tritheism by the very psychological model within which he championed differentiation of personhood. Protection against any tendency towards too great a differentiation or individuation was built into the model which, in its very constitution, has the notion of one Mind in it. Plantinga Pauw's contention that Edwards was forced by the events which engaged the economic Trinity, and especially by the covenant of redemption, to invoke another more social model of the Trinity, seem unnecessary. Edwards thought of his "psychological" model as social, and he is no sooner finished explaining the derivation of the ontological Trinity than he is using the term 'person' frequently, and defending the notion of the distinct offices of the persons vigorously.

This finds ample illustration with respect to the Spirit. Inherently for Edwards, the notion that the Spirit is the *Love* of God means that the Spirit is a person. The Spirit is the personification of the love shared between persons. It is for this reason that the "psychological" Trinity is social. In the *Miscellany 94*, for example, we trace the development of the identity of the Spirit as Love along psychological and Idealist lines. Edwards makes the assertion that the "Holy Spirit is the act of God between the Father and the Son infinitely loving and delighting in each other."¹⁶⁷ Then in the same paragraph he states that "This is certainly distinct from the other two ... the perfect act of God must be a substantial act ... an infinitely perfect substance, even the essence of God."¹⁶⁸ Immediately thereafter in the following paragraph, we find Edwards identifying

¹⁶⁵ Jinkins, 1993b, 183.

¹⁶⁶ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 12, 14-15, 37, 114.

¹⁶⁷ *Miscellany 94, YE 13*, 260.

¹⁶⁸ *Miscellany 94, YE 13*, 260.

the person of the Spirit as that “act” and “perfect substance” whose “office is to actuate and quicken all things, and to beget energy and vivacity in the creature.”¹⁶⁹ Clearly the psychological Trinity could in Edwards’ mind account for the individuation necessary for the irreducible distinctiveness of the Spirit in his economic roles.

In similar fashion, in the *Treatise on Grace* unequivocal expression of the personhood of the Spirit – “I think the Scripture does sufficiently reveal the Holy spirit as a proper Divine person ... a distinct personal agent”¹⁷⁰ - flows hand in hand with explanations of the essential nature of the Spirit - “...the Divine essence is called in a peculiar manner as breathed forth and subsisting in the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷¹

The notion of his distinct personhood does become critical to honouring the Spirit in the economy where he is not merely the one who “applies” the gift of redemption, but *is* that Gift given in redemption – to bring about union with the Godhead. This is the context in which Edwards’ functional tritheism becomes most noticeable, an objection he does not seem to have anticipated. His apparent blind spot to what is an heterodox position is testimony to his fervour to honour the Spirit.

The objection of polytheism

Prior to considering this, we note that Edwards did seem to anticipate some of the objections that would be raised with respect to his Trinity. The first was that of polytheism, which he counters in *Miscellany 94*. In answer to the questions, why are only two ‘Persons’ generated or processed, and not an infinite number, and why are the ideas and affections of the other persons within the Trinity, that is, those of the Son and the Spirit, not substantial also, Edwards’ answer is an extension of the argumentation used in the classical, ontological proof of God. There can be no idea beyond what is the perfect idea. There can be no love

¹⁶⁹ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 261.*

¹⁷⁰ *Treatise on Grace, 57.*

¹⁷¹ *Treatise on Grace, 57.*

beyond the perfect love. Therefore further ideas and loves within the Trinity do not generate new substantial persons as they are already contained within the perfect idea and perfect love.¹⁷² Thus Edwards concludes “So that if we turn it all the ways in the world, we shall never be able to make more than these three: God, the idea of God, and delight in God.”¹⁷³ But what about other *attributes*, attributes other than reason or knowledge and love? Why would these not generate new persons also? Edwards’ answer is that all other attributes are contained or subsumed within knowledge and love. For example, goodness is the “external exertion of the essence” of love,¹⁷⁴ and holiness is for Edwards, “delight in excellency, ’tis God’s sweet consent to himself, or in other words, his perfect delight in himself; which we have shown to be the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷⁵ Thus it is the attributes of essence, or ‘real’ attributes that govern this ontological proof and limit the number of persons to three in Edwards’ reasoned derivation of the Trinity. This attributing of goodness and holiness to the Spirit constituted a further ‘honouring’ of the Spirit in Edwards’ theology.

The objection of depersonalization

Edwards also anticipated the accusation that his ‘persons’ within the psychological model might in fact be differentiated insufficiently. In fact the opposite charge became more prevalent, as we shall see, but Edwards did not foresee this. Inherent within the psychological model of Augustine is the following tension: the assignation of the Son as “Understanding,” and of the Spirit as “Love,” appears to diminish their personhood in that if this is all they are, they cannot qualify for personhood by possessing that which traditionally defines it – intellect *and* emotion *and* will. Edwards’ defence is not to suggest that each person does have separate intellects, sensitivities and wills.

Instead, without actually using the term ‘perichoresis’, this is in fact his defence in the *Essay*, in words that are its equivalent. He justifies the personhood of the

¹⁷² *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 261.*

¹⁷³ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 262.*

¹⁷⁴ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 262.*

¹⁷⁵ *Miscellany 94, YE 13, 263.*

Trinitarian persons by means of the coinherence of the attributes of each in the other, a perichoretic union of ontological procession. The unity of the Godhead is maintained through this union, in a way that reflects Augustine's concern on the one hand. The integrity and 'threeness' of personhood is also maintained in that each person is in the other and the attributes of one are therefore "predicable one of another".¹⁷⁶ Therefore he concludes that "All three are persons for they all have understanding and will. There is understanding and will in the Father, as the Son and the Holy Ghost are in Him and proceed from Him. There is understanding and will in the Son, as He is understanding and as the Holy Ghost is in Him and proceeds from Him."¹⁷⁷ The passage in the *Essay* in which this is expounded is remarkable for its particular emphasis on the Spirit as person, who as love not only imparts that to the Father and Son, but who also as such defines the unity of the Godhead: "... so the Holy Ghost or the divine essence subsisting is divine, but understands because the Son the Divine Idea is in Him."¹⁷⁸ This is further evidence of the high place of the Spirit in Edwards' ontology. It is the Spirit's love, which is the mutual love of the Father for the Son which defines the unity of the Godhead. The use of perichoretic procession to achieve this union is Augustinian.

Consideration of "On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity"

That Edwards was strongly influenced in his theology of the Trinity by a desire to give honour to the Spirit as person has received strong confirmation by convincing demonstration of this motivation in the very recent publication of his hitherto unprinted individual manuscript entitled, "*On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity*."¹⁷⁹ Lee in his editorial comments goes so far as to say that in this piece, "Edwards makes a clear departure from the Western tradition and sets forth a remarkably original conception of the Holy Spirit within the

¹⁷⁶ *Essay*, 120-1.

¹⁷⁷ *Essay*, 121.

¹⁷⁸ *Essay*, 120-1.

¹⁷⁹ This work has been published in *YE 21*, 146-148. It is an untitled fragment in the collections of the Boston Public Library, and Lee suspects that it predates *Miscellany No. 1062* and that it was probably written in the early 1740's, and no later than 1742 (*YE 21*, 145).

Trinity.”¹⁸⁰ Here Edwards speaks of the Spirit as more than the bond of love, but as an “active agent,” and as one who “reigns,” “governs” and “influences” the other two persons of the Trinity. Lee concludes that although this pneumatology is not elaborated, “what he does say represents a profound advancement over the Western church’s typically underdeveloped doctrine of the agency of the Holy Spirit in the intra-trinitarian life of God.”¹⁸¹ Specific consideration of this fragment seems appropriate, especially in that it is a more detailed account than is found anywhere else, of two key aspects of Edwards’ theology of the Trinity: (i) Edwards’ innovative Trinitarian and idiosyncratic approach to the simplicity of God, in which the divine persons of the Trinity are individuated by subsuming some of the divine perfections (‘real’ attributes, understanding and love) under individual persons of the Trinity, whilst other perfections (‘relations of existence’) are considered to be part of the divine essence; and (ii) the apparent invoking of a perichoresis (again, without the term) at a processional level to resolve the issue of the unity of the Godhead as well as the integrity of each person as a person.

It is apparent that its content is driven by a particular concern to address the seeming inferiority of the Spirit as Edwards perceived it in his theological tradition in which, in the immanent Trinity the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, who therefore appear as the Spirit’s ‘lords:’ the Holy Spirit “is the last that proceeds from both the other two.”¹⁸² Correspondingly, within the economic Trinity the Spirit serves the interests of the “other two.” Edwards’ way of addressing this apparent subordinationism in both aspects of the Trinity, immanent and economic, is to emphasize a distinction between attributes related to the essence of God which all three persons share, and attributes of relation, or personal glories related to personal relations: “personal relations are not the divine essence.”¹⁸³ Equality for the three persons is not just a function of a shared essence, but also one arising from the fact that there is an equal but different sharing of personal glories related to personal relations. Edwards seems to be

¹⁸⁰ *YE 21*, 18.

¹⁸¹ *YE 21*, 19.

¹⁸² *YE 21*, 146.

¹⁸³ *YE 21*, 146.

saying that not all of the persons have the same “personal glory.” These are distinctive to the identity of the person in relation to the others. However, though they may be distinct, each has equivalent personal glories that add up to the same overall glory.

This concept is worked out into both the immanent and economic Trinities by Edwards, especially in relation to the Holy Spirit. He begins and ends with issues related to the immanent Trinity. His answer to the seeming inequality arising from the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son (it is again apparent in this work that Edwards adhered to the Western *filioque* tradition), and perceived subordination to them as servant to lords, is to suggest that just as the Father’s ‘personal glory’ in the immanent Trinity is that of the “fountain of Deity”¹⁸⁴ and the Son’s is that also of “lord” in a secondary sense (with regard to procession), the Son’s equivalent and compensating glory is that of being the “end of all procession” and the “good that they enjoy.” The Father may have superiority as the fountain and so he begets the Son who is thereby granted the personal glory of being the “great and first object of divine love,” with an inherent superiority the ‘beloved’ has over the ‘lover.’ But, after the manner of the Augustinian, psychological and Idealistic generation of the Trinity which Edwards consistently demonstrates, the Spirit has a compensating ‘superiority’ or ‘personal glory’ in that he is the divine love who “as it were *reigns* over the Godhead and *governs* his heart, and wholly *influences* both the Father and the Son in all they do.”¹⁸⁵

Edwards transitions the argument into the realm of the economic Trinity by indicating that as the Holy Spirit is “the end of the other two in their acting *ad intra*,” so also is he in the acting of God “*ad extra*.” In the realm of the economic Trinity, Edwards demonstrates the equality of the Spirit with respect to personal glory in two different aspects:

¹⁸⁴ *YE 21*, 147.

¹⁸⁵ *YE 21*, 147. The italics are mine. These are the verbs Lee, in his editorial comment on this piece (*YE 21*, 18) highlights in referring to new pneumatological advances he considers Edwards to have made, that is, the “departure from the Western tradition” and his “remarkably original conception of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity.”

- (i) The first is with respect to election. Although the Father's personal glory is to elect, the 'end' of that electing purpose is that the elect might receive the Spirit as their own possession. So, in fact, Edwards argues, because the end of the Father's electing is the gift of the Spirit, and the end of the Son's suffering is the purchasing of that gift, all that the other "Two" do is subordinated to that end. The Spirit therefore has a superiority or unique glory in that sense.

- (ii) The second is with respect to servanthood. In the economy of redemption as expounded in the New Testament, the Spirit is the messenger and 'servant' of both the Father and the Son. Yet, Edwards argues, in so doing, the Spirit sustains their character and honour in doing so and thereby the Spirit is given an honour the other 'Two' do not receive. It is blasphemy against the Spirit that is considered the 'unpardonable sin,' and not that against the Father or the Son.

Edwards' conclusion is that each person has superiority in different but equivalent ways that add up to equality of personal glory.

Edwards then moves into a discussion of what has been obvious throughout his discussion of this sphere of personal relations in the Godhead: that there is a mutual dependence of the persons on each other. This fragment ends with a discussion about what this dependence, that is both essential and economic, means for the issue of the simplicity of God. Here Edwards reverts primarily to discussion of the immanent Trinity again. Edwards' primary concern is that if the persons derive their divine essence from each other, this may not threaten their equality for reasons he has expressed that relate to equivalence of personal glories. But the dependence of the Son and the Spirit on the Father as those who derive their essence from Him, could, Edwards concedes, threaten two concepts which Edwards clearly cherished as orthodox tenets of the faith: the independence or underived nature of the divine essence, and the undividedness or simplicity of the divine essence.

Edwards has two responses to his own question:

- (i) He insists firstly, that the essence of God is independent and undivided with respect to its ‘being,’ even though it may within itself contain elements of derivation and dependence with respect to the ‘relative being’ of the persons. Having asserted that the essence “is not in any respect in any dependence or by derivation,” Edwards then adds a statement that is difficult to interpret in this already dense context. “But yet it may be by derivation.”¹⁸⁶ It seems as though having said that the essence of the Godhead cannot be divided or derived from without, yet there can be ‘derivedness’ within the essence, because the ‘underivedness’ is that of the Father as fount of the Trinity, and therefore, there is an overall underivedness. This seems the best way to interpret this in the larger context within this piece and also in the immediate context where Edwards states, “That it should be here or there, or that in some instances it should be where it is, or belonging to such persons, this don’t in the least detract from the glory of the divine essence in itself considered.”¹⁸⁷ This concept only works if the principle of coinherence is invoked, and without articulating this word again, Edwards does indeed seem to be invoking it. Each person is underived in the sense that because the Father is underived, so are they also, by coinherence. Yet as persons, the Son and Spirit are derived within the essence of the Trinity from the Father. This seems to make sense of why Edwards states here: “That though the Son has life in himself because he is possessed of the divine essence, that (*the essence I take it*) has life in itself and in an independence, yet the Father has given him to have life in himself.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ *YE 21*, 148.

¹⁸⁷ *YE 21*, 148.

¹⁸⁸ *YE 21*, 148.

- (ii) Edwards secondly establishes that the divine essence is indeed independent and underived because no will outside of it has given it existence: “it is not dependent on any arbitrariness or voluntary communication.” Again Edwards acknowledges that with respect to the ‘relative being’ of the persons within the Trinity there is dependence and a following of the will of other persons. Yet because of the independence of the Father again, I take it, the Godhead remains independent, and through coinherence, I take it again, the other persons are also independent because they share his essence, even though in their ‘relative being’ they have mutual dependence, the one on the other. A necessary corollary concept here seems to be that there is but one will within the Trinity, that residing within the Father, which is the Spirit. The others have ‘will’ in a derived sense by coinherence from the Spirit and can thus be considered as ‘persons’ (with intellect emotion and will). This last concept is certainly an interpretive step on my part and a tentative one at best. It seems to be in keeping with the whole intent of the article. It also perhaps makes sense of Edwards’ final comment which seems out of place otherwise. He makes a statement that seems to be saying something about the validity of his Augustinian and Idealist construct of the Trinity. The Son is not just the wisdom of God in a figurative sense, he insists. He is the “real proper wisdom of God.”¹⁸⁹ I take it that having insisted on the oneness of God in terms of independence of being as arising from the Father’s underivedness or independence with respect to origin (through whom, by coinherence, the Son and the Spirit have independent existence also, even though they have derived ‘relative being’), and then on the oneness of God with respect to will as arising from the Spirit (through whom, by coinherence, the Father and the Son have will, yet there is one will not three), he is also insistent on the oneness of the intellect of God as arising from the Son as the wisdom of God (through whom by coinherence the Father and the Son have intellect, yet there is one intellect, not three).

¹⁸⁹ *YE 21*, 148.

Perichoresis of procession

Although Edwards' is a very eloquent description of a certain type of perichoresis, a critical question relates to the appropriateness of its use as a means to maintain the unity of the Godhead and also the hypostatic uniqueness of the Spirit (and the Father and the Son). This is what may be classified as a 'perichoresis of procession,' which is an invocation of perichoresis at the ontological level. This is very much an Augustinian tendency,¹⁹⁰ and it is an excessive use of perichoresis to compensate for a view of personhood that is limited in its inception by the psychological analogy for which unity rather than threeness is the predominating motive. The psychological model, even with the invocation of ontological perichoresis, does not in the end provide that which motivated Edwards, and that which he desired for the Spirit in particular, a satisfactory articulation of the true hypostatic uniqueness of the persons in the Trinity.

Of course, Edwards did not see this as a difficulty. He has, in his mind, achieved the 'honouring' of the hypostatic uniqueness of the Spirit. His invocation of ontological perichoresis to achieve this individuation within the Augustinian tradition where the unity of the Godhead is a given, appears to have given him permission to articulate a theology of persons who are eternally individuated to such an extent that they can 'covenant' (contract?) with each other. The irony

¹⁹⁰Augustine's defence of the unity of the Godhead shows too great a dependence on the idea of coinherence or perichoresis. There are some places in Augustine's writings where his assertions about the doctrine of perichoresis are not substantially divergent from that of the Cappadocians, especially Gregory of Nyssa (see Martland, T.R. A Study Of Cappadocian and Augustinian Methodology, *Anglican Theological Review* 47 (Jl 1965), (hereafter "Martland, 1965a"), 258, fn.13). For example Augustine legitimately uses this concept to proclaim the equality of each of the persons with the full Trinity as well as with each other, on the basis that God cannot become greater than any of the Persons (Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV.3,5, cited in Martland, 1965a, 258.). A further example of his legitimate use of perichoresis was to give single expression to the triune God in His actions. Thus any act belonging to a particular Trinitarian person is not performed without the other persons. As Martland states: "As the whole undivided essence is in each person so an action via a particular mode is in reality via the three. For Augustine this means even the traditionally associated characteristics of source, wisdom and love fall to the doctrine." (Martland, 1965a, 258.) It is in this latter area that Augustine begins to need perichoresis and therefore to employ it inappropriately. In his similar invocation of perichoresis to achieve unity, Edwards is exactly in parallel with Augustine.

here is that in the depictions of the covenanting and actions of the persons in the economy of redemption, the individuation achieved in this manner is so great as to threaten to undo the unity of the Edwardsean Trinity.

The elevation in Cappadocian thought of the category of hypostasis, and the Cappadocian Trinity of three persons with hypostatic uniqueness, in a oneness of eternal *koinonia*, would have served Edwards well in preventing him from verging towards the tritheism suggested by especially his covenanting, ‘salvation by committee’ theology. Edwards does have a social component in his theology, but it is not a Cappadocian social model of divine persons in communion, but rather a somewhat humanoid model of ‘individuals in relation.’

In fairness to Edwards, his combination of the notions of procession with coinherence is somewhat puzzling and complex to him, for it is at this point in his *Essay* that he wisely pleads his finitude and the inscrutability of the Divine by conceding, “I am far from pretending to explaining the Trinity so as to render it no longer a mystery.”¹⁹¹

The filioque clause

Not surprisingly given his use of the Augustinian psychological model, Edwards’ is a proponent of the *filioque* clause.¹⁹² Although he declares this in a context where he appears for a moment to side with the Eastern tradition in speaking of the Father as the “fountain of the Godhead,”¹⁹³ the procession of the Spirit from both the Father and the Son is in keeping with the ‘mutual love’ Augustinian psychological notion wherein the love that is shared between the Father and the Son is the Spirit.

¹⁹¹ *Essay*, 121-2.

¹⁹² In his *Essay* (122) he simply acknowledges the phrase “Proceeding [from] both the Father and the Son” among “many things wont to be said by orthodox divines about the Trinity”. A previously unpublished fragment of Edwards’ writing has recently appeared in *YE 21*, 146-148. This untitled fragment from the collections of the Boston Public Library, has been given the title, *On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity* (hereafter I refer to it as “*Equality*.”) The editor of this volume, Sang Hyun Lee, suspects that this fragment predates *Miscellany 1062* and that it was probably written in the early 1740’s, and no later than 1742 (*YE 21*, 145). This piece confirms the adherence of Edwards to the *filioque* clause.

¹⁹³ *Essay*, 122; *Equality*, 147.

The objection of tritheism

Perhaps the greatest challenge to Edwards' doctrine of the Trinity was one he did not appear to anticipate. This was the fact that some of his social depictions of the Trinity 'covenanting' seem tritheistic rather than Trinitarian, and also that the simplicity of the Godhead appears to be threatened or at least idiosyncratically reconceived by Edwards in the manner in which he differentiates the persons of the Trinity. The assigning within Edwards' psychological Trinity, in accordance with Idealism, of attributes to particular persons, positioned him such that, even with respect to Barth, he "is more thoroughly Trinitarian in his discussion of the divine perfections."¹⁹⁴ Such is the assertion of Steve Holmes in his book, *God of Grace and God of Glory*. This arises from Edwards' striking statement that "the Father's perfections are only and precisely the Son and the Spirit."¹⁹⁵ My particular interest in this "striking move" by Edwards, whether it turns out to be a valid one or not, lies in the fact that it is yet another evidence of his 'honouring' of the Spirit. If, as Edwards asserts, "all divine love may be resolved into God's infinite love to himself" which "is "nothing but the Holy Spirit," and if indeed, not just the goodness of God, but also the attribute of holiness¹⁹⁶ resides within the Spirit, this is lofty view of the Spirit indeed.

Edwards, according to Holmes, thereby denies any meaning to the notion of a divine essence: "The residue of a common 'essence' which was so pervasive in Western theological discourse is wholly absent, and Edwards claims to be unable to think of 'any rational meaning' behind the standard language that describes the essence."¹⁹⁷ The upshot of this according to Holmes is that "in this passage Edwards has succeeded in gathering up the whole tradition of discourse about the

¹⁹⁴ Holmes, 2001a, 66.

¹⁹⁵ Holmes, 2001a, 69. Holmes notes that this is not an isolated statement in Edwards, citing a passage in *End of Creation* (528).

¹⁹⁶ Holiness, according to Edwards is "God's delight in excellency, 'tis God's sweet consent to himself, ... his perfect delight in himself ; which we have shown to be the Holy Spirit." *Miscellany 94, YE 13*, 263.

¹⁹⁷ Holmes, 2001a, 69.

attributes of God into an overarching Trinitarian framework,”¹⁹⁸ and has thereby accomplished something radical within the tradition. This Holmes indicates is an example of where Edwards went beyond Augustine in his psychological analogies to psychological “accounts.”¹⁹⁹ This made another move obvious, says Holmes, that of “essentially seeking to appropriate different perfections of the divine *phusis* to particular *hypostases*.”²⁰⁰ The hypostatic integrity of each person is, as explained above, maintained by perichoresis of procession.

Holmes goes so far as to suggest that this subsuming of the divine perfections under the doctrine of the Trinity by Edwards reflects agreement with Barth’s contention that the perfections of God are truly the Being of God, but it offers, according to Holmes, a way of understanding this that Barth did not articulate. That way of understanding was to gather all the perfections of God up into the Son and the Spirit.

The fundamental notion that Holmes posits with regard to the absence of the notion of ‘essence’ in Edwards’ Trinity, has been seriously challenged by Oliver Crisp. “Were this the case,” Crisp argues, “it would be more than unprecedented; it would mark a move away from orthodox Trinitarianism into a form of tritheism. For if the referents for the concept ‘God’ were all and only the Father, Son and Spirit, without any common essence, then it is difficult to see how this is at all coherent, let alone Trinitarian.”²⁰¹ Crisp cites a passage which gives evidence that Edwards did retain the concept of shared essence in Edwards’ Trinity.²⁰² Crisp also suggests that it is unclear that Edwards did intend to exclude everything other than the real attributes. He suggests the alternative interpretation that “the perfections of God refer to the real attributes of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit together), but that the relations of existence do not.”

¹⁹⁸ Holmes, 2001a, 56.

¹⁹⁹ Holmes uses this term to refer to the projection of analogies found in the mind of humanity back into the life of God. His rationale is the biblical language of *Logos* – rationality, idea – and Wisdom (and Love, if Augustine’s identification of the Spirit with Love is accepted).

²⁰⁰ Holmes, 2001a, 71.

²⁰¹ Crisp, O. unpublished essay, “Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity and Individuation.”

²⁰² *Miscellany 650, YE 18*, 190. “’Tis from the exceeding imperfect notion that we have of the nature or essence of God, and because we can’t think of it but we must think of it far otherwise than it is, that arises the difficulty in our mind of conceiving of God’s existing without a cause.”

These relations are merely relations. They refer to attributes such as existence, for example, in relation to which God is not identical with his immutability. Similarly, God is not identical with his omnipresence or authority or immortality, or infinity. These are all merely relations of existence that God has, or is described as possessing.

Crisp does concede the novelty in Edwards' locating of perfections that have traditionally been considered to refer to the essence of God to the persons of the Trinity. But he does not agree that this removes the shared essence of God and his concern further is that the partitioning of the 'real' and 'relational' attributes violates the *opera extra sunt indivisa* principle which is a crucial constituent of a doctrine of divine simplicity. Edwards is "unable to avoid the impression that certain divine attributes are the peculiar preserve of one or other divine person, rather than shared together in the divine life" and his drawing upon the concept of perichoresis does not overcome this.²⁰³ Thus," Crisp concludes, "in individuating the persons, he seems to have threatened a crucial constituent of the unity of God's being."²⁰⁴

Holmes has himself recently written a rebuttal of the dispositional view in light, among other things, of its contravention of the simplicity of the divine being.²⁰⁵ This will be considered in detail in the evaluative section below.

Helm in his introduction to the *Treatise on Grace*, has also indicated he remains unconvinced that Edwards' treatment of the Trinity removes the suspicion of tritheism. "What God's idea of himself will be will not be another person of the

²⁰³ As indicated elsewhere Edwards did endorse a doctrine of perichoresis (see *Essay* (p. 120)). It is inappropriately used and insufficiently worked through to obviate the difficulties here, however. Crisp cites the recent work of Peter Van Inwagen who speculates that the persons of the Trinity may have certain intrinsic non-relational attributes not shared by the other divine persons in a fashion that Edwards' distinction between 'real' and 'relational' attributes attempts to demonstrate, but as Crisp rightly concludes, it becomes difficult to see how this can be made compatible with (a) perichoresis, and (b) divine simplicity, as understood in the *opera extra sunt indivisa* principle. See Van Inwagen, "And Yet They Are Not Three Gods but One God", in *God Knowledge and Mystery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 258-9.

²⁰⁴ Crisp, O. unpublished essay, "Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity and Individuation."

²⁰⁵ Holmes, 2003a.

Godhead but another God.”²⁰⁶ The principal point which Helm appears to miss, however, is that Edwards is not referring to “God” as the triune God, but to the “Father.” It is the Father who has a perfect ‘Idea’ of Himself, which is the Son. Even though Edwards may rarely in this argumentation refer to ‘God’, he intends ‘the Father,’ and he refers to the ‘Father’ most frequently.²⁰⁷ Edwards even refers to the Father as the fount of the Trinity,²⁰⁸ and the ontological ‘proof’ begins with God the Father specifically generating the Son, not a ‘triune God’ generating another triune God as Helm would have us believe.

Helm claims that Edwards does not himself see the proof as convincing, and he quotes Edwards at a particular point in the *Essay* to prove this. Closer inspection of this quotation however reveals that Helm employed it out of context. It is not at the point of the ontological proof where Edwards pleads his own finitude and the ultimate inscrutability of God as a way of acknowledging its limitations. Rather it is his further attempt to elucidate how notions of procession co-exist with coinherence in the Trinity. It is the ontology of relations that is so puzzling for him and which leads him to plead human inadequacy. Helm is right, I believe, in his conclusion that “Edwards was a metaphysician, but he was no rationalist. The mysteries of revelation were to be mysteries still.”²⁰⁹ However, caution must be exercised at this point. The point at which “mystery” is declared and intellectual pursuit is deemed to have reached its limit, may have been different for Edwards than for his commentator Helm. After all, as noted in the

²⁰⁶ *Treatise on Grace*, 21. Having first declared it ingenious, Helm nevertheless acknowledges a significant weakness in it: “For one thing,” he says, “Edwards’ premise that an idea of x where x is ‘non-material’, e.g. an emotion, is equivalent to an instance of x, is dubious. A person does not have to be in a fright to have an idea of fear. But disregarding this, what God’s idea of himself will be will not be another person of the Godhead but another God. 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*. His argument is implicitly tri-theistic.”

²⁰⁷ A case of his using the term ‘God’ is in *Miscellany* 308 where Edwards is defending against the objection that his ‘proof’ allows for more than three persons. There he states: “Secondly, we never suppose the Father generated the Son by understanding the Son, but that *God* generated the Son by understanding his own essence...” (italics mine to indicate the occasion being illustrated). Here the context makes it clear Edwards is referring to the Father using the term God.

²⁰⁸ *Miscellany* 143, *YE* 13, 298: “*Coroll.*2. Hence we see how and in what sense the Father is the fountain of the Godhead, and how naturally and properly God the Father is spoken of in the Scripture as of the Deity without distinction, as being the only true God; and why God the Son should commonly [be] spoken of with a distinction, and be called the Son of God; and so the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God.”

²⁰⁹ *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, 21.

Trinity section, Edwards launched into the Essay in defiance of those who protested its further elucidatory study,²¹⁰ expressing that he was “not afraid to say twenty things about the Trinity which Scripture never said.”²¹¹ Edwards is certainly aware of the limitations of his humanity and of the ultimate inscrutability of God, but I suspect he would have been very uncomfortable with the footnoted quotation of Rabbi Duncan which Helm presumably approves:

The Trinity is my highest Theologoumenon. I reach it, and find it in the supreme harmony of revealed things. But it is equally irrational and irreverent to speculate on the nexus between the persons. This is not revealed, and I think it is not revealable.²¹²

It is in the context of speculation on the nexus between the Persons that Edwards reaches his own limit, but he would certainly not have approved a censure on others in the last two centuries who have sought to further explore and develop Trinitarian theology.

Although the ontological proof did have its limitations, it has to be said that Edwards was well-intentioned in that he wished to articulate a doctrine of the union of regenerate humanity with God in a God-glorifying manner. His own insistence that in the mind of God, what is first intended is last executed,²¹³ seems to be observed in his reasoning here with respect to the doctrine of union. His first execution is the adoption of a model of the essential Trinity in which the Spirit is both honoured as Love and enabled as a person to be infused within human persons. The Augustinian model does achieve this for him despite its weaknesses.

²¹⁰ “There has been much cry of late against saying one word, particularly about the Trinity, but what the Scripture has said; judging it impossible but that if we did, we should err in a thing so much above us... .” *Miscellany* 94, *YE* 13, 257.

²¹¹ *Miscellany* 94, *YE* 13, 257.

²¹² ‘Rabbi’ Duncan, *Colloquia Peripatetica*, 5th edn., (Edinburgh, 1879), 165, cited in *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, fn.1, 21.

²¹³ *End*, *YE* 8, 405ff.

Tritheism has been a charge levelled against Edwards with respect to its ontological definition. It will be a recurring danger we will note as we begin to consider the functioning of the Trinitarian persons in the covenants and the economy also.

Edwards' second step towards his pneumatological goal is to express a theology of the economic Trinity in which the role of the Spirit is honoured and analogous with that in the essential Trinity. He specifically wishes to grant full honour to the Spirit as 'gift' to the believer rather than as simply the "applier" of redemption. In this arena Edwards espoused a pneumatology higher than that of his fellow Calvinistic covenantal theologians. This had profound consequences for his view of the immediacy of the work of grace effected by the triune God on converting humans. How he achieved this is our next consideration.

3. The Economic Trinity and Covenantal Relations – the Spirit as 'Gift'

It is clear that Edwards did not think that the Trinity should be defended primarily on the basis of the economic Trinity and its importance to the atonement.²¹⁴ However, having established the immanent Trinity, Edwards saw in it an order of existence that was correspondingly reflected in the economic Trinity. The *opera ad extra*, the works ascribed to each person in the outward manifestation of the Trinity, reflect the *opera ad intra*, or personal attributes by which the three persons in the ontological Trinity are distinguished (subsistence-generation-procession). Having established this logical priority of the immanent over the economic, Edwards expounded the full participation of the entire Trinity

²¹⁴ Edwards takes issue with Calvin on this point: "Calvin waves aside eternal generation as an 'absurd fiction'. But to maintain the deity of Christ merely on the ground that it is essential to his making an adequate atonement for sin, is to involve the rejection of his deity if ever the doctrine of atonement becomes obnoxious... Not to ground the distinctions of the divine essence by some immanent eternal necessity was to make easy the denial of what has been called the ontological trinity and then the rejection of the economical trinity was not difficult or far away." (Recorded in Strong, Augustus. *Systematic Theology*. (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1950). Vol. I, 341). He does, however, offer the opinion that the atonement was the reason that the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed to us. Edwards, J. *Works* [Carter], 4:130, 154. The basic approach to the Trinity in Edwards through philosophy rather than in the Christological revelational event, is evidently in contrast with that of both Calvin and Barth.

in the work of atonement..²¹⁵ Keeping this priority was important to Edwards because he understood that if the Trinity were defended on the basis of the participation of the persons, the subordination of the persons evident in this participation could lead to denial of their essential equality and of the Trinity. Having established the essential equality of the persons within the essential Trinity, he thus understood the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit to be related to the economy, and in the case of the redemptive mission to redeem humans, to be *covenantal* in character and not ontological.

Edwards as an inheritor of a tradition in which covenant theology was dominant, did not work outside of its bounds. He did however modify especially the covenants of grace and redemption. His way of doing this was by elaborating the Trinitarian roles within these covenants. Edwards observed a consonance between the internal union and ‘acts’ of the immanent Trinity with the manner in which the persons act in the economy, and in turn, with the manner in which they consult and act within the covenant of redemption. Thus, in fact, Edwards envisaged three interconnected levels of Trinitarian relations. These he unveils in a small but tortuously complex treatise on the covenant of redemption, *Miscellany 1062*, also known as *Observations Concerning the Scriptural Oeconomy of the Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption*.²¹⁶

A detailed exposition of this document as it relates to the Trinity and Trinitarian relations has been undertaken by Plantinga Pauw.²¹⁷ I wish merely to highlight in this work and sections in the *Treatise on Grace*, what has to do with the Spirit in particular. These are the segments in Edwards’ works in which he gives the clearest indication of his desire to honour the Spirit in the economic Trinity and in the perpetrating of human redemption under the covenant rubric.

²¹⁵ Edwards, J. *Works* [Carter], 4:130, 154.

²¹⁶ These are recorded in *Treatise on Grace and other posthumously published writings*, (Helm, P. ed.), 77-98 and will be referred to hereafter as “*Observations*.” This work was first published in 1880 by Egbert C. Smyth following the campaign begun in 1854 by Horace Bushnell aimed at exposing heterodoxy in Edwards on the Trinity.

²¹⁷ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 105-119.

a. **In the *Observations Concerning The Scripture Oeconomy of the Trinity and Covenant of Redemption* – honouring the Spirit as “person” in a “social” Trinity**

One of Edwards’ chief concerns was that the Spirit’s role in the economic Trinity does appear to be a subordinate one, and that in significant ways, the standard Reformed view of the Spirit’s role within the covenant of redemption minimized the honour of the Spirit. One particular concern that motivated this entry by Edwards was to rectify the conception that the Spirit, because subordinated within the economy to both the Father and the Son, was therefore not their equal, and to address the further inequities apparent in the covenant.²¹⁸

Economic subordination addressed

Edwards begins by noting that there is a subordination within the Trinity with respect to the manner in which the persons operate both in creation and in the accomplishment of man’s redemption.²¹⁹ He is certain however, that such an economy does not contradict the essential equality of the Three Persons in terms of ‘excellency of nature’ and glory. At the ground level of the immanent Trinity, there is a subordination of sorts, on which the economy is patterned. But to honour the Spirit (and the Son), Edwards establishes that neither of these threatens the fully Deity and equality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. This is firstly because the subordination within the immanent Trinity is one of *priority*, and not superiority: “And though there be a priority of subsistence, and a kind of dependence of the Son, in His subsistence, He is wholly from the Father and is begotten by Him; yet this is more properly called *priority* than superiority, as we ordinarily use such terms.”²²⁰ Ontological dependence, Edwards insists, does not imply inequality: “There is dependance [sic] without inferiority of deity; because in the Son the deity, the whole deity and glory of the Father, is as it were repeated or duplicated. Everything in the Father is repeated,

²¹⁸ *Observations*, 89ff..

²¹⁹ *Observations*, 77.

²²⁰ *Observations*, 77.

or expressed again, and that fully: so that there is properly no inferiority.”²²¹ This is in keeping with Edwards’ conceiving of the Son as the perfect Idea of the Father elsewhere. It also bears resemblance to Barth’s use of the concept of threefold repetition²²² to express the generation of the Son or procession of the Spirit.

The submission within this Trinity of equal Persons, must therefore, Edwards argues, be based not on ‘any natural subjection’ based on superiority-inferiority, or on the ‘dependance [sic] of one on the will of the other’, but rather it must be established by ‘mutual free agreement, whereby the person, of their own will, have as it were formed themselves into a society, for carrying on the great designs of glorifying the deity and communicating its fullness.’²²³ The functions assigned to each of the persons for the economy were decided upon prior to the covenant of redemption (because there is a change back to the ‘normal’ economy relations after redemption is accomplished in accordance with the covenant, Edwards argues),²²⁴ and they remain after the work of redemption is over. These mutually established decisions of this Divine society in establishing what the economy would be, that is the Father’s designation as head and Prime Mover in the works of God, and the subservient status of Son as mediating and Spirit as applier, were not arbitrary. The “order of their acting” is “agreeable to the order of their subsisting.”²²⁵ They also do not therefore imply inequality.

With respect to the Spirit therefore, Edwards seeks to honour him, not only by defending his equality with the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity, and establishing that his procession from Father and Son (he approved the *filioque* clause) at that level was an issue of priority, not inferiority. He also honours the Spirit by establishing that the function within the economic Trinity to which he gladly submits is one suited to his essential nature, and therefore could not have been undertaken by any other Person. He only could fulfil the role as “the

²²¹ *Observations*, 77.

²²² *CD I/1*, 406.

²²³ *Observations*, 78.

²²⁴ *Observations*, 79.

²²⁵ *Observations*, 80.

common emissary and consummator of the designs of the other two”²²⁶ given his double processioning from the two. But thirdly, and Edwards makes much of this point, in the decisions made with respect to roles in the economy “all the persons act as upon a level” with equal input and agreement. If this were not the case, he argues, the decision would have dishonoured the equality of the persons. Once by common consent all three persons concur that the Father should be Head, then the submission of the Son and the Spirit is voluntary. If the Father is with respect to the economy already the Head and the two other persons are assigned their roles, this would be involuntary and dishonouring. With respect to these roles they are agreed upon by “common consent.” In the making of the covenant these roles are already established, Edwards argues.²²⁷

It is admirable to see Edwards raise the honour of the Spirit. However, some serious questions hang over his whole line of reasoning here. Do the persons really have a choice in this great premundane, pre-redemption covenant, “voting committee,” when their function is suited to, and parallels their ontology? Clearly this is where the *a priori* approach and the domination of the ontological in Edwards is shown to be deeply deficient. Barth’s conviction is that what the Trinity is in revelation is what God is in essence. There is not God, the Quaternity, back of revelation. Whatever submissions are present within the economic roles reflect back into the essential Trinity, not the other way around. Secondly, and related, however, is the question of an obvious anthropomorphic conception of God which Edwards reflects here as a result of the analogy from below approach. Edwards’ depiction is of the essential Trinity sitting as a society to give consent in a great, premundane, ‘Divine committee.’ The degree of individuation of the persons that is implied in this pre-economy council is also problematic – “the persons of the Trinity of their own will, have ... formed themselves into a society, for carrying on the great design of glorifying the deity and communicating its fullness.”²²⁸ This thought will recur in the “redemption covenant” deliberation, only this time with voting powers limited to two!

²²⁶ *Observations*, 82.

²²⁷ *Observations*, 81.

²²⁸ *Observations*, 78.

Further Covenant subordinations addressed

In other ways, related to the covenant of redemption, rather than the economy, the standard Reformed view of the Spirit's role and honour were, in Edwards' judgement, deficient. Edwards' starting assumption in *Observations* is that there is a subordination in the immanent Trinity that concerns *priority*, not inferiority, and that there is a voluntary subordination inherent in the works carried out by the economic Trinity. However, the incarnation and mediation of Christ, whilst in keeping in principle with the economic subordination, entailed further subordinations that can only be accounted for by a covenant made between the Father and the Son, the covenant of redemption.²²⁹ This also affected the Spirit. Three ways in which the Spirit was potentially dishonoured, and how Edwards countered these with innovations to honour the Spirit in redemption are the following:

- (i) The first way was the 'additional' subjection of the Spirit *to the Son as God* in the covenant of redemption. There were two elements in that subjection which are distinct from what is merely the subjection of the economic order. The first is that the disposal and dispensation of the Spirit by the Son to fulfil the work of redemption is a role normally belonging to the Father, and as such is performed in the covenant agreement, by the Son as the Father's vice-regent.²³⁰ Edwards' defence of the Spirit's honour here is in noting the temporary nature of this subjection. This role he suggests, will be surrendered back to the Father at the end of the world, when again the

²²⁹ The economic order with respect to the Divine actions *ad extra* "is to be conceived of as prior to the covenant of redemption...". The reason for this lies in the distinction between the decision the Godhead makes to "glorify and communicate Himself" and the "*method* that His wisdom pitches upon as tending best to effect this (emphasis mine)." *Observations*, 79.

²³⁰ A key difference between the economy of the Trinity and what transpires within the covenant of redemption is the role the Son takes in His risen session at the right hand of the Father. According to this same I Corinthians 15 passage, for a season it is the Son who rules the Kingdom. As Edwards suggests, "by the covenant of redemption the Son of God is for a season advanced into the oeconomical seat of another person, viz., of the Father; in being by this covenant established as the Lord and judge of the world, in the Father's stead and as His vice-regent, and as ruling in the Father's throne, the throne that belongs to Him in His oeconomical station." *Observations*, 83.

Spirit will “be dispensed only according to the oeconomy of the Trinity.”²³¹

- (ii) The second aspect was in the subjection of the Spirit to the *Son as Man*. The subjection of the Spirit to the Son under the covenant was that the Spirit was given to the Son for dispensing, not only as vice-regent of the Father, but “as God-man and husband, and vital head of the Church.”²³² The Spirit is thus no longer acting under the Son as God, but under the same person in two natures, the incarnate God-man.²³³ Edwards qualifies this subjection of the Spirit to the Son by indicating that it is only “circumstantially new”, not “a new kind of subjection”.²³⁴ This subjection, Edwards asserts, will continue through all eternity, and will never be “resigned up” in that the Son will eternally be the God-man and will eternally communicate the Spirit to the church, His body and bride, “Christ mystical”. This is in fact no different to the economy, Edwards argues, because the God-man is that, God.²³⁵ Thus in the double procession theology, this was what obtained prior to the incarnation anyway. Edwards is, in other words, in no need of defending the Spirit’s honour in this aspect. In fact, he refers to what is prominent in other places in his corpus - the Spirit as ‘Gift,’²³⁶ as the eternal inheritance which Christ’s redemption purchased, received at His ascension. In this aspect of his pneumatology, Edwards significantly raises the bar in that the notion of the Spirit as applier of Christ’s redemption which was the norm in covenantal Reformed teaching, is replaced by the concept of the Spirit as the Gift itself, and as such capable of effecting regeneration and

²³¹ *Observations*, 90.

²³² *Observations*, 90.

²³³ *Observations*, 90. Edwards asserts that the Son at the ascension was invested with a two-fold dominion over the world, one as the Father’s vice-regent, which is vicarious and is resigned at the end of the world, and the other as Christ, the God-man, Head and Husband of the Church, which, as depicted in Revelation 22:5, will continue forever with the saints.

²³⁴ His purpose is to draw a distinction between the Son’s subjection to the Father in His incarnate humiliation, which he classifies as a new kind of subjection in that it involves a status below that of the economy, and that of the Spirit, who though He is subject to the God-man, undergoes no such change.

²³⁵ All of which makes one wonder why Edwards brought up the issue in the first place!

²³⁶ *Observations*, 91.

sanctification. This would thus also pave the way for his doctrine of the union with God of the saints by the infusion of the Spirit.

- (iii) The third manner in which the Spirit at first appears to be dishonoured in the covenant of redemption is that he was not one of the “covenanting parties”²³⁷ This arises and is countered within Edwards’ elaboration of point (ii). Edwards argues there that the Spirit undergoes no qualitative change in His submission to the Son as God-man. He cites John 17 to prove that in His exaltation as God-man, the Son recovers the glory He had with the Father before the world was. It is in this state that the Spirit is given to the Son for disposal and thus nothing has changed from the economy as it was prior to the incarnation.²³⁸ Thus the Spirit is in no way debased. Edwards sees an adverse consequence of this, however. Since the Spirit underwent no addition to His substance in His submission to the Son, and since the obedience of the Spirit to the Son involves no humiliation, but flows simply from the economic order, it has no meritorious value for sinners. Therefore, he concludes that the covenant of redemption “is only between the Father and the Son”.²³⁹ This is supported by pointing to the lack of any scriptural reference to a covenant between the Father or the Son with the Spirit.²⁴⁰ How does Edwards offset this seeming dishonour? Anticipating a related criticism with respect to a ‘fracture’ that this seem to imply within the

²³⁷ *Observations*, 92.

²³⁸ *Observations*, 91.

²³⁹ *Observations*, 92.

²⁴⁰ The covenant of redemption, which Edwards interestingly equates with the new covenant, is that made only with the Son as the Second Adam. Edwards states his belief that the covenant with the Second Adam, though only revealed after the breaking of the covenant with the first Adam, was “entered into first in order of time”, and that only between God as lawgiver and the Son as man’s surety and representative, and thus he concludes: “The covenant of redemption was the covenant in which God the Father made over an eternal reward to Christ mystical, and therefore was made only with Christ the head of the body.” *Observations*, 93. There are here some interesting points of comparison with Barth, both with respect to supralapsarian thinking, and with respect to the union of the people of God in Christ as Head of the body, in the premundane counsels of God. One significant difference is the scope of these counsels. Edwards’ particularism is explicit in his exposition of the covenant of redemption. God covenanted to glorify himself by “the redemption of a certain number of fallen inhabitants of this globe of earth.” *Observations*, 79.

Godhead, he assures the reader of the infinite concern of the Spirit in the affair of redemption, and assumes that “the affair was, as it were, concerted among all the persons, and determined by the perfect consent of all.”²⁴¹ It is not a question of the Spirit’s involvement and concern in the covenant, only that He is not a party covenanting.”²⁴²

In assessing this complex reasoning in Edwards, a first observation is that the degree of individuation here is disconcerting. More will be said of this, but an important point to be made is that in this very extreme there is confirmation of our contention that Edwards was greatly motivated to honour the Spirit in his theology. With respect to the Spirit, in particular, this very fault in Edwards is evidence of a good intention to honour the Spirit by ascribing full personhood to him. He is perhaps not a specific party consenting, but the Spirit is at the table. In fact, he is in perfect consent in a non-subordinated immanent Trinity consenting with the other persons over his own submissive yet volunteered role within the economy. Anthropomorphic and overly individuated though this may be, it provides overwhelming evidence that Edwards aims to honour the Spirit as person. This prepared the way for his communion as a person indwelling the saints to enable their union with God. It prepared the way also for a spirituality in Edwards which encouraged the cultivation of intimacy with the Spirit.

Prior to a more detailed critique of the Edwardsean Trinity, the work in which Edwards most explicitly proclaims his concern with elevating the Spirit is considered.

b. In the *Treatise On Grace* – ‘Love’ category in the psychological Trinity is His greatest honouring

Any still latent notions in his Reformed tradition of the Spirit’s neglect or inferiority that could possibly arise, are dispelled by Edwards’ detailed exposition of the Spirit’s role in redemption in the *Treatise On Grace*. A

²⁴¹ *Observations*, 93.

²⁴² *Observations*, 93.

significant concern in this work is to demonstrate that “there is equal glory due to the Holy Ghost” in the matter of human redemption.²⁴³ In it, the Spirit is proclaimed as the very “principle of grace” that resides within the heart of believers and the means by which they participate in God.²⁴⁴ But this role in their salvation flows from the fact that He is the love and delight of the Father and the Son in each other first and then to them. The essence of Edwards’ intent to elevate the Spirit within Reformed theology is captured in the following paragraph:

If we suppose no more than used to be supposed about the Holy Ghost, the honour of the Holy Ghost in the work of redemption is not equal in any sense to the Father and the Son’s; nor is there an equal part of the glory of this work belonging to Him. Merely to apply to us, or immediately to give or hand to us blessing purchased, after it is purchased, is subordinate to the other two Persons.²⁴⁵

He accomplishes this with the understanding that the Spirit *is* the love which the Father and the Son *express*, and in describing the Spirit as ‘Gift’ and therefore on parity with the Son who is the ‘price’ paid to purchase it.

But according to what has now been supposed, there is an equality. To be the wonderful love of God is as much as for the Father and the Son to exercise wonderful love; and to be the thing purchased, is as much as to be the price that purchases it. The price, and the thing bought with that price, answers each other in value; and to be the excellent benefit offered, is as much as to offer such an excellent benefit.²⁴⁶

In this *Treatise*, therefore, the psychological model of the Trinity entailing the Spirit as the *vinculum caritatis* finds its goal in the outworking of Edwards’ soteriology. By insisting that the Spirit is the very love of God given to saints in

²⁴³ *Treatise on Grace*, 67.

²⁴⁴ *Treatise on Grace*, 74.

²⁴⁵ *Treatise on Grace*, 68-9.

²⁴⁶ *Treatise on Grace*, 67-8.

conversion, Edwards' was able to emphasize the immediacy of the gift of grace as well as its uniqueness (the distinction between common grace and saving grace occupies much of this *Treatise*). This *Treatise* sees the full development of the involvement of the Trinity in the work of redemption. The Father is the provider, Christ is the purchaser and the Spirit is the sanctifier. Edwards' primary emphasis in this treatise, however, is on the particular role of the Holy Spirit and the concern to vindicate the equality of the Spirit in the economy is very evident.

One illustration of this is in the particular way in which Edwards ascribes glory to the Spirit. This provides insight into the importance of participation in Edwards' soteriology. The glory of the Father and the Son lies in their love of the world of sinners. But that love is the very person of the Spirit. Therefore the Spirit receives equal glory in the revelation of love.²⁴⁷ That He receives equal glory, is important for the doctrine of the Trinity, but, further, in the equating of the Love of God with the person of the Spirit, Edwards honoured the Spirit in his foundational role in the doctrine of participation or union with God. His theological assumption based on the psychological Trinity is that humans by the infusion of the Spirit are brought into the life of the Trinity in its immanent sense: "There is an equal glory due to the Holy Ghost on this account because He is the love of the Father and the Son, that flows out primarily towards God, and secondarily towards the elect that Christ came to save."²⁴⁸ The ontological-economic distinction becomes somewhat blurred within this participation theology. A descriptor of the Spirit which relates to who the Spirit is within the Immanent Trinity is used with equal ease by Edwards for describing how the Spirit relates to regenerate humans in the economy of salvation. Edwards understood the Holy Spirit to be the personal Love of God the Father, and he understood John's assertion in I John 4:8 that "God is love" in that light.²⁴⁹ His exegesis may be questionable, but Edwards' motive, which, without a doubt, is to

²⁴⁷ This is also emphasized in the *Essay* – "But there is equal glory due to the Holy Ghost, for He is that love of the Father and the Son to the world." *Essay*, 123.

²⁴⁸ *Treatise on Grace*, 67.

²⁴⁹ He avowed that we never read in the Bible of the Son or the Father loving the Spirit, or of the love of the Holy Spirit to men. The Holy Spirit is that love. The love that was the manifestation of grace in the heart of the regenerate was thus also understood to be the person of the Holy Spirit. This is exegetically questionable. Romans 5:5 suggests that love is shed abroad in our hearts instrumentally by the Spirit rather than essentially.

raise the visibility and vindicate the economic equality of the Spirit, is laudable nevertheless.

Edwards, though innovative, still saw his theology to be within the realm of covenant theology and the Westminster Confession. This self-assessment was not unanimously agreed upon in the tradition, and notably, P.Y. de Jong has accused Edwards of departing from classic covenant theology. That this accusation would arise is not surprising in light of Edwards' innovations and especially that concerning the immediacy of the Spirit's work in conversion. De Jong accused Edwards of "Anabaptist individualistic piety," and of making the covenant "no more than an anthropological representation of God's dealings with men."²⁵⁰ His anthropomorphisms have been acknowledged above. Notwithstanding, I am in agreement with Helm in his critique that de Jong "fails to show that Edwards' discriminating endorsement of revival is inconsistent with covenant theology."²⁵¹ What is interesting for our purpose is that the innovations to the covenant were made by Edwards precisely to accommodate his new appreciation for the work of the Spirit as he had come to experience this in the revival, to provide a means to understand the surprising conversions, and as a way of providing a test of reality based on the ethics of love.

The impact of this union with God by the Spirit on conversion and sanctification will be developed in chapter five.

B. Edwards' Trinity Located and Assessed

On the one hand, there are some advances made by Edwards here in Trinitarian theology in general, and for pneumatology in particular, that one can affirm. It is difficult to conceive how Edwards could have been accused of unorthodoxy in

²⁵⁰ de Jong, P.Y. *The Covenant Idea in New England Theology*, 143-150. Carl Bogue in *Jonathan Edwards and the Covenant of Grace*, in *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays in Reformed Theology* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1976), has also provided very convincing evidence that Edwards remained a covenant theologian.

²⁵¹ *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, 16.

view of these writings in his *Observations*. Edwards' theology of the Spirit turns out rather to be an excellent illustration of what Paul Helm has stated with respect to Edwards, that "for all his reaffirmation of orthodoxy, he is not averse to theological development."²⁵² This development of a Trinity construct is a classic case of Edwards using reason guided by Scripture to construct models and elucidate mysteries in areas that his Reformed predecessors may have considered inscrutable.

Despite its individuating and anthropomorphic excesses, Edwards does present an attractive view of the hypostatic uniqueness of the Spirit which prepares the way for a practical theology in which life in the Spirit is not mere theory. Edwards seeks to do justice to the both the Spirit's essential and economic equality within the Trinity. He seeks to find a way of constructing or adapting a model of the immanent Trinity which will allow for a theology of pneumatological participation that takes seriously the equivalence depicted in the teaching of Christ in John 14 of the "other Comforter," by whose indwelling within the disciples, the Father and the Son would "make their home" also.

The challenges that arise within his rational biblical theologizing are, however, considerable, especially in light of Cappadocian perspectives which pre-dated him, and that may have served his aims well, and in light of advances made by Barth in a later century, with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. I will now pick up the threads of discussion with respect to six principal issues which have arisen in the foregoing descriptive section, some of which are currently receiving considerable attention within recent Edwardsean scholarship with respect to the Trinity. The first three are in this category. They concern the ontology Edwards employs with respect to the essence of the Godhead, and whether this is an ontology of substance or disposition, his method of individuating the Divine persons, and the Patristic origins of his ontology. The three further issues I raise arise from consideration of Edwards' Trinity in light of the concerns of contemporary Trinitarian scholarship in general, or with respect to comparison with Barth's Trinity. These have to do with the issues of the coalescing of the

²⁵² *Treatise*, Introduction, 17.

immanent and economic Trinities, the question of subordinationism, and the proposal that within Edwards' Trinitarian approach, in his great concern to craft a robust pneumatology he neglected to emphasize the enhypostatic, incarnational Christological aspect of Trinitarian soteriology.

1. The issue of the Divine essence ... does Edwards use a dispositional ontology?

I noted in the previous chapter the hypothesis presented by Lee and Daniel that Edwards conceived of all reality, including that of the essence of the Godhead, as dispositional in nature. The challenge which Paul Helm raised to this hypothesis was also noted there. Earlier in this chapter, I cited the work of Oliver Crisp who, in my opinion, convincingly shows that Edwards remained within the *actus purus* simplicity tradition of his Reformed orthodox background, albeit he propounded an idiosyncratic version of it. This also challenges the dispositional hypothesis of Lee, as we shall shortly see. Since the writing of his *God of Grace and God of Glory* which does not directly address the issue of a dispositional ontology in Edwards' theology proper, Holmes has become convinced that Lee's thesis in this regard, although "an extremely powerful work," "is simply wrong in its main thesis."²⁵³ I now give consideration to this article in which Holmes significantly challenges the Lee hypothesis.

Recapping the main thesis of Lee, he believes that Edwards replaced the "old scholastic account of ontology which divided the being of things into substance and form,"²⁵⁴ with what Lee calls, "a strikingly modern conception of reality as a dynamic network of dispositional forces and habits."²⁵⁵ God is reconceived by Lee as dispositional, as "the absolutely sovereign *disposition* of true beauty that is an eternally complete exercise."²⁵⁶ The Trinity is reconceived in dispositional terms also such that the Son and the Spirit are "the eternal and absolutely complete repetitions of the Father's self-existent actuality", and the creation is

²⁵³ Holmes, 2003a, 114.

²⁵⁴ Holmes, 2003a, 99.

²⁵⁵ Lee, 1998a, 4.

²⁵⁶ Lee, 1998a, 173. This point is expounded in 170-241.

considered to be a further “actualization” of God’s being, “an increase or enlargement of God’s own being.”²⁵⁷ Holmes has, with good reason, expressed two chief concerns with Lee’s thesis: the first is that it decontextualizes Edwards in an historical sense, and the second is that, theologically speaking, it attributes to Edwards, elements of process theology that would have been incongruous with the concepts of immutability, aseity and impassibility espoused within his *actus purus* classical theism.

Within Edwards’ tradition, and in his own theology, God, as one act, and not many, is simple. The problem for Lee’s thesis, as Holmes notes, is that the doctrine of divine simplicity which is threatened by Lee’s dispositionalism, was clearly one which Edwards explicitly espoused.²⁵⁸ Plantinga Pauw, who reflects Lee’s viewpoint here, states that “the notion of divine simplicity was never truly incorporated into his theology.” In a section entitled, “Edwards’ Ambivalence Towards the Simplicity Tradition” she continues, “There are abundant indications of Edwards’s departure from its strictures that are both more deliberate and more integral to his theology as a whole than his casual use of it. He freely rejected those parts of the simplicity theory he could make no sense of, and developed an alternative conception of divine oneness that revolved around the notions of excellency, harmony and consent.”²⁵⁹ Whilst both Crisp²⁶⁰ and Helm²⁶¹ acknowledge that there are problems for the doctrine of simplicity in Edwards’ innovative thought on the Trinity, they are not prepared to concede that Edwards would have knowingly flouted simplicity considerations, and on this I

²⁵⁷ Lee, 1998a, 184.

²⁵⁸ Edwards’ *Essay* contains statements that reflect this understanding: early on he states that “in God there are no distinctions to be admitted of faculty, habit and act, between will, inclination, and love, but that it is all one simple act.” (99) Later on (119), as Helm indicates, Edwards specifically “takes what he has said to be in accordance with the doctrine of divine simplicity, according to which everything that is in God is God, provided that this is understood of real attributes (expressing real distinctions; the distinguishable persons of the Trinity, in his understanding) and not of mere modalities, manners in which the distinct powers of each person (alone or in combination) as well as the attributes of the godhead are expressed.” (Helm, 2003a, 13). Further evidence of the notion that Edwards was schooled in the doctrine of simplicity is contained in Crisp, 2003a, and Holmes 2003a. Holmes presents a defence of this doctrine in “Something Much too Plain to Say: Towards a defence of the doctrine of divine simplicity,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 43 (2001), 137-154.

²⁵⁹ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 69.

²⁶⁰ Crisp, 2003a.

²⁶¹ Helm, 2003a.

must agree. I suggest that to say that Edwards showed “ambivalence *towards*” the simplicity tradition is too strong a statement. That he wrestled within its bounds as he sought to innovatively ‘say more than had been said,’ still within the framework of an Augustinian conception of the Trinity, seems more likely. That still within his Reformed classical theism, he may at times even have unconsciously transgressed those bounds in his not yet fully formed thoughts on the Trinity, in order to express an adequate degree of individuation for the Spirit (and the Son), is to state the case more accurately, in my opinion.

In agreement with Holmes, then, I suggest that Lee’s reconception of Edwards’ Trinity as dispositional would have too obviously violated his doctrine of simplicity. Lee’s desire is to find within Edwards’ theology of the Trinity a greater ‘dynamism’ than the seemingly static medieval category of ‘substance’ and in its place a more modern (in fact, post-modern) relational category of disposition. The triune God of Edwards’ *actus purus sine ulla potential* tradition is not, as Holmes notes, “doing many things, but is one act: being Father, Son and Spirit, eternally, perfectly and unchangeably.”²⁶² In fact, the traditional view of God as pure act, which incorporates that concept that God’s being and act are one and that God is “pure dynamism” leads Holmes to suggest that Lee’s reconstruction of God in dispositional terms is “actually less dynamic than the God of traditional orthodoxy that Edwards believed in.”²⁶³

A further concern Holmes has expressed with regard to Lee’s dispositionalism is relevant to my immediate concern here with how Edwards differentiated the persons of the Trinity. This relates to the issue of the *filioque* clause to which, as indicated above, Edwards adhered. In Lee’s dispositional re-casting of Edwards’ way of deriving the doctrine of the Trinity in an Augustinian fashion, by which the Son and the Spirit are differentiated by use of the psychological analogy (knowledge and love), he insists that the concepts of ‘knowing’ and ‘loving’ were merely analogical. The reality they merely illustrated was the dispositional essence of God. Holmes’ point is that thereby historic (and Edwardsean)

²⁶² Holmes, 2003a, 108.

²⁶³ Holmes, 2003a, 110.

‘trinitarian grammar’ is threatened in that the differentiation of the origins of the Son and the Spirit are compromised. The way within Edwards’ theological tradition to differentiate between the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit is removed by Lee, and the ability to incorporate the *filioque*, is also removed. Whether or not the *filioque* is correct or not, the fact is that Edwards adhered to it, and therefore Lee’s dispositional re-casting of Edwards is thereby placed in serious doubt.

Another significant challenge for the credibility of Lee’s thesis concerning Edwards is the failure of his dispositionalism to make the distinction made within patristic and orthodox theology between the *ad intra* dynamic of God’s generation of the Son and procession of the immanent Trinity, and the *ad extra* dynamic of God’s creation and recreation of the universe. This distinction preserves another distinction important within historic Christian orthodoxy: that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father, and therefore eternal, whereas the universe is not *homoousios* with the Father, and not created *ex nihilo* and not eternal. Lee’s loss of the *ad intra / ad extra* distinction, what Athanasius called the *ergon phuseos* and the *ergon theleseos* in his battle against Arianism, and what Aquinas confirmed, leaves him open to the charge of pantheism or monism. In the chapter following this one, I will observe that this charge will be levelled at Edwards. However, this does not confirm a consonance between Edwards and Lee that suggests that Edwards was in fact, a dispositionalist ‘born out of due time.’ Rather, the charge of monism is levelled at Edwards because of his doctrine of the Spirit’s infusion and indwelling of the believer to create a union between God and believing humans, such that in regenerating and glorifying saints he is glorifying Himself, in accordance with his ultimate end. His articulations of a union that is between the souls of man and the Spirit as conceived within the immanent Trinity (the mutual Love or communion of the Father with the Son) are what lead to this charge. This in my opinion is resolved by making a distinction between what is *relational* and what is *dispositional* as Lee understood the latter term.

It is my contention that even his deficiencies in erring towards the side of ‘differentiation,’ the threeness at the expense of oneness, may give evidence that Edwards may have been pneumatologically motivated. What is apparent behind this whole discussion is a determination in Edwards to exalt all three persons, and in so doing to exalt the neglected Spirit in particular, who in his *schema* contributes love as the perfection of the divine *phusis* within his particular *hypostasis*. If the individuation is stretched to the point that tritheism is approached, I believe it is because one of Edwards’ aims, at any rate, is to stress the honour of the Spirit as ‘person’ with the Father and the Son. Edwards apparently did not see that this might be a threat to the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead, perhaps because of the strength of the emphasis on the unity of the Godhead in the Augustinian, psychological model of the Trinity which was his primary working model. It is possible that the danger of tritheism incipient in Edwards’ approach was a theological blind spot that was a casualty of an ardent desire to find a means to express the operation of the Spirit beyond that of merely applying the atonement of the Son to that of being the ‘gift’ and sanctifier, who by infusion in the saints, will effect their theotic union, and therefore their spiritual vitality.

2. The issue of the individuation of the Persons.... does Edwards’ method of differentiation flout divine simplicity and verge into tritheism?

A key issue in assessing the Trinitarianism of Edwards is in relation to the poles within which Trinitarianism fluctuates. As Barth writes on the Trinity in *CD I/1*, his stated concern is always that two heresies be avoided: that of subordinationism (of an essential or substantial nature), on the one hand; and that of modalism, on the other. Barth’s passion to avoid tritheism has sometimes evoked the charge of modalism, and as a result, that of an inadequate pneumatology. Whilst Edwards is free in his *use of the term ‘person,’* a notable feature of Barth’s Trinity is his reservation about doing so. His concern was that this term, in his cultural milieu, denoted the idea of ‘individual’ and of personality. He wanted to avoid, on the one hand, a Sabellianism arising from

the association of the term ‘person’ with *prosopon*; and on the other hand a latent tritheism arising from the conception of the person as *hypostasis*, which when translated into Latin becomes *substantia*.²⁶⁴ In light also of the connotation within his own cultural ethos of ‘person’ as ‘individual, to avoid too great an individuation of the persons, and the danger of tritheism, Barth opted for ‘modes of being’.²⁶⁵ His concern, it must be noted in fairness, was thereby “to defend rather than subvert the orthodox position”.²⁶⁶ Edwards’ tendency towards tritheism validates Barth’s fears about the use of the term ‘person’ and tritheism. Edwards errs in the opposite direction, showing a great tendency at times to be tritheistic rather than Trinitarian.

Plantinga Pauw, who perceives Edwards’ ontology to be both Idealist and dispositional, has suggested that Edwards’ psychological model was “unable to accommodate the social images that were critical to his Trinitarian reflection as a whole.”²⁶⁷ He found in the covenant of redemption the bridge that he perceived was required between the *theologia* and the *oikonomia*, and a means of expressing the themes of “relational dynamism in an explicitly social way.”²⁶⁸ In so doing, Plantinga Pauw believes that he invoked a social model of the Trinity, specifically that of Richard of St. Victor. She notes that he went beyond the bounds of both Patristic ontologies and flouted Reformed rules about divine simplicity, this in consequence of his ultimate aim to “admit the church into the divine family as his Son’s wife.”²⁶⁹ The issue of which Patristic ontology Edwards used will be considered in the next section. The assertion that Edwards

²⁶⁴ See a detailed discussion of this issue in Torrance, Alan J. *Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth’s “Church Dogmatics”* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996) (hereafter “Torrance, A. 1996a”), ch.4, and especially pp. 226ff.

²⁶⁵ Barth, *CD I/1*, 355-360. ‘Modes of being’ is used in *preference* to ‘modes of existence’ in this thesis, except in quotations. The two descriptions are often used interchangeably, even though Hunsinger, who defends Barth against the charge of modalism, has indicated that Barth seems to have preferred ‘modes of “being” to translate *hypostasis*, because ‘existence’ is a term he usually reserves for human existence, and partly because he sees the *hypostases* as essential determinations of God’s eternal *being* (*ousia*.” Hunsinger, George. *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth*. (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), 191, fn.7. (Hereafter this work is referred to as “Hunsinger, 2000a”).

²⁶⁶ Bromiley, 1979a, 21.

²⁶⁷ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 91.

²⁶⁸ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 91.

²⁶⁹ Miscellany 741, *YE 18*, 367.

did flout the Reformed rules of simplicity has been contested by Crisp and Holmes as already noted above. Whilst I agree that Edwards remained within the *actus purus* tradition explicitly, I would also contend that his language does on occasion flout his own assertions about simplicity. The social Trinity (the “family of the three”²⁷⁰) depictions of Edwards do seem to stretch the oneness-threeness tension too far, and do seem to invite the charge of tritheism, where the ‘persons’ appear to be more like ‘individuals.’ Plantinga Pauw’s criticism of the Edwardsean covenant of redemption as ‘salvation-by-committee,’ has some justification.²⁷¹ The term “covenanting partner” reflects too much individuation. In the ontology reflected in the covenant of redemption Edwards did go beyond Augustine, driven it seems, by the desire to bridge the perceived ‘distance’ between the *theologia* and the *oikonomia*, but especially to secure the hypostatic uniqueness of the persons, and specifically that of the Spirit.

I would contend that securing the Spirit’s hypostatic uniqueness was of such great importance, (a), in light of his ontic concerns that pneumatological union of the saints with God would ensure that the end of salvation would be God’s self-glorification, and (b), in light of his concerns to have an adequate theology of the human experience of the immediacy of the presence and power of the Spirit, that if he ran the risk of excessively individuating the Spirit, this was for him a risk worth taking.

It is possible that Edwards felt the freedom to develop the social components of his Trinity because he could do so within an overarching “one mind” psychological view with its stress on unity. He does in this instance, perhaps, atypically, seem to reflect a “high tolerance for theological tension”²⁷² and perhaps also an elasticity with respect to models and how he used them. Hans Urs von Balthasar’s assertion that truth concerning the Trinity “can only be developed in two opposite lines of being and thought that point to each other”²⁷³

²⁷⁰ *Essay*, 122.

²⁷¹ Pauw, 2002a, 115.

²⁷² Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 11.

²⁷³ Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. III, *The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ* (Harrison, G. trans.) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 525.

is indeed relevant, and it seems a fair understanding that working within the psychological model already put in place the safeguard of the unity of the Godhead for Edwards. This left him free within that model to perhaps overuse the social aspects of triune reality without, in his mind at least, the ‘threeness’ violating the oneness.

In particular, the absence of the Spirit in the covenant²⁷⁴ is an altogether speculative and anthropomorphic concept. By creating the image of two persons covenanting with a third standing by, the Spirit is depicted as an anthropomorphic individual, not a Trinitarian person. Barth specifically decried the idea of persons covenanting in the Godhead as anthropomorphic and incredible: “Can we really think of the first and second persons of the triune Godhead as two divine subjects and therefore as two legal subjects who can have dealings and enter into obligations one with another? This is mythology, for which there is no place in a right understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity...
..”²⁷⁵

Edwards desire to have a way to defend the doctrine of the Trinity in light of his historical context by way of an *a priori* defence of the immanent Trinity, is laudable. This arose as we noted above, from his concern about an over-emphasis in his day on ways of defending the Trinity from the economy of salvation and the atonement in particular. This approach by Edwards was in a direction very much opposed by Barth, albeit in a different historical context. For Barth, the starting point for discussing the Trinity was not philosophy, or *a priori* arguments, but with the primary revelation of God in the Son as Word.

Here, in fact, Edwards would find himself on the receiving end of what Bromiley refers to as Barth’s “only substantial polemic” in this area of doctrine, which was “against the idea of natural or human vestiges when this carries with it

²⁷⁴ The absence of the Spirit as a “party covenanting” contains a hint of the binitarianism later found in Berkhouwer.

²⁷⁵ CD IV/1, 66.

the suggestion of another root”.²⁷⁶ For Barth, the personal revelation of God is in Christ: “God’s Word is God Himself in His revelation.” God’s revelation of Himself as the Lord, in accordance with Scripture, determines the “concept of revelation” for Barth. It is “that God Himself in unimpaired unity yet also in unimpaired distinction is Revealer, revelation and Revealedness.”²⁷⁷ Barth’s preferred and sole basis for theological knowledge is therefore an *a posteriori* Christological revelation, rather than the *a priori* approach of Edwards with his strong focus on ‘general revelation’, natural theology, earthly analogies and semiotics. Barth’s use of analogy is therefore always from above to below. This approach may have enabled Edwards to keep closer the immanent and economic relations of the Godhead, but more importantly in this immediate context, it might have provided a clearer window into a more Cappadocian articulation of persons in relation.

3. The issue of Patristic ontology ... is Edwards’ ontology Augustinian, Cappadocian²⁷⁸ or “Cobbled”?

That Edwards did veer into descriptions of an overly individuated Trinity has been established. However, this raises the question of the Patristic source or sources of the ontology he employed in doing so.

Discerning the exact nature of Edwards’ ontology of the Trinity is a difficult task for three reasons: (i) there are apparent changes in how he viewed this matter and although we do well to heed Perry Miller’s warning that one cannot simplistically divide Edwards’ theology into early and late periods, nevertheless

²⁷⁶ Bromiley, 1979a, *Introduction*, 21. Barth devotes a whole section to discounting the *Vestigium Trinitatis* in *CD I/1* (333-347) as an appropriate source for Christian revelation. He cites Augustine as the greatest culprit in advocating this approach. Christian revelation for the doctrine of the Trinity according to Barth cannot stem from any other root than “the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ or the Lord (334).”

²⁷⁷ *CD I/1*, 295.

²⁷⁸ For a summary of the origin and contribution of the Cappadocian fathers to the doctrine of the Trinity see Zizioulas, John D. in *Trinitarian Theology Today* (Schwöbel, Christoph (Ed.) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), ch.2, “The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: The Significance of the Cappadocian Contribution”, 44 (This work hereafter referred to as Zizoulas, 1995a)). See also Hopko, Thomas, The Trinity in the Cappadocians, ch.1 in *Christian Spirituality I: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Eds. B. McGinn and J. Meyendorff)(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 260ff.

there is in this area of his theology some evidence of shifting emphases;²⁷⁹ (ii) although Edwards did mature in his concept of the Trinity, as Jinkins indicates, a qualifier is that the evolution did not develop *consistently* in this manner; and (iii) Edwards has an aversion to being categorized and notoriously eschews the use of labels.²⁸⁰ He certainly does not acknowledge that his predominant thinking stems from the Augustinian model and he is even less likely to give credit to the Cappadocians, if that is in fact where he turns for help.²⁸¹

The suggestions that Edwards invoked a Cappadocian model to achieve his aims are contestable, as already suggested. Plantinga Pauw notes that there was “no hint that he was ever troubled by the dissonances between these models.”²⁸² It could be that this was because he did not see himself invoking two models, but one.

Stuebaker has recently written in support of this point of view. He contends that Edwards “did not employ two models of the Trinity, but one – the Augustinian mutual love model.” He adds that “Edwards's use of the Augustinian mutual love model reflects his continuity with the dominant Western Augustinian Trinitarian tradition and early Enlightenment apologetics for the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.”²⁸³ Stuebaker has strongly challenged the thesis of Plantinga Pauw that Edwards’ draws on the Cappadocian or Victorine model in his individuation of the divine persons. His contention is that the ‘social’ manner in which the persons of the Trinity are conveyed in Edwards (particularly *Miscellany 571*) is

²⁷⁹ Michael Jinkins, for example, states “In his final treatises, Edwards moves well beyond the view he shared with Federal Calvinism in his discourses and sermons, of a contractually bound Godhead.” (Jinkins, 1993b, 182).

²⁸⁰ With respect to Calvin, for example, he said, “I utterly disclaim a dependence on Calvin, or believing the doctrines which I hold, because he believed and taught them; and cannot justly be charged with believing in everything just as he taught” (*YE I*, 131), when in fact he owed a great deal to Calvin. An independence of the “frontier” New England type is in evidence here.

²⁸¹ Lee (*YE 21*, 25, fn.3), although he makes reference to the possibility that Edwards may have become acquainted with the thought of Gregory of Nyssa through exposure to Ralph Cudworth, the Cambridge Platonist, (reference is made to Thomas H. Johnson’s “Jonathan Edwards’ Background Reading” *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 28 (1931)) acknowledges that “there is no evidence that JE read the Cappadocian theologians.”

²⁸² Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 50.

²⁸³ Stuebaker maintains that “the threeness – oneness paradigm is an overgeneralized understanding of the trinitarian traditions and, as such, unsuitable as a template to interpret Edwards's trinitarianism (Stuebaker, 2003a, 268).”

consistent with the ‘mutual love’ psychological model of Augustine. He draws attention to the fact that there were two models in the Augustinian tradition and not one. The first is the ‘psychological model’ *per se*, in which the Spirit as Love in the immanent Trinity eternally proceeds as the love of the Father for the Son (presumably the single procession view). The second ‘mutual love’ model conceives of the Spirit as proceeding from the love of the Father for the Son *and* the Son for the Father (presumably in agreement with the *filioque* clause). It is this form of the Augustinian model that Edwards adopted, Studebaker contends, and which accounts for the social motif in Edwards’ Trinity. I find myself to be in agreement with this perspective. I agree also that Edwards did not invoke a Cappadocian solution for his social fabric in the Trinity. However, my contention is that his individuation of the persons in this manner is inadequate and would have been better served by a Cappadocian perspective. Studebaker does not appear to be critical of the individuation achieved in the Augustinian ‘mutual love’ model. I am disagreeing with the notion that the ‘mutual love’ psychological model removes all challenges about how the persons of the triunity become that ... persons! The Cappadocian solution would have helped Edwards.

In fact, Studebaker argues that the Augustinian Trinity was not as different from that of the Cappadocians, as is frequently assumed by social Trinitarians, whose interpretation of Augustine he strongly vilifies. He specifically contends that the ‘threeness-oneness’ paradigm, so popularly used in contemporary Trinitarian theology, is a relatively new paradigm brought into being by the late nineteenth century French theologian Theodore de Régnon. His concern is that the now standard way of associating ‘threeness’ with the patristic era and as championed by the Cappadocians, and ‘oneness’ with the Augustinian era as then championed in the scholastic era, is a caricature. He insists that the “patristic and scholastic eras, while distinguished by their different emphases, do not stand in polar opposition.”²⁸⁴ It is the wrong application of this paradigm by Plantinga Pauw as a means to assess the social aspects of Edwards’ Trinity as Cappadocian

²⁸⁴ Studebaker, 2003a, 274.

‘threeness’ (“an unsound methodology”) that leads to her “flawed interpretation.”²⁸⁵

Whilst the cautions Studebaker issues concerning dependence on secondary sources for the assessing of the Augustine’s Trinity need to be heard, I am concerned that he underestimates the scholarship of social Trinitarians on this issue.²⁸⁶ I also ultimately find myself left wondering what new paradigm Studebaker is really offering. To suggest that Plantinga Pauw may be guilty of historically decontextualizing Edwards and to offer the alternative that Edwards was responding, not to a ‘threeness-oneness’ paradigm (non-existent in his day according to Studebaker) but rather to the Deist and anti-Trinitarian trends of his day is not to convince me that there is a new paradigm with which to view what is in fact a Christendom-long tension, the threeness and oneness tension.

Studebaker’s conclusion that Edwards employed a ‘mutual love’ version of Augustine’s psychological model to individuate the persons of the Trinity is one which is in agreement with my primary thesis concerning Edwards’ Trinity in two senses: (i) he accords with my contention that Edwards’ Trinity is predominantly in the Augustinian mould (but Augustinian with his own innovations employing Lockean and Idealist sources), rather than the ‘cobbled’ mix of Augustinian and Cappadocian models Plantinga Pauw has suggested, and (ii) he agrees on the profoundly important place of the Spirit in Edwards’ Trinitarian theology. Studebaker considers the development of the doctrine of the Spirit within Edwards’ thought on the Trinity to have been worked out in reaction to Deism, and that it was largely motivated by apologetic concerns of an academic and theological nature. I am convinced that there was an undergirding pastoral and experiential concern which also motivated Edwards’ desire to elevate the Spirit’s role. Against the deistic notion of the distance of God from human experience, Edwards was motivated to demonstrate the immediacy and power of the Spirit’s activity with regenerate humanity in a manner which he had experienced in his pastoral ministry, particularly in the awakenings.

²⁸⁵ Studebaker, 2003a, 269.

²⁸⁶ There is no mention of the work of Martland and a superficial understanding of the contribution of Gunton.

Sang Hyun Lee does not, like Plantinga Pauw, specifically indicate that he believes Edwards to have drawn on the Cappadocian tradition. Rather, he believes that Edwards uses the Augustinian psychological model to construct a social model. Unlike his forefathers in Western theology who relied on the psychological analogy to stress divine oneness rather than threeness, Lee contends that Edwards' distinction between 'real' and 'relational' attributes as this arises in his use of the psychological analogy, enabled Edwards to "transform the psychological analogy into a perspective that clearly emphasizes the threeness of the Trinitarian persons."²⁸⁷ Lee believes that Edwards' use of the psychological model "ends up reinforcing the social analogy."²⁸⁸ That an analogy arising from the human mind, which implies unity (the mind of one 'person'), is employed by means of the "God all over again" repetition mechanism, to generate the family or social model, seems innately confusing,²⁸⁹ and it seems that Lee's interpretation depends too heavily on his interpretation of Edwards' "dispositional reconception of reality."²⁹⁰ It seems better, as I have indicated, to avoid insisting on a 'model' motif to understand Edwards here. He can speak of the Godhead as the 'family of three,' perhaps with tongue in cheek, not because he wishes to show an allegiance to the Cappadocian model. It is to facilitate his understanding of covenant interactions within the Godhead that he employs such typically figurative language. William Placher has expressed ways in which the two models may be seen as complementary.²⁹¹ Our contention is that Edwards did not knowingly employ a Cappadocian model but rather that all the social aspects he required were either already found within the Augustinian model, or were his own innovations.

²⁸⁷ *YE 21*, 19.

²⁸⁸ *YE 21*, 19.

²⁸⁹ Lee even refers to Edwards' employment of the term 'triplicity' which he considers Edwards to be using in favour of the term 'Trinity' in contrast with his mentor Turretin (*YE 21*, 19, fn. 2.). Whilst Lee insists that "JE does not accept the implication of 'a multiplication of essence,'" it seems difficult not to conclude that there is incipient tritheism here, as Helm has insisted. Lee interestingly draws a parallel between Edwards' concept of God's self-repetition with Barth's idea of God's self-reiteration as expounded by Jüngel.

²⁹⁰ *YE 21*, 7.

²⁹¹ Placher, William, *C. Narratives of a Vulnerable God: Christ, Theology and Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 53-86.

First of all, Edwards' tendency towards too great an individuation of the persons in his social depictions of the Trinity is, in fact, quintessentially Augustinian. This tendency arises from within an Augustinian substantialist ontology. Colin Gunton who refers to Augustine's Neoplatonic 'supermind' ontology as 'intellectualism,' because it exalts the category of knowledge, is also persuaded that it engenders individualism.²⁹² Its analogies concern one mind rather than persons in relation, but as Christoph Schwöbel has pointed out, in considering the Trinity, "a starting point in substance, as distinct from one in the threefold economy, gives the whole development a radically different shape.... individualism is engendered by the fact that for a substance it is of no concern whether it is exemplified by one, three or a hundred individuals."²⁹³ Edwards countering of the polytheism criticism has been considered above, but it does not overcome Schwöbel's essential point.

The derivation of the ontological Trinity based on the analogy of the human soul, the ascription of the Spirit as 'Love,' and the adherence to the *filioque* clause, as already expressed above, are ample evidence that Augustine's was Edwards' ground level approach to the theology of the Trinity. It provided a way for him to honour the Spirit, in his mind at least. The inherent flaws in the psychological model he used to give even ontological definition to the Spirit as the *vinculum caritatis*, which in the end might be deemed to dishonour the Spirit, did not occur to Edwards. Edwards delighted in his model for what it could accomplish by way of the union of humans with God, in a manner correspondent with his concept of union within God. That he 'opened' the Trinity for human relations by the Spirit was a significant achievement. The issue with respect to the appropriateness of the manner in which this opening is achieved, does not detract from the fact that his motive was to honour the Spirit. The fact that the alternative ontology of the Cappadocians by which the Spirit is eternally a person in communion with the Father and the Son, and that this is a more honouring model even with respect to

²⁹² Gunton, Colin. Augustine, The Trinity and the Theological; Crisis of the West, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 43 (1990), 47. This work (pp. 33-58) hereafter referred to as "Gunton, 1990a".

²⁹³ Christoph Schwöbel is acknowledged for this insight in footnote 17, Gunton, 1990a, 47.

the hypostatic uniqueness and ontological identity of the Spirit, is not something Edwards appears to have understood.

Evolution of thought?

Was Edwards' Augustinian model characteristic of his youthful thinking, though? Did he perhaps come to see the inadequacies of the theology as borrowed from Augustine, who in all of his analogies did not take seriously the reality that God of His nature is a multiple, the reality of three encountered, revealed divine persons in communion? Did he see the inadequacies of the intrapsychic nature of all of his analogies, and of the explanation of triplicity as movements of self-realization? Did he realize that in conveying images of the oneness of deity accompanied by a triplicity of mental actions, that he failed therefore, as Martland says it, "to express ontological persons"?²⁹⁴ Did he perhaps come to see that his theology downplays the influence of the doctrine of the incarnation in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in that the incarnational concept of love is largely missing in it?

In other words, did Edwards in fact mature into a Trinitarian theologian with Cappadocian understanding such that he was able to resolve the basic conflict between the psychological model which over-emphasized unity at the expense of threeness, on the one hand, and the incipient tritheism reflected in his covenantal writings, on the other?

Some authors are convinced that he did. Jenkins has suggested that by 1751 Edwards had reached "an understanding of the Trinity which is remarkably similar to the Cappadocian Fathers, especially Gregory of Nyssa."²⁹⁵ Patricia Wilson-Kastener is convinced also that Cappadocian theologian, Gregory of

²⁹⁴ Martland, 1965a, 262.

²⁹⁵ Jenkins, 1993b, 183. Jenkins comments that another example of the strain of Edwards' relational Trinitarian thought is evident in his revival writings, noting that it is characteristic of Edwards that he arrives at his reflections on the Trinity most satisfyingly, when he comes at them in a pneumatological context. Jenkins, 1993b, 184. Jenkins comments that Jerald Brauer in 'Types of Puritan Piety', *Church History* 56 (1987), 1, 39-58 would classify Edwards' theology by the term 'rationalist piety'. Parallels to the Trinitarian thought of Aquinas are also made by Jenkins.

Nyssa (c.330-395), was a “major but mediated influence” on Edwards, and speculates that Edwards “almost surely had some consciousness of his debt.”²⁹⁶ Plantinga Pauw, as already noted, makes an equally speculative case for the influence of Richard of St. Victor,²⁹⁷ a Western theologian with Cappadocian tendencies.

Notable Cappadocian omissions

The fact that the most crucial aspects of the Cappadocian Trinity are absent in Edwards’ discussions argues against the possibility of such an evolution of thought. This, most critically, was the notion of the elevation of the concept of hypostasis, the supremacy of *hypostasis* as an ontological category. This was, as Zizioulas describes it, the “great innovation in philosophical thought, brought about by Cappadocian Trinitarian theology,” which, in turn “carries with it decisively a new way of conceiving human existence....”²⁹⁸ Whereas Edwards defines ‘threeness’ within the ‘oneness’ of the ‘one mind’ analogy, the Cappadocians were able to equate the ‘threeness’ and the ‘oneness’, such that the persons are persons in communion.²⁹⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus, with the other Cappadocians, indicated that the *cause* or *aition* of divine existence is the Father, which, because He is a person, makes the Trinity, therefore, “a matter of ontological freedom.”³⁰⁰ The Cappadocians were able to account for the unity or oneness of God by suggesting that the *ousia* (substance) or *physis* (nature) in God should be taken as a general category which is applied to more than one person.³⁰¹ Commenting on this, Martland stresses that *ousia* is that which is

²⁹⁶ Wilson-Kastener, Patricia. God’s Infinity and His Relation to Creation, *Foundations* 21 (1978), 317.

²⁹⁷ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 12, 14-15, 37, 114.

²⁹⁸ Zizioulas, 1995a, 49.

²⁹⁹ The equality of the ‘threeness’ and the ‘oneness’ is reflected in Gregory Nazianzen’s Oration ‘*On Holy Baptism*’: ...the one Godhead and Power, found in the Three in Unity, and comprising the Three distinctly ... the infinite conjunction of Three Infinite Ones, Each God when considered in Himself ... The Three One God when contemplated together; each God because of the one essence (*to homoousion*); One God because of the *Monarchia* (of the Father). No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the splendour of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One. Gregory Naz. *Oration 40 [On Holy Baptism]* 41.

³⁰⁰ Zizioulas, 1995a, 51.

³⁰¹ The manner in which the finally accepted terms *ousia* and *hypostases* were understood is well expressed by a quotation from Basil of Cappadocia: “The Godhead is common; the fatherhood particular. We must therefore combine the two and say: ‘I believe in God the Father.’ The like

common and *hypostasis* is that which is particular. *Hypostasis* is the “external, concrete, encountered deity” while “*ousia* is the single philosophical unit, disclosed ... by internal analysis.”³⁰²

The Cappadocians were willing to run the risk of appearing to represent tritheism in order to secure the concept of the hypostatic uniqueness of persons. This they did, not because of the safety of a ‘one mind’ psychological analogy as in Edwards, but because they knew that their use of the term ‘persons’ was by definition that of persons in communion.³⁰³ The Cappadocians were thus, in contrast to Edwards, able to draw the important distinction between human persons as created, on the one hand, in which case nature precedes the person, and the person is an ‘individual’, that is, an entity independent ontologically from other human beings, and uncreated divine persons, on the other hand, in which case the three persons of the Trinity, because God has no beginning, “do not share a pre-existing or a logically prior to them divine nature but coincide with it.” “Multiplicity in God,” therefore, “does not involve a division of His nature, as happens with man.”³⁰⁴

Defined by the Cappadocians through properties which are *unique*, ‘person’ was in this respect fundamentally different from nature or substance. In reaction to Eunomianism,³⁰⁵ the concept of ‘person’ emerged more clearly as a distinct

course must be pursued in the confession of the Son, we must combine the particular with the common and say, ‘I believe in God the Son,’ and so in the case of the Holy Ghost we must make our utterance conform to the relation and say ‘in God the Holy Ghost.’ Hence it results that there is a satisfactory preservation of the unity by the confession of the one Godhead, while in the distinction of the individual properties regarded in each there is the confession of the peculiar properties of the Persons.” (Basil, “Letter 236”, cited in Martland, 1965a, 254).

³⁰² Martland, 1965a, 254.

³⁰³ It is in this context that the Cappadocians use the term, ‘*mode of existence*’ as that which communicates what is uniquely implied in the names of the persons of the Trinity, and that which communicates their peculiar characteristics as hypostases.

³⁰⁴ Zizioulas, 1995a, 48.

³⁰⁵ Eunomianism was the second of two heresies in response to which the Cappadocians formed their Trinitarian theology. In accordance with the Aristotelian dialectic, Eunomius sought to prove that the Son is totally *unlike* the Father. Since, they argued, the Father as the substance of God is unbegotten (*agennetos*), and the Son is, according to Nicaea, ‘begotten’, he is therefore outside of the being or substance of God. The first heresy was that of Sabellianism or modalism which the Cappadocians countered by stressing the fullness and ontological integrity of each person of the Trinity. The Cappadocians were so concerned to do this that they rejected the use of the term *prosopon* or person to describe the Trinity, a term that is first attributed to Tertullian

category in ontology, and on the other hand, as Zizioulas indicates, it caused the Cappadocians to underline “the idea that personhood can be known and identified through its absolute uniqueness and irreplaceability, something that has not ceased to be of existential relevance in philosophy.”³⁰⁶ The personhood of each of the persons in the Godhead in their appropriate irreducible differentiation is conveyed as divine eternal persons in communion. The Cappadocian model could, in other words, have more convincingly and appropriately achieved what Edwards so strongly pursued, the hypostatic uniqueness of the Spirit.

The Cappadocians were also able to reconcile incommunicability with relationship. This was accomplished, as Zizioulas indicates by their “freeing divine existence from the servitude of personhood to substance, a servitude which applies only to created existence.” In that they are uncreated, the three persons were “not faced with a given substance, but exist freely.” “Being is”, therefore, “simultaneously relational and hypostatic.”³⁰⁷ This thereby rendered the Trinity ‘open’. In that the doctrine of persons in the Trinitarian theology “makes us see in God a kind of existence we all want to lead”³⁰⁸, it is very much a soteriological theology. Again, what Edwards valued by way of an ‘open’ Trinity with significant soteriological impact by the Spirit, might have been achieved without recourse to neo-Platonic philosophy by the ingeniously crafted Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity, which was an expression of the distance of these theologians from the Platonic presuppositions of their cultural context.

The Cappadocian Fathers therefore bequeathed a legacy of “a concept of God, which exists as a communion of free love out of which unique, irreplaceable and unrepeatable identities emerge, i.e. true persons in the absolute ontological sense.”³⁰⁹ God’s self-revelation that leads to saving knowledge of God in humans and their eternal communion with Him is emphasized in the Cappadocian tradition as being an expression of the common will and action of the three

in the West, and is thought to have found its way to the East through Hippolytus. (Zizioulas, 1995a, 46).

³⁰⁶ Zizioulas, 1995a, 50.

³⁰⁷ Zizioulas, 1995a, 50.

³⁰⁸ Zizioulas, 1995a, 59.

³⁰⁹ Zizioulas, 1995a, 58.

divine hypostases. This will be an expression of the love that unites the three persons within the Godhead – a love stemming from the Father but shared within the Trinity and not reduced as in Augustine and Edwards to a *nexus amoris* in the hypostasis of the Spirit. That united love in its “inexhaustible depth and intensity... overflows and surpasses the boundless limits of divine being in order to embrace, save, and transfigure the object of its affection.”³¹⁰

The Spirit is greatly emphasized in this scheme, and Edwards’ aims in ‘honouring’ the person of the Spirit would be well accommodated by it.

The Cappadocians also left behind the legacy of a conception of the Trinity as being ‘open’ for human participation or communion by means of the identity of Christ with our humanity, and so that the ultimate goal of sanctification is the recovery of full personhood in communion, and therefore divinisation, in a relational sense. Barth’s emphasis within Trinitarian participation is similarly Christological. By contrast, Edwards’ emphasis in the openness of his Trinity and in human participation is more pneumatological than Christological. This will be seen to mirror the greater emphasis of Barth on justification and that of Edwards on sanctification in soteriology.

The Cappadocians, as Zizioulas has eloquently expressed it, “have taught us that the Trinity is not a matter for academic speculation, but for personal relationship.” “As such,” he continues, “it is truth revealed only by participation in the Father-Son relationship through the Spirit which allows us to cry ‘Abba, Father’. The Trinity is therefore revealed only in the church, i.e. the community through which we become sons of the Father of Jesus Christ. Outside this it remains a stumbling block and a scandal.”³¹¹ This high view of the church is a hallmark of the Cappadocian tradition, stressing as it does the role of community, by definition, in developing Christian ‘personhood’ and standing in stark contrast to the individualism that has often characterized the Western world in general,

³¹⁰ Breck, J. *Divine Initiative: Salvation in Orthodox Theology*, in Meyendorff, John and Tobias, Robert, (Eds. & Intro.). *Salvation in Christ: A Lutheran – Orthodox Dialogue*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 108.

³¹¹ Zizioulas, 1995a, 60.

and Western Christianity in particular. Edwards, as the *Religious Affections* indicate, sought to propagate a more community-based sanctification, but as we will discover in succeeding chapters, he remained bound within an introspective and individualist perspective that somewhat mirrors his psychological view of the Trinity.

Gunton in his strong critique of Augustinian pneumatology indicates amongst others, a missing feature in Augustine's view of the Spirit, which is valid with respect to that of Edwards also. By centring the notion of love on its unitive function in relating Father to Son, and believer to God – a valid function in itself – little weight is given by Augustine to the notion of love derived from the economy of the incarnation, that is the “essence of the love of God in its outgoingness, its dynamic seeking of the other.”³¹² This leads to an inadequate theology of community in the Augustinian-Edwardsean scheme. Any “conception of the Spirit as realising the conditions of the age to come particularly through the creation of community,”³¹³ is missing.

The inadequate aspects of the Augustinian model, which in fact bring lack of clarity, if not ‘dishonour,’ rather than the honour Edwards sought for the Spirit, and which perhaps he might have corrected had he followed the Cappodocian ontology, may be summarized in the following manner:

- (i) The inadequacies of a model in which the true ontological foundations of the doctrine of the Trinity are the triad of memory, understanding and will of the human mind appeals ultimately to neo-Platonism as opposed to the economy of salvation,³¹⁴ and this, and the arbitrariness within it of assigning “will” and “love” to the Spirit are dishonouring. In downplaying the role played in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity by the incarnation, the incarnational concept of love is largely missing, and this obscures the specific hypostatic uniqueness of the Holy Spirit. Because of his inadequate

³¹² Gunton, 1990a, 54.

³¹³ Gunton, 1990a, 54.

³¹⁴ Gunton, 1990a, 46.

conception of love as ‘love for the other as other’, Augustine is, to cite Gunton, “unable to conceive a true otherness in the Trinity, another feature which can be seen to be a function of too strong an emphasis on the unity of God.”³¹⁵ This is summarized in the following manner:

The overall result is that because the doctrine of the Spirit has inadequate economic hypostatic weight in Augustine, the father of Western theology also lacks the means to give personal distinctiveness to the being of the Spirit in the inner Trinity.³¹⁶

- (ii) The *vinculum caritatis* within the Augustinian psychological model implies an adherence to the *filioque* clause (even though Augustine modified it with the *principaliter* clause), and ultimately places the Spirit ontologically “on the fringes.” The Cappadocian understanding of the ontological (logical) origin of the Spirit and the Son by non-temporal causality from the *monarchia* avoids subordinationism and the confusion of two origins of the Holy Spirit (instead of the one origin and the one instrument), and two Gods, and honours the Spirit more with its “empirical emphasis on the distinctive characteristics within the Godhead.”³¹⁷
- (iii) Edwards appears to have modelled his thinking on Augustine with respect to his fundamental basis for divine unity – that of intra-divine relations. As Martland and Gunton have shown, the concept of intra-divine relations was present in Cappadocian theology prior to Augustine, but Augustine’s ontology is in fact one of “*intra-divine relations*” rather than “*divine persons in relation*”. Augustine and therefore Edwards do not escape an incipient modalism in their Neoplatonic model and this ultimately does not honour the Spirit as full divine *hypostasis in communion*.

³¹⁵ Gunton, 1990a, 54. Gunton credits John Zizioulas with this latter insight.

³¹⁶ Gunton, 1990a, 55.

³¹⁷ Martland, 1965a, 255.

There are occasions when Edwards appears to escape a substance ontology and to derive the Trinity from the Father. He refers to the Father as the fount of the Trinity³¹⁸ and the ontological ‘proof’ begins with God the Father specifically generating the Son. Closer inspection of this, however, shows that his derivation of the Trinity from the Father is Augustinian, not Cappadocian.³¹⁹ It is based on the analogy of the human mind and the Platonic elevation of knowledge. When God is called Father, or ‘unbegotten’, this is a reference to personhood, not substance, in the Cappadocian reckoning.

Is there in fact any evidence of ‘persons,’ defined or described as ‘persons in communion,’ in Edwards’ later writings? As noted in a passage above, his description of the pre-economy Divine deliberations may reflect this somewhat. The Cappadocian view is purported to be seen also in the *Treatise on Grace*, where in the context of the union of the elect with Christ by the Spirit, Edwards speaks of the Holy Spirit as being described in Scripture “as a proper Divine Person,” and as one who should be properly considered as “a distinct personal agent.”³²⁰ “Person,” he explains, is the right word to use to describe the Holy Spirit, because this word describes appropriately “the distinction of the Eternal Three – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – as to say they are one God but three persons.”³²¹

The term ‘person’ is not in itself decisive, however, and the manner in which Edwards describes the uniqueness of the persons does not seem to be tempered

³¹⁸ *Miscellany 143, YE 13, 298*: “*Coroll.2.* Hence we see how and in what sense the Father is the fountain of the Godhead, and how naturally and properly God the Father is spoken of in the Scripture as of the Deity without distinction, as being the only true God; and why God the Son should commonly [be] spoken of with a distinction, and be called the Son of God; and so the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God.”

³¹⁹ The Trinitarian theology of the Cappadocians considered the Father alone as *arche*, *pege*, or *aitia*, the source of divinity. The Athanasians differed at this point in that they understood the Trinity, the whole Godhead, as the *mon-arche*. In favour of the Athanasian view, T.F. Torrance comments that ‘while the Son is certainly *of* the Father he is not thought of as derived or caused, for he is Son *of* the Father as the Father is Father *of* the Son.’ (Torrance, T.F. *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), 252-253.)

³²⁰ *Treatise on Grace*, 57.

³²¹ *Treatise on Grace*, 57.

with the notion that they are divine ‘persons in communion,’ working in harmony for the salvation of humanity. Rather they are humanoid, and individualistic, in the manner which Karl Barth was so concerned to avoid.

Cappadocian advances in Barth

With respect to *Patristic tradition*, Barth has a leaning at times towards the Western tradition in certain issues where he shows affinity with Augustine, and therefore with Edwards. Both theologians demonstrate a polemic for the unity of the Godhead, for example. In Barth this is most evident in his hesitance to use the term ‘person’ in his discussion of modes of being. Despite his concern with the use of the term ‘person’, however, Barth’s fundamental ontology, however, (‘persons in relation’, albeit ‘modes of being’ is preferred to ‘person’ and yet his ‘modes’ are personal) is more Eastern. Barth’s closeness to the orthodox formularies is evident, for example, from the fact that his major section on the person of the Holy Spirit, “The Eternal Spirit”, is an exposition of the Niceno – Constantinopolitan creed.³²² Edwards would certainly have benefited by exposure to Barth’s incorporation of Cappadocian insights with respect to articulating the notion of personhood, with the ontological freedom Edwards desired, and yet with an understanding that avoided incipient individualism.

Barth also interprets the Holy Spirit in the Augustinian way,³²³ including adherence to the *filioque* clause, as is the case with Edwards. He speaks of the Spirit in terms similar to those of Edwards, as the love that constitutes the essence of the communion between the Father and the Son. Barth, it should be noted, arrives at this conclusion in a very non-Augustinian way, however. In general, as already noted, for Barth, God is known in this way through revelation. “But He is not this, because He is it in His revelation; but because He

³²² *CD I/1*, paragraph 12, section 2, 466ff..

³²³ Barth follows Augustine closely in *CD, I/1*, 470, where he states: “Thus God - and to this degree He is God the Holy Spirit - is ‘antecedently in Himself’ the act of communion, the act of impartation, love, gift.” Unlike Augustine however, discovery of this is derived through revelation of the economy, as indicated by Barth’s next sentence: “For this reason and in this way and on this basis He is so in His revelation. Not *vice versa*! We know Him thus in His revelation. ”

is it antecedently in Himself, He is it also in His revelation.”³²⁴ He contends specifically that this communion in the inner, divine life of the Trinity forms the ground of the communion between God and man, which is established in revelation through the Holy Spirit. The fact that the communion of the inner life of the Trinity existed antecedently, gives objective content and ground to the communion of the Spirit between God and man. Such would not be the case, Barth argues, if the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone.³²⁵ This *a posteriori* derivation, along with a more Cappadocian articulation of the personhood of the Spirit, would have greatly served Edwards’ express purpose to ‘honour’ the Spirit.

Having pointed out some shortcomings of the Edwardsean Trinity, it is fair to say, however, that Edwards did in fact see the origin and therefore the character of redemption as Trinitarian. The redemption order, including specifically for our purposes, sanctification, was seen by him, as Wilson indicates, as “establishing *the nature of the Godhead as irreducibly Trinitarian.*”³²⁶ The excessive individualism of the persons in the Trinity in Edwards’ model may be an anthropomorphised reflection of his individualistic view of the nature of humanity. This would be supported by Edwards’ Augustinian tendency towards the use of analogy which seems clearly to influence how he sees the relationships and personhood of the triune persons. One cannot help but wonder whether the individualism that characterized the early Puritan pilgrims and came to shape the culture of the North American continent is not already in evidence in the projection of individualism onto the Trinity by one of its most influential thinkers.

Presenting an alternative Augustinian interpretation

In summary, I wish to offer the alternative that Edwards’ Trinitarian ontology remained firmly within the Augustinian camp and that his Lockean and Idealist innovations, and his ventures into an ontology in which the persons are more

³²⁴ CD I/1, 471.

³²⁵ CD I/1, 473-4.

³²⁶ Wilson, John F. *YE* 9, 31.

individuated than Augustine would permit, were first of all determined not by another model he found at all, but by his scripturally-based observations of the Spirit in action, and specifically by his need to make the Spirit as *vinculum caritatis* more free to operate in a personal way to communicate the love of the Father and the Son for saints in whose soul he took residence. He felt free to over-differentiate the persons within the safety of an Augustinian “one Mind” model which above all would safeguard the unity of the Godhead. Edwards, in other words, is much more concerned about honouring the persons of the Trinity, and especially the Spirit, than he is about which model he is using.

It seems that Edwards, in describing the loving union within the Trinity, as effected by the Spirit as the *vinculum caritatis*, and in employing the Spirit as such, as a means to open the Trinity, uses Cappadocian-like language without the adequate Cappadocian grounding for securing the hypostatic uniqueness of the Spirit. He uses language for the functioning of the Spirit with the hypostatic uniqueness that the Cappadocian understanding brings, not because he has adopted a new model, but because this is how he sees the Spirit functioning in the Scriptural texts, and in his personal and church experience. The language of the Spirit’s personhood then dominates his descriptions of Trinitarian relations, even though they are not properly grounded in a Cappadocian ontology. The persons are really still held within a psychological one mind model, even if it is a ‘mutual love’ psychological model, and even though Edwards’ descriptions of their actions and inter-dependence sound more Cappadocian. Rather than reading a Cappadocian theology back into Edwards’ theology, I suggest that his penchant for independent thought led him to at times to describe the functioning of the persons of the Trinity without concern about the model he may have been reflecting.

How Edwards’ ontology actually affected his view of union of the saints with God and sanctification was perhaps the most telling test of where its character lay. An open Trinity in the Cappadocian ontology fostered a sanctification centred on participation of Christ in our humanity, and of our participation in Him, with the goal of the recovery of full personhood in communion, with a high

view of the church as the community through which we become sons of the Father of Jesus Christ.³²⁷ An “open Trinity” in Edwards which is of an Augustinian sort, by contrast, is characterized by a consuming passion for knowledge of God gained by means of the soul’s knowledge of itself, and of concomitant self-orientation and individualism. As Gunton has pointed out, Augustine’s historical context is the “beginning of the era in which the church is conceived essentially as an institution mediating grace to the individual rather than of the community formed on the analogy of the Trinity’s *interpersonal* relationships.”³²⁸ This is eminently evident in Edwards’ sanctification as we shall shortly discover. He does make a strong effort to emphasize relationality as the ultimate value for the Christian, but never does escape the strictures of his Augustinian model in that the relationality is still with a view to the introspective assessment of the soul.

4. The issue of the coalescing of the immanent and economic Trinities ... is there a God “back of” the revealed God?

Although the gap between the immanent and the economic appears to diminish within the participation aspect of Edwards’ theology, there is in general in his theologizing about the Trinity, a great distance between the essential God and the God of the economy. This is evident within the *Observations* as he finds himself adding a further category to the economic and the immanent, that of the status of the persons under the covenant of redemption. Edwards falls into the trap of opening up the search for a God behind the revealed persons in the economy. A question that arises naturally in this discussion is whether in fact Edwards is justified in drawing a distinction between roles played in the economic Trinity and those he points to in the initiation and enacting of the covenant. A further more fundamental question relates to what this says about the God who functions in a manner beyond that of the economy. Does this mean that God in fact violates His nature, specifically His Triune nature in the executing of our redemption?

³²⁷ Zizioulas, 1995a, 60.

³²⁸ Gunton, 1990a, 54.

Edwards' defence against such an accusation would be to say that the humiliation of the Son in assuming a suffering human-servant role is not qualitatively different to the economy. It is only a question of degree. If this is so, the creation of a new category hardly seems justifiable. It seems somewhat strange that the category of the economic which defines the works of God *ad extra*, should be deemed by Edwards to be insufficient to include the redemptive acts of God, including those of the Son in humiliation. What seems to drive Edwards to this is the issue of what the Son becomes in His redemptive mission. Edwards does affirm that the Son was undiminished in His deity whilst in the form of a suffering servant. The concern with Edwards' insistence that a different set of relations to that of the economy governs the Son in His humiliation seems unnecessary if one understands the humiliation or kenosis as an issue of visible, governmental glory, not of things essential, and that it therefore really is in keeping with the spirit of the economic relations.

Barth's concern with Edwards' starting point in the immanent Trinity, and with the consequent distance between the immanent and economic Trinities that requires Edwards to build the bridge of the covenant of redemption, would be expressed as follows: "the real God would remain behind revelation and we would be back on our quest."³²⁹ Looking for the real God behind revelation would appear to be what Edwards does in the *Observations* in particular. In positing a set of relations beyond the economic Trinity, Edwards falls into the realm of concern that Barth anticipated: "If the *tropos apokalypseos* is really a different one from the *tropos huparcheos* and if the *huparchis* is the real being of God, then this means that God in His revelation is not really God."³³⁰

Barth purports to start with the economic Trinity, and then at each point moves to the essential Trinity. Thus, in this aspect of things, he is at odds with Augustine, and therefore with Edwards. Barth's concern is to demonstrate that "God is what He reveals Himself to be."³³¹ Thus, the activities of Father, Son and Spirit in creation, reconciliation and redemption do not only reveal a single God playing

³²⁹ *CD I/1*, 350.

³³⁰ *CD I/1*, 353.

³³¹ Bromiley, 1979a, 21.

three different roles. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit eternally and antecedently in Himself, and therefore, is revealed as such in His dealings with us. As Bromiley summarizes it, “Noetically, the economic Trinity forms the starting point, but the eternal Trinity has ontic priority.”³³² By contrast, using his psychological analogy, Edwards’ starting point is the ontological Trinity as conceived through Augustinian lenses. The distinction between the economic and ontological Trinities is thus slightly greater in Edwards, than in Barth, where they are correspondent and more closely coalesced.

5. The issue of subordination ... is there a heightened concern about subordinationism?

Edwards’ desire for the vindication of the honour of the Spirit causes him to take great pains to avoid subordinationism in the immanent Trinity (a matter of priority not inferiority), within the economic Trinity where all three persons are consenting equally, and even with respect to the divine decision concerning the covenant in which the Spirit is not a partner. Although not a partner, he participates fully as a “member”³³³ in the matter of consenting about roles, and in so doing manifests his full equality and Deity, because as Edwards notes, those not of the same essence “don’t infinitely consent.”³³⁴

However, behind Edwards’ great concern to avoid subordination, there is an underlying assumption that submissive roles within the economy and the covenant are necessarily pejorative. Edwards felt it necessary to require special covenants for this submission to be present in the Godhead. Edwards’ great pains to avoid any notion of subordination within the immanent Trinity and his undue emphasis on the “social arrangement” by which the Trinity consented concerning their economic roles may be a reflection of what Plantinga Pauw notes as “the

³³² Bromiley, 1979a, 21.

³³³ That the persons or ‘modes’ in the Trinity are that, and not ‘members’ is clear, for as J.I. Packer is wont to remind his students, the Trinity is not a ‘club’. That they appear to function somewhat in a social club in Edwards’ scheme is the problem, and hence my usage of this term here.

³³⁴ Miscellany 117, *YE 13*, 283.

tremendous emphasis on familial and communal bonds within Puritan society which encouraged social images.”³³⁵

In light of the fact that the revealed God in Jesus endorsed voluntary submission among equal persons, and exemplified submission even in his essential superiority,³³⁶ attributing submission within the Deity should not require explanation. It is everywhere present in the revelation of economic Trinity. Requiring a covenant to explain this was a further consequence of Edwards’ *a priori* approach, and the resulting distance between the revealed God and the immanent God.

Edwards’ description of his understanding of the absence of all subordination prior to the establishment of the economic order, and the fact that these roles were assumed with mutual consent, and indeed that the “redemption” roles were temporary, is quite surprising especially in light of the hierarchialism of his culture with respect to family and society. In this he resembles the egalitarianism of Moltmann. In his descriptions of the Trinity outside of these social and egalitarian covenanting depictions, Plantinga Pauw in *The Supreme Harmony of All* expresses a diatribe against hierarchialism and particularly patriarchalism in Edwards’ Trinity.³³⁷

Barth also receives her disapproval for not avoiding subordinationism, despite his avoidance of the mythology of the covenant. Barth’s alternative to the covenant of redemption is that of “primal history” in which the eternal decision concerning human redemption is made between God and from its very origin, a human partner who “must be present as the second partner at the institution of the covenant to make it a real covenant.” That human partner is the God-man in whom humanity is “already present, and presumed, and assumed into unity with

³³⁵ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 32. Plantinga Pauw actually expresses concern that Edwards’ “development of the covenant of redemption is alarmingly reminiscent of classical social contract theory, in which a person is a self endowed with an indissoluble right to self-determination.” Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 115.

³³⁶ Witness, for example, the God-man who knows His identity as “the one who has come from” and is “returning to God,” washing his disciples’ feet in John 13, and then endorsing the servant, submission values of His kingdom for his disciples.

³³⁷ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 116-7.

his own existence as God”, and already loved “from the very first and in whom He intends and loves all other men... ”³³⁸ This insight is in my opinion a better alternative to Edwards’ covenantal depictions. However, in this, Plantinga Pauw also sees subordinationist themes to which she and other feminist theologians take offence, especially since it is a subordination that belongs to the inner life of God.

In this discussion, however, it seems that there operates within feminist theology a hermeneutic analogous to that in Edwards’ depictions of the Trinity ‘in covenant session,’ which overrides that of the economic revelation of God in Christ. Just as Edwards neglects the revelation of God in Christ as his starting point, there is a feminist hermeneutic which sits above observation of the revelation of the *oikonomia* and which assesses both Barth and Edwards. There is a presupposition that all talk of economic or functional submission must be “offensive.” The possibility that voluntary submission does not, in fact, imply subordinationism, seems not to be a possibility. The idea prevalent in contemporary culture is that essential equality is violated by submissiveness in functional roles. It is the avoidance of this that supercedes all other concerns in the feminist approach. Both Edwards (apart from within his discussions of the covenant) and Barth accepted, as a given, the ontological equality of the persons or modes of being within the Godhead, and accepted also what apparently Jesus accepted in his incarnation and his teaching, that roles engaged in with mutual submission and harmony define the Trinity in a harmonious and beautiful, not a pejorative way. Plantinga Pauw’s assertion is that “While the divine work of human redemption is not at all alien to God’s eternal being, it is not simply identical with it.”³³⁹ This leaves us open to looking for the God back of the Trinity again.

³³⁸ CD IV/1, 66.

³³⁹ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 118.

6. The issue of the absence of the enhypostatic movement represented in the incarnation... is there a Christological deficit in Edwards' pneumatologically-weighted Trinitarianism?

Edwards' emphasis on securing for the Spirit an equality of functional importance in the economy as well as essential equality, and his desire to achieve hypostatic uniqueness for the Spirit to achieve that goal, has been noted. That he might have inadequately or perhaps illegitimately done so, and that he might have better achieved the latter goal through Cappadocian insights which Barth, in part adopted, has also been noted.

That Barth did not himself fully adopt a Cappadocian view of the Trinitarian persons has been expressed also. Even theologians who view Barth favourably in general terms are critical of the inadequacies of his theology of hypostatic uniqueness, including that of the Spirit.³⁴⁰ They are also especially critical of his pneumatology. The possibility that there are incipient 'modalistic' tendencies in Barth has been widely addressed by others. Edwards, to his credit, does not reveal the same tendency. His descriptions of the active ministry of the Spirit which will be the focus of my attention in subsequent chapters reflect a robust and, I think, a biblical pneumatology. A key question that I will postpone to

³⁴⁰ Richard Roberts has expressed this in *Karl Barth – Studies of his Theological Methods* (Oxford: 1979), 93-96, in particular, where he demonstrates parallels between Barth and Hegelian idealism, and again in a more detailed treatment, in *A Theology On its Way? Essays on Karl Barth* (Edinburgh, 1991). Other critiques of Barth's pneumatology (in its failure to redress the marginalisation of this doctrine in Western theology, and in his failure to use the term 'person' and how this specifically affected the doctrine of the Spirit), by Alasdair Heron in *The Holy Spirit* (London: 1983) and Thomas Smail in *The Giving Gift: The Holy Spirit in Person* (London: 1988), 43, corroborate this parallel. A. Torrance also draws attention, as Moltmann did, to the fact that Barth's under-characterization of the Spirit is related to the influence of Hegel. In support he cites the work of Rowan Williams who points to a 'kinship with Hegel' on the part of Barth with respect to the similarity of pattern between Barth's concept of the Word and Hegel's pan-unity of 'Absolute Spirit', the one and universal self-thinking thought. Horst Pöhlmann (*Analogia entis oder Analogia fidei?, Die frage der Analogie bei Karl Barth*, (Göttingen, 1965), 117) is also quoted with reference to his suggestion that there are strong parallels between Barth's *Aktualismus* and a dynamic conception of Being that characterizes Hegelianism. Pöhlmann suggests, therefore, that Hegel's influence can be seen to be reflected in Barth's refutation of the *analogia entis*, which is motivated by Barth's refutation of the dichotomy between being and act (Torrance, A. 245). Torrance finds this to resonate with his own argument that "the *Seinsweise* concept underplays the notion of the free and specific agency of the Spirit just as it underplays the notion of a mutuality of relations between the Father and the Son - which weakness he sees also in Karl Rahner's exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, which as Moltmann has pointed out is so similar to Barth's (Torrance, A. 1996a, 245).

answer, however, is this one: did Edwards emphasize the work of the Spirit in salvation at the expense of Christology and Christological participation of God in humanity? There is an aspect of that question which I will address, here however. It concerns a deficit which is absent even in Barth despite his great emphasis on incarnational Christological concerns in soteriology, and if this is so for Barth, it is even more so for Edwards.

Alan Torrance has noted that with regard to the matter of perceived inadequacies with regard to the theology of the hypostatic uniqueness of the divine persons, that this is not the crucial issue in Barth's pneumatology. Rather, Torrance has indicated, that it is in fact "*an inadequate integration of the enhypostatic movement* represented by the incarnation – and, in particular, the vicarious and priestly roles of Christ – *with the doctrine of the Trinity.*" Torrance flatly states that, "Attributing to the Holy Spirit the role or function of Revealedness is insufficient." He then insists that "The vicarious faithfulness - as this includes faith - of Christ (so critical to Paul's argument concerning justification, if faith is not to be conceived as a work) and the continuing priesthood of Christ (as interpreted by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews), conceived in terms of its enhypostatic dynamic, requires to be taken into account here." Barth is held back from expressing the grace of the triune God "in terms of the full 'vitality' of its perichoretic energy, that is, as denoting that two-way movement grounded in the mutuality intrinsic to the Triunity and opened to humanity in the revelation event."³⁴¹

Jenson, who recognized the inadequacy of Barth's pneumatology, attempted to offer a more profound characterization of the agency of the Spirit than that of Barth, by means of further explication of the Trinitarian nature of the divine agency through 'notions' and 'relations.'³⁴² This is however, also inadequate, because, as Torrance notes, "it further compounds Barth's failure to interpret the vicarious subjectivity of the Son in relation to the Father". I am in agreement

³⁴¹ Torrance, A. 1996a, 245.

³⁴² Jenson, Robert W. *The Triune Identity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

with Torrance that “there is a whole dimension to the ‘Subjectivity’ of the person of the Son which cannot be reduced to the agency of the Spirit.”³⁴³

Barth, as a consequence of this fails to achieve what he so keenly desired by way of affirmation of the identity of the immanent and economic Trinities, that is, “the integrity of the divine being with the revelatory event, in accordance with his *a posteriori* approach.”³⁴⁴ As Torrance indicates, “Therefore, where God is deemed to have his being *in se* as a mutuality of love, what God is *in se* he is *ex se* in such a manner that this becomes the very ground of our participation in God - God recreates us (i.e. we are ‘reborn from above’, as Zizioulas insists) in order to be taken to participate in the ‘mutuality’ of the intradivine communion (*theosis*).”³⁴⁵

What is most interesting in Edwards’ theology is that even though he even more glaringly misses the mark with respect to enhypostatic Christology, and even though he approaches it as one bound within the Augustinian ontology, in his elevated pneumatology and especially his exposition of the pneumatological union of the saints, he seeks the goal outlined here by Zizioulas. For by the infusion of the Spirit as the mutual love of the Father for the Son, that mutual love of the Father for the Son becomes, by rebirth, the experience of the saint. And here in Edwards, at any rate, it is as the immanent God, who in fact at that point is the God of the economy also, that this is achieved. In this one aspect of Edwards’ theology he achieves a greater integration of the revealed and the immanent God.

Another limitation which has been noted in Barth’s Trinitarian approach is with respect to the priority of revelation over the doxological. This weakness lies in the fact that he is “preoccupied with the divine intention *vis-à-vis* witness, i.e. *revelation* rather than *worship*, and fails to appreciate the extent to which one can

³⁴³ Torrance, A. 1996a, 224-225.

³⁴⁴ Torrance, A. 1996a, 222. This is the fundamental Trinitarian axiom that “what God is eternally and antecedently in himself he is toward us and what God is toward us he is eternally and antecedently in Himself.”

³⁴⁵ Torrance, A. 1996a, 222.

only arrive at an appropriate interpretation of the former in the light of the latter where worship is interpreted as the gift of free participation in the glory of God or, more fully, the gift of participating by the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father."³⁴⁶ Barth's doctrine of the Trinity with regard to his preference for the use 'modes of being' over 'persons' reveals that his revelation model does cause him to inadequately articulate the dynamic relations of mutual love within the Triunity. As Torrance suggests, "A doxological model which balanced metaphors of 'address' and 'meeting' with those equally important New Testament notions of *koinonia*, communion and participatory being and worship could have addressed these concerns much more adequately."³⁴⁷

Although Edwards does not express worship in quite the same ontological and Trinitarian manner that Torrance envisages, with respect at least to the ultimate end of all God's being and revealing, Edwards gets it right. His quintessential axiom is that the end of God in all his works, is His own glory and praise.

Conclusion

That Edwards considered the doctrine of the Trinity to have a high place within dogmatics is certainly clear. Trinitarian themes and analogies abound in Edwards' corpus, even though they are often provisional in their nature. The doctrine of the Trinity has a distinct bearing on Edwards' view of Christian experience as we shall shortly discover. Although he was not able to write a systematic theology, one cannot help but wonder if the opus magnum might have expressed a theology that was not just descriptively Trinitarian, but perhaps prescriptively so, as in Barth. The implicit importance of the Trinity and Trinitarian relations for the ontically central idea behind Edwards' theology as this is expressed in the *End of Creation*, that is that the ultimate end of God's

³⁴⁶ Torrance, A. 1996a, 224-225.

³⁴⁷ Torrance. A. 1996a, 224-5. "Moreover", he adds, "any residual influence of the 'infinite gulf' of his earlier didactic theology would have been tempered further as he would have been forced to emphasise the 'actual' in Christ as opposed to the necessary (albeit 'given') conditions of possibility *vis-à-vis* the knowledge of God and God-talk."

creative and redemptive purposes is God's own glory, and that this is achieved in a Trinitarian fashion by the union of saints with God through Christ, and especially by the Spirit's infusion, suggest this may have been likely. It is this theme that I will pursue in chapter III.

As to whether or not Edwards might have articulated an 'ontology of relations' had he more fully developed his doctrine of the Trinity, in the same sense as Barth, or even in the fuller sense of Moltmann or Zizioulas, remains an open question. Although the exact terminology of 'perichoresis' or 'ontology of relations' is not articulated, the notions are present in Edwards. I side with Jenson and Holmes in their assessment that this was certainly the direction in which the Edwards of the later writings was moving, and that had he had the opportunity to write the full theology, a more fully developed ontology of relations might have been articulated. In favour of Holmes, Helm and Crisp, and against Lee, Daniel and Plantinga Pauw, I have come to the conclusion that a 'dispositional' account of the essence of the Godhead was not an ontology Edwards used. A different issue is that of the relationality of the divine persons, which Edwards certainly does convey.

I have concluded that Edwards, even with his Lockean and Idealist innovations, stayed within an Augustinian 'mutual love' ontology, formally speaking. His attempts to secure hypostatic uniqueness, freedom and economic equality for the Spirit did lead him to depictions of the persons of the Trinity, especially in covenantal depictions, that are overly individuated and anthropomorphic, despite his formal adherence to the simplicity or *actus purus* tradition. His use of the term 'person' and his method of differentiation of the persons do not reflect the adoption of a Cappadocian ontology. I have concluded that this ontology would have served him well, and that the advances Barth made in this direction would have been instructive for Edwards had they been contemporaries. Both seem to find safety in the unity of the Godhead which this model emphasizes, but both are also, in different ways, in the process of escaping Augustinian domination. In some sense both are held back by entrenchment within the Augustinian model, from what perhaps they could envisage as the superior ontology of the

Cappadocians. Barth is held back from evolving a more highly developed theology of the hypostatic uniqueness and freedom of the ‘persons,’ from more fully integrating the immanent and the economic Trinities, and from espousing a more highly developed pneumatology.³⁴⁸ Edwards does develop a more highly developed hypostatic uniqueness and pneumatology, but not in a legitimate fashion.

I have suggested a theme that will be developed in chapter IV, that Edwards’ desire to ‘honour the Spirit’ in matters of the Trinity, leads him into an over-emphasis on pneumatology at the expense of incarnational Christology, in the matter of soteriology.

³⁴⁸ Moltmann indicates that “Barth’s idealist heritage finally betrays itself in the use of the reflection structure to secure God subjectivity, sovereignty, selfhood and personality.” He continues, “if instead the thinking of God deistically as substance, we think of him theistically as subject, then this triad process of reflection is intellectually necessary. It is through self-distinction and self-recollection that God shows himself to be the absolute subject.” This then influences Barth’s decision to begin not with the God who reveals himself, that is, the Father, but with the specific revelation who is the Son, that is, the ‘Godhead, Jesus Christ’. This influence also leads to Barth’s under-characterization of the doctrine of the Spirit. Moltmann concludes that “the God who reveals himself in three modes of being can no longer display subjectivity in his state-of-revelation, the Holy Spirit.” (Moltmann, J. *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM Press, 1981) (hereafter “Moltmann, 1981a”), 142.

III. Union of the Saints with God by the Spirit

The prominence and integrating function within the theology of Jonathan Edwards of spiritual union, which for him meant union of *the Spirit*, is clearly indicated even as early as his *Miscellanies 184*:

What insight I have of the nature of minds, I am convinced that there is no guessing what kind of union and mixtion, both conscious or otherwise, there may be between them. So that all difficulty is removed in believing what the Scripture declares about spiritual unions - of the persons of the Trinity, of the two natures of Christ, of Christ and the minds of saints.³⁴⁹

We have noted the critical role of the Holy Spirit as ‘Love’ in the union of Edwards’ immanent Trinity. The elevation of the Spirit in Edwards’ theology is perhaps most apparent in his doctrine of the pneumatological union of saints with God. The presence of a doctrine of *theosis*³⁵⁰ in a Western, Reformed theologian is the surprising result of this. The concept of union of the saints with God, by the Spirit, plays a critical integrating role in his whole theological endeavour. For example, he employed it to give integrity to his doctrine of God as a self-glorifying God, who creates and redeems, without compromising Divine aseity. The doctrine of the creation of a community brought into union with Christ by the Spirit’s infusion, to be the bride of Christ, was essential to this. Space does not allow the development of these theological themes. It has been convincingly shown elsewhere that the ultimate purpose in Edwards’ theology is doxological rather than merely soteriological, that the ultimate end behind the penultimate

³⁴⁹ Edwards, J. *Miscellanies 184*, “Union, Spiritual,” *YE 13*, 330.

³⁵⁰ The notion of *theosis* or divinisation can be traced back to the anti-Nicene era, even to Athanasius, to whom is attributed the following statement that the Son of God became man “that he might deify us in himself.” (Athanasius, Letter 60, to Adelphius, 4. Cf. paragraphs 3.8 (NPNF, 2d series 4, 575-578), cited in Rakestraw, Robert V., *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 40 (June 1997), 257). It was however most fully developed by the Cappadocians. Their theology of divinisation, or deification or, as preferred by some, ‘participation in the life of God’ is thereafter found throughout the history of the church in a variety of traditions, but most particularly in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. See Clendenin, D.B., *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 120. Its presence in Augustine is noted below.

ends of the creation of the universe and the redemption and union of the saints with God is the glorification of God himself,³⁵¹ and that this does have Trinitarian content. Glory for Edwards is akin to beauty and consents, and the whole notion of union in the Trinity plays an integral part in glory and glorification. The exercise of divine power, so often associated with Edwards' theology,³⁵² serves the higher end of revealing his divine glory. *God is, therefore, God glorifies himself*, is Edwards' maxim.

More directly important for my purpose is to show that union established by infusion of the Spirit who is 'Love' according to the psychological model of the Trinity, achieved for Edwards a direct entry of the saints into the fellowship of the immanent Godhead, and an elevation of the doctrine of the Spirit in the redeeming economy of God. It will be noted that although this left him open to the charge of monism, this direct union between the saints and the immanent Godhead was understood relationally by Edwards rather than substantially, that is, as an entering into the love shared between the Father and the Son. The challenge of doing so within a psychological rather than a social model of the Trinity accounts for charges of monism and mysticism which he encountered.

³⁵¹ See especially Holmes, 2001a, and references therein. The dissertation *End of Creation* particularly makes this clear. See also Piper, J. *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's delight in Being God*, (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1991), pp. 47-78, 123-160. Creation and redemption have a Christological orientation in Edwards in that both were undertaken by the Father for the Son who is "the end of all God's works *ad extra*." Edwards specifically states: "God created the world for His Son, that he might prepare a spouse or bride for him to bestow his love upon; so that the mutual joys between this bride and bridegroom are the end of creation" (*Miscellanies* 271, *YE* 13, 374). Creation is subservient to redemption in Edwards' thinking. This is reflected in his frequent typological assertions about the creational realm. If this at first glance makes creation in Edwards' unimportant, it should be noted that Edwards' relished and delighted in the creation order and I am in agreement that in Edwards' theology "the entire created realm as God's repetition of his own glory" (Sang Hyun Lee, "Edwards on God and Nature", in *Edwards in Our Time*, 17). Edwards' saw the culmination of that created order in the union of human creatures (the elect) with His Son, and the restoration of the created order in association with and dependent upon the manifestation of the sons of God.

³⁵² Plantinga Pauw (2002a, 7) offers her Trinitarian account of Edwards' theology with awareness of the "usual readings of Edwards that attribute to him a celebration of divine power". She concedes that the themes of Trinitarian love and union are not greatly in evidence in Edwards' works on original sin, the freedom of the will, and hell, but accords with Michael McClymond in his assertion that *Freedom of the Will* and *Original Sin* are "not nearly as central to Edwards' lifelong intellectual concerns as is commonly thought" (McClymond, M. *Encounters with God* (Oxford/NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 6).

We will in this chapter, therefore, clarify, and critically assess the redemption context and the nature of this concept of the union of the saints with God by the Spirit. The importance of pneumatological union in shaping Edwards soteriology will then be explored. I will then evaluate Edwards' doctrine of pneumatological union and with an eye constantly towards the participation theology of Barth with its more Christological emphasis. The influence of this theology of pneumatological union on Edwards' soteriology in its application to the human subject of salvation, and particularly on the relationship between justification and sanctification, will then be discussed. The contrast between Edwards' emphasis on sanctification by the Spirit and Barth's emphasis on justification in Christ will be noted.

The highly experiential nature of Edwards' doctrine of sanctification (inclusive of conversion, assurance of salvation and progressive sanctification) and his elevation of sanctification over justification was a consequence of the priority of pneumatological union in Edwards' soteriology and the consequent immediacy of the Spirit's work within the human soul. Especially noteworthy is the fact that a sanctification crafted in accordance with the union motif enabled him to adequately account for the extraordinary affections and 'union' in human hearts and communities he had seen in the revivals. At the same time it provided him with criteria to be discriminating within these awakenings with both individuals and churches. Extraordinary 'union' in churches was the litmus test of a work of the Spirit, not raised emotions or physical phenomena. And the criteria for testing whether a saint had really experienced an 'infusion of the Spirit who is Love' naturally became discernment of love in their hearts and actions. True religion as this is especially expounded in the *Religious Affections* was thus ultimately judged on affective and relational grounds. The achievements made by Edwards through the elevation of the Spirit in his theology of union as well as its inherent weaknesses will be assessed here. The more contemplative approach to the Christian life offered by Barth, arising within a theology of the Trinity with a greater Cappadocian influence, and a greater emphasis on the objective reality of justification as a consequence of the participation of the Son in humanity, is offered as a means of balancing Edwards' overly introspective approach.

A. The Redemption Context and Nature of Pneumatological Union with God in Edwards

1. The redemption context

In his introduction to what is probably Edwards' most mature reflection in the areas of the doctrine of God and salvation, the *Treatise on Grace and other posthumously published materials*,³⁵³ including the two late works on the Trinity,³⁵⁴ Paul Helm suggests the "one unified theme" of Edwardsean reflection on the teaching of Scripture to be that of "a revelation of God's redemptive grace" which was "Trinitarian in scope".³⁵⁵

Helm suggests that Edwards' mature reflection arose still within the framework of the covenant theology of his Puritan and Scholastic Calvinist forefathers,³⁵⁶ but that he modified the covenant doctrine at two significant points: (i) Edwards corrects what for him was an inadequate pneumatology in covenant theology, believing that the "common way of expressing the Holy Spirit's part in the covenant does not do full justice to biblical teaching",³⁵⁷ and specifically the notion of the Spirit as merely the "applier" of the gift of redemption, rather than the fully co-equal Person, who as the personal "Love" of God, *is* the gift of redemption; and (ii) Edwards radicalized and enhanced covenant theology in this area, because it "inadequately expresses the biblical teaching on grace and the Trinity." Helm adds in parenthesis an important comment for our thesis, "It will

³⁵³ Edwards, J. *Treatise on Grace and other posthumously published writings* (Ed. Paul Helm), (Cambridge and London: James Clarke and Co., 1971).

³⁵⁴ *Essay and Observations*.

³⁵⁵ *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, 6.

³⁵⁶ *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, 6. Helm cites Ames, Perkins and Preston as the "prominent 'covenant theologians' in Britain," and Turretin and Witsius on the continent, indicating also that the influence of this theology was "pervasive in Reformed circles in the seventeenth century, and found classic expression in such documents as the *Westminster Confession of Faith*."

³⁵⁷ *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, 6.

become clear how closely interwoven these two matters were in Edwards' thinking."³⁵⁸

The theme of redemption was a fundamental category of New England Puritan thought.³⁵⁹ The emphatic trait in this tradition is the concern with the subjective "application of redemption"³⁶⁰ in the soul of the Christian. The preoccupation of Calvin in salvation was with the incarnation, atonement and high priesthood of Christ, that is, the objective aspect of redemption. Whilst this was professed to be the accepted heritage of New England Puritan thought, in effect it is largely replaced as the centre of concern by the subjective issues of the morphology of conversion and the development of visible sainthood³⁶¹. This was a consequence of the interpenetration in the new world of the influence of the English Puritans, whose concern with the application of redemption developed at times into preparationist extremes, and the influence of German-speaking Pietists, who themselves had been deeply influenced by the English Puritans.³⁶²

This theme of the application of redemption is especially evident in Edwards' doctrine of redemption, and according to John F. Wilson, "provided the focus for much of Edwards' mature career"³⁶³. He cites in support of this, the sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God", the chronicling of the 1734 Awakening in the *Faithful Narrative* and in particular, in the wake of the Great Awakening, "the masterful treatise" on the spiritual life, the *Religious Affections*. Wilson

³⁵⁸ *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, 6.

³⁵⁹ John F. Wilson refers to this in his introduction to *A History of the Work of Redemption*, *YE* 9, 28-29, by documenting the work of Thomas Hooker (as recorded in *Thomas Hooker: Writings in England and Holland, 1626-1633*, Williams, George H. (Ed.) et al, Harvard Theological Studies 28 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975)), and by noting that Edwards' first publication is on redemption (*God Glorified In The Work Of Redemption, by the Greatness of Man's Dependence on Him, In The Whole Of It*), and that the 30 sermons composed in his early years, and which constituted *A History of the Work of Redemption*, have a major focus on that area.

³⁶⁰ This phrase was used by Thomas Hooker in *The Application of Redemption* (London:1656).

³⁶¹ This theme has been developed in Morgan, Edmund S. *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1963) and in Pettit, Norman. *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

³⁶² Nuttall, Geoffrey F. *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), and *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946) documents this tendency. Preparationism has its roots in Beza, and is most fully developed in William Perkins' *The Golden Chaine*.

³⁶³ Wilson, John F. *YE* 9, 31.

affirms that for Edwards, redemption is the most basic religious category. Wilson suggests, however, that Edwards “turned these concerns in a different direction entirely”. He indicates that Edwards

proposed systematic attention to the ‘objective’ side of the issue: redemption seen in relationship to the whole of creation as the means to comprehend the relationship of the world to God. His continuing reflection on these questions led him to carry the question even further back, into conjecture that the human understanding of the Work of Redemption established *the nature of the Godhead as irreducibly Trinitarian*.³⁶⁴ (emphasis mine).

Wilson supports this statement by suggesting that this issue is already present in his early work, and frequently in the “*Miscellanies*.” It is implicit in the *History of the Work of Redemption*, though not fully developed, but in the late essay, *End of Creation*, posthumously published in *Two Dissertations*, the limits of the human understanding of redemption are more fully discussed and the Trinitarian focus of Edwards evidenced. The critical importance of the union with God of the redeemed achieved by the Spirit and of the correlative manner in which this notion develops with Edwards’ doctrine of the Trinity will emerge in this context. I contend that although Edwards did concern himself greatly with the divine and objective aspects of redemption, and that in a Trinitarian manner, his emphasis on the third person of the Trinity reflected a great concern with the application of redemption such that the subjective elements of the human experience of salvation tended to overshadow the objective and Christological realities of redemption.

2. The nature of pneumatological union with God

The concept of the union of the saints with God by the Spirit may be summarized thus: the Spirit is the ‘Gift’ acquired by the incarnation and atonement of Christ, and is the means not merely of applying salvation, but of effecting union between

³⁶⁴ Wilson, John F. *YE* 9, 31.

God and the elect saints in their salvation. The communication of God's nature to the human person to create a new 'principle of the heart' is done by the infusion of the Holy Spirit at conversion. In receiving the very person of the Spirit who in accordance with the psychological model of the Trinity is the Love of the Father and the Son, believers thereby are placed in direct, loving, relational union with the immanent Godhead. As the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, he, as the 'vital principle of the soul,' is the means by which they exercise faith and demonstrate love in every aspect of the Christian life.

The specifics of this concept helped Edwards address his above-referenced perceived diminution of the Spirit's role. It is a union created by the person of the Spirit. The Spirit's participation which Edwards envisages is such that the distinction between the immanent and the economic actually disappears and the human soul participates in the life and love of the immanent Trinity by participation in the Spirit as Love. The following passage in the *Essay* reflects this:

... 'tis the office of the person that is God's love to communicate Divine love to the creature. In so doing, God's spirit or love doth but communicate of itself. 'Tis the same love so far as the creature is capable of being made partaker of it. God's Spirit or His love doth but, as it were, come and dwell in our hearts and act there as a vital principle, and we become the living temples of the Holy Ghost, and when men are regenerated and sanctified, God pours forth of His Spirit upon them and they have fellowship or, which is the same thing, are *made partakers with the Father and Son of their love*, i.e. of their joy and beauty.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ *Essay*, 111, emphases mine. The same notion is already present in *God Glorified in the Work of Redemption, by the Greatness of Man's Dependence upon Him, in the Whole of It (1731)*, in Kimnach, Wilson H., Minkema, Kenneth P. and Sweeney, Douglas A. (Eds.) *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 75, 76. Hereafter this sermon in this form is referred to as "*God Glorified*" and the latter work is referred to as "*Sermons: A Reader*."

A union reflective of divine union

It was noted in the previous chapter that Edwards' Trinity is predominately Augustinian in its construction. The core of that union was the communion between the persons of the Father and the Son hypostatically represented in the Spirit. There is a degree of coinherence entailed in this that overstepped the bounds of Cappadocian 'perichoresis' in that in Edwards it is a perichoresis of ontological procession. Despite this concern and the awkwardness of doing so within the mutual love psychological model of the Trinity, Edwards' description of the union of God with the saints is reflective of both the psychological and "person-oriented" elements of that union within the Godhead. In Edwards' theology, therefore, union of humans with God closely parallels the perichoretic union of the persons of the Godhead. The union within the Godhead becomes a pattern for our union with the Godhead. The Spirit is the commonality in these unions.

This analogical equivalence shapes the notion of human participation in the union with the Godhead of the believer. The Spirit imparts the love experienced between the Father and the Son in such a way that the saint by a form of divine-human 'perichoresis' is in possession of that "Love" by being in possession of the Spirit. The circle of communion between the persons of the Father and the Son, by the Spirit, now includes human persons, by the Spirit. The parallelism between the nature of the union within the Trinity and that between God and man becomes obvious when the very qualities Edwards, in the antecedent context of the *Essay*,³⁶⁶ has attributed as comprising the excellency of the divine persons in their equality – excellency, holiness and happiness, now become true of the believer.³⁶⁷ Thus, he states "Christ purchased for us true spiritual excellency, grace and holiness, the sum of which is love to God, which is [nothing] but the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the heart. Christ purchased for us spiritual joy and comfort, which *is in a participation of God's joy and happiness*, which joy

³⁶⁶ *Essay*, 122-3.

³⁶⁷ *Essay*, 124-5.

and happiness is the Holy Ghost, as we have shewn. The Holy Ghost is the sum of all good things”.³⁶⁸

It is by analogous perichoresis also that the Spirit’s indwelling of the saints brings them into union with Christ, such that Christ is in them and they are in Christ. Christ’s communicable attributes become theirs by the indwelling of the Spirit. The idea here is that a human person possesses an attribute because the person “in him” possesses it. This participation theology includes, therefore, the concept of hypostasized grace. The graces of justification and sanctification are communicated to the saint by Christ through the Spirit’s indwelling. This indeed demonstrates the honouring of the equality of the Spirit in the economy of redemption by Edwards. In language that is unequivocally participatory, he affirms that the union effected by the Spirit’s infusion thereby mediates the believer’s union with and in Christ.

What Christ purchased for us was that we have communion with God ... which consists in partaking of the Holy Ghost: as we have shown, all the blessedness of the redeemed consists in partaking of Christ’s fullness, which consists in partaking of that Spirit which is given not by measure unto Him: the oil that is poured on the Head of the Church runs down to the members of His body and to the skirts of His garment, Ps.cxxxiii.
2.³⁶⁹

The Spirit and Christ work cooperatively as equals in the imparting of salvation. Christ purchased the love of God for us, but this is the Spirit: “Christ purchased for us that we should have the favour of God and might enjoy His love, but His love is the Holy Ghost”.³⁷⁰ But conversely, to partake of the Spirit is to partake of the fullness of Christ, such that his righteousness and holiness becomes theirs. Thus, by means of perichoretic relationship and cooperation between the Son and the Spirit, for the believer there is both a union with God through the Spirit’s

³⁶⁸ *Essay*, 124.

³⁶⁹ *Essay*, 124.

³⁷⁰ *Essay*, 124.

indwelling, and an organic union in Christ the Head of the body, the church, which results from the Spirit's regenerating and indwelling.

It is by this means that Edwards accomplishes the reality of union of the saints with Christ such that God in saving sinful humanity, glorifies himself. But this emphasis on the 'man in God' (as opposed to the incarnational 'God in man') participation, with its highly pneumatological weighting, also, and importantly, sets the stage for Edwards to craft a robust theology of sanctification which must be present in a convert given the reality of the infusion of the Spirit of love. Such is the importance placed on the doctrine of the union of the saints with God in Christ by the Spirit's infusion, that it logically precedes the twin graces of justification and sanctification (as in Calvin), and that it ties these graces together as inseparable. I contend, in fact, that Edwards' emphasis on the pneumatological dimension of this union will cause Edwards to place more emphasis on sanctification than justification, and to blur their distinction. Union with God by the Spirit will also necessitate that sanctification will primarily affect the affections and be measurable above all by loving actions.

In summary therefore, Edwards' theology of union with God by the Spirit is thoroughly intersected with his doctrine of God, his theology of the Trinity and with the participation of the saints in God such that they are transformed into the divine likeness now and even progressively in eternity in heaven, such that in their glorification, God will be all in all, having glorified Himself by glorifying His creation who are united to Him in Christ. It is this pneumatology that is new for the Reformed tradition in Edwards. The importance and consequences of this doctrine of pneumatological union for Edwards' applied soteriology will now be addressed in more detail.

B. The Importance of Pneumatological Union to the Edwardsean Soteriology of Participation in God

Further evidence of the centrality of the notion of pneumatological union of the saints with God in Edwards' theology is how it determined his soteriology as one of participation in God. That Edwards "needed" this concept for the integrity of his doctrine of a self-glorifying God is clear. It was inevitable that the self-glorification matrix of his theology proper and the notion of union of the saints in Christ by the Spirit would then be influential, even determinative, of how he viewed justification, sanctification, conversion, assurance, the church and glorification.

This section will explore the mechanism by which Edwards constructed his theology of the union of the saints with God. In essence, the mechanism is a self-reflexive, emanation-remanation union of participation structured according to the categories of the psychological Trinity, that is, knowledge and love.

Knowledge and love correspond in that model of the Trinity to the Son and the Spirit. How the union of the saints with God flowed out of the Trinity and back into the Trinity and the specific role of the Spirit in this will be highlighted. In both the Divine *ekstasis* (emanation) and the human aspects of participation (remanation) the person of the Spirit is exalted by Edwards. It is clear that by the invoking of the person of the Spirit, Edwards desired to express *the nature of this union as one of participation*, that is a relational participation rather than substantial union. The difficulties of doing this within the constraints of the psychological model will be noted. Tendencies towards monism and mysticism that seem to be inherent in a doctrine of union with the immanent Trinity will be assessed in this light. How the doctrine of union by pneumatological participation shapes the particular facets of Edwards' soteriology will then follow.

1. Union with God is the Self-reflection of the Psychological Trinity

Union with God in Edwards as the self-reflection of the psychological Trinity, and therefore by participation with the Son and the Spirit, is *implicit* in Edwards' description of the union of saints with God in the *End of Creation*. In his final argument Edwards develops this doctrine of deification by participation. He

argues that it is fitting for God to make Himself His own end, but that this outflow of glory appears to be directed towards the good of the creature. For the good of the creature and his own glory to be compatible, union with God of the creatures is required,³⁷¹ and it must be therefore be a self-reflexive union. Edwards thus describes the core meaning of union in his theology as one of self-reflexive participation structured according to the psychological categories of knowledge and will or love. Edwards contends that “God’s internal glory, as it is in God, is either in his understanding or will.”³⁷² The glory of God in his understanding is His self-knowledge; that in His will is His holiness and happiness. The creature’s knowledge, love and joy are God’s own knowledge, love and joy given (communicated) to the creature, and then returned to God. God’s fullness is received from the emanation of his glory and returned to him by remanation.³⁷³

Jenson points out that for Edwards our knowledge and love of God are a ‘conformity’ to God’s holiness, to His knowledge and love of himself.³⁷⁴ The anthropological outworking of this theology is that knowing God is participating in God’s perfect knowledge of himself, so that the display of God’s perfections is equivalent to the communication of this knowledge. Likewise, the human person who loves and delights in God is the recipient of the communication of His happiness and joy. True holiness consists in love for God’s beauty, and the creature who loves God is also participating in God’s holiness, and is in fact the recipient of the communication of God’s holiness. As Holmes so cogently reflects, “the underlying Trinitarian conception suggests that participation in the Son and Spirit is what is intended, and thus that notions of the indwelling Spirit and salvation as participation in the Son are not far from the surface.”³⁷⁵

³⁷¹ “The creature is no further happy with this happiness which God makes his ultimate end than *he becomes one with God*. ...nearer and more like to that between God the Father and the Son; who are so united that their interest is perfectly one ... in this view, the creature must be looked upon as united to God in an infinite strictness.” *End, YE 8*, 533-4.

³⁷² *YE 8*, 528.

³⁷³ *YE 8*, 531.

³⁷⁴ This discussion is developed in Jenson, 1988a, 41-43.

³⁷⁵ Holmes, 2001a, 56.

The contention that Trinitarian participation is implicit in the union doctrine of *End of Creation* arises by consideration of the sentiments of the whole Edwardsean context and corpus. The categories of knowledge and will are the building blocks that make up the edifice of the Western psychological Trinity that Edwards has already expounded. The persons in the Trinity according to Edwards' psychological understanding of it are implicated in his discussions in *End*. This seems obvious, for example, from the way in which Edwards in the *Essay on the Trinity* identifies the Son with God's perfect knowledge of Himself in his understanding, and the Spirit with God's will and perfect delight in Himself or 'Love'.

There are in fact a number of the *Miscellanies* (notably 679), written by Edwards in preparation for the *End of Creation* that make *explicit* Edwards' implicit Trinitarian understanding of union. Why this was not specifically articulated in the *End of Creation* remains unknown, although Holmes conjectures that having the *Essay on the Trinity* in hand already, Edwards was content "to leave the doctrinal connections in the *End of Creation* implicit, with the intention of spelling them out when he came to write his projected statement of the whole of Christian theology."³⁷⁶

The transition by which Edwards' theology of union with God is expressed explicitly as *Trinitarian* self-reflexive participation is facilitated by his association of divine persons in the *Essay* with the psychological categories in the *End*. These categories of knowledge and will or love that shape the Augustinian-Edwardsean union of the Godhead naturally give definition to the dynamics of human union with God. This structuring is such that participation according to the categories of knowledge and love becomes participation in the Son, by, and in the Spirit.

For Edwards therefore, salvation means participation in the emanating fullness of God by the impartation of God's very essence as knowledge and love to humanity. God "communicates" himself and humans "participate" (remanating

³⁷⁶ Holmes, 2001a, 55.

back to God) in His nature by means of ‘new disposition’ or ‘habit’ or ‘principle’ created in them by infused grace. This soteriology of participation or ontological transformation in Edwards is now considered in its two parts – the communication of God’s nature to humanity, and humanity’s participation in God’s nature by means of a “new disposition of “infused grace”, with the prominence of the Spirit’s role in both the emanation and remanation elements in mind.

2. Union with God is by the Spirit in emanation

The evidence that emanation (and indeed, remanation) is brought about by pneumatological participation in Edwards’ theology is certainly explicit in the *Essay on the Trinity*. The Spirit’s identity as Love within the immanent Trinity becomes the basis for emanation of love and communion and happiness out of the Trinity (and then the means of human remanation back into the Triune communion in the Son). Edwards thereby expresses a soteriology in which the language of union and communion with the triune God is prominent. One point in the *Essay* which will suffice to demonstrate the role of the Spirit in this Divinely self-reflexive act of effecting union and Divine-human correspondence, is that where Edwards gives his seventh defence of the ontological identity of the Spirit as the love and delight between the Father and the Son. The presence in this passage of one of many references Edwards makes to the *theosis* passage in his works, 2 Pet.1:4, is noteworthy, as is the clear statement of the Spirit’s agency in our union with God:

It is a confirmation that the Holy Ghost is God’s love and delight, because the saints’ communion with God consists in their partaking of the Holy Ghost. ... Communion is a common partaking of good, either of excellency or happiness, so that when it is said the saints have communion or fellowship with the Father and with the Son, the meaning of it is that they partake with the Father and the Son of their good, which is either excellence and glory, (2 Pet.i.4, ye are made – “partakers of the divine nature”) ... But the Holy Ghost, being the love and joy of God, is

His beauty and happiness, and it is in our partaking of the same Holy Spirit that our communion with God consists.³⁷⁷

The manner in which God participates in redemption by way of emanation in the Spirit is also described in detail in two sermons, *God Glorified*,³⁷⁸ where the Petrine *theosis* passage recurs, and *The Wisdom of God Displayed in the Way of Salvation*.³⁷⁹ The themes are familiar: the role of each person in the Trinity in the outworking of redemption is highlighted and equal gratitude ascribed to each,³⁸⁰ the union of the saints with Christ through the Spirit as the essence and prize in salvation,³⁸¹ and the shift from consideration of the Spirit as merely the applier of redemption to the gift procured by the atoning work of Christ.³⁸²

In this extensive description of the unique suitability of each Person in their economic roles in a manner which reflects a strong measure of individuation, Edwards' special concern is to elucidate the role by which the Spirit as gift participates to effect the union of man with God. So close is the association of the Spirit and the believer in this union that Edwards describes that the Spirit would not qualify as mediator between the Father and man in the manner that Christ is. There is such a oneness of union between the saints and the Spirit and such a conjoining of the action of the saints and the Spirit ("he is their principle of action") that the saints cannot have someone who is the same as they are

³⁷⁷ *Essay*, 116-7.

³⁷⁸ *God Glorified*, 75. Citing a number of scripture passages, Edwards affirms that the "Holy Spirit and good things are spoken of in Scripture as the same; as if the Spirit of God communicated to the soul, comprised all good things," and that it is "in the communications, indwelling, and acting of the Spirit of God" that holiness and happiness come to them as the fruit of the Spirit's indwelling, by whom "God dwells in them, and they in God."

³⁷⁹ "The Wisdom of God, displayed in the way of Salvation," in *The Works of President Edwards in Four Volumes*, (1808-9; reprint, New York: Jonathan Leviitt and John F. Trow, 1843), volume 4, 145ff. Hereafter referred to as "*Wisdom of God*."

³⁸⁰ *Wisdom of God*, 145.

³⁸¹ "The blessedness of the redeemed consists in partaking of Christ's fullness, which consists in partaking of that Spirit, which is given not by measure unto him." *Wisdom of God*, 145.

³⁸² "The Holy Ghost immediately communicates to us the thing purchased; yea, and he is the good purchased. ... The Holy Ghost is the sum of all that Christ purchased for men." *Wisdom of God*, 145.

mediate between them and the Father. The ‘somebody different’ needed as mediator is Christ.³⁸³

This is a point in Edwards’ soteriology where his emanation by the Spirit pneumatology almost appears to drive him into hyperbole at best and monism at worst. Even given the relationality of the union Edwards portrays (our union with the Spirit is an entering into the love of the Father for the Son), a union which leads to an inability to differentiate between the Spirit and the saint (albeit in forensic terms) seems to go beyond the pale of orthodoxy. In particular the notion of a union with the Spirit being closer than the union of the saint with Christ seems almost bizarre. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. When Christ promised the coming of the Comforter he indicated that thereby he himself would come to them: “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18). The needed balance for this is the emphasis of the Christological participation in humanity through the incarnation that so preoccupies Barth. The degree of individuation in the persons of the Trinity is also excessive in Edwards here, despite his psychological analogy. It is these very excesses in Edwards’ participation theology, however, that underline our contention concerning the prominence of pneumatology and union by the Spirit.

The presence of the theology of emanation of God by the Spirit towards and in the saint made certain that in Edwards’ salvation scheme sanctification would with certainty accompany justification, and in fact that in salvation as participation in God or *theosis*, regeneration and sanctification would assume the higher profile.

3. Union with God is by the Spirit in remanation

As Edwards envisaged it, the way in which human beings fulfil the self-glorification of God *ad extra* is by their participation in the life of the Trinity. Emanation of the grace and glory of the triune God towards humans, is followed

³⁸³ “The Spirit in the saints seeks divine blessings of God, by and through a mediator; and therefore that mediator must not be the Spirit, but another person. “*Wisdom of God*,” 142, 143.

by their active remanation of that glory back to God. This human participation in it is effected by regeneration. Edwards consistently described this as an experiential subjective reality which he most frequently referred to as a “new disposition” or a new “sense of the heart”.

In his description of the human subjective experience of this participation in salvation, and in its outworking into sanctification and glorification, Edwards is Trinitarian in his approach. For Edwards, the salvation of the elect in its fullest sense of justification, sanctification and glorification, is circumscribed by the Trinity and is very much a participation in God’s self-glorification. The active role played by humans is that they “participate in the process of God’s self-glorification through their knowledge, love, and faith.”³⁸⁴ The growth in holiness and ultimate glorification of the elect is assimilated into God’s self-glorification. The communication of his internal glory *ad extra* results in both the glorification of the creature and Himself, in that the creature’s glorification consists in the communication of God’s fullness to them in emanation, and the remanation of it back to God in these three ways.

Edwards is in fact explicit at one point in *End* about the direct relationship between the union with God of the Christian with the intra-Trinitarian union between the Father and the Son. In a passage which contains as unapologetic and clear an expression of union with God as any in the traditions of *theosis* literature, Edwards states:

For it will for ever come nearer and nearer to that strictness and perfection of union which there is between the Father and the Son. ... In this view, those elect creatures, which must be looked upon as the end of all the rest of creation, considered with respect to the whole of their eternal duration, and as such made God’s end, must be viewed as being, as it were, one with God. They were respected as brought home to him, united with him, centring most perfectly, as it were swallowed up in him:

³⁸⁴ Morimoto, A. *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation*, 150-151. This work is hereafter referred to as “Morimoto, 1988a”.

so that his respect to *them* finally coincides, and becomes one and the same, with respect to himself. The interest of the creature is, as it were, God's own interest, in proportion to the degree of their relation and union to God.³⁸⁵

Ample evidence has already been cited that this union between the Father and the Son is in fact, the Spirit, in Edwards' theology. In considering the remanation aspects of this Edwards was anxious to maintain that human beings participate in God's self-glorification *ad extra* in a Trinitarian way, as reflected in knowledge and love. The role of the Spirit in this is implicit in *End of Creation* as interpreted by its surrounding *Miscellanies* and the *Essay*. In remanatory human participation in God in *End*, legitimacy has been given to seeing a Trinitarian correspondence of knowledge with the Son (as *Logos*) and of love (and therefore faith³⁸⁶) with the Spirit in this work.³⁸⁷ Knowledge is characteristically more than a cognitive activity in Edwards. It is knowledge that transforms. This knowledge of God is in fact "a communication of God's infinite knowledge which primarily consists in the knowledge of himself."³⁸⁸ Lee comments that God's self-communication is "ontologically productive."³⁸⁹ This ontological change relates to conformity to Christ who is the image of the invisible God. The transformation that occurs through intimacy with God is ontological because in knowing God, they receive more communication of God's own knowledge of Himself.³⁹⁰ Their growth in sanctification towards glorification comes through "having God's own knowledge communicated to them, and precisely in their

³⁸⁵ *End of Creation*, *YE*, 8, 443.

³⁸⁶ The third manner in which there is the self-glorification of the triune God through communication of divine excellencies is that of *faith*, which joins together knowledge and love. Morimoto claims that for Edwards, "faith is a kind of ontological transformation through which human beings are more and more conformed to the image of God. It is to become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4, KJV). Herein lies the marrow of Edwards' soteriology." Morimoto, 1988a, 153.

³⁸⁷ In a footnote (fn.4, p. 432) in this section Ramsey affirms this correspondence asserting that "Trinitarian correspondences become clearer in Dissertation I as a whole, especially as JE moves through what Scripture teaches." *Miscellanies* 146 and 259 on the Trinity which speak of knowledge and love as the only attributes "said to be God" and therefore as corresponding to the Son and the Spirit, are cited to confirm this to be the understanding implicit in *End of Creation*.

³⁸⁸ *End of Creation*, *YE* 8, 441.

³⁸⁹ Lee, 1988a, 174, 180, 191.

³⁹⁰ *Miscellanies* 1225 cited in Lee, 1988a, 152, 153.

glorification, God's glory increases through time."³⁹¹ It is implicit in *End* that this self-reflexive knowledge of God has a Christological goal.

However, in the effecting of this goal the Spirit has greater prominence for Edwards. The love, happiness and holiness that flow from the knowledge of God do so through the Spirit's role in the saints' knowledge of God. God glorifies himself in the sanctification of his people specifically by their reflecting God's immanent love within the Trinity in their love to God. In *Miscellanies* 1254,³⁹² Edwards cites Ramsay's Principles to demonstrate this idea. Ramsay states: "the supernatural love by which we can love God is an emanation of the holy Ghost and a participation of that love by which he loves himself."³⁹³ The proof of real knowledge of God for Edwards therefore is that it is accompanied by love and praise. But this love originated in the "the mutual love of the Father and the Son"³⁹⁴ within the Trinity. This love of God arising from the inner-trinitarian love is what, when imparted to human beings, increases their holiness. It is the Spirit therefore who increases holiness in the saint. The pneumatological union thereby achieves for Edwards a way of bringing sanctification into higher profile in his doctrine of salvation.

In Edwards' thought it is specifically the infusion of the Spirit that imparts this holiness. Since the object of the saints' knowledge is the excellency or holiness of God, holiness is therefore a further inevitable consequence of the fullness emanated through knowledge of God. It is a holiness through intimacy, "a communication of God's holiness; so that hereby the creature partakes of God's own moral excellency, which is properly the beauty of the divine nature."³⁹⁵ This holiness in turn leads to happiness, in that order, in the sanctified. It is a

³⁹¹ Morimoto, 1988a, 151.

³⁹² *Miscellanies* 1254, Yale MSS, cited in Morimoto, 1988a, 152.

³⁹³ "Ramsay's Principles," vol. 1, 309-315. Edwards appeals in these discussions to scriptures like 1 John 4:7 "love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7), and to Romans 5:5, "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

³⁹⁴ "The Mind", *YE*, 6, 364.

³⁹⁵ *End of Creation*, *YE* 8, 441-442.

happiness also that emanates and remanates from and to the Triune God, and results from closer and closer union with him.³⁹⁶

Holiness in the redeemed is therefore “a conformity to, and participation of it [divine holiness]”, such that when the redeemed creatures exercise holiness, it returns to God who takes delight in it. Sanctification, according to Edwards therefore, is thus the process of “increasing communication of [God] himself.”³⁹⁷ The ultimate goal of the universe, and in this Edwards reflects his Reformed heritage, is not soteriological, but doxological. By reflecting and remanating the increasing holiness and excellency of God, the elect creatures repeat and magnify the glory of God. God is the more glorified in the emanation and remanation of his own knowledge, love and holiness. This because these are “the excellent brightness and fullness of the divinity diffused, overflowing, and as it were enlarged; or in one word, *existing ad extra*.”³⁹⁸ The specific manner in which this is achieved in Edwards is pneumatological. It is by the saint’s infusion of the Spirit and intimacy with God by the Spirit. It is the role of Spirit infusion in conversion and sanctification that will cause much of Edwards’ preaching and writing to be focused on the human experience of salvation, despite his explicit desire to place emphasis on the glory of God as the end of human salvation.

The strong pneumatological emphasis in Edwards’ *theosis* gave him a foundation for uniting justification and sanctification but also for the elevating of sanctification as an emphasis over justification in his theology of conversion and assurance. A critique of Edwards’ applied soteriology will follow shortly. At this point I wish to address the charge of monism which Edwards’ doctrine of pneumatological union received. Both sections will show that a greater grounding of Edwards’ soteriology in the ‘emanation’ which is that of incarnational Christology, would have preserved him from the charges of monism and the blurring of justification and sanctification. These sections will therefore anticipate the content of chapter IV.

³⁹⁶ *End of Creation*, YE 8, 442-443.

³⁹⁷ *End of Creation*, YE 8, 443.

³⁹⁸ *End of Creation*, YE 8, 527 (emphasis original).

C. Evaluation of Pneumatological Union in Edwards: Countering the charge of monism

The harmonisation of Edwards' doctrine of a God who glorifies himself and his doctrine of salvation by which humans are glorified clearly lies in the Trinity and in the union of humans in God in Christ as the church, by the Spirit. Morimoto's declaration that "Edwards' concern for the creaturely reality of salvation is thus imbedded in the grand scheme of the theology of divinisation (*theosis*)"³⁹⁹ corroborates this. An objection raised against this theology was that in forging a union between the saints and the immanent Godhead in this pneumatological fashion, Edwards invites the criticism of monism and mysticism.

1. It is moral, not metaphysical

There is at least one occasion where Edwards had to explicitly refute the charge of an assailant who mistook Edwards' reference to the communication of the "nature" of the Spirit to the believer at conversion as a reference to the "essence" of God.⁴⁰⁰ His defence on that occasion, was that the saints' "identity with God" is not metaphysical but moral. Moral holiness is what he intended to convey. In this letter he explicitly and repeatedly rejects monism. He in fact points out that the reader had not read the *Affections* closely enough, in that it contains the following relevant passage:

Not that that the saints are made partakers of the essence of God, and so are 'Godded' with God, and 'Christed' with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous language and notions of some heretics....⁴⁰¹

2. It is relational, not essential

³⁹⁹ Morimoto, 1988a, 152.

⁴⁰⁰ "Unpublished Letter on Assurance and Participation in the Divine Nature", *YE* 8, 636-640. This letter is incomplete.

⁴⁰¹ *Religious Affections*, *YE* 2, 203.

Another of his defences against this charge, could well have been also that he viewed *theosis* as relational, not essential. Measured against Tillich's definition of participation as an ontological concept that relates an individual subject to an objective and transcendent reality, without destroying the former's self-identity, and that does not involve complete 'absorption' nor complete 'separation' and requires the presence of both the elements of transcendence and immanence,⁴⁰² Edwards would have claimed a Trinitarian defence - participation of human persons in the person of Son by the person of Spirit, without loss of identity. What makes his defence challenging however, is the analogy between the union of the saints with Christ by the Spirit and the role of the Spirit as 'Love' within the immanent Trinity, inherent within the Augustinian 'mutual love' model Edwards expounds. The limitations of Edwards' model of the Trinity, as we noted in the previous chapter, did not prevent him from speaking pragmatically of divine 'persons.' Had he done so in a Cappadocian way, he could have articulated a doctrine of *theosis* without confusing man and God, with greater integrity.

Edwards cannot escape the challenges associated with a Trinitarian model he borrowed from Augustine: his emphasis on the unity of the Godhead (over triunity) which is made in substantialist terms; his description of intra-trinitarian relations which does not reach the more fully developed notion of 'persons-in-communion' conceived in Greek theology; and his "theo-psychology of the soul created in the image of the Trinity and longing to return to God", where Augustine displays deep affinity with the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus (205-270 AD).⁴⁰³ Augustine's historical context is the "beginning of the era in which the church is conceived essentially as an institution mediating grace to the individual rather than of the community formed on the analogy of the Trinity's *interpersonal* relationships."⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 1:177.

⁴⁰³ LaCugna, 1991a, 81-82.

⁴⁰⁴ Gunton, 1990a, 54.

With regard to mysticism Jenson has sought to defend Edwards by stressing the Trinitarian undergirding of Edwards' doctrine of *theosis*.⁴⁰⁵ Though the manner in which Edwards approached *theosis* is undoubtedly Trinitarian, I maintain that it is his brand of trinitarianism that proves to be problematic. Edwards' argumentation towards union with God flows from *a priori* assumptions of a "One Mind" Trinity model in which the Spirit as Love of the Father and Son draws humans into union. It is not the Christological union as effected by the incarnation which is emphasized.

It is in particular how the Spirit's being and procession is outlined by Edwards within the psychological model of the Trinity that poses the most significant challenge. The absence of any distinction between the person of the Holy Spirit and the Father's love, holiness and excellency ("God loves himself only in reflex act"⁴⁰⁶), by contrast with the distinction that is made between the Father's primordial knowledge of the divine essence and the reflex act of knowledge by which the Son is generated, leads to a blurring of the distinction between the actions of the Godhead *ad intra* and *ad extra*. The immanent-economic distinction is coalesced. As a consequence when Edwards articulates his doctrine of the infusion of the Spirit to create the union of the saints with the Godhead, this is the Spirit who is articulated as "the divine essence flowing out and breathed forth in God's infinite love...."⁴⁰⁷ This certainly does sound like monism. As Plantinga Pauw has noted, when "Edwards' portrayal of the Godhead loses its intratrinitarian sociality, there is a tendency to describe the Spirit's work of union between the elect and God in monistic rather than social categories."⁴⁰⁸ Given that this is his primary model, the "Godded with God" accusation is difficult to dislodge.

⁴⁰⁵ Jenson, 1988a, 43.

⁴⁰⁶ *Essay*, 130.

⁴⁰⁷ *Essay*, 118.

⁴⁰⁸ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 158. Here she makes reference to a passage in *End* cited above which contains the words "*the nearer it becomes to an identity with God.*", *YE* 8, 459.

Even Plantinga Pauw who claims that Edwards' Augustinian Trinity was cobbled with social Cappadocian elements⁴⁰⁹ finds the relational description⁴¹⁰ Edwards gives of the "expansion of the Trinitarian family" to be "unnerving" and reminiscent of a minority strand found in Christian mystical writings of the believers' intimate incorporation into the life of the Trinity.⁴¹¹ Edwards finds himself trapped and unable to completely extricate himself from the "power of the psychological analogy"⁴¹² in which the Spirit is the love of God, and therefore from the monist accusation.

3. It is Christological as well as pneumatological

Edwards might also have appealed to the Christological aspects of participation of a relational kind to defend against monism. His depictions in the sermon *Excellency of Christ*⁴¹³ of how the humanity of Christ enables relational intimacy of the bride with the Bridegroom are a case in point. His appeal was not however to the incarnational and enhypostatic participation of the Son in humanity. It was rather to the spiritual intimacy that a human Christ can have with the believer whom he indwells by the Spirit. Edwards' doctrine of participation does not appear to be as firmly grounded in God's participation in humanity in Christ as it is in Barth. The charges of monism and mysticism might have been obviated had enhypostatic incarnational Christology been more prominent in his doctrine of participation. His emphasis on pneumatological union corresponds with the great attention given in Edwards' conversion theology to testing the reality of the

⁴⁰⁹ Plantinga Pauw at first insists that "Despite his theological imprecisions and inconsistencies, Edwards' vision of the elect's spiritual union with God did finally elude the threat of monism by invoking the social analogy for the Trinity..." She opines that "by letting the two Trinitarian models complement each other, Edwards was able to show that the union with God forged by the Spirit's indwelling love is a *social* union, in which the identities of the saints and members of the divine Trinity are preserved." Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 159. She concedes, in the end, however, that Edwards does not quite avoid the monism charges.

⁴¹⁰ Edwards describes it thus: "that his people should be in a sort admitted into that society of three persons in the Godhead," *Miscellanies* 571, *YE* 18, 110.

⁴¹¹ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 142. She notes Edwards' debt to van Mastricht in this respect and in footnote 107 references the sixteenth-century Carmelite mystics Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross in their advocacy of notion of "a transforming union of the soul with Christ leading to incorporation into the life of the Trinity." As noted above, however, this is an Augustinian trait too.

⁴¹² A phrase used by Plantinga Pauw (2002a, 159).

⁴¹³ *Excellency of Christ*, in *Sermons: A Reader* (161-196), 195, 196. Hereafter, this work designated as "*Excellency of Christ*."

profession to Spirit infusion and progressive sanctification. An emphasis on the Christological union of the Son in humanity might have correspondingly balanced this approach with the more objective and contemplative approach – a looking away from the self to Christ, who is ‘for us,’ as in Barth.

4. It is communal as well as individual – the collective Christ concept

The consequence of Spirit-infused union of the saints for Edwards was that they became, not Christ, or God, but the bride of Christ.⁴¹⁴ This, it could be argued, also kept the lines of distinction between God and man clear. However, this notion also has its attendant challenges. Jenson has referred to Edwards’ theology on union with God by union of the saints with Christ as bride as “one more piece of Edwards’ beloved spouse-mysticism, of a drastic Christianity I’m not sure is elsewhere found.”⁴¹⁵

5. it is infinitely progressive

When Edwards expounds the eternal aspects of union with God he defines this in terms of an infinitely progressive intimacy and moral transformation. The saints, when they get to heaven, remain human, and distinct from Christ, though they are exalted and transformed as a consequence of their being in union with Christ who is exalted on their behalf. Christ eternally remains human, and he and the saints are ‘friends’ who share in his glory, though not in his deity. This is clearly articulated as Edwards moves into the conclusion of his *Excellency* sermon, for example.⁴¹⁶ Glorification by the perfecting of union with Christ is articulated not

⁴¹⁴ Edwards expresses this for example in the following *Miscellanies*: “the end of the creation of God was to provide a spouse for his Son Jesus Christ, that might enjoy him and on whom he might pour forth is love... .” (*Miscellanies* 710, App. *YE* 18, 335-9.) And again, “[H]eaven and earth were created that the son of God might be complete in a spouse” (*Miscellanies* 103, *YE* 13, 271-2).

⁴¹⁵ Jenson, 1988a, 43.

⁴¹⁶ Edwards inspires his hearers towards the lifelong pursuit of cultivating the intimacy with Christ that leads to holiness, by pointing to the benefit of the final end of that process. Christ’s identification with humanity and his taking of redeemed humanity to the throne of God is the key element facilitating the possibility of our glorification with him, and of union and intimacy with the Godhead: “This will be the improvement Christ will make of his own glory, to make his beloved friends partakers with him, to glorify them in his glory ... We are to consider, that though Christ is greatly exalted, yet he is exalted, not as a private person, for himself only, but as

as becoming God, but as more perfect friendship. The imperfection of experienced union in the present creates the hungering and thirsting for the perfection of that experienced communion in heaven. The importance of desires and affections in Edwards' work on sanctification is a prominent theme and is evident especially in the *Religious Affections*. It is thus natural that Edwards should speak of heaven in terms of the satisfaction of the desires that have been present in the souls of the redeemed as assuring signs of their conversion and harbingers of a place where in their satisfaction happiness would be complete.⁴¹⁷

On this account, ever-growing intimacy, and with that, ever-increasing moral virtue and glory, appear to be what Edwards has in mind when he speaks of a union in eternity that will make the saints "one with God." Edwards' answers to the charge of monism would be that the union he envisaged was progressive even in heaven and for all eternity.⁴¹⁸ Edwards' even viewed union as eternally asymptotic.⁴¹⁹ This notion of asymptotic progression in holiness or grace in light of 1 John 3:2 seems to belong in the realm of speculative theology. It is nevertheless evidence that humans do not themselves become God in Edwards' reckoning.

Summation

his people's head; he is exalted in their name, and upon their account, as the first fruits, and as representing the whole harvest. He is not exalted that he may be at a greater distance from them, but that they may be exalted with him. ...the members have the same relation and union with the head they had before, and are honored with the head; and instead of the distance being greater, the union shall be nearer, and more perfect." *Excellency of Christ*, 193, 194.

⁴¹⁷ *Excellency of Christ*, 194, 195.

⁴¹⁸ "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..." *YE* 8, 533-4.

⁴¹⁹ See *End of Creation, Works* (Banner), I, 102..Ramsey has suggested that in his view of the beatifical vision of God as union rather than sight, and in his asymptotic understanding of eternal participation and transformation, and in the basing of this on the inexhaustible plenitude of God, Edwards may have paralleled Gregory of Nyssa. See Appendix III, *Heaven Is A Progressive State*, *YE* 8, 727-9. He acknowledges however, that in his account of eternal life there are also strong parallels with Augustine in the Western tradition of degrees of sinless perfection in heaven.

The chief reason for latent doubt about monism lies in the confusion that Edwards' fundamentally Augustinian, psychological model for the Trinity invites, and in an inadequate emphasis on the enhypostatic union of God with humanity in Christ. The strength of his desire to honour the Spirit is in evidence here. However, the boundaries between God and human saints infused by the Spirit and therefore in union with the essential Trinity, could excusably be viewed to be blurred. The importance Edwards placed on the *vinculum caritatis*, motivated by pastoral concerns, becomes his liability.

Edwards' doctrine of pneumatological union with God did, as we shall shortly discover, achieve for Edwards' a strong theology of conversion which could account for immediateness of conversion as well as the immediacy of grace as bequeathed by the Spirit hypostatically.⁴²⁰ It also helped him find a theology of the Spirit that could accommodate the unusual work of the Spirit he had observed in the Great Awakening, and which could provide him with a basis for assessing the true and the false professions within his pastoral experience during which he progressively developed an aversion to nominalism. As in so many of his meditations on this theme, in his exposition of I Corinthians 13, "Charity and Its Fruits," Edwards leaves no doubt in the minds of his readers that the heart of *theosis* was pneumatological. "The nature of the Holy Spirit is love; and it is by communicating himself, or his own nature, that the hearts of the saints are filled with love or charity", he asserts and then concludes, "Hence the saints are said to be 'partakers of the divine nature' [II Pet.1:4]."⁴²¹ Until love enters the human soul by the Spirit the salvation purchased by Christ's death and resurrection is of no value to the human soul. The incarnation and atonement of Christ apply only to the elect who are infused by the Spirit in regeneration, and their value is, as it were, on hold until the Spirit as the gift accomplished thereby initiates regeneration and infuses the believer with love.

⁴²⁰ "All succeeding acts of grace" in the Christian life will be seen as to be as immediately, and, to all intents and purposes, as much from the immediate acting of the Spirit on the soul as the first." *Treatise on Grace*, 74.

⁴²¹ *Charity and Its Fruits*, YE 8, 132.

The consequences of this Spirit emphasis led not only to the charge of monism, therefore, but as we shall see, to the elevation of sanctification or the human experience of salvation over the objective aspects of salvation and justification. This aspect of salvation which Barth so strongly championed might have balanced Edwards' approach. Barth, as we shall see, was convinced of the ontological value for all humanity of the Christological participation in humanity in the incarnation and the cross event. Incarnational Christology is in fact the lens by which Barth views soteriology. Edwards and Barth are a mirror image of each other in the sense that if Edwards weighted pneumatology too highly to the neglect of incarnational Christology, and in the interests of defining the elect for whom Christ died by their experience of sanctification, the converse has sometimes been perceived to be true for Barth, who by his ontological doctrine of justification for all humanity, and by his playing down of the human experience of sanctification, might be perceived as opening the door to a universalist approach.

D. The application of pneumatological union to the human subjects of soteriological participation: justification and sanctification in Edwards

In a manner that is consonant with the honouring of the Spirit in his Spirit-union theology of the Trinity, and in a manner that reflects his understanding of pneumatological *theosis*, Edwards raised the profile of the Spirit in his consideration of the application of salvation to the human subjects of redemption.

It has already been noted that the pneumatological emphasis in Edwards' soteriology is in keeping with his desire to elevate the role of the Spirit so that there is "exact equality in each person's concern in the work of redemption."⁴²² The context in which he actually articulated this most clearly was that of a series

⁴²² *Miscellanies* 402, *YE* 13, 467.

of *Miscellanies*⁴²³ which have to do specifically with *conversion* and the Trinity. He implies that he wished to offer an improvement on the standard Reformed theology of the Trinity related to the Spirit. Schafer has noted that towards the end of his original essay on the Trinity, Edwards included and expanded *Miscellanies* 402 in which Edwards charged that “if we suppose no more than used to be supposed about the Holy Ghost [merely applying to us the blessing purchased by Christ] the concern of the Holy Ghost in the work of redemption is not equal with the Father’s and the Son’s.”⁴²⁴ In place of this he exalts the Spirit’s role by offering the alternative that “The sum of all that Christ purchased is the Holy Ghost.” Edwards contends that “God’s giving his dear Son, and the Son’s suffering so much, glorifies the Holy Ghost, as it shows the worth of the Holy Ghost, that the Father should give his Son, and the Son pay so great a price that the Holy Spirit might be purchased.”⁴²⁵

Edwards’ pneumatology, which arose from his Augustinian construction of the ontological Trinity, though it has its shortcomings, was Edwards’ chosen mechanism for the giving of full honour to the Spirit in the application of salvation. What the *Essay*⁴²⁶ affirms and *Observations* confirms, that “the Spirit was the inheritance that Christ, as God-man, purchased for Himself and His Church”⁴²⁷ and what Helm reflects of Edwards’ intention when he states, “The Holy Spirit is not the agent of application, He is what is given to the Church”⁴²⁸ is true only because the Spirit is the love expressed between the Father and the Son, and therefore He is able to draw those in whom He resides into that circle of divine affection. Thus conversion leads to a relational participation in the Godhead. Progressive sanctification will transpire through growing intimacy with God, and this will be authenticated in community, in harmonious

⁴²³ *Miscellanies* 396-405 are written in tandem with Edwards’ three-sermon, seven-unit series on John 16:8 on the work of the Spirit. No. 402 contain his special concerns related here with regard to the equality of the Spirit.

⁴²⁴ *Essay*, 125. Schafer notes that JE made the same statement in his “Treatise on Grace”, *ibid.*, pp.68-69, and that his comment applies to the Westminster Confession and catechisms and other Reformed creeds.

⁴²⁵ *Miscellanies* 402, *YE* 13, 467.

⁴²⁶ *Essay*, 123-4.

⁴²⁷ *Observations*, 88.

⁴²⁸ *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, Paul Helm, 7.

relationships in marriages, families, society and the church.⁴²⁹ And the Trinitarian framework of the operation of the Spirit is what determines Edwards' definition of 'true virtue' and his rejection of any conception of the Christian life and of ethics in which love of God and neighbour is not primary. Edwards defines true virtue as "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."⁴³⁰

Before examining in more detail the influence of pneumatological union on the various aspects of Edwards' applied soteriology, a brief comment on the possible origin of this theme is appropriate. There has been a tendency to comment on Edwards' espousal of *theosis* as an Eastern feature in his theology,⁴³¹ or even as evidence of Cappadocian influence.⁴³² It is important to note the presence of this doctrine in Augustine also.⁴³³ Given his debt to the latter with respect to the conception of the Trinity, and especially of the Spirit as *vinculum caritatis*, this would be a reasonable assumption. Edwards is more likely to have followed the Augustinian notion of *theosis*, given that the concept of synergism that seems to

⁴²⁹ I am in agreement with Holmes that Edwards' primary theological *motif*, that of God's self-glorification, was in fact an act of divine *ekstasis* in which the Son and the Spirit are sent by the Father so that through participation in the Son and indwelling of the Spirit, God's own life and joy is shared with the church. That it is specifically the Church that experiences the sharing and enlargement of the Triune life is an emphasis in Edwards. Holmes believes that we must see Edwards' "vision of the Church as the primary locus for God's act of self-glorification" (Holmes, 2001a, 184ff.). The metaphor of the Church as Bride of Christ certainly plays a prominent role in the 'union with God' theology expressed by Edwards. Holmes and Plantinga Pauw (2002a, 171-3) agree that it was this understanding that spawned the ecclesiological controversy that led to his dismissal from the Northampton church. These authors have amply explored this controversy by which his Trinitarian vision of the union of the saints with God influenced his decision that communion in Northampton was to be restricted to those who could in good conscience "by profession and in visibility" profess to be "a part of that heavenly and divine family."

⁴³⁰ *True Virtue*, YE 8, 557.

⁴³¹ Holmes, 2001a, 57.

⁴³² Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 30ff..

⁴³³ As Bonner has noted ("Augustine's Conception of Deification." *Journal of Theological Studies*, 37 (October 1986), 369-386), the belief that Augustine embraced the doctrine of *theosis* and that his view of justification and sanctification was conditioned by it, has not been noticed or widely accepted by Protestant scholars who have interpreted Augustine in his anti-Pelagian writings with lenses focused on issues of depravity and forensic justification. Edwards, like Augustine, crosses the traditional lines of the divide between the Greek East and the Latin West with respect to justification and deification, as this is reflected by authors such V. Lossky ('Redemption and Deification' in *In The Image and Likeness of God*, (London & Oxford: 1975), 71-110); *The Vision of God*, (London, 1963), 9-20), Jouko Martikainen, ("Man's Salvation: Deification or Justification?" in *Sobornost*, series 7, no. 3 (1976), 189), and Christos Yannaras in 'Orthodoxy and the West' in *Eastern Churches Review* iii, n.3 (1971), 286-300.

be widely present in the Eastern Fathers' notion of *theosis*, is not, of course, present in Augustine.⁴³⁴ The emphasis on sanctification and deification in Edwards' soteriology may therefore be a reflection of that in Augustine.

Much has been written in recent Edwardsean scholarship on this theme in general and on putative shifts in Edwards' thought and emphases in pre- and post-awakening eras. I wish here merely to summarize Edwards' mature understanding of the nature and relationship between justification and sanctification, demonstrating that his emphasis on the Spirit affected this understanding. The following points will serve to summarize Edwards' applied soteriology with its high emphasis on the work of the Spirit:

- (i) Firstly, sanctification, in all its aspects - conversion, assurance and progressive sanctification - is described by Edwards in the language of consent and union, as a holiness⁴³⁵ enabled by the Spirit's power and intimacy expressed primarily as loving relationality.⁴³⁶ Edwards

⁴³⁴ The inability of fallen man is key for Augustine, as is the primacy of grace. However, what man becomes as a result of grace, the heights to which he rises as a participant in the life of God, a son of God, divinised, deified, is the same for the Cappadocians as for Augustine. In exposition of one of his key statements regarding deification in *The Trinitate*, "To make gods those who were men, He was made man who is God;" (Augustine, *serm.* 192. i.I.) Augustine demonstrates both that deification owes nothing to man in terms of his own merit or being, and that its ultimate goal, in making men to be "sharers of His divinity", is identical with that of the Eastern Fathers (see also Augustine, *De Trin.* IV.ii.4.).

⁴³⁵ The concept of holiness as union and harmony, that is the Spirit, is important in Edwards' doctrine of sanctification by the Spirit's infusion. By this infusion they are able to participate in God's own "excellence and beauty; that is, his holiness, which consists in love." *YE* 6, 364. In a sermon as early as 1734, for example, Edwards declared that the Spirit of God "acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling, vital principle... he unites himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new supernatural principle of life and action." Progressive sanctification will be the inevitable consequence in the believer, because, he argues, "Holiness is the proper nature of the Spirit of God." (*A Divine and Supernatural Light, YE* 17, 411). Edwards viewed the *substance* of progressive sanctification to relate to holiness understood primarily as relationality, or harmony, beauty or union in a manner correspondent with the nature of the Spirit within the Trinity. In *Religious Affections*, holiness is described as "the beauty and sweetness of the divine nature." Holiness is the harmony and excellency of the divine being, as was noted in the section on the Edwards' Trinity. How Edwards describes holiness in the believer shows correspondence with this. There is, according to the *Tenth Sign in Religious Affections*, the presence of a "beautiful symmetry and proportion" in those characterized by "truly gracious and holy" affections, that renders them amenable for loving relationships. Whilst acknowledging that "the symmetry of the virtues" of the saints in this life is imperfect, there is in the true believer nevertheless a "universality of their sanctification" that is based on their union with Christ such that "they have the whole image of Christ upon them." (*YE* 2, 365).

⁴³⁶ The point of connection of love and holiness in the Godhead and that in the saints is the Holy Spirit who, of course, *is* love. Thus *Miscellanies* 376 states, "'tis in our partaking of the Holy

is well known for his portrayal of the immediacy of conversion and regeneration by the Spirit, and of the Christian life, which because it is ‘life in the Spirit’ is one characterized by vibrant faith, assurance through lively affections and loving action in community, the experienced presence of God in the communities of the saints, and demonstrable progress in holiness. Above all, by the presence of internal and relational harmony or beauty, or a union in and among the saints, reflective of Spirit-union in the triune God of beauty, and enabled by spiritual intimacy with that God. The language of conversion and sanctification in Edwards is Trinitarian language – that of participation in God, and of love, consent and union with God by means of the infusion of the Spirit in the regenerate soul. Edwards elevates the profile of the Spirit in his emphasis on holiness as harmony and community, and by the primary place of love in his view of Christian life. The prominence of the Spirit is further evidenced by the prevalence within Edwards’ theology of the Christian life and ecclesiology, of the notion of the sovereignty and unpredictability of the Spirit’s action in granting assurance, and in bringing seasons of renewal and revival.⁴³⁷

- (ii) The theology of the infusion of the Spirit into the human soul is the predominant reality in Edwards’ understanding of conversion or regeneration and I am in agreement with Paul Helm, who maintains that Edwards’ understanding of conversion was still “*within* the Westminster covenantal framework and not *of* it,”⁴³⁸ and that Edwards’ pneumatological emphasis in conversion brought about the following two important gains for evangelical theology : first, as a

Ghost that we have communion with the Father and Son and with Christians: this is the common excellency and delight in which they all [are] united.” *YE 13*, 448.

⁴³⁷ Edwards is well known for his experience of a surprising work of the Spirit in his own church and in the Great Awakening and for his reflections on revival, the false and true, in the wake of this revival. The presence of unity amongst the people of God in revival depicted by Edwards as the beauty of spiritual consents is another evidence of a Trinitarian – union focus in Edwards’ spirituality. See Plantinga Pauw (2002, 170). Edwards described the revived town as “full of the presence of God, full of love and joy as never before” (*YE 4*, 103).

⁴³⁸ *Treatise on Grace*, Introduction, 7.

result of the fact that the person the Holy Spirit is gifted as personal love to the convert, there is an *immediacy* of the gift of divine grace conveyed in to the soul, and second, this experience of divine grace by the Spirit's regenerative indwelling, is unique or distinct in its identity.⁴³⁹

- (iii) This theology of infusion of the Spirit had the positive consequence for Edwards' understanding of conversion that it led to rejection of the kind of preparationism prevalent in Puritan theology (Perkins' *Golden Chaine*, for example).⁴⁴⁰ Justifying faith will be seen to be conceived of aesthetically by Edwards, as the union which the Spirit imparts, and the harmony of the regenerate soul with Christ. It is the discovery of "God's holy beauty"⁴⁴¹ that initiates 'evangelical' repentance, overcoming the sinful heart and changing its inclinations.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Edwards' primary purpose in the *Treatise on Grace* is to demonstrate the distinction between common and saving grace. "Special or saving grace ... is not only different from common grace degree, but entirely diverse in nature and kind." From this Edwards concludes that conversion must of necessity be instantaneous, and that by it man is made completely dependent on God, for on the one hand, "it is impossible for men to convert themselves" and on the other, "Grace must be the immediate work of God, and properly a production of His almighty power on the soul." (*Treatise on Grace*, 36-8). As a consequence conversion is understood to be an *experiential crisis*. These ideas of conversion have come to be a cornerstone within the conversion theology of evangelicalism.

⁴⁴⁰ He did retain a modified form of it, however, conceding that for the majority of people the heart of the sinner is prepared by God "for the receiving of Christ by a sense of his sin and misery, and a despair of help in himself and in all others." (*Miscellanies* 317, *YE* 13, 400). He did encourage use of the 'means of grace' such as the attending of church, private prayer and the study of scripture as the "preparatory circumstances to introduce it" (*Miscellanies* r, *YE* 13, 173), averring that these things "cause those effects in our souls whereby there is an opportunity for grace to act ... God don't see meet to infuse grace, where there is no opportunity for it to act." (*Miscellanies* 539, *YE* 18, 84). However, this did not lead him to espouse a rigid morphology, and he insisted that "The goodness of [a] person's state is not chiefly to be judged of by any exactness of steps, and method of experiences." (*YE* 4, 556). In *Religious Affections* Edwards clarifies that the profession given by a convert in his church community does not need to include a rigid *ordo salutis*: "...it is not necessary they should give an account of the particular steps and method by which the Holy Spirit, sensibly to them, wrought and brought about those great essential things of Christianity in their hearts." (*A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1898; 1902 Reprint), 332. Hereafter this work, in this edition, is designated as "*Religious Affections*").

⁴⁴¹ *Religious Affections*, 238.

⁴⁴² As a consequence of the initiative of the Spirit in conversion, Edwards considered saving repentance to be evangelical and not legal. Evidence of this is that evangelical repentance or humiliation is so wedded with saving faith in Edwards as to be the obverse of faith. The action of despising and turning from sin and self, to trust in Christ, is effected by the perception, or sense of the heart gained through union with Christ, effected by the infusion of the Spirit. Thus

- (iv) On the negative side, however, this increasing emphasis by Edwards on Spirit- infusion theology led to the introduction of conditionalism, the severing of the covenants of grace and redemption,⁴⁴³ the hypostasizing of grace,⁴⁴⁴ and the elevation of subjective

Edwards states, “a sense of this (the hatefulness of sin) is given in evangelical humiliation by a discovery of the beauty of God’s holiness and moral perfection.” It is the discovery of “God’s holy beauty” (*Religious Affections*, 238) that overcomes the sinful heart and changes its inclinations. Controversy surrounds this understanding of Edwards’ repentance, however. Jenson agrees that it is evangelical (Jenson, 1988a, 83), but Michael Jinkins (Jinkins, 1993a; Jinkins, 1993b) has seen Edwards’ whole orientation in repentance as an anthropocentric one, focused on the human self such that it is inward looking (*in curvatus in se*), as opposed to the Lutheran *ek curvatus ek se*. That the New Testament calls for some self-examination with respect to the reality of one’s faith is beyond question. However, the rigours envisaged by Edwards seem to move to an extreme whereby the focus in repentance is moved from the subject as Christ and His mercy to the human self. Edwards’ understanding stands in contrast to the Barthian perspective in which repentance follows an awareness of justification as a prior reality in Christ (*CD IV/2*, para. 66). Evangelical *metanoia* is not a condition for the gaining of forgiveness. It is a consequence of contemplation of the *euangelion*, that is the good news of the righteousness of Christ is ‘for us.’ Looking for inner signs, including hunger for God and righteousness, and even behavioural signs are irrelevant on this account. Barth would have us look in another direction altogether, away from self to Christ standing in our place, holy on our behalf.

⁴⁴³ Plantinga Pauw (2002a, 101-3) has documented an observable change in Edwards in the wake of the Great Awakening with regard to conditionalism. In his earlier writing (1920’s) he keeps the covenant of redemption in close association with the covenant of grace, and the covenant between the Father and the saints is only another expression of the eternal covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, and, notably, the union of the two is based in the concept of the union of believers in Christ eternally. The only condition of the covenant of redemption and therefore of the covenant of grace is that of Christ’s righteousness alone. Human faith has no place in this. Faith rather than being a prior condition for salvation, is “the soul’s active uniting with Christ, or is itself the very act of union, on their part.” (*Works* (Serenio), 5, 364. By contrast however, in light of his concerns about nominalism after the Awakening, and false professions within it, Edwards began to reflect a theology in which the covenants of grace and redemption were no longer in such close harmony. His preaching and writing lays greater emphasis on human response in the acceptance of Christ’s offer of salvation flowing from the covenant of grace. The language of conditionalism Edwards eschewed in the 1720’s, he now employs in *Miscellanies* 1091: “... the covenant of grace, if thereby we understand the covenant between Christ himself and his church or his members, is conditional as to us: the proper condition of it, which is a yielding to Christ’s wooings and accepting his offers and closing with him as a Redeemer and spiritual Husband, is to be performed by us” (*Miscellanies* 1091, *YE* 20, 475-479).

⁴⁴⁴ Edwards’ understanding of infused moral virtues requires clarification, however. Edwards did share with Thomas Aquinas the belief that no created likeness could mediate the vision of God, and that an infusion of grace or divine love (the Spirit, for Edwards) was necessary for the regeneration, sanctification and ultimate beatific glorification of human persons. However, Edwards’ infusion doctrine differed in significant ways from that of Aquinas. (Refer to a comparative discussion of Edwards and Aquinas on infusion by Ramsey, Appendix III, *YE* 8, 722-4.). Most importantly the undergirding philosophical assumptions of Edwards prevented any notion of merit becoming associated with the virtues. Infusion as Edwards understood it was a common Reformed doctrine, present in the theology of his two most influential mentors, Turretin and van Mastricht (Paul Ramsey gives evidence of this in Appendix IV, *Infused Virtues in Edwardsean and Calvinistic Context*, *YE* 8, 742-4). All in all, Edwards’ soteriology remained within the Protestant Reformed camp. His emphasis on the infusion of virtues, derived from his emphasis on the pneumatological aspects of salvation involves the hypostasizing of grace, which,

sanctification by the Spirit over objective justification in Christ, for obtaining assurance of conversion. The contention that Edwards' doctrine of justification by faith took on Roman Catholic character after the Awakening has been well documented.⁴⁴⁵ Though this concern is in my opinion overstated, there does seem to be some ground for this accusation, given the comparison between Edwards' early statements⁴⁴⁶ and some later *Miscellanies*.⁴⁴⁷ In his early most eloquent exposition in *Miscellanies 2* of why faith is not a work, and why, although love and works are necessary for justification,

irrespective of its origins, stands in contrast to Barth's more appealing notion of grace as the orientation of God towards his imperfect creatures, his self-giving, His standing in our place. Barth's notion of grace is incarnationally based. Edwards' pneumatological over-emphasis in the wake of the Awakening appears to lead him into these Scholastic notions of grace. His desire to honour the Spirit is once again apparent, and again despite the theological risks.

⁴⁴⁵ The accusations that Edwards had Catholic tendencies arose because of his expectation that regeneration flowed from union with Christ by the Spirit, and that this logically preceded and subsumed both justification and sanctification. This understanding was present in Calvin, but so great was Edwards' emphasis on experienced sanctification by the infusion of the Spirit resulting in "inherent good" and a new disposition in the believer, that some within Protestant circles suspected him of Catholic tendencies in this regard and they significantly misrepresented him. For example, in the mid-nineteenth century, Tryon Edwards tampered with *Charity and Its Fruits* before its publication to minimize the emphatic and repeated use of the term "infusion" which to Tryon sounded too "Roman Catholic" (Introduction to *Charity and Its Fruits*, YE 8, 59-60, fn.5). In the late nineteenth century George Boardman felt it necessary to explicate the precedence of regeneration over justification in Edwards' theology (Boardman, George N. *A History of New England Theology* (New York: A.D.F. Randolph, 1899; reprint New York: Garland, 1987), 155-6, cited in Morimoto, 1995a, 8). In the twentieth century, Perry Miller opines that Edwards felt "a necessity to say something more" than the standard Protestant doctrine of forensic justification" (Miller, Perry. *Jonathan Edwards*, (New York: Sloane, 1949; rep. Amherst, Univ. of Mass. Press, 1981), 76). Thomas Schafer, also wrote that Edwards "went beyond the doctrine of justification by faith." (Schafer, Thomas, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith," *Church History* 20 (1951), 64). Despite the conditionalism Plantinga Pauw documents and the claims of Morimoto (1988a) that Edwards' doctrine of justification contained Roman Catholic elements, it is not clear to me that in the problematic *Miscellanies* on justification, Edwards' theology of justification moves beyond Protestantism, or even into Arminianism. With respect to Morimoto's assumption that the second aspect of Edwards' "dispositional soteriology" would satisfy the "Catholic concern," it could be argued equally that this satisfies the concern of Calvin also, given his view of the *duplex gratia* and his emphasis on sanctification and perseverance as inevitable outcomes of union with the Christ who grants both.

⁴⁴⁶ Edwards is unequivocal in his espousing of justification by faith alone in his 1723 sermon, *Quaestio: Peccator Non Iustificator Coram Deo Nisi Per Iustitiam Christi Fide Apprehensam* (A Sinner Is Not Justified in the Sight of God Except Through the Righteousness of Christ Obtained by Faith)". According to the tenets of this sermon, works were, for Edwards, *necessary* for justification in that they are an inevitable outflow of the same grace and union in Christ and participation in God that effected justification in the believer. But only faith (or repentance which Edwards viewed to be simply the obverse of faith and therefore equivalent to it – works were the fruit of repentance in his mind) was *instrumental* in justification. As a "condition" (a term he considered inappropriate in his earlier writings) of the covenant of grace it is not a work (YE 14, 3ff.).

⁴⁴⁷ *Miscellanies* 855, 857, 847 in YE 20.

justification is by faith *alone*, Edwards appeals to union with Christ and to notions of a Trinitarian nature. Faith is a receptiveness which precludes any notion of merit. It is strictly the gift of God and his initiative. Edwards argued that it must be aesthetic rather than moral. Faith is given the role it is in God's wisdom because of "the fitness and beauty"⁴⁴⁸ that lies in so doing. In *Miscellanies 412* which correlates with the justification sermon in which there is a distinction drawn between the "moral fitness" of good works and the "natural fitness" of faith, this latter fitness is expressed again in terms of receptivity, and as "the heart's giving entertainment to Christ and the gospel," which makes it possible for the soul to be "looked upon as being in Christ."⁴⁴⁹ On the other hand, Edwards' later assertions in *Miscellanies 847* are difficult to reconcile with this. He states there that "Even after conversion the sentence of justification in a sense remains still to be passed, and the man remains still in a state of probation for heaven," seems to convey a change in his Protestant convictions. This statement shows how much his concern over nominalism or false profession consumed his pastoral endeavour after the revivals. It is important to observe what motivates this in Edwards. It is a concern with respect to "after-works of *the Spirit of God* upon the soul..." on which "justification itself does in a sense attend and depend upon."⁴⁵⁰ One can attempt to rationalize this statement as reflecting justification not from a divine perspective by which *true* faith leads to immediate justification, but from the human perspective of assurance with respect to the testing of the reality of faith, which for Edwards, does remain uncertain as far as human knowledge of it is concerned. The ambiguity in Edwards is once again present in his theology because of a desire to honour the work of the Spirit.

⁴⁴⁸ Sermon, "Justification by Faith," Doc., Sec., 1 cited in Jenson, 1988a, 61, fn.25.

⁴⁴⁹ *Miscellanies 412*, YE 13, 471. *Miscellanies 416 and 455* reflect similar notions.

⁴⁵⁰ *Miscellanies 847*, YE 20, 74 (emphasis mine).

My chief contention here, however, is that with respect to the assurance of the salvation of the saints, Edwards constantly appeals for the examination of the state, of the saints, that is their experienced sanctification, rather than the examination of justification as a reality for humanity based in the incarnation and work of Christ for them, and with whom they are in eternal union. It also led to a significant nature-grace distinction in Edwards' understanding of humanity.

- (v) Fifthly, the elevation in emphasis on sanctification by the Spirit over justification in Christ in the matter of the assurance of the salvation of the professed believer created an undue dependence for assurance of salvation on the human subject's experience of the Spirit's sanctifying work that leads to a consequent introspectiveness such that the subjective spiritual experience of converts is not only overly emphasized, but is one of perpetual tension between delightful intimacy and profound uncertainty. Edwards' doctrine of assurance requires some elucidation in order to demonstrate this point.

E. Edwards' Doctrine of Assurance grounded in sanctification by the Spirit

Upon the anvil of revival experiences, Edwards chiselled and shaped a doctrine of assurance of salvation which actually had three primary facets. Each of these is a result of the ministry of the Spirit, and each, as such, reflects the Spirit's nature as the nexus of Trinitarian love, and union in communion. These aspects of assurance are presented in ascending order of strength or validating value, which I believe would accurately reflect Edwards' thought.

- (a) Assurance from cognitive-affective perception and love

The true believer was aware of a ‘new perception’ of divine beauty and harmony,⁴⁵¹ along with renewed affections underlying the perception. Conversion as harmonious union was the correspondence between the objective reality of the beauty of God with the human, subjective appreciation of it.⁴⁵² The place of the affections is crucial in Edwards’ theology of assurance, even if action is the ultimate diagnostic sign. The fruit of truly loving action without the root of love in the heart of the convert is mere humanitarian benevolence and behaviourism. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards is unequivocal and eloquent with respect to the importance of renewed affections as the source of Christian practice. It is the emphasis on the origin of the renewed affections in participation in the divine triune nature,⁴⁵³ in the high priesthood of Christ⁴⁵⁴ and as effected by the Spirit⁴⁵⁵ that keeps the emphasis on action from becoming behaviouristic or legalistic. Furthermore, the subjective reality of love needed to have both an upward and an outward orientation. Edwards’ way of uniting love for God and love for people was to appeal to the union and participation of the believer with God, by infusion of the Spirit. Thus he states: “Christian love to both God and men is wrought in the heart by the same work of the Spirit. There are not two works of the Spirit of God, one to infuse a spirit of love to God and another a spirit of love to men.”⁴⁵⁶ Both are the consequence of renewed affections, the fact that the “Spirit of God in the work of conversion renews the heart by giving it a divine temper.”⁴⁵⁷ The basis for the role of the Spirit in this is His identity as the love of the Father for the Son into which the believer is

⁴⁵¹ *Religious Affections*, 164ff.

⁴⁵² Unlike those with false affections who love God because of their self-interest and what His love can do for them, the person infused by the Spirit is different: “... the exercises of true and holy love in the saints arise in another way. They do not first see that God loves them, and then see that He is lovely, but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their hearts are first captivated with this view, and the exercises of their love are wont from time to time to begin here; and then, consequentially, they see God’s love, and great favour to them. The saint’s affections begin with God; and self-love has a hand in these affections consequentially, and secondarily only.” (*Religious Affections*, 171).

⁴⁵³ “... a communication of God, a participation of the divine nature,” (*Religious Affections*, 312).

⁴⁵⁴ “For in the heart where Christ savingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the power of that endless life that he received at his resurrection. Thus every saint that is a subject of the benefit of Christ’s sufferings, is made to know and experience the power of his resurrection.” (*Religious Affections*, 312).

⁴⁵⁵ “The Spirit of Christ, which is the immediate spring of grace in the heart, is all life, all power, all act ... And thus it is that holy affections have a governing power in the course of a man’s life.” (*Religious Affections*, 312).

⁴⁵⁶ *Charity and Its Fruits*, YE 8, 133.

⁴⁵⁷ *Charity and Its Fruits*, YE 8, 133.

brought by His infusion. Such an infusion must show in the renewal of the affections of the human subject of conversion.

(b) Assurance from the immediate witness of the Spirit to the human spirit

The second line of evidence that a person had truly become a believer was also personal and internal, but it was of a more ‘spiritual’ than ‘soulish’ nature, and it was of a more immediate nature, than the first or the third. It was both temporally immediate, in that its joyful effect was instantaneous, and also functionally immediate, in that it was the consequence of the direct and intimate speaking of the Spirit to the human spirit, imparting to the saint the experience of being loved, and the acceptance of sonship.

In keeping with the Puritan tradition,⁴⁵⁸ Edwards believed in the importance for the assurance of the believing soul of the inner witness of the Spirit in accordance with Romans 8:15-16.⁴⁵⁹ That witness was one of love. The love of God would be poured by the Spirit into the heart of the believer (Romans 5:5). The believer would experience the love of the Father, and cry out ‘*Abba, Father*’. Edwards made much of this notion because of his observation in the awakenings of experiences which he believed were true to what these texts anticipate. The ‘inner witness’ experience was viewed as a crisis event which took place in seasons of renewal or revival, rather than as an ongoing steady witness within the Christian’s spirit throughout life.

Edwards does at one point appear to consider this direct and immediate witness of the Spirit into the spirit of the saint as the highest level of assurance,⁴⁶⁰ but one that was sovereignly imparted by the Spirit most often in seasons of revival of

⁴⁵⁸ J.I. Packer devoted a chapter in his *A Quest For Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1990), ch.11, 179-189 on “The Witness of the Spirit in Puritan Thought.” Thomas Goodwin, Richard Sibbes, Thomas Brooks and John Owen are the primary subjects.

⁴⁵⁹“... you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘*Abba, Father.*’ The Spirit himself witness with our spirit that we are God’s children.” (NIV)

⁴⁶⁰ An advocate of Edwards’ interpretation of this pneumatological assurance in the twentieth century was the Reformed preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones (*The Puritans* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 348ff.).

the church, and not to every believer, and not to any believer all the time. This way of interpreting the assuring witness of the Spirit is a revelation of the extent to which Edwards' pneumatology was an experiential pneumatology. Edwards, in his defence of the spiritual experiences of the awakenings, which so shaped his view of normative Christian experience, confirms unequivocally our thesis concerning the importance which he placed on pneumatological experience in conversion, assurance and the Christian life:

And perhaps there are some who upon this ground (that of their own experience) do not only reject these extraordinary things, but all such conviction of sin, discoveries of the glory of God, excellency of Christ, and inward conviction of the truth of the gospel, *by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God*, now supposed to be necessary to salvation.⁴⁶¹

Edwards was especially concerned that the 'ordinary' levels of affective intensity, which most Christians experience, should not cloud interpretation of the level of experience which Scripture (in his interpretation of it) anticipates, with respect to the inner witness of the Spirit and specifically the love and joy it produces. Edwards interpreted 1Peter 1:8 with its reference to "joy unspeakable and full of glory" as the product of this experience which the Spirit's witness brought.

The association of this inner witness of the Spirit with revival and therefore as sporadic, and as an experience which not every Christian might experience, contributes to a trend we have seen developing in Edwards' doctrine of assurance and the Christian life. This is the theme of perpetual uncertainty that runs ironically through the very midst of his teaching on assurance of the love of God and salvation. The deterministic dimension of the highest level of assurance might well have left many of the saints who did not experience this, wondering whether they were of the elect or not. Within the revivalist interpretation of Edwards, this was an experience willed by the Spirit sovereignly for some of the

⁴⁶¹ *Works* (Banner), I, 371.

elect. If one was not one of the 'elect within the elect' chosen for this special operation of the Spirit by which there was an impartation of the highest level of assurance, one might understandably live with a significant lack of assurance of one's authenticity as a Christian.

(c) Evidence from affective-behavioural love confirmed in community

The third line of evidence was the most telling, in that it was less subjective than the others. That in his mature reflection, Edwards arrived at this as the highest level of assurance, and not the second, is evident from his speaking of "Christian practice," and not the "inner witness," as the "chief Sign to Others... to Ourselves."⁴⁶² Self-adjudged abilities to perceive and love the beauty of God and truth, and self-assessed experiences of the Spirit's witness, in that they were subjective, could be misleading. Edwards grew increasingly suspicious of claims to conversion or renewal based on religious experiences that were merely private and untested by the Christian community. Love as the acid test of the soul's state must therefore be one that was cognitively, affectively, and, especially conatively verified. There must be lively affection as verified by loving action. To assess that, required a community component.

Edwards had been required to give a defence of the Great Awakening against those like Charles Chauncy who sought to discredit the revival by pointing to some of the contentions and factions it generated. Chauncy had written "In vain may any pretend to be under the extraordinary guidance of the Spirit, while in their practice they trample upon this law of Christian love."⁴⁶³ Edwards could not disagree on this point. He was aware that not all that had been in the revival had been truly renewed by it, and of both the fleshly and satanic counterfeiting within it, and, being on this point in full agreement with Chauncy he wrote, "Charity, or divine love, is in Scripture represented as the sum of all religion of heaven, and that wherein mainly the religion of the church in its more perfect state on

⁴⁶² *Religious Affections*, 323, 341.

⁴⁶³ Chauncy, Charles in "Enthusiasm Described and Cautioned Against," in Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, (Eds.), *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), 238.

earth shall consist.”⁴⁶⁴ Edwards himself expressed cynicism about the revivals at times,⁴⁶⁵ and he protested against divisiveness and faction-forming, with the conviction that anyone claiming the authentic presence of the Spirit must be characterized by love, because the Spirit is ‘Love.’ As Plantinga Pauw has aptly stated, “The revival’s exaltation of inner religious experience, with its tendency towards spiritual pride and uncharitableness, was for Edwards, a mark of a satanic infiltration of the Spirit’s work. Loving union was the true mark of the Holy Spirit’s influence, and inevitably this worked against prideful pretensions and divisive claims to special spiritual perception.”⁴⁶⁶

In these, his most mature reflections on the revival, he therefore advocates a testing of individual experiences in community in a manner that upholds his Trinitarian ideals. He writes, “I am far from saying, that it is not requisite that persons should give any sort of account of their experiences to their brethren,” suggesting that their sharing of their experience in community could assist “others in forming a judgement of their state.”⁴⁶⁷ The nature of the profession required by Edwards, as outlined in this passage in *Religious Affections*, included that of commitment to experiencing the Christian life as one of union and communion with Christ, and his people. The foundation of this was Trinitarian and its effectuating was principally pneumatological:

... their hearts are united to the people of Jesus Christ as their people, to cleave to them and love them as their brethren, and worship and serve God, and follow Christ in union and fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform all those duties that belong to them, as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ.⁴⁶⁸

The Self- and Other-Orientation Tension in assurance: a reflection of Psychological and Social Tensions in the Psychological Trinitarian model

⁴⁶⁴ YE 4, 299.

⁴⁶⁵ *Religious Affections*, YE 2, 407.

⁴⁶⁶ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 165.

⁴⁶⁷ YE 2, 416-7.

⁴⁶⁸ YE 2, 417.

Although an ascending order of importance emerges in *Religious Affections* with respect to assurance – intellect, then affections, then actions - all three aspects were necessary. Edwards gave priority to the affections over the intellect, but did not discount the intellect. Edwards gave evidential priority to the behavioural or social or communal component in an attempt to overcome undue introspection and individualism, but this did not lead him to negate the affections as the spring of those actions, in assessing Christian profession. With respect to the affections, for example, whilst Edwards may say, on the one hand that “Christian practice is the sign of signs, in this sense that it is the great evidence which confirms and crowns all other signs of godliness,”⁴⁶⁹ he will also say that the affections are “the very life and soul of all true religion.”⁴⁷⁰ In three aspects of the emphases and ordering of these components, that is, (i) the priority of affections over intellect, (ii) the insistence on there being lively affections motivating the actions, and (iii) the priority of loving behaviour over the combined inner cognitive and affective state, there are reflections of aspects of and tensions within the psychological model of the Trinity to which Edwards adhered.

First of all, in his voluntarist understanding of conversion in which the affections and will have primacy over the intellect, Edwards gave a clear reflection of his view of the Spirit as will and love in the psychological model of the Trinity. This has been well summarized by Plantinga Pauw:

The redemptive work of the Spirit is to indwell the soul and create a new habit of love and holiness. As a new active principle seated in the will, the Holy Spirit elicits holy love for God and acts of love toward others, culminating in the saint’s glorification.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁹ *YE* 2, 444.

⁴⁷⁰ *YE* 4, 297.

⁴⁷¹ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 155.

Secondly, the insistence on the presence of the *affection* of love as demonstrated in action,⁴⁷² so that even if behaviour is the litmus test, there must be authentic affections driving that behaviour, seems to correspond to the notion that, in the psychological Trinity model, the Spirit's identity as the Love of the Father and the Son is logically prior to the emanation of love, by the Spirit, to humanity. The outward demonstration of 'true virtue' of loving consent to 'Being in general' must of necessity first spring from inner dispositions transformed through grace by the infusion of the Spirit. To over-emphasize the loving actions at the expense of the loving dispositions in the affections would have violated Edwards' psychological model of the Trinity. It is the being of the Spirit as Love first, and the experience of loving intimacy within the Godhead first that leads, second, to the emanation of that love to His creation. In analogous fashion, Edwards first expounds the affections in *Religious Affections*, that is, what the believer *is*, before expounding their loving Christian practice, what they *do*. The latter may be the ultimate evidential sign of reality but without the former it is valueless.

And thirdly, the insistence on social demonstration of love flowing from the authentic affection of love, given that this is evidence of the Spirit's presence within the believer, reflected with striking parallelism, the social dimension by which the Spirit acts within the chiefly psychological model of the Trinity. Just as Edwards invoked individuation within a 'One Mind' analogy of the Trinity (inappropriately I have suggested), believing he could avoid tritheism in doing so, so he presents a picture of the Christian infused by the Spirit and therefore firmly grounded in authentic affection as an integrated being, but necessarily acting out that love in a social way.

⁴⁷² The connection between the affections and action was very much grounded in Trinitarian participation. The reason that affections in the convert were renewed lay in the convert's "participation in the divine nature, Christ living in the heart," and that specifically through "the Holy Spirit dwelling there in union with the faculties of the soul, as an internal vital principle...". (*Religious Affections*, 312). But the result of the Spirit's indwelling in the human soul was the "exerting of his own proper nature in the exercise of those faculties." This exercising of the faculties by the Spirit was, for Edwards "sufficient to show us why true grace should have such activity, power and efficacy." His reasoning is that "If God dwells in the heart, and is vitally united to it, He will show that He is a God by the efficacy of His operation." (*Religious Affections*, 312). There is further evidence of the pneumatological and participatory connection between love as an affection and loving action in the two *Miscellanies* (396-7, *YE* 13, 461-2) in which Edwards specifically linked conversion and the Trinity.

Plantinga Pauw has suggested that the social emphasis in Edwards' assurance theology is confirmation of her thesis that Edwards' model of the Trinity is an eclectic synthesis of the psychological model with a social Cappadocian model. The alternative we have preferred, is that Edwards saw social components within his predominantly psychological model, without espousing a social model *per se*. Irrespective, it is conceded that there is ample evidence of the use by Edwards of significant social metaphors in his discussion of the Trinity. It seems fair to see the social component in assurance as a consequence of the participation of the believer in a Trinity in which the Spirit, as love, is love shared between persons, that is the Father and the Son, and then, secondly with humanity.

Had Edwards moved to a Cappadocian model of the Trinity, he may have correspondingly discovered a less introspective means of assurance altogether. The most fundamental tension in Edwards' theology of assurance is that, even in his attempt to be outwardly focused, he cannot escape a fundamentally anthropocentric and introspective orientation. This is a consequence precisely of a psychological orientation in his view of the Trinity, and therefore, in his view of man. The greatest problem is not so much the answers Edwards gives, but the very question he is asking, and the object of his inquiry, in the whole assurance issue. The objective reality of who Christ is for the Christian does not enter the discussion. The question Edwards seems to pose for the inquiring soul, troubled about his salvation, has nothing to do with the worthiness and efficacy of the person and work of Christ. Rather it is this: "does the person see enough evidence of the Spirit being at work in his soul, and in his relationships?" That Edwards sought to be Trinitarian in his approach, is not in question. The source of the tensions in his theology of assurance lie within the Trinitarian model Edwards adopted. It is specifically the psychological nature of that model that gives rise to the problem.

The psychological model of the Trinity is analogous with the psychological orientation of the human soul seeking assurance by looking inwards, to assess the affections. Even looking to the opinion of others to assess the reality of the affections and actions, does not change that orientation. Edwards appears to see

the danger in self-assessment of those affections. In the midst of his communion controversies, it is to avoid too great a self-orientation that he advocates a criterion for assessment of the affections that is outside of the self - the Christian community in which the individual lives. In his participation mindset, therefore, Edwards did appear to see faith not merely as a matter of individual perception, and conversion as authenticated by more than private experience, and sanctification as more than mere personal holiness. Faith, conversion and sanctification must be authenticated in community. However, all of this did not remove the fact that the burning question is addressed to the realm of human subjectivity, even if it was that of other humans.

Despite his best efforts, therefore, Edwards is ultimately unable to escape an introspective, anthropocentric approach. But this is because he is unable to escape a psychological model of the Trinity, which in its conception is an anthropocentric theology. In the climate of a Reformed and philosophical Rationalist heritage, Edwards' contribution to understanding the affective, as opposed to merely cerebral dimensions of the human heart, is remarkable. It was perhaps his greatest contribution to a Reformed piety that has tendency towards cerebral dominance to this day. However, the limitations of the psychological model of God and man are reflected in a theology of assurance in which the other-centredness never quite overcomes a self-centredness. An alternative approach to be considered shortly will be that in Barth, who would have us look in a different direction altogether for assurance, away from the self, towards Christ and the objective realities of the justification he has achieved for humanity.

That we should make such a correlation between his anthropology and his theology Proper is consistent with the principal of univocity Edwards himself invoked in crafting an immanent Trinity from insights gained in general revelation. His view of the human self is mirrored in his view of the divine 'Godself.' Specifically, the psychological *intra-psychic* dimension of his Trinity, ultimately prevails over the social or *inter-psychic* aspect (the 'for the other' aspect), and this correlates with the inward and psychological nature of Edwards'

spirituality. Noble as his desire was to make agency or action the principal evidence of true conversion, introspection remained as the prevailing emphasis. The direction of his piety spirals in the wrong direction. The question lying behind the loving actions of the professed Christian is the authenticity of the loving affections of the professor, and in turn, the authenticity of the faith experience. The question always remains. The engagement in agency is still with a view to achieving assurance by validating affections within the soul of the saint. How much loving action is sufficient to verify the loving affection, and therefore, the authenticity of the ‘infusion of the Spirit’ conversion experience? Given this morass of subjectivity it is not surprising that Edwards’ parishioners seemed never to be quite sure of where they stood.

The irony of a theology of the Spirit which elevated union and harmony is that with regard to assurance, this theology seemed to create uneasy introspective angst instead. This irony also enters Edwards’ theology of progressive sanctification, the road to which is the cultivation of experienced union or communion with God, by the Spirit.

F. Progressive sanctification by pneumatologically-enabled intimacy, rather than contemplation

In Edwards’ mind, union of the saints with God as described above, was not merely theological, positional or static. It was a union to be experienced in dynamically growing intimacy with God which would lead to progressively growing holiness. God by the Spirit actually “communicates of the goodness of His nature”, and “the influences of the Spirit of God, being thus peculiar to God, and being those wherein God does, in so high a manner, communicate Himself and make the creature partaker of the divine nature” actually result in the arising within the convert of “truly gracious affections ... from those influences that are spiritual and divine.”⁴⁷³ A “new inward perception” of God and the excellence of divine things, and of the world, and of themselves, and of sin arises immediately as a result of the infusion of the Spirit.⁴⁷⁴ And as the Spirit indwells and

⁴⁷³ *Religious Affections*, 129-130.

⁴⁷⁴ *Religious Affections*, 131.

communion with the Father and the Son is cultivated, evangelical repentance (as Edwards understood it), “change of nature”, the “temper of Jesus”, and a “symmetry and proportion” is correspondingly crafted in the believer.

The theme of relational intimacy of man with God is a prominent motif in Edwards’ spirituality, as a consequence of his promotion of the Spirit, understood within the psychological model to be the divine person who infuses the believer with the love of the Father for the Son. An evidence of this is the tempering of Edwards’ view of the importance of “holy exercises” or the development of theological knowledge as he matured in pastoral experience. Whereas at an early stage of ministry he is sure that “A false notion gives no opportunity for grace to act,” a decade later he has come to the place where he admits that “there may be true exercises of grace ... that may be founded on an error... and that the erroneous practice founded on that error may be the occasion of those true and holy exercises which are from the Spirit of God.”⁴⁷⁵ Furthermore, in a notebook Edwards began to write in the 1740’s on the “exercises of Holiness & obedience” as preparations for heaven, he concedes that “This is not absolutely necessary” given the heavenly destination of “Elect Infants”.⁴⁷⁶ He is convinced of a freedom of the Spirit to work surprisingly apart from what would be considered to be the normal means of grace, in a manner that is somewhat reflective of the relational spirituality of the Eastern orthodox tradition.

The central challenge of Christian living becomes for Edwards that of participation in the perfections of God, which is facilitated by drawing ever closer to God. Thus the *imago Dei* is progressively restored, and “so the good that is in the creature comes forever nearer and nearer to an identity with that which is in God.”⁴⁷⁷ As Holmes reflects, this “is a movement towards a

⁴⁷⁵ *Miscellanies* 999, *YE* 20, 326.

⁴⁷⁶ “Subjects of Enquiry,” Beinecke Library, Yale University, cited in Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 162.

⁴⁷⁷ Holmes, 2001a, 48.

fulfilment of Christ's own prayer, recorded in John 17, as we share the unity He has with His Father, being, in Edwards' words, as it were, one with God."⁴⁷⁸

Though it is unquestionably true that Edwards looked on the practice of love in Christian community as the acid test of a Christian profession, he placed high value on the cultivation of intimacy with God in the private life, and, in the context where he suggests that true affections are often not flaunted and are rather deep and secret, he gave warning against a merely social religion:

But this is all that I aim at by what has been said, to show that it is the nature of true grace, that however it loves Christian society in its place, yet it in a peculiar manner delights in retirement, and secret converse with God. So that if persons appear greatly engaged in social religion, and but little in the religion of the closet, and are often highly affected when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Christ to converse with, it looks very darkly upon their religion.⁴⁷⁹

Indeed, a telltale affective sign of the true believer was insatiable hunger for the presence of God. Edwards begins a section XI of part II of *Religious Affections* with the words: "Another great and very distinguishing difference between gracious affections and others is, that gracious affections, *the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased.*" By contrast, people with false affections rest complacent with no driving hunger for more of God's presence. "The more a true saint loves God with a gracious love, the more he desires to love Him, and the more uneasy is he at his want of love to Him... the more he thirst and longs after God and holiness, the more he longs to long, and to breathe out his very soul in longings after God."⁴⁸⁰ Intrinsic to these longings for God, are longings for holiness, a thirsting after righteousness, which is the natural consequence of being infused with the Spirit who is holy: "There is a holy breathing and panting after the Spirit of God, to increase holiness ... holiness and sanctification is more directly the

⁴⁷⁸ Holmes, 2001a, 48-9.

⁴⁷⁹ *Religious Affections*, 299-300.

⁴⁸⁰ *Religious Affections*, 300.

object of it, than any manifestation of God's love and favour."⁴⁸¹ Thus the sign of the true saint was the desire even more for holiness and sanctification, even more than for experiences of the love of God and their comfort. These were more to be treasured for their sanctifying influence, than for the hedonistic enjoyment of them.

Doubting introspection or delightful intimacy?

This striving is symptomatic of the most significant challenge in Edwards' theology of sanctification. Underlying the active pursuit of holiness, empowered by the Spirit and inspired by the hunger for it, there is evidence of a restless unease in Edwards' pursuit of sanctification. What seems to motivate it is not the freedom of acceptance that comes from basking in the sunshine of a completed justification through union with Christ. It is not the looking away from the imperfect self to the perfect Christ and consequent transformation through contemplation. It is not as a relational Trinitarian theology might suggest the delighting in the affectionate embrace of the unconditional love of the Father for the Son and those in Him. Rather, there is a pervasive introspection that penetrates the motives and intents of the heart, a never-ceasing self-examination. Edwards envisages a pursuit of holiness through intimacy which is ironically accompanied by an ever-present inward introspection, rather than the 'towards the other' orientation that seems to define intimacy. The human partner in the relationship is constantly wondering whether or not there is a real relationship. It is difficult to see how true intimacy can be a reality with a self-doubting, self-obsessed 'beloved' partner.

This is not to say that Edwards, or his fellow saints, did not experience or recommend as a realistic expectation delight in the pursuit of intimacy with God. Joy in intimacy is evident in Edwards' spiritual literature. From the sermon "*Wisdom Displayed In Salvation*", for example, he eloquently describes the privilege of communion or intimacy that union with Christ makes possible. After showing convincingly in the section prior to this, that the union and communion

⁴⁸¹ *Religious Affections*, 305.

believers experience after the Fall surpasses that which Adam knew, Edwards states:

4thly, By the contrivance for our salvation, man's sin and misery are but an occasion of his being brought to a more full and free *converse* with and *enjoyment* of God than otherwise would have been. For as we have observed already, the union is greater; and the greater the union, the more full the communion, and intimate the intercourse.⁴⁸² (emphasis original)

The immensity of the privilege of immediate access to, and intimacy with, the triune God through worship and prayer, is a theme Edwards expounded often. He was always careful to stress that this intimacy was not familiarity. Accusations with respect to a loss of distinction between God and man were thereby rebuffed. Edwards distinguishes between relational nearness and appropriate essential or 'natural' distance.⁴⁸³ However, intimacy and its delights as the means to sanctification were greatly admired and pursued in Edwards as the prevalence of his bride metaphor for the church reveals.⁴⁸⁴ Edwards particularly admired the spiritual intimacy his wife Sarah seemed to experience.⁴⁸⁵

These sections in the Edwardsean corpus that represent a joyful, relational, experiential spirituality not often found in the evangelical tradition, are however often coupled with a paradoxical inward orientation that works against the experience of joy in the Christian life. There are places where Edwards encourages a more contemplative approach⁴⁸⁶ but these are still dominated by an

⁴⁸² "Wisdom of God," 151.

⁴⁸³ *Religious Affections*, 286-7.

⁴⁸⁴ "Love desires to stand in some *near relation* to the beloved. Provision is made by Christ, that we should stand in the nearest possible relation to God; that he should be our Father, and we should be his children. We are often instructed in the Holy Scriptures, that God is the Father of believers, and that they are his family. - And not only so, but they stand in the nearest relation to Christ Jesus. There is the closest union possible. The souls of believers are married to Christ. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Yea, there is yet a nearer relation than can be represented by such a similitude. Believers are as the very members of Christ, and of his flesh and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. Yea, this is not near enough yet, but *they are one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. ..." Sermon, *Wisdom of God*, 146 (emphases original).

⁴⁸⁵ *Miscellanies 741, YE 18, 372*. One wonders if her father's less introspective theology might have been a soul-forming factor influencing this.

⁴⁸⁶ An example of an Edwardsean exhortation that conveys the idea of transformation through contemplation is in the sermon, *Wisdom of God* in which he is rehearsing the blessings that come

intimacy with an immanent Christ and a lack of assurance in the pursuit of that intimacy, than a looking away from the self to the transcendent Christ as the One who is for us. Even the transforming heavenly beatific vision in Edwards, is as has been noted, one of *theosis*, that is one of union and intimacy with the triune God, rather than one of transformation through contemplation.⁴⁸⁷

The dictum that ‘the only proof of election is in perseverance,’ holds true for Edwards. Perseverance was inevitable for the elect in that they had been truly infused by the Spirit, for in Edwards’ soteriology, “the new disposition” which is “the fundamental infrastructure on which all the subsequent categories of grace are securely based in a coherent manner” is “created by the infusion of grace,” and just as its origin is the Spirit, so it is also “‘kept in operation’ only by his power.”⁴⁸⁸ But from the perspective of human awareness, Edwards’ exhortation would be to keep on keeping on, for only in this manner could one be assured of what God already knew. Thus in Edwards’ doctrine of assurance there were to two tiers of awareness – the divine tier, on the one hand, in which Edwards is convinced that whoever God infuses and redeems, will truly be redeemed and will necessarily persevere, and – on the other hand, the tier of human experience in which there is always some doubt, and in which actual perseverance is the sign of inward reality.

In the midst of his preoccupation with sanctification by the Spirit, there arose within Edwards’ ‘spirituality of the Spirit,’ therefore, certain problematic tendencies that have repeatedly protruded. These are the dangers of anthropocentricity, of individualism (despite the communal emphasis in his insistence on love as an affection and as action as the ultimate sign of faith), of an obsessive introspection, and perhaps some shades of triumphalism.

to those who come into union with Christ: “Love naturally inclines to a *conformity* to the beloved. To have those excellencies, upon the account of which he is beloved, copied in himself. Provision is made in this way of salvation, that we may be conformed to God; that we shall be transformed into the same image. 2 Cor. iii. 18. “We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” - And that hereafter we shall see him as he is, and be like him.” *Wisdom of God*, 146 (emphases original).

⁴⁸⁷ Paul Ramsey observes this in Appendix III, *YE* 8, 726-7.

⁴⁸⁸ Morimoto, 1995a, 38.

G. Evaluating and Locating the justification-sanctification model determined by pneumatological union ... Barthian correctives

I contend therefore that Edwards' attempt to describe the human experience of salvation in a way that emphasizes the Trinity, because it is conceived within a *psychological* understanding of the Trinity, unfortunately will lead Edwards instead, into an undue emphasis on the human subject of salvation. Over-emphasis on the Spirit as conceived within this model, in particular, and on the Spirit dynamics of infusion and indwelling, thus causes Edwards to describe an eclectic soteriology in which there is a Scholastic conception of hypostasized grace, and an undue emphasis on the experiential and the subjective. Despite his attempts in the wake of the revivals to place the source of the assessment of spirituality in how the human self relates in community, it is still the state of the human self that remains uppermost in these considerations, even if it is about how that human self is doing with regard to the matter of loving relationships. Edwards' theology of the Christian life is therefore, to a great degree, anthropocentric. The content of most of Edwards' writing and speaking in this area of theology addresses the question of the authenticity of the evidences of the work of the Spirit within the human life. The answers to these questions provide a rich understanding of a holistic spirituality of intimacy with God. However, the fundamental issue is that in Edwards' spirituality, it is the question that is wrong, for the most part. The primary question being asked most often is being asked of the human subject of sanctification, and with respect to the subjective experience of the Spirit. Edwards' is therefore, in the end a Christian experience of tension rather than harmony and union. The delights of the intimacy of the members of the Bride with the Bridegroom are coupled with much introspection as to whether they are even in the wedding party. The gains for evangelical theology in Edwards related to a rich emphasis on the Spirit are considerable. However, for a more balanced Trinitarian theology of assurance and the Christian life, the truth of the reality of the Spirit's work in human conversion requires to be held together with the objective reality of Christ for the believer, and justification in Him, an emphasis not altogether absent in Edwards, but more radically conceived and more greatly emphasized in the theology of Karl Barth.

Karl Barth demonstrated a preponderance to offer a different question to a different subject. His question addresses the objective reality of the Christ who is our justification and our sanctification, and whose full participation in humanity transforms the very conception of reality for all humanity. Barth's conception of the Christian life is one of the contemplation of that Christ and of loving action as the human partners of the covenant, in community, rather than one of intimacy coupled with introspection. The Barthian alternative which emphasizes Christological participation and especially the doctrine of justification, is a balancing emphasis to Edwards' pneumatological and anthropocentric approach to providing assurance of salvation and to describing the Christian life in a Trinitarian way.

Barth's theology of justification is significantly at odds with that of Edwards, in that it is more Lutheran,⁴⁸⁹ with greater emphasis on justification, and a greater distinction between justification and sanctification. Barth would have avoided these scholastic categories such as 'infused grace' in favour of hypostasized grace in Christ. Grace, in Barth, is God's self-giving, His standing in our place, His fulfilment of the obligations of the Torah 'for us'. His Christological doctrine of justification will be considered in bold relief against that which Edwards adopted, motivated by pastoral concerns.

⁴⁸⁹ In the context of a discussion of the greater general similarity of Luther to Augustine than to Calvin, Alister McGrath has commented that where Luther and Augustine differed (a case where Calvin is closer to Augustine) was that "the notion of the imputation of the *iustitia Christi* is simply not present in Augustine's theory of justification in the sense that Luther required... In justification, man is *made righteous*" (McGrath, *Forerunners of the Reformation? Harvard Theological Review* 75:2 (1982), (Hereafter, "McGrath, 1982a"), 231). Whereas for Luther, "the righteousness of Christ is always external to man, and alien to him," for St. Augustine, as McGrath indicates, "justifying righteousness becomes part of man's being." Augustine's understanding of *iustitia* is broad enough to mean 'being made to live as God intends man to live, in every aspect of his existence,' which includes his relationship with God, his fellow men, and the relationship of his higher and lower self (on the neo-Platonic anthropological model favoured by Augustine). And von Loewenich points out that "justification is not understood by Augustine in a highly forensic manner, but as a process with perfection as its goal" (McGrath, 1982a, 230). Whereas for Luther, *semper iustificandus* means 'ever to be justified anew', for Augustine, it means 'ever to be made more and more righteous'. Certainly Edwards is more akin to Augustine than to Luther (and Barth) here.

A brief consideration of Barth's understanding of justification and sanctification will serve to locate and assess Edwards' theology in this area. In summary, we may say that both theologians maintained that the twin graces were inseparable but distinguishable, but that latterly in Edwards, sanctification receives the greater emphasis and the distinction is blurred, whilst in Barth, as in Luther, justification receives the greater emphasis, with a clearer distinction evident between justification and sanctification. In the Edwardsean interplay of justification and sanctification in which Spirit-infused union lies back of both, and in which sanctification becomes his chief pastoral concern, a conditionalism protrudes. A man-centred introspectiveness pervades Edwards' theology of conversion and assurance as a consequence, a theme to be developed in the second half of this chapter. An alternative less man-centred, less pneumatological and more Christological doctrine of justification is evident in Barth.

1. Barth's Soteriology of Justification in Christ

Creation and Covenant

Barth avoided conditionalism because he held creation and covenant⁴⁹⁰ closely together, and therefore the covenants of grace and redemption. He avoided the tendency to differentiate two different dispensations in the relationship between God and humanity, one on the basis of nature and the other on grace. Creation for Barth is the external basis for the covenant, and the covenant is the internal basis for the creation, and both, consistent with the Christological-incarnational hermeneutic, are viewed through the lenses of "their common *telos* in the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ."⁴⁹¹ Christ is the one who fulfils the covenant from both the side of God and from that of humanity, and Christ is the fulfillment of creation, both from the side of the Creator and the creature. Nature may illustrate and typify grace in Edwards, but there is not the same prominence of an incarnational Christological mechanism as in Barth. As Hart has observed,

⁴⁹⁰ See *CD* III/1, 42ff.

⁴⁹¹ Hart, 1999a, 50.

discussion of creation and covenant is the road in for Barth's discussion of justification.⁴⁹²

Justification as Ontological

Barth would not have embraced the opinion expressed by McGrath, that the Christian doctrine of justification “constitutes the real centre of the theological system of the Christian Church.”⁴⁹³ In Barth, the critical article of the Church is “not justification as such, but its basis and culmination: the confession of Jesus Christ ... the knowledge of his being and activity for us and to us and with us.”⁴⁹⁴ Edwards' greatest concern is ostensibly the glory of God, and the magnifying of that glory in the salvation of man as one with Christ, by the Spirit. Yet practically, and ironically, it is sanctification and spirituality as evidence of justification, that seems to preoccupy Edwards. With respect to justification once again, Barth's assessment of it is seen through the eyes of the Christological–incarnational hermeneutic and therefore he would have adjudged McGrath's view of the importance of justification as man-centred, and that of Edwards as even more so. Edwards is greatly concerned that his people are justified, but his chief concern with respect to justification is a man-centred one. Towering over all other concerns in his discussion of justification are his copious considerations on determining the authenticity of the faith professed by the one who is justified. No other Reformed theologian, excepting perhaps John Owen, is so consumed with the subjective aspect of the faith of the justified. A brief consideration of how Barth arrived at a less man-centred approach exposes this in Edwards.

As noted above, the primacy of the incarnate Christ in uniting creation and covenant, paves the way for the Barthian doctrine of justification. The pronouncement of God over creation, “it is good”, is deemed by Barth not to refer to aesthetics (as it might well do in Edwards' thought) nor even to its consonance with some divine blueprint. Rather, Barth maintains that the creation is declared ‘right’ “insofar as it is *capax infiniti*, able to be taken up by God in the

⁴⁹² Hart, 1999a, 51. Here Hart cites para. 61 in CD III/1, 369-70.

⁴⁹³ McGrath, 1986a, I,1.

⁴⁹⁴ CD IV/1, 527.

incarnation and brought concretely to its *telos* in fulfilment of the covenant.”⁴⁹⁵ This divine assessment of creation thus anticipates an ontological aspect of justification which for Barth determines that of the forensic, that related to law, sin and justice. God, as Creator and Lord of the covenant, has a ‘right’ over his creatures and covenant partners and in Christ, the elect Man, God establishes the right of man to existence by putting to death that which contradicts his purpose in creation, replacing it with the new creation. Justification is not simply a declaration of righteousness with respect to the law, but is more fundamentally justification with respect to God’s purpose for us as creatures and covenant partners. Sin is an ontological condition primarily, and God judges that condition in Christ on the cross, and reveals his sentence on man by the resurrection so that just as sin is ontological, so justification is ontological too, resulting in the establishment of new creatures and faithful covenant partners who can truly be assessed as ‘good’. The key issue is that the existence of this new humanity as good is not one of ‘potential,’ or ‘as if,’ but one of actualities.⁴⁹⁶ Barth’s point is that justification, as ontological, means that we are not merely treated as if we were just, but that we actually *are* just, in God’s eyes.

Justification as Christological

Central in Barth’s theology of ontological justification is the location of this justification in the history of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, as opposed to the histories of individual men and women. Barth develops this thought in his consideration of the doctrine of election in *CD* II/2 in which Jesus is the Elect Man in whom our being is entwined and through whom God’s purposes for humanity are focused. The key concept that allows Barth to cause Christ to be representative of humanity in an authentic sense is that central and pivotal notion of *homoousios* by which the Christ, the one Man is identified as the one in whom all things were created in the beginning and in whom all continue to live and move and have their ‘being.’⁴⁹⁷ Thus we have our existence only in relation to him. This relationship is deepened by the fact that the Creator takes flesh and

⁴⁹⁵ Hart, 1999a, 51.

⁴⁹⁶ *CD* IV/1, 542f.

⁴⁹⁷ *CD* III/1, 29f.

becomes a human person and fulfils his own creative and covenantal purposes. Thereby our identity and being is no longer determined solely by our relationship to God, but by our relationship to this man, *Deus incarnatus*, in such a way that 'his particular history is the pre-history and post-history of all our individual lives.'⁴⁹⁸

This Christological-incarnational interpretation for Barth has profound implications for his view of reality or actuality. The divine intention for justification becomes a concrete historical actuality in Christ and no mere abstraction. In Christ, the eschatological future has been fully realized historically.

Justification as Reality

Nowhere is the contrast between a man-centred and a Christologically-centred hermeneutic more apparent in Edwards and Barth respectively, than in the area of what constitutes reality, or how justification (and sanctification) are experienced. Edwards spends much of his energy on assessing the validity or otherwise of individual experience of faith and therefore of the assurance of justification, and is at pains to distinguish what are true religious affections that give an individual confidence in his justified state. In stark contrast, for Barth, human individual experience is relatively irrelevant. The fact that justification is a concrete historical actuality in Christ, causes Barth to relegate the realm of individual experience to the level of anhypostatic abstraction.

Justification for Barth is not a state at all – it is a history, and in particular it is the history of the man Christ Jesus, in whom God has justified his creation by putting it to death and raising it up in a new form. The good news of the gospel is that His history is also our history. As an individual discovers the reality that they are already justified in Christ, they are not merely in a 'state' but rather they are plunged into a reality transition. They are called to live in the awareness that true reality is the supreme reality of what has taken place in the history of Jesus.

⁴⁹⁸ Hart, 1999a, 59. Quotation is from *CD III/1*, 27.

Justification as Barth viewed it is therefore an alien history to our own but which we discover to be our own, and “which projects us into the crisis of eschatological transition, living out the Kingdom of God in the midst of the world, living by faith in that reality *which lies beyond our experience*, but which stands over against us as our reality nevertheless.”⁴⁹⁹

Whereas the issue of human individual experience apart from our relation to Christ is anhypostatic abstraction, as Dalferth notes, “our world of common experience is an *anhypostatic reality* which exists only insofar as it is incorporated into the concrete reality of God’s saving self-realization in Christ.”⁵⁰⁰ As Hart has stated, “precisely what we must not do ... is simply to ask after our own intrinsic and natural state, what we *are* in and of ourselves apart from Jesus Christ, since reality proper, the ‘really real’ is not to be found here.”⁵⁰¹ If this is true, Edwards has completely missed the point in his whole approach to justification and conversion which is very much the approach of self-examination to ensure that one is really of the faith. Edwards’ assumptions and those of Barth concerning reality differ, and this difference goes back to the critical issue of determining hermeneutic. For Barth, reality is Christologically understood: it is our ontological relatedness to Jesus Christ, whose history – death and resurrection – is ours.

Barth’s input on the locus of reality is unique. In the area of the ontology of justification, alternatives to the traditional western post-Aristotelian identification of the real with the actual have been offered. Jüngel attributed greater reality to the possible than to the actual, so that the future established by God for me as the *iustus*, is more real than the present in which we groan and travail as the *peccator*.⁵⁰² The alternative of the divine intention or will being more real than the present reality has also been considered. But for Barth, the only thing

⁴⁹⁹ Hart, 1999a, 62.

⁵⁰⁰ Dalferth, Ingolf. ‘Karl Barth’s Eschatological Realism’ in Sykes, S.W. (Ed.), *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 29.

⁵⁰¹ Hart, 1999a, fn.40, 60. See also John Webster’s article “‘The Firmest Grasp of the Real’: Barth on Original Sin,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 4 (spring 1988), 19-29.

⁵⁰² See Webster, John (ed.). *Eberhard Jüngel: Theological Essays* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 95-123. See also Jüngel’s *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God’s Being is in Becoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 75-85.

determinative of what is ultimately real, is the concrete history of the one man, Jesus of Nazareth.

Barth, who in this manner radicalizes Luther's *simul iustus et peccator*, stands in contrast to Edwards with regard to justification, and whatever state a justified person experiences.

From within the framework of his ontology of relation to Christ, Barth is enabled to attribute reality to both the *totus iustus* and the *totus peccator* in a manner in which the *simul* has credibility. *In ourselves* we are still sinful and guilty people. *In Christ* we are righteous, new creatures, faithful covenant partners set free to live as such.

The distinction between 'being' and 'experience' is a critical one in Barth's reasoning. Our 'being' is one of tension within the *iustus-peccator* tension. The history of Jesus Christ is objective to us, but to our 'experience' rather than our 'being'. The depths of our 'being' have been changed by the justification that God has brought about in Christ, Barth would say, but this reality is not locatable within our experience. It is something God has brought about by His electing grace, made concrete in Christ, irrespective of our experience of it. We are called away from our own experience of ourselves and called into discovering ourselves 'in Christ' and his situation. An excerpt from Barth in which he is describing how the reality and truth of the concrete history of Jesus Christ, in its reality and truth, becomes our reality and truth, serves to express this notion:

It is all true and actual in Him and therefore in us. It cannot, therefore, be known to be valid and effective in us first, but in Him first, and because in Him, in us. We are in Him, and comprehended in Him, but we are still not He Himself. Therefore it is all true and actual in this Other first and not in us. *That is why our justification is not a matter of subjective experience and understanding.* That is why we cannot perceive and comprehend it. That is why it is so puzzling to us.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰³ CD IV/1, 549. Emphasis mine.

Three questions naturally arise out of this notion of justification as reality in Christ. Does the fact that justification is our history because it is the history of Christ imply that justification is a process? Does the further fact that justification is a reality of our 'being' rather than our 'experience' leave any room for faith in justification? Furthermore, if justification has been granted to humanity in the 'one Man' Jesus Christ, is Barth compelled to say that all humanity in general, and all humans in particular, are justified - not merely potentially or virtually, but really justified in their beings? These questions are now considered in order with particular attention as to how Edwards might have been assessed in these areas by Barth's theology.

Justification as immediate reality

Although the metaphor of being 'on the journey' is employed by Barth, this is not, in any sense, with respect to justification. We are not on the journey towards 'being justified' (the Roman Catholic position), nor even towards its completion. Justification is always a completed reality because it is a concrete actuality in the history of Jesus Christ. In Christ our justification is complete justification, *totus iustus*. The nature of the journey is not for Barth towards *iustus* but rather the eschatological tension of *totus iustus simul totus peccator*. We live in the reality of being in Christ which is a 'real being', one of total justification, and this is the ground on which we have hope of one day ceasing to be *totus peccator*. We are never more or less justified as we move along the journey.

Certainly, the early Edwards could agree with this. There is a post-awakening drift in perspective, however. It is in the realm of assurance with respect to this reality, in human subjective experience, that Barth would issue a severe critique of Edwards. The ability of Edwards, or those who followed his theology, to ever enter into the reality of justification was very much in question. Although Edwards would certainly agree that justification is a completed reality, he would

immediately add that this was only a reality for the elect in Christ, and that none could know they were truly elect in Christ unless they had truly believed and could demonstrate their election by their perseverance in the works (albeit works of love) that verify true faith as such. How Edwards and Barth differed with respect to the nature of faith, and with respect to the particularity of justification will now unfold.

Justification and Faith as Acknowledged Reality

Does the fact that justification is a reality of our ‘being’ rather than our ‘experience’ leave any room for faith in Barth’s justification? Given the non-experiential theology of Barth with respect to justification, in what sense does he understand justification to be *by faith*? In response, these statements about Barth’s view of faith are presented:

(a) Barth did take faith seriously.

He knows nothing of benefiting from justification without faith. It is the appropriate unconditional ‘yes’ to the unconditional ‘Yes’ by which God has pardoned us in Christ.⁵⁰⁴ It is submission to the divine verdict and a casting of self wholly and humbly on divine grace. Justification is and remains ‘objective’ reality outside of our experience until faith, the ‘self-demonstration of the justified man’ causes that reality to impinge on our existence as a crisis.⁵⁰⁵

(b) Barth adhered to *sola fide* in justification.

In that our justification is a reality effected in Christ beyond our experience, and in that we cannot justify our own existence, and in that our sin disqualifies us from being a partner in the operation, and in that it was therefore necessary for God himself to act on our behalf in a supreme act of self-substitution, Barth is convinced that only faith and not the works of the law can save us. In this, Barth

⁵⁰⁴ CD IV/1, 570.

⁵⁰⁵ CD IV/1, 629.

is in line with his Reformed heritage and that of Edwards, though his reasoning is more radical. He does recognize, as Edwards would, that works will follow faith and that they must be done as “the (in itself) inevitable and good actualization of the (in itself) good creaturely nature of man.”⁵⁰⁶

(c) Barth avoided conditionalism more convincingly than other Reformers

Reformed theology’s defence against conditionalism, the issue of faith itself as a work or as a condition of justification, has not always been convincing. Edwards’ solution was to point to the reality that faith itself is a gift of grace and that it was aesthetic rather than moral. Barth provides what is a novel solution to this issue. He states with clarity that faith is “not a self-justifying act” and has no intrinsic self-justifying value at all. His first supporting argument is to define faith as the realization and appropriation of God’s justifying work, as “wholly and utterly humility”, as surrender to God’s grace as it meets us, an act of obedience to the Word of God as it encounters us. It has the character of mere acknowledgement. So far this is standard Reformation and Edwardsean fare. Secondly, reminiscent of Calvin and Edwards, Barth indicates that faith too is a gift from God; that it is not an inherent human capacity. Barth insists that it is based rather on the ‘self-demonstration’ of the justified man which breaks into our worldly existence as a crisis. This is the point at which Barth gives an answer more radical than Edwards or the Reformers, an answer that arises again out of his Christological ontology. When asked about the nature of the “self-demonstration” that is the essence of faith, Barth will respond that it is the self-revelation of Jesus Christ to the sinner, the incarnate Word of God, the ‘most concrete reality’ in whom our justification is a completed reality prior to and apart from our acknowledgement of it. This is why faith is not a work that adds to justification to make it complete – justification is complete for us as an act of God in Christ – it cannot be augmented or set in motion by anything else. As Barth so eloquently expressed this: “What is the *sola fide* but a faint yet necessary echo of the *sola Christus*? He alone is the One in whom man is justified and revealed to be justified. He alone

⁵⁰⁶ CD IV/1, 627.

has fulfilled the penitence in which the conversion of man to God is actually and definitively accomplished.”⁵⁰⁷

Faith is thus our response to what is revealed to us concerning ourselves as we are in Christ, that is, justified. Hart has pointed out that in the justification theology of the Catholic theologian Hans Kung, justification is divided into two parts: the objective side which is the redemption Christ has accomplished, and the subjective side which is justification which is worked out in us as we are made righteous by God’s gracious activity in our lives.⁵⁰⁸ In this scheme, faith is not a condition of the objective aspect of justification, but it is a condition of the second, in that without faith the ‘making holy’ cannot occur. By contrast, Hart appropriately points out that for Barth, faith is not a condition for the subjective aspect of justification. Rather, for Barth, Hart asserts, “faith *is* the subjective aspect of justification.” Whereas for Kung, the subjective aspect of justification is that in which virtual or potential justification becomes a reality for man, for Barth justification is the prior reality, not possibility, to which faith responds. The loci of reality in Kung is in us and our being as individuals. For Barth the locus of reality is in Christ, and therefore in us and our ‘being’. Nothing ontological remains to be done before justification can be a reality in us, as far as Barth is concerned. Therefore faith cannot be a condition for justification.

The question that arises from this comparison of Kung and Barth is where *Edwards* would be located with respect to this issue? At first glance, one might expect that Edwards would eschew the Catholic idea that justification is a progressive “making righteous.” McDermott⁵⁰⁹ like Morimoto, has questioned this. Admitting that “Edwards’ understandings of justification and regeneration are exceedingly complex”, on the one hand, McDermott lauds Edwards in that he “did not follow the Protestant scholastic tendency to collapse all of soteriology into justification,” and for his following “the ‘Lombardian tradition’ (of positing the radical contingency and dependence of the created virtues on God) far more

⁵⁰⁷ *CD IV/1*, 632.

⁵⁰⁸ Hart, 1999a, 68.

⁵⁰⁹ McDermott, Gerald R. ‘Jonathan Edwards and the Salvation of Non-Christians,’ *Pro Ecclesia* IX, No.2 (2000), 208-227 (hereafter “McDermott, 2000a”).

consistently than most of his Reformed predecessors.” However, McDermott is persuaded that Edwards’ emphasis on disposition over faith, and the dispositional structure of his soteriology ultimately led him to “undermine the Reformation contention that salvation is the justification of the ungodly”.⁵¹⁰ McDermott even opines that Martin Luther’s salvation by faith *alone* becomes for Edwards, salvation by faith *primarily*. He thereby places Edwards within the Catholic camp, as an advocate of sinners by justification, being *made* holy through the regeneration that is prior to justification, rather than being *accounted* righteous.⁵¹¹

This evaluation by McDermott is validated by the manner in which Edwards hypostasizes the term ‘grace’ or the ‘graces’ which recalls the language of Catholic Scholasticism. Grace in Barth is God’s self-giving, His standing in our place, His fulfilling of the obligations of the Torah for us. The prominence of the concepts of ‘infused grace’ and ‘graces’ in Edwards is not true Trinitarian participation, but rather is evidence of a scholasticism that is, in the end anthropocentric. Morimoto’s ability to find places of dialogue between Edwards and Catholicism in the realm of soteriology is ample evidence of this.

Justification as Universal Reality

Edwards would have agreed with Barth that justification was a reality prior to the act of faith of the justified individual. The critical difference, however, is that for Edwards this would only be true for the elect. For Edwards, justification had been accomplished fully in Christ, with the operative words being “in Christ”. The decree of God and therefore the redemption aspect of justification (the objective side of justification mentioned above) was, for Edwards, limited to the elect ones joined with Christ as His Bride. Edwards does not link humanity ontologically with Christ and therefore He does not espouse a universal justification as a reality for all humanity. The *homousios* and incarnational theology by which Barth links all men to Christ and by means of which an

⁵¹⁰ McDermott, 2000a, 16.

⁵¹¹ McDermott, 2000a, 16.

objective and real justification is actualized concretely for all men was not a theology Edwards encountered.

McDermott has pointed out that Edwards in his latter years⁵¹² went beyond his Reformed predecessors, even his mentors Frances Turretin (1623-87) and Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706), in arguing for a greater knowledge of religious truth among the heathen, and conceding even the *possibility* that the heathen could be saved. Near the end of his life in *Miscellanies* 1338, in dialogue with deists' ideas concerning reason, Edwards maintained that reason can confirm many religious truths, but not discover them unaided. In response to the deist objection that most humans have not had the benefit of revelation, Edwards parried by stating his belief that there is a "possibility" of the heathen being reconciled and this in light of his contention that "the greater part of the heathen world have not [been] left merely [sic] to the light of nature." This reflects Edwards' adherence to the *prisca theologia*,⁵¹³ which along with his extensive understanding and use of typology, and his development of a dispositional soteriology,⁵¹⁴ McDermott attributes to a movement in Edwards towards a broader soteriology, by which the drama of redemption would be seen to be more just, and therefore aesthetically excellent, resulting in the magnifying of God's glory. These tendencies to a less particularistic soteriology bear no resemblance however to Barth's doctrine of justification as a reality for creation and all mankind. Edwards' reasoning comes from the general revelation which Barth eschewed. It is anthropocentric rather than Christocentric. Barth's understanding of a universal justification came from a different source altogether.

⁵¹² McDermott, 2000a, 208-227. McDermott's sources are *Miscellanies* 27, 29, 241, 393, 492, 847, 1299, 1338, and *History of the Work of Redemption* in *YE* 9, 179.

⁵¹³ *Prisca theologia* is ancient theology, a tradition in apologetic theology postulating that vestiges of true religion (monotheism, the Trinity, *creation ex nihilo*) were taught by the Greeks and other non-Christian traditions, and that all human beings were originally given this knowledge by Jews or by tradition going back to Noah's sons or antediluvians. In the extent of general revelation Edwards believed this went much further afield than Calvin. See McDermott, 2000a, 211.

⁵¹⁴ Sang Lee, 1988a, and Stephen H. Daniel, 1994a. By disposition is meant an active and real tendency which has ontological reality even when it is not exercised. *Miscellanies* 27 and 29 though referring primarily to OT Jews nevertheless convey that in general for Edwards, faith is subsumed by the category of disposition and disposition was the ground of forensic imputation (see Morimoto, A. 1995a, 75-101).

Barth's insistence that justification is universal is grounded in Christology. Our justification has been actualized in the history of the God-man who by his incarnation entered humanity, by his death assumed the sentence of death for humanity and by his resurrection has established the 'right' of humanity. Barth insists that the justification of all men is reality. For Barth, as noted above, faith is a response to a reality and not merely a possibility. Therefore, he must conclude that all are justified. On the basis again of his ontology, Barth did aver that all are justified because God has justified human existence in Christ, and because all are bound up with him whether they know it or not. Thus Barth states: "As the One who has done that, in whom God has done that, who lives as the doer of that deed, He is our man, we are in Him, our present is His, the history of man is His history. He is the concrete event of the existence and reality of the justified man in whom every man can recognise Himself and every other man – recognise himself as truly justified."⁵¹⁵ It should be noted however, that this did not for Barth necessarily imply universalism, the notion that all will be saved. "Whether man hears it, whether he accepts it and lives as one who is pardoned is another question."⁵¹⁶ Whether all will be saved from hell is an altogether different question than are all justified, for Barth. Individuals can deny the reality that they are justified. They cannot even undo this reality if they tried. They can however continue to deny this reality and embrace hell in this state of denial of their true being.

2. Justification and Assurance in Barth

The nature of saving faith is very differently envisaged by Barth and Edwards, and in particular the degree to which faith, repentance, conversion and sanctification *could be experienced* and *how they were experienced*. Edwards is introspective in his view of faith. It is not as in Barth, 'mere acknowledgement'. Edwards writes often and at great length concerning the holistic dimensions of faith and of repentance. Perhaps his most famous work, *Religious Affections*, is

⁵¹⁵ CD IV/1, 630.

⁵¹⁶ CD IV/1, 568.

an attempt to define 'real' faith and its concomitant evidences in the affections and actions of those professing it. The result of this introspective approach is that assurance is never a certainty. Edwards shared somewhat in the proclivity of the Puritans to search for signs that showed the presence of grace within an individual soul. As McClymond so aptly expressed it, "This engendered a tendency towards endless self-scrutiny." He adds with a touch of irony that "By means of ruthless introspection one could strip away the successive onion-skins of vain and self-flattering hopes and at last discern a core of sincere and unhypocritical faith."⁵¹⁷

Whereas Edwards might with considerable justification be viewed as the champion of Reformed spirituality and the diagnostician of true religion in the human soul, Barth would dismiss his whole approach in favour of making our primary concern the spirituality and holiness of Christ for the believer, with relatively less emphasis on how that might be experienced.

Barth's very liberating premise for assurance is that only if justification is a reality for all, can there ever be complete assurance. Faith was for Barth not the hazy business of bringing something virtual into reality, or of something which demonstrated the reality of one's election, which is where much of evangelical and Reformed Christianity lives, respectively. Faith was rather that action by which "we joyfully embrace something which is already real and already has our name firmly stamped on it."⁵¹⁸ It is not that which establishes the reality of justification for the individual – justification is already a reality. That faith does not establish righteousness does not for Barth completely minimize its experiential significance. Without faith the human person lives a lie, and is thus in existential tension. Sanctification flows out of the realization that faith brings, of our being justified persons. Thus the imperatives of the gospel flow from its indicatives in the life of sanctification.

⁵¹⁷ McClymond, 1998a, 39.

⁵¹⁸ Hart, 1999a, 67.

Reference was made above to the fact that Edwards asked the wrong question with regard to assurance. Based on his psychological understanding of the Trinity and of man, Edwards directs the question of assurance to the inner self. Barth's answer was to look away from the self altogether, and to Christ instead.

Assurance in Barth comes from asking the question of Christ with respect to justification, rather than asking the self with respect to sanctification.

Justification in Barth is justification by Christ first and by faith second.

Justification is the reality that is ultimate because of the incarnation and death of Christ for all humanity. Faith apprehends that divine reality, but faith and its consequences within human reality are always secondary and minimal by comparison with the divine reality of Christ who has made things 'right' in the universe and is 'for us'. Assurance comes not from studying faith, my faith, but by studying Christ, and His active and passive obedience for me. Contemplative looking away to Christ brings assurance in Barth's thinking, not subjective, introspective analysis of human faith. And second, assurance comes through active participation in community as a covenant partner, not by individualistic self analysis. These perspectives in Barth are grounded in Barth's view of the Trinity, which reflects a more Cappadocian understanding of the modes, based on the economy, and not on psychological analogy.⁵¹⁹ The challenges of Barth's Trinity do not detract from the evidence of a correlation in His view of the Trinity as with his Christological and communitarian participation approach to

⁵¹⁹ Barth's expositions of the doctrine of sanctification cannot be understood without interpreting it in its firm grounding in his christological and so Trinitarian anthropology. A major key to understanding Barth's theology of sanctification lies in understanding the relations in his doctrine of *analogia relationis*, the analogy of relations, which is founded in the doctrine of the Trinity. The nature of the covenantal relationship between God and humanity revealed and actualised in Jesus Christ, was for Barth grounded in the Trinitarian relations of Father, Son and Spirit. The relational nature of humanity and of the command of God to humanity are, correspondingly, to be grounded by grace upon this Christological and Trinitarian basis. There is thus to be a correspondence to the Trinitarian relations in all human relations carried out 'horizontally' within the creaturely realm. These relations are spoken of analogically as relations of covenantal love, and constitute a critical starting point in Barth's theology of sanctification. Barth's anthropology and sanctification was grounded in an understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. The distinctiveness of Barth in this area lay in his understanding of the priority of the Trinity in the doctrine of God. Hence the discussion of the Trinity in his prolegomena. For Barth, the being and act of God were inseparably intertwined. Consideration of the character and perfections of God, as manifested in the act of God *ad intra* within the triune life and *ad extra* towards creation, must be taken into account. Relationality, in other words, is not an abstract attribute of God's being. It involves both being and act, living and doing, form and content. Unlike so much consideration of the doctrine of the Trinity that has focused solely on the being or form of the triune relations, Barth presented the view that to be faithful to the revelation of God, we must see that there is no 'slippage' between the being and action of God. God is true to His being in action.

assurance. As the modes exist for the other, and in communion with the other, so human persons in union with Christ look away to him to find their real identity, and then towards other humans, in love. Barth's spirituality is therefore one of contemplation and agency, in contrast with Edwards' spirituality of intimacy.

3. Justification and Sanctification in Barth

Whereas the infusion of the Spirit in establishing the union of believers with Christ is the key dynamic that unites justification and sanctification in Edwards, and with this a concomitant blurring of the two, Christology is what determines the unitedness and distinctiveness of these in Barth. The *participio Christi* theme is established right away in the "justification and sanctification" section of the *Church Dogmatics*.⁵²⁰ It is this which unifies and makes the two inseparable, for "both justification and sanctification are elements in the one atoning and reconciling activity of God in Jesus Christ."⁵²¹ The roots of the distinctiveness lie also within the *participio Christi* concept. Thus, for Barth, the basis for man's sanctification is the "divine act of atonement accomplished and revealed in Jesus Christ" which consists not only "in the humiliation of God but in and with this in the exaltation of man". This "exaltation of man" has been "achieved in the death and declared in the resurrection of Jesus Christ".⁵²²

For Barth, the distinction between justification and sanctification is not one based on the objective/subjective dichotomy. Rather, as Hart points out, orientation and agency within the *participio Christi* reality, define the basis of distinction.⁵²³ Thus, *justification* has a backward looking orientation and with respect to agency, we have no part in it. Eschatologically, it is retrospective, in that it is that aspect of the reconciling work of God in canceling out the old creation order and exonerating it. With respect to agency, this occurs and is transacted completely in the history of Jesus Christ. Justification is God's work and not ours.

⁵²⁰ *CD IV/2*.

⁵²¹ Hart, 1999a, 70.

⁵²² *CD IV/2*, 499.

⁵²³ Hart, 1999a, 70.

In distinction, *sanctification* is orientated prospectively in the eschatological future, rather than retrospectively. It relates not so much to what we are saved from, but what we are saved for. It is the movement of humankind towards God within reconciliation. Man is given an existence as the “royal man” and as the “faithful covenant partner of God.”⁵²⁴ With respect to agency, there is a ‘subjective’ aspect to this in that it is something we share in. By this movement God claims man for himself and converts us from our sinfulness to his holiness. However, this agency is qualified in that for Barth, sanctification is also primarily Christological. It is “achieved first and foremost in the history of the man Jesus Christ.” Sanctification of the saints is therefore a “sharing in that covenanted existence which God himself has established for us, as he pours out the Spirit upon the church.”⁵²⁵ Our covenant partnering is a partnering with Christ, whom God provided for himself as faithful covenant partner, “not to the exclusion of others, but as *the very ontic basis of their adoption* into covenant and filial existence.”⁵²⁶

Justification and sanctification are therefore united as inseparable, and differentiated as distinct, on ontological grounds in an incarnational Christological manner. In the close association of these two aspects of salvation with the condescension and exaltation of Christ, his person as Son of God and Son of Man, Barth is able to provide a Chalcedonian interpretive grounding for articulating that justification and sanctification should neither be separated, nor confused.

In this Christological way, Barth was able in particular to keep justification and sanctification distinct and avoid the blurring of these we have observed in Edwards. Barth did not permit justification to merge into the process of sanctification. On the understanding that justification is uniquely God’s work, he thereby avoided any possibility that faith or love and its works can have justificatory worth. The consequences of this for the joyful proclamation of the gospel and for assurance are evident.

⁵²⁴ CD IV/2, 499.

⁵²⁵ Hart, 1999a, 71.

⁵²⁶ Hart, 1999a, 71.

The Spirit in Barth's sanctification

Reference has been made above to a perceived weakness in Barth's pneumatology. *CD IV/2* does indicate that we participate actively in the sanctification of Christ under the powerful direction of the Holy Spirit, so that we become faithful covenant partners with God. The Holy Spirit is presented as the Subject of our subjective sanctification, as the "alien factor" like an eddy when a powerful wind blows from above and stirs up the stream.⁵²⁷ But he directs us to the active *participatio Christi* as free subjects of obedience. Nevertheless, as has been admitted even by one of his strongest proponents, one possible weakness of Barth's theology is the abstractness of his pneumatology. As Mangina has wondered, "Might not talk about the Spirit and participation be related in a more straightforward way to the life and practices of the church? Is not our knowledge of ourselves in Christ precisely a matter of our *baptism*."⁵²⁸ Mangina points to the new Finnish interpretation of Luther with its strong sacramentalism and the Orthodox tradition to supplement Barth's shortcomings in this area. Despite his citing of Edwards in this work, Mangina does not suggest the strong pneumatology of Edwards as a solution. Edwards' pneumatology would have struck Barth as being neither new nor helpful. Its derivation from Augustine would have been obvious to him. Its anthropocentricity would have been equally obvious. Perhaps, nevertheless, dialogue on this issue between these two great theologians would have been mutually fruitful, I suggest.

The Human in Barth's sanctification

As noted in the introduction, Barth's theology has also been criticized for its apparent minimizing of humanity and human response.⁵²⁹ A full development of

⁵²⁷ *CD IV/2*, 528, 530.

⁵²⁸ Mangina, 2001a, 200.

⁵²⁹ The most common accusation is as Jenson puts it "that Barth's theology cannot be a moral theology because it offers no account of created personal agency, and cannot do so without violating its monolithic construal of divine agency." Jenson writes this in review of John

this theme is not possible here. Mangina has recently helped to bring some clarity to the difficult task of understanding human response in Barth. He writes “... I am not claiming that a concern for practice *controls* Barth’s theology, which seeks to orient itself exclusively toward the self-disclosure of the triune God. But... given who this God is, it is impossible to know him without having one’s self-knowledge, affections and agency transformed in profound and abiding ways.”⁵³⁰ Mangina is convinced that John Webster’s ground-breaking work, *Barth’s Moral Theology*,⁵³¹ exploded the myth that the ‘theanthropology’ of the later Barth, was a totally new departure. He presents his own work *Barth on the Christian Life* in the hope of exploding another related myth: “that Barth ignores the subjectivity appropriate to the Christian life, or that he leaves it at the level of mere assertion.”⁵³² The stated aim of his inductive expositions of the Christian life in Barth from various sections of the *Church Dogmatics* is to help the reader “discover that the Christian life is nothing less than a form of active human participation in the life of God.”⁵³³

Barth’s whole movement is away from man as the subject to God and Christ as the subject of theology. This does not however negate humanity or human experience of salvation. As Mangina so aptly states, the notion that a high view of God and its attendant view of revelation in Barth “must somehow reflect an implicit dualism” has in fact “collapsed once it was noted that his theology is governed not by a distant, transcendent God but by a God of almost terrifying intimacy, present to all human beings in the person of Jesus Christ.”⁵³⁴ Mangina outlines a view of the human self (beyond Cartesianism) and human experience of salvation in Barth that contradicts the ideas held by Roberts who criticized Barth for “epistemological and ontological repression” leading to “the most

Webster’s work, *Barth’s Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth’s Thought*, (Jenson, Robert W. *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 2, No.1 (2000), 112-124) which Jenson considers to contain a conclusive refutation of this accusation. A central argument of this book is that the Barth saw no reason for a theory to link divine and human action because he has antecedently interpreted all three terms in such a fashion that divine and human action are never separated in the first place. “One need not bring together what was not apart”, as Jenson states.

⁵³⁰ Mangina, 2001a, 4.

⁵³¹ Webster, 1998a.

⁵³² Mangina, 2001a, 4.

⁵³³ Mangina, 2001a, 5.

⁵³⁴ Mangina, 2001a, 2.

profound and systematically consistent theological alienation of the natural order ever achieved.”⁵³⁵ Mangina’s is one of very few treatments on affectivity in Barth.⁵³⁶ Interestingly he places a quote from Edwards at the head of this chapter of his treatment of *Barth on the Christian Life* and opts for the use of Edwards’ term ‘affections’ to avoid the baggage associated with the contemporary use of the term ‘emotions’. He does not at any point compare the theology of Barth with Edwards, however. The underdevelopment in the incipient moral psychology of Barth’s “Zeal for the Honour of God” in that it is not worked out into particular dispositions, passions and virtues is also noted by Mangina, and yet again, Edwards is overlooked as a conversation partner in favour of Thomas.⁵³⁷ Mangina introduces this surprising aspect of Barth’s theology, surprising in that it concerns one popularly considered to be a human subject minimalist, by referring to the “affirming note of sheer delight in God and in God’s world that runs throughout Barth’s theological activity.”⁵³⁸ He presents Barth’s spirituality predominantly as one of *agency* rather than *introspection*, whereas, despite an increasing emphasis on action in the late Edwardsean corpus, the converse is true of Edwards. Barth’s is an agency in participation with Christ.

4. Location of Edwards and Barth with respect to justification and sanctification

⁵³⁵ Roberts, R.H. “Barth’s Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications,” in *Karl Barth: Studies in his Theological Methods*, (Stephen Sykes, ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 124-5.

Mangina’s exposition of the “recovery of experience in *CD I/1*” (32-45) is eloquent and convincing.

⁵³⁶ Mangina, 2001a, ch. 4. Hart has dialogued with McGrath, defending the charge against Barth that his view of man’s fallen condition is purely cerebral and purely cerebrally relational (it concerns his ignorance, the lack of knowledge of God) rather than moral (bondage to sin). Hart contends that “the history of Jesus Christ is not described simply or even primarily in terms of man’s coming to know the Father.” The relational is present and the “model of knowing is rich with the connotation of personal acquaintance and relationship, rather than the purely intellectual model which McGrath seems to presuppose.” However, Hart concedes that this relational dynamic is not the dominant one. Rather the saving history of Christ is in fact described in terms that are primarily representatively and ontologically moral or “sin” terms: “a history in which the divine judgement on human sin is executed, the old humanity put to death on a Cross, and the new humanity raised up in the power of the Spirit.” (Hart, 1999a, fn.40, 61-2).

⁵³⁷ Mangina, 2001a, 200.

⁵³⁸ Mangina, 2001a, 125. Bonhoeffer’s listing of Barth as among thinkers who exemplify *hilaritas*, a combination of deep gladness with healthy confidence in oneself and one’s work, is also cited.

Hunsinger⁵³⁹ and Couenhoven⁵⁴⁰ are in agreement that in the theological nuancing of justification and sanctification, Luther and Barth are more alike than is generally recognized. With respect to the clarity of distinction between the two, this is understandable. However, Barth, with the exception of Calvin's particularity with respect to its extent, follows and interacts with Calvin throughout most of his discussion of sanctification. Barth's starting point is in fact to affirm Calvin's view that both justification and sanctification are subservient in priority to another reality, that of union with Christ, or the *participio Christi*. Commenting on how Calvin could deal in his *Institutio* with sanctification before justification, Barth states the following:

Because he started at the place which is superior to both because it embraces both, so that in the light of it we can and must give the primacy, now to the one and now to the other, according to the different standpoints from which we look. The basic act in which they are a whole, in which they are united and yet different, and in which – without any contradiction – they have different functions according to which they must each be given the primacy, is as Calvin sees it (and as he describes it in the first chapter of the third book) the *participio Christi* given to man by the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴¹

In fact, Barth affirms Calvin as the “theologian of sanctification”⁵⁴² and sees himself in his Christological interpretation of justification and sanctification as following in the train of Calvin.

Edwards in his early career, reflects a Lutheran distinction between the two graces. In his emphasis on sanctification, Edwards is however, much more a reflection of Calvin, as noted above. His increasing emphasis on pneumatological infusion, his tendency to base assurance on sanctification, and his foray into

⁵³⁹ Hunsinger, 2000a, chapter 12, 279-304.

⁵⁴⁰ Couenhoven, Jesse. Grace as Pardon and Power: Pictures of the Christian Life in Luther, Calvin, and Barth, *Journal of Religious Ethics* 28, No.1 (2000) (hereafter “Couenhoven, 2000a”), 63-88.

⁵⁴¹ *CD IV/2*, 510-511.

⁵⁴² *CD IV/2*, 509.

scholasticism even went beyond the bounds of Calvin's theology. These trends might well have been prevented by the greater Christological grounding of Barth's theology. On the other hand, the pneumatological emphasis of Edwards in sanctification, whilst at times overshadowing the Christological, may, in turn, have provided a corrective to Barth's sometimes criticized pneumatology. Furthermore, although Edwards receives criticism for an over-emphasis on the subjective aspects of faith and conversion, at times the exact nature of human agency within sanctification in Barth, is difficult to determine and seems to veer off to an opposite pole.

Summation

Despite movements towards a view of spirituality that is shaped by a vision of divine beauty and harmony, Edwards fails to become fully Trinitarian, and remains introspective rather than contemplative. Its obsession with realized pneumatological experience, keeps it subjective and man-focused. It lacks the balance provided by the Barthian Christological emphasis and is focused on the redeemed man's experience of grace by the Spirit, rather than on the orientation of grace of the triune God towards us in Christ as the man made one with humanity by the incarnation, and who has made things right in the universe for us. Justification by faith and repentance alone takes priority over justification by Christ and grace alone as in Barth. Edwards remains unable to shed the influence upon him of a Scholastic Calvinistic, Federal Covenant view of salvation and this ultimately prevents his view of conversion, sanctification, personhood and religious experience ever became ontologically shaped by the Trinity and Trinitarian relations.⁵⁴³

In contrast with that of Edwards, when grappling with Barth's theology of justification, sanctification, reality and experience, one does sometimes feel like

⁵⁴³ This in agreement with James Torrance and Michael Jinkins who maintain this view especially as a consequence of the way in which Edwards has been interpreted in Scotland, where his impact on Scottish Calvinism and its depiction of God as 'contract God' has been well documented. See Mitchell, Christopher W. *Jonathan Edwards' Scottish Connection and the Eighteenth Century Revival, 1735-1754* (Ph.D. thesis, St. Andrews University, 1998).

one has indeed taken “an excursion into a dogmatic Wonderland in which familiar values and assumptions are turned on their head... .”⁵⁴⁴ The fact that we find it strange and ‘alien’ to view theology, and, indeed, the universe, from a Christological perspective, is testimony to our endemic anthropocentrism. Indeed, it will feel strange in light of the *in se* self-orientation that is the essence of our fallenness. And it ought to feel strange, as it does come from above. In fact, the theology of justification and reality in Barth is no anomaly in Barth. It is a consequence of what Dalferth⁵⁴⁵ has so eloquently described as the very weave of the fabric of Barth’s entire theological enterprise, the *scandalon* which underlies every section of the *Church Dogmatics* – an alternative Christological ontology. Edwards’ frequent approach to theology from below, his emphasis on pneumatology over Christology, and his fixation with subjective human introspection does not have this scandal or strangeness in it. This is a testimony to our familiarity and comfort with and proclivity towards self-orientated, experiential, earth-bound theology which is a consequence of the pervasive permeation into popular evangelical Christianity of the kind of conversion and Christian life theology Edwards espoused.

Finally, I suggest two distinctions. Firstly, Edwards, in the manner in which he perceived justification, sanctification and the Christian life, was guided and shaped by his view of the Trinity, *descriptively*. He understood the importance of the Trinity as the starting point of theology. As such, he espoused a comprehensive relational theology, but with a persistent individualistic bent. Barth, however, is more *paradigmatically and intensively* Trinitarian, in that his prism for ‘doing theology’ is Trinitarian, in the sense that the Christological hermeneutic, and the ontology of relations, totally undergirds the whole and every part of his *Church Dogmatics*. Barth’s view of humanity and of justification and sanctification appears at first glance not to be particularly relational, but this is a misconception.⁵⁴⁶ Secondly, it is the type of Trinitarianism

⁵⁴⁴ Hart, 1999a, fn.40, 58.

⁵⁴⁵ Dalferth, Ingolf. ‘Karl Barth’s Eschatological Realism’ in Sykes, S.W. (Ed.), *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 14-45.

⁵⁴⁶ See for example, the work of Gary W. Deddo in *Karl Barth’s Theology of Relations, Trinitarian, Christological and Human: towards an ethic of the family* (in the series, Issues in Systematic Theology, #4), (New York: Peter Lang Pub. Inc., 1999), 24,25.

that creates the distinction between the two. Barth would have critiqued Edwards' Trinitarian theology as a Trinitarianism projected 'from below', with an anthropocentric perspective on the Trinity, and therefore on the Christian life. He would have predicted that this anthropocentric theology would inevitably lead in the realm of soteriology to the prevalence of experiential subjectivism, and he would have predicted that converts of Edwards would be still turned in on themselves, rather than away towards Christ.

In chapter IV, I will assess the Christology of Edwards, recognizing that in avoiding the charge of monism, as well as in maintaining a stronger distinction between justification and sanctification, the incarnational aspect of Christology is critical.

IV. Union in the Incarnation - by the Spirit

Having examined the manner in which Edwards exalts the Spirit in the union of the immanent Trinity, and that of the union of the saints with God, we now seek to demonstrate that in his conception of the hypostatic union of the Divine and human natures of Christ, he also honoured the Spirit. Edwards did in fact draw a parallel between the union in the immanent Trinity as facilitated by the Spirit as Love, and the hypostatic union of the Divine and human natures of Christ. He saw the latter as a consenting union between God and humanity, and in this he proposed a distinctive role of the Spirit: “the Holy Spirit is the bond of union by which the human nature of Christ is united to the divine, so as to be one person.”⁵⁴⁷ This hypostatic union he, in turn, ascribed as having correspondence with the union of God with the saints. He maintained that all begotten-ness derives from the begotten-ness of the Son, and therefore, that the church’s origin is ontologically wrapped up in His.⁵⁴⁸ Thus he demonstrated a correspondence of the three types of spiritual union.

In this section I seek to answer the following questions with respect to the second or intermediary union, that in the Divine-human person of Christ: (i) what is the Spirit’s role in the incarnational aspect of Edwards’ Christology, and how does this influence how he views the humanity of Christ? (ii) what place does Edwards give to the incarnation and especially to the humanity of Christ, in his doctrine of the participation of the saints in God, and does this save his *theosis* theology from incipient monism? and (iii) with respect to these issues, how would his theology be viewed by Barth?

It may seem anomalous to give consideration to the second, or Christological union, *after* dealing with the union of the saints with God. This order of treatment is a reflection of my assessment of the priority of the ordering of these unions in Edwards’ theology. It reflects the contention that pneumatological

⁵⁴⁷ *Miscellanies 764b, YE 18, 411.*

⁵⁴⁸ *Miscellanies 487, YE 13.*

union of the saints with God, though it requires the incarnation and atonement of Christ for its effecting, is more important within Edwards' higher theological aims than the hypostatic union of God with humanity in Christ. In fact, Spirit union itself plays a large role, even perhaps an inordinately large role, in how Edwards conceives of the origin of Christ's humanity and its union with God the Son, the *Logos*.

The issue of incipient monism arose with regard to Edwards' concept of *theosis* in the previous chapter. If the basis for the union of humans with God is first and foremost the incarnation by which the Son of God becomes fully human, and yet in which his humanity and divinity are in union in one person, without confusion, union of other humans with him avoids being monistic. God remains God, and man remains man, and the aspect of union by which "man becomes God" is understood relationally. If the humanity of Christ is in some way diminished, or if his *hypostasis* or personhood is confused, and the union of the Christian and church collectively is conceived of in purely "spiritual" terms, the charges are difficult to overcome.

St. Athanasius expressed the mystery of the incarnation epigrammatically in his *De Incarnatione*: "God became man so that man might become God."⁵⁴⁹ He did so without fear of monism, in light of the fact that by the incarnation, God became fully human in Christ to achieve this. The doctrine of *theosis* is also a neglected theme in the theology of Augustine, as Gerald Bonner⁵⁵⁰ has pointed out.⁵⁵¹ As Bonner explains, "There is, however, in Augustine's spirituality another element, perceived as a consequence of Christ's taking human nature upon himself; for it is in Christ and through Christ, and only in and through

⁵⁴⁹ In fact Athanasius may have borrowed his interpretation of the sentiments of 2 Peter 1:4 from what Irenaeus expressed earlier in his famous phrase, 'if the Word has been made man, it is so that men might become gods' (*Adv. Haer V*, Pref.).

⁵⁵⁰ Bonner, Gerald, Augustine's Conception of Deification. *Journal of Theological Studies*, 37 (October 1986), 369-386. Hereafter "Bonner, 1986a."

⁵⁵¹ Bonner bemoans the fact that in a work on deification by Drewery, B. ('Deification' in *Christian Spirituality. Essays in Honour of Gordon Rupp* (Ed. Peter Brooks) (London: 1975), 35-62) he writes "as if deification played no part in Augustinian theology, in ignorance of the magisterial article by Victorino Capanaga in 1954 ('La deificacion en la soteriologica agustiniana' in *Augustinus Magister ii* (Paris:1954), 745-754) and G.B. Ladner's admirable study, *The Idea of Reform* ('St Augustine's Conception of the Reformation of Man to the Image of God' in *Aug. Mag. ii*, 867-888; *The Idea of Reform* (Cambridge, MA: 1959)."

Christ, that man becomes a partaker of God's nature: 'He who was God was made man to make gods those who were men'.⁵⁵² These words, which parallel the more-often-quoted words of Athanasius, show that Augustine did not shrink from using the language of deification, often said to be peculiar to the Greek Fathers.⁵⁵³ Given Edwards' debt to Augustine, it would not be surprising if he modelled his concept of participation, in addition to his view of the Trinity, largely on that of Augustine. It is clear from the statement above that Augustine understood the importance of the humanity of the incarnate Christ in *theosis*.⁵⁵⁴ We will discover that Edwards also understood this. We will now explore what is less clear: whether Edwards proposed the kind of incarnational union in which Christ has, in fact, become *fully* human, thereby healing what has been assumed.⁵⁵⁵

In Augustine's explanation of deification in *De Trinitate*, he reflects an understanding that the Christian human becomes divine, not in nature in an essential sense, but rather in terms of three criteria: (i) the assuming of a relationship as sons of God, as distinct from *the* Son,⁵⁵⁶ and therefore, in terms of

⁵⁵² Augustine, (*serm.* 192.1, 1), in Bonner, 1986a.

⁵⁵³ Bonner, Gerald, *God's Decree & Man's Destiny: Studies in the Thought of Augustine of Hippo*. (Variorum Reprints, London, 1987), 157. Hereafter "Bonner, 1987a."

⁵⁵⁴ Bonner asserts that "the notion of deification is to be found in Augustine, not as something added to his system as an afterthought, but as an integral whole. In itself, the notion of deification is no more than what is implied by the New Testament term *ὑιοθεσία* – sonship by adoption – by grace, that is to say, and not by nature. It is, indeed, the consequence of human flesh being assumed by the divinity in the Incarnation: that flesh has been taken into heaven by the ascended Christ, and if men participate in Him through membership of the Church, the Body of Christ, they too may hope, after death, to enjoy the divinisation effected by His flesh-taking." Bonner, 1987a, 291-292.

⁵⁵⁵ Augustine appears to reflect an Athanasian conception of the incarnation. He explains that deification has come about because God has taken humanity into Himself: "...the Word was made flesh through the assuming of flesh by divinity, not by the conversion of divinity into flesh." *Ench.* X.34. BA 9.166. Augustine also appears to reflect an Athanasian understanding that the human nature assumed by the Son of God is a sinful humanity which He then transforms. Thus Augustine declares: "Christ's deformity forms you, for if He had not willed to be deformed, you would not have recovered the form which you lost. He, therefore, hung upon the cross deformed; but His deformity was our beauty. In this life, therefore, let us hold the deformed Christ." Augustine, *Serm.* 27. vi.6. CCSL xli.365. See also *De Agone Christ.* Xi.12. CSEL xli.115.

⁵⁵⁶ When Augustine makes reference in *Enar. In Ps.* 49. i. 2 to what is often considered to be the primary text on deification in Scripture (Psalm 82:6; John 10:34), he in fact does use the word 'deified', and makes clear again the distinction between the essential divine Sonship of Christ and our real but non-ontological sonship by adoption.

(ii) moral transformation and (iii) immortality.⁵⁵⁷ This would appear also to be representative of what Edwards taught about *theosis*. It is clear that both theologians would overtly and vehemently reject monism.⁵⁵⁸ What is again uncertain in the case of Edwards, however, is whether in his pneumatologically crafted doctrine of the union of the saints with God, his depiction of this union is grounded sufficiently by an incarnational Christology to prevent his doctrine of theosis unwittingly from veering into monism. The Spirit-created incarnation as Edwards understood it, is now considered, with a special focus on the humanity of Christ, and how this related to the union of believers to Christ by the Spirit.

A. The Incarnation

It has been noted in the previous chapter that the crucial reality on which Edwards' expositions of his doctrine of a self-glorifying triune God depends, is that of the union of believers with Christ. The editorial introduction to *Sermons: A Reader*, for example, contains the following claim: "Significantly, Edwards became the first major Reformed thinker since the Reformation era to place such a high premium on the doctrine of what scholastic (or academic) theologians called in Latin the *unio Christi*."⁵⁵⁹ Specific reference is made in this regard to the sermon, *The Excellency of Christ*,⁵⁶⁰ which though intended as an attractive portrait of Christ for the enrichment of believers in an objective sense, actually "presents a compelling view of the benefits of union with Christ."⁵⁶¹ "Christ will give himself to you," Edwards promises, "with all those various excellencies that

⁵⁵⁷ The moral transformation, which is both forensic and sanctifying, and the consequent attaining to immortality is evident in this section of *De Trinitate*: "We are not divine by nature; by nature we are men, and through sin we are not righteous men. And so God, being made a righteous man, interceded with God for man who is a sinner. The sinner has nothing in common with the Righteous One, but man has humanity in common with man. Therefore joining to us the likeness of His humanity, He took away the unlikeness of our iniquity, and being made a sharer (*particeps*) of our mortality, He made us sharers of His divinity." (*De Trinitate*. IV.ii.4).

⁵⁵⁸ Divinisation is expressed by Augustine in terms of the brotherhood of Christ with the elect because of His assumption of humanity, which he equates with the raising of elect humanity into a relationship of sonship (*υιοθεσια*) through adoption. Man remains man, something created. The created being is however raised by adoption in the New Testament sense of *υιοθεσια* to assume sonship by adoption, through the incarnation of Christ. See *Epist. Ad Galatas Exp.* 30.6 which Bonner calls "a major, perhaps the palmary, text for understanding Augustine's doctrine of deification." Bonner, 1986a, 376.

⁵⁵⁹ *Sermons: A Reader*. xlv.

⁵⁶⁰ *Excellency of Christ*, 161-196.

⁵⁶¹ *Sermons: A Reader*. xlv.

meet in him.” He adds that the saints “shall behold his glory, and shall dwell with him, in most free and intimate communion.”⁵⁶² The coming into humanity of the *Logos* by the hypostatic union does have a necessary role for the achieving of this union with Christ. The Son, by the incarnation became “the perfect instantiation of the divine goal ... consenting union between God and humanity.”⁵⁶³

Made in the likeness of the union of the immanent Trinity

When it comes to determining the nature of that hypostatic union, however, it is clear that Edwards fashions it after the likeness of the union within the immanent Trinity insofar as that union was effected by the Spirit, and therefore, it is a union of both “nature and love”.⁵⁶⁴ Edwards does appear to reflect a relational ontology in describing the nature of the union in the immanent Trinity and that in the hypostatic union of Christ, and their correspondence: “This union of Christ to us, in like manner, consists in two things, viz. union of nature, and love, as his union with God did.”⁵⁶⁵ Union “of love” for Edwards, is in fact closely associated with union of “nature”, for it is union by the Spirit who is the Love of the Father and the Son, as in his psychological model of the Trinity.⁵⁶⁶ This paralleling of unions is an important factor in the assessment of the role of the Spirit in Edwards’ doctrine of the incarnation. It also provides weight to the primary contention of this thesis in that we note that the uniting theme in all of these unions is the Holy Spirit: the Holy Spirit is “the bond of perfectness by which God, Jesus Christ and the church are united together.”⁵⁶⁷ Edwards, here again, demonstrates a very prominent pneumatology.

⁵⁶² *Sermons: A Reader*, xliv.

⁵⁶³ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 144.

⁵⁶⁴ “The Son is one with the Father in nature and in love.” *YE 14*, 402.

⁵⁶⁵ *YE 14*, 403.

⁵⁶⁶ Stephen Daniel ascribes to Edwards an ontology of relations evidenced in both Edwards’ view of the unity of the Godhead as a union of love, and in his view of the incarnation in which the union of natures in Christ are displayed in his relations of perfect love both to God and to humanity. Daniel, Stephen. 1994a, 197. The viewpoint of Daniel, Lee and Plantinga Pauw that Edwards in general espoused a ‘dispositional ontology’ has been challenged in a previous chapter. There is however evidence here of the high degree of relationality in Edwards’ conception of the Godhead and also of the hypostatic union.

⁵⁶⁷ *Miscellanies 487, YE 13*, 529.

Made in the likeness of the union of the saints with God

We note firstly then, the modelling of the nature of the hypostatic union on that of the relational union accomplished by the Spirit within the immanent Trinity. With respect to how Edwards goes about expounding the incarnation however, we also note that he sees the third union, that of the union of saints with God, as analogous with, and even as the further basis for, understanding the hypostatic union, rather than other way around: “As the union with believers with Christ be by the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in them, so it may be worthy to be considered, whether or no the union of the divine with the human nature of Christ ben’t [sic] by the Spirit of the Logos dwelling in him after a peculiar manner and without measure.”⁵⁶⁸ The order in this logic reflects an overall tendency in Edwards’ theology to stress the pneumatological union of the saints with God, over that of the union of Christ with humanity *per se*. This is understandable in light of Edwards’ higher theological aims outlined in the previous chapter.

For God to achieve the ultimate end of his own glorification in the salvation and glorification of humans, they must be saved and glorified as those who are in union with His Son (and therefore Himself). That the Son must become one with them in his incarnation for the effecting of this union, is not a point that Edwards neglects. However, that truth, in our assessment, plays second fiddle to the truth that union is effected in the saints by the Spirit’s infusion, and their consequent regeneration, sanctification and glorification once the Spirit brings them into a ‘closing with Christ’ conversion. That the union with God of the saints comes about through the opening of the Trinity by the Spirit, who is the love of the Father and the Son, has been observed. The intermediate Christological identification of God with humanity is a necessary step, even if emphasized less by Edwards. Even in how that Christological union is crafted after the manner of

⁵⁶⁸ *Miscellanies 487, YE 13, 528.*

the other two, that is, by Spirit union, we hope to show how pneumatologically weighted Edwards' theology was.

Thus the union of the two natures of Christ is patterned after the union of saints, by the Spirit, with Christ. But both draw their primary character as unions from the union within the immanent Trinity. The question still before us is this, however: as fashioned after the likeness of the other unions, what precisely was this role of the Spirit in the incarnation, according to Edwards, and where does Edwards' position on the nature of the humanity which Christ assumed by the Spirit fit within the Patristic and Reformed Christian heritage?

To answer this question I want first to try to locate Edwards' view of the incarnation and humanity of Christ and the Spirit's role in this, within the broader context of this debate. Then, secondly, I will seek to examine his views within the narrower context of a debate by two current Edwardsean scholars regarding the compatibility of Edwards' view with those of John Owen, a Puritan noted for his Christology of the Spirit. This will provide some clarity as to how Barth might have dialogued with Edwards on this issue.

Edwards and The Patristic and Reformed Debate on the Nature of the Humanity Christ Assumed

1. The Debate

Kelly Kapic has recently attempted, if not to resolve, at least to clarify the issues within the controversial debate as to whether the human nature assumed by the Son of God was fallen or unfallen.⁵⁶⁹ Kapic confirms that within the Reformed tradition, adherents to both points of view agree on the following points: (i) that the Son as a person was and remained *sinless* from conception and on, and therefore qualified as the perfect Lamb of God and sin-bearer for humanity; (ii) they oppose the point of view that "Mary was simply ... a channel" and that "the Son is able from Mary to assume a complete human nature: including a

⁵⁶⁹ Kapic, 2001a.

reasonable soul ... and physical body”;⁵⁷⁰ (iii) that the involvement of the Holy Spirit is critical to the person of Jesus Christ being ‘without sin.’

Where the two camps differ, however, and Edwards and Barth would seem at first glance to represent the opposite positions well, is that the ‘unfallen’ position (Edwards) cannot conceive of any time when the human nature was fallen because of the Spirit’s sanctifying work at conception, although the Spirit’s ongoing activity remains essential for the obedience of Christ throughout his life. By contrast, the ‘fallen’ position (Barth) “emphasizes the Spirit’s role in keeping the *person* of Christ free from sin, though the human nature is itself ‘sinful flesh’.”⁵⁷¹

A further nuancing is that within the ‘fallen’ camp there is disagreement as to whether Jesus had to overcome an inner propensity to sin (i.e. concupiscence), some affirming this (Luther, Owen, Irving, Barth) and some denying it (Zwingli), the latter camp being concerned that internal disorder necessarily implies inner impurity or sin. The difficulty with the ‘fallen’ position and especially that of the first sub-category is that the notion of the *person* of Christ being sinless whilst yet having a sinful human nature (‘sinful flesh’), becomes difficult to defend (Nestorianism is a danger). The challenge inherent in the ‘unfallen’ position is that if Jesus assumed a prelapsarian humanity, or, as Menno Simons maintained, a ‘celestial flesh’,⁵⁷² then in the Son assuming a human nature different to that of fallen humanity, the very essence of the vicariousness of Christ for humanity in life or in death is at risk. The integrity of the notion that such a Christ could have experienced temptation in any real sense from without, and thereby have become a sympathetic High Priest, is also questionable (Apollinarianism is a danger).

A further nuance of this debate is that adherents of both the ‘fallen’ and ‘unfallen’ positions agree that the Son of God assumed the ‘common infirmities,’ such as hunger, thirst, weakness, pain, sorrow and even death, that are surely

⁵⁷⁰ Kacic, 2001a, 164.

⁵⁷¹ Kacic, 2001a, 164.

⁵⁷² See George, T. *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman, 1988), 280-5, cited in Kacic, 2001a.

characteristics of a fallen humanity. I will refer to these qualities as *metaphysical* as opposed to *moral* aspects of fallenness. Thus it would appear that on both sides of this issue there is a comfort level with the notion that Christ assumed a metaphysically fallen humanity. Deciding which aspect of fallenness Edwards is referring to when he speaks about the fallenness of Christ's humanity is crucial to determining where Edwards stood on this issue, as will shortly be apparent.

The issue is complicated by the fact that theologians on both sides of this issue appeal to the church Fathers in an attempt to vindicate the historicity of their position as orthodox. Edward Irving,⁵⁷³ Karl Barth⁵⁷⁴ and T.F. Torrance⁵⁷⁵ have made a strong case that patristic literature favours the view of the assumption of a fallen human nature, whereas Romanides asserts that "the Logos united to Himself manhood as it was before the fall is... accepted by all the Fathers."⁵⁷⁶

The issue is complicated also by a lack of clarity on the part of the Reformers.⁵⁷⁷ Luther's position is noted by Kopic to be similar to that of Irving (and Barth). Calvin's inclusion of both metaphysical and moral corruption in the concept of the 'fallenness' of the human nature the Son received, is evident, as is the view that the human nature of Christ escapes contamination by the Spirit's work from conception to ascension. Calvin considers the sin in human nature to be accidental rather than essential to it, given its creation as the image of God.⁵⁷⁸ Thus the Son's assumption of a human nature perfected immediately prior to, or in conception, preserves his true identification with humanity, but also frees Him by the Spirit from inherited guilt and sin. Kopic suggests, however, that there is ambiguity in Calvin's thought with regard to whether he represents the 'fallen' (of the 'fallen-but-no-inner-propensity' variety), or 'unfallen' position.

⁵⁷³ It was through Edward Irving and Thomas Erskine that the idea that the Son assumed a fallen human nature gained popularity. Irving believed he was returning to the basic orthodox tradition of the Fathers in doing so (Irving, E. *The Morning Watch or Quarterly Journal on Prophecy and Theological Review*, I, 75-79, cited in Kopic, 2001a, 157, where the opposition of Marcus Dods is recounted also).

⁵⁷⁴ *CD* I/2, 147-159; II/1, 397-8.

⁵⁷⁵ Torrance, T.F. *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theory of the Ancient Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988).

⁵⁷⁶ Romanides, John S. *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Vol. X.2. 1964-5, 52, cited in Kopic, 2001a, 157..

⁵⁷⁷ See Kopic, 2001a, 160-3.

⁵⁷⁸ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.4.

It is apparent to me that Kaptic's 'fallen'–'unfallen' category, helpful as a starting point, becomes inadequate to describe the complexity of the issues here. For instance, Calvin, at first glance, on Kaptic's account, may appear to be in the 'fallen' camp. However, for Calvin, the 'fallen' aspect of humanity is negated at the moment of conception by the Spirit's activity. Thus the purification of the Son's humanity is immediate in a temporal sense, in Calvin's thought, so it seems. If this were not so, Calvin would not have made the point that sinfulness is accidental to, rather than essential to human nature. Thus the humanity which the Son received, was, in its derivation from Mary, fallen, but before the act of conception, it was purified by the Spirit, so that the human nature thereafter had no bias or propensity towards sin. In that sense, therefore, Calvin would appear to be in the 'unfallen' camp, in that the human nature Christ received was purified and restored to moral neutrality as he is conceived. To the objection that a Christ, in whom the perfected humanity is in *homoousios* union with the divine nature, would not need the Spirit's action to be obedient, Calvin would have argued that in incarnate form, the Son chose to depend on the Spirit's power rather than his own deity. Thus as a person with a human nature of a pre-Adamic kind, where once again there was a level-playing field with respect to temptation, Christ chose holiness constantly, in dependence on the Spirit, in a relationally mediate rather than immediate way.

It thus becomes apparent that the 'fallen' – 'unfallen' category itself does not distinguish the positions in question here. Three further issues require to be specified to adequately define the problem.

- (i) The first issue (or set of issues) is of a temporal nature. When does the act of purification happen, or, as in the case of Simons and one reading of Edwards, when does the act of creation happen? If it is an act of purification, does it happen at conception, leading to the recovery of the prelapsarian condition, as in Calvin? Or is it a gradual process, by which the person of Christ (viewed as a whole person) is able to be obedient always, but by overcoming a human nature which

is not itself purified until the sufferings of the cross experience, after which the person of Christ with a now purified human nature is carried into heaven (as in Irving, Torrance and Barth)?

- (ii) The second issue has to do with the inter-relationship of the divine and divine-human persons involved in the sanctifying act (or process, as the case may be.) Is the action of the Spirit one of *immediacy* such that the human nature is either purified (or created) by that *immediate agency* on the human flesh of the Son? Or does the Spirit act *mediately* to assist the *person* of the Son *with* a human nature that continues to be either prelapsarian or fallen, such that the Spirit thereby empowers the *person* of the divine-human Christ to remain sinless.
- (iii) The third issue is a sub-set of the second. If the agency of the Spirit is immediate rather than mediate, is his act one of the creation *ex nihilo* of a new order of humanity, or is it merely an act on sinful human nature to purify and transform it into prelapsarian Adamic condition?

A number of alternatives, not just two, arise within the ‘fallen’–‘unfallen’ category, therefore. I will attempt to associate these with particular theologians:

- (i) Calvin, in Kapic’s account, believed the act of the Spirit to be immediate in a temporal sense, and that the Spirit’s act at conception was one of immediate agency, such that the Son received a purified human nature, equivalent to the prelapsarian nature of Adam. From then on, however, the Spirit acted *mediately* upon the Son, who after conception possessed a human nature that was effectively unfallen. The Spirit enabled the voluntarily dependent God-man to choose to be obedient in both an active and a passive sense (the cross).
- (ii) John Owen⁵⁷⁹ and Karl Barth believed the act of the Spirit to be immediate in a temporal sense, but that the Spirit’s activity in the act of conception, and thereafter, was always mediate rather than

⁵⁷⁹ Owen’s position will be expounded in detail below in light of its importance to the recent controversy over Edwards’ putative similarities to it.

immediate. The Son possesses a fallen human nature but by the mediate act of the Spirit upon the Son, as a fully Divine and fully human *person*, the incarnate Son is always obedient. The sufferings of Christ under the mediate influence of the Spirit do gradually purify the human nature to completion at the cross.

- (iii) Menno Simons (outside of the Reformed tradition but born within it) believed the act of the Spirit to be immediate in a temporal sense but that it was an act of creation *ex nihilo* so that at conception this ‘celestial flesh,’ incapable of sin, was assumed by the Son, such that the ‘man from heaven’ could not but be obedient. He is a ‘superman’, ‘the man from heaven’ Paul seems to speak of in 1 Corinthians 15:47.
- (iv) Edwards, as I will shortly attempt to show, believed that the act of the Spirit was immediate in a temporal sense, and that this was an act of creation, *ex nihilo*. It is not clear in Edwards that this ‘new creation’ human nature of Christ is merely of an Adamic prelapsarian nature, however. The work of the Spirit on the Son is one of immediate agency both in birth and in life, and the Son’s humanity does therefore appear to be of a ‘superman’ variety as in the theology of Menno Simons.

Perhaps the point of greatest divergence between those of the ‘fallen’ and ‘unfallen’ schools is with respect to original guilt and sin, and the means of the atonement. Both schools are anxious to affirm that Jesus acts vicariously for us, by taking upon himself our guilt and sin. Within the ‘unfallen’ school are those who focus mainly on the atonement of the cross, and others, like Calvin and Edwards, who acknowledge the vicariousness of both the active as well as the passive obedience of Christ. They are especially concerned to protect, and rightly so, the sinlessness of Christ as the sacrificial Lamb of God, and find difficulty with the concept of his being preserved sinless as a person by the Spirit’s overcoming a morally as well as a metaphysically fallen humanity. They struggle, as Calvin did, to see how the Son is protected from inherited guilt and sin if he received a sinful human nature, even if by the Spirit he is able to

overcome its influence constantly from conception on.⁵⁸⁰ Calvin considers Christ to have genuinely received a human nature that was fallen as delivered through Mary but transformed into unfallenness in his assumption of it in the act of conception, by the Spirit. He preserves a continuity of the humanity of Christ with humanity by suggesting that sinfulness is an accidental rather than essential element of humanity.

The critique of the unfallen position by its opponents, however, is that if the humanity the Son assumed was in any way different to ours, he is assuming a different nature to ours and cannot therefore act vicariously for what he does not fully assume.

In summary, it seems to me that Kopic's categories of 'fallen' and 'unfallen' are inadequate for the task of distinguishing the views of those even within the Reformed wing of this controversy (Calvin, for example, as noted above, is in the 'fallen' camp in that the human nature transformed and given to Christ was fallen before it was purified, but in the 'unfallen' camp with respect to the 'post-conception' life and death of Christ).

The watermark issues or essential elements of the debate are therefore, the following ones: (i) not whether the Spirit works to ensure the sinlessness of the *person* of Christ (for all agree on this), but whether the *timing* of the Spirit's work to purify the *human nature* Christ assumed is immediate at conception, or gradual, culminating at the cross; (ii) not whether the Spirit was critical to the maintaining of the sinlessness of Christ throughout, but whether the act of the Spirit is *immediate or mediate with respect to agency*; and (iii) not whether the obedience of Christ in life and in death is vicarious, but whether it can, with integrity be vicarious. If the human nature he assumed is in any way qualified or different to our own, some are concerned that his obedience and atonement cannot truly be 'for us and on our behalf'. On the opposite end of the spectrum, others are concerned that to assert that the Son ever possessed a human nature

⁵⁸⁰ In the manner which Calvin appears to reflect in the Geneva Catechism of 1541 as Kopic observes (2001a, 161).

that was morally fallen, is to cast doubt on his sinlessness and therefore on his ability to make atonement as a holy sacrifice before a holy God.

2. *Edwards Located in the Contemporary Debate on the Nature of the Humanity Christ Assumed ... Mediate or immediate union?*

I now wish to attempt to locate Edwards within this debate, having already hinted at my opinion as to where Edwards stood on these issues, based on how he went about his doctrine of the incarnation, and how he viewed the role of the Spirit in Christology. I will do so in the context of a disagreement that has arisen concerning these matters in recent Edwardsean scholarship.⁵⁸¹ With respect to putative similarities between Edwards and the Puritan, John Owen, in the role of the Spirit in Christology, two contemporary Edwardsean scholars, Steve Holmes and Amy Plantinga Pauw, have indicated opposing views. Having hopefully clarified the issues in a broader Patristic and Reformed context, I will seek to clarify Edwards' position in light of this discussion, and with reference to original sources. Having assessed the primary tenets of Edwards' incarnational Christology, I will in the context of dialogue with Barth, seek to assess whether this Christology rescues Edwards' pneumatological union of the saints with God from the charge of monism.

Amy Plantinga Pauw, on the one hand, has suggested that the "distinctive role for the Spirit" Edwards depicted in the incarnation and life of Christ, "fuelled a tendency to describe the incarnate union in ahistorical ways, with the result that the humanity assumed by the Word seems to have no need for growth in wisdom or stature...".⁵⁸² The Spirit acted in the birth of Christ to "prevail[ed] over any ill influence, that the nature of the mother might be supposed to have"⁵⁸³ so that from birth his humanity is holy. Although at one point Edwards does refer to the

⁵⁸¹ Robert Jenson, in *America's Theologian* describes the issues in Edwards' Christology in ch.10. He does not mention Owen but notes that Edwards employs the doctrine of the Spirit in a Calvinist and Enlightened way, using a super-Lockean doctrine of personality. Paul Ramsey (Appendix III, *YE* 8) insists on a distinction between Edwards' *spoken* Christology of the sermons and that in the *Miscellanies* which are by nature provisional.

⁵⁸² Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 147.

⁵⁸³ *Miscellanies* 767, *YE* 18, 414.

humanity of Jesus as being in “its mean, defaced, broken, infirm, ruined state,”⁵⁸⁴ the holiness of his humanity for the most part is spoken of as having been possessed from the start rather than as assumed in order to be made holy “through what he suffered” (Heb.5:8-9). Steve Holmes, on the other hand, sees much more community of interest between these English and American Puritans, in a manner which, in Plantinga Pauw’s opinion, he “overplays.”⁵⁸⁵

Both are convinced that Edwards is like Owen, in that he gives prominence to the Spirit in his Christology. The reader who may doubt the Spirit’s prominence in Edwards’ Christology need only read *Miscellanies 487* to be convinced of this. With primary reference to this entry, we will shortly seek to demonstrate this. What is at issue in the Holmes-Plantinga Pauw controversy, however, is exactly *how* the Spirit was involved in the creation of the hypostatic union, and what this meant for the state of the humanity that the Son or the *Logos* entered into, and therefore what role the incarnation played in the atonement and other aspects of Edwards’ theology. Both agree that Owen is actually quoted by Edwards in *Miscellanies 1047*.⁵⁸⁶ What Holmes proposes is firstly, that Edwards closely followed Owen in the latter’s insistence that the *Logos* is in union with the man Christ Jesus mediately by the Spirit, not immediately, as in traditional Christologies. He maintains, secondly, that Edwards believed, like Owen in the gradual, rather than the instantaneous perfection of the humanity of Christ in his incarnation.⁵⁸⁷

Employing the categories explored above, I now explore these aspects of Edwards’ pneumatological Christology to help to clarify the differences of opinion between Holmes and Plantinga Pauw.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁴ *Miscellanies 664b, YE 18, 208.*

⁵⁸⁵ Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 146, fn. 127

⁵⁸⁶ Holmes in 2001a, 136, fn.35, and Plantinga Pauw in 2002a, 146, fn.128.

⁵⁸⁷ Holmes suggests that Edwards also anticipated Edward Irving’s assertion that the humanity of Jesus was the same as that of the fallen humanity he came to redeem.

⁵⁸⁸ Holmes asserts on the basis of his interpretation of *Miscellanies 487* that Edwards’ is an “Owenite Christology” (Holmes, 2001a, 136). Plantinga Pauw’s opinion of Holmes treatment in *God of Grace & God of Glory* is that he goes too far (Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 146, fn. 127).

A controversial passage in the interpretation of the nature of the hypostatic union, and the Spirit's relation to this in Edwards, has been the *Miscellanies 487*. A detailed examination of this entry is merited to elucidate the issues.

The following are the principal affirmations concerning the incarnation and the union of the two natures of Christ in *Miscellanies 487*, as far as I can discern these:

- (i) The union of the *Logos* or the eternal Son with humanity is an indwelling analogous to that of the Spirit in the redeemed saints who are thus brought into union with Christ.
- (ii) There is no other way of God's dwelling in a creature but by His Spirit.
- (iii) In that Christ and those whom the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) indwells may be "in many respects" considered as one, so the Spirit of the *Logos* may dwell in a creature, in like manner, to cause that creature to become one person.
- (iv) The commonality of the union of the church with Christ and the union of the *Logos* with "the man Christ Jesus" is illustrated by the temple or tabernacle analogy – Christ dwells (by the Spirit) in his mystical body the church, "the *Logos* dwells in the human nature of Christ," the difference being that God (equivalent to the *Logos*) dwells in the Head of the body that is Christ (the collective Christ, 1 Cor.12:12) as opposed to the body itself.
- (v) In Christ, the Head, therefore, dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9), but that fullness is in fact, *the Spirit* (Edwards states that "the Holy Ghost is the fullness and riches of the Godhead" in a manner consistent with his generally high Augustinian pneumatology) who is given to the Son without measure (John 3:34), and therefore also to the saints in the mystical body, the church, such that we are also "partakers of the divine nature" (here Edwards quotes 2 Peter 1:4, thus harmonizing Pauline, Johannine and Petrine concepts).

- (vi) The hypostatic union is thus the uniting of the historical man Christ to the *Logos* (God the only-begotten, eternal Son), by the Spirit, in two ways: (a) as a man who is still loved by God as his only begotten Son, that “love of God” being “the Holy Ghost”,⁵⁸⁹ he is therefore, still the *Logos* in Trinitarian relation, as man, and (b) as one human-Divine “person” he is constituted as such by the communion (which as is the case with “all divine communion,” is the “Holy Ghost”) to his one person, of understanding and will.
- (vii) This communion of ‘understanding’ to the one human-Divine person is his consciousness⁵⁹⁰ of his nature as the only-begotten Son or *Logos* before the world was, that is of his unique Sonship, not merely in the filial sense that the children of God have.
- (viii) The indwelling of the Spirit in this God-man is therefore not as the “Spirit of the Father” but as the “Spirit of the Son” (relating to the Father in this consciousness as eternal Son – this is an interesting distinction made possible presumably by Edwards’ adherence to the *filioque* clause).
- (ix) In summary (I take it), the Spirit of God is thus “the bond of perfectness by which God, Jesus Christ, and the church are united together.”
- (x) The importance of the Spirit in this forming of the hypostatic union is the reason Christ is called ‘Christ’, ‘the Anointed One’ and this explains the symbolism of the descent of the dove at his baptism, although this was already a reality by the ‘anointing’ that happened in his conception by the Spirit in the Virgin’s womb.
- (xi) Following these affirmations, Edwards gives a biblical summary of the place of the Spirit in Christ’s salvific history – it is “by the Holy Spirit” that Christ is (declared) “the Son of God” (Rom. 1:3-4) in resurrection, it is by the eternal Spirit that his sacrifice has

⁵⁸⁹ By definition the Spirit is the love of the Father for the Son in Edwards’ Trinity.

⁵⁹⁰ Jenson (1988a, 120-1) has pointed out that Edwards is here employing a Lockean understanding of personhood which involves continuity of memory. Two different consciousnesses would imply two persons. Common consciousness, the complete knowing of one person by another, means that the two persons are one. “...Jesus *remembers* the innertrinitarian life of the *Logos*,” (121) therefore he is that same person.

value (Heb.9:14), it is by the Spirit that he is “quicken” and “justified” as mediator (1 Tim.3:16), in fact “all he did when on earth.”

- (xii) In the penultimate paragraph, he overcomes an objection to the notion that the same Spirit who conceives the human nature of Christ, is the Spirit by whom he has union with the divine nature.
- (xiii) Implicit in this is a concern about the confusion of the persons of the Spirit and the Son, which Edwards anticipates and seeks to overcome. He does so, inadequately in my opinion, by insisting firstly, that the *Logos ensarkos* is the same person as the eternal *Logos*. Secondly, however, his answer to this objection is what has been implicit throughout, and what has determined the concept of union throughout this entry of the *Miscellanies*, namely union in the immanent Trinity, which is personal union, not mere association or influence. His point seems to be that the “Son of God” (the eternal *Logos*) is in personal union with the Spirit in the immanent Trinity, and therefore, if the Son incarnate becomes the Son incarnate by the indwelling of the Spirit in human flesh, this does not confuse the two divine persons, and it is still a real union of God the Son with humanity.
- (xiv) The closing statement reiterates how Edwards viewed the hypostatic union as consisting in a compound of two things only: the human nature of Christ received from the Virgin Mary, and the Holy Spirit by which that human nature was united to the *Logos*.

Consideration of this entry confirms firstly that Edwards’ was undoubtedly a pneumatological Christology. This entry constitutes a powerful polemic in favour of the thesis that Edwards had a great, even predominating, concern with the Spirit. This does indeed appear to resemble the theology of Owen in that it is a pneumatological Christology, but its conception, and therefore its consequences are, I submit, quite different.

On the basis of this exposition and consideration of other entries, I will now attempt to clarify Edwards' stance on the key issues identified above for defining his incarnational Christology, in dialogue with Owen, and implicitly therefore with Barth who largely mirrors Owen in this area of Christology.

2.a. *The temporal immediacy of the Spirit in Edwards' incarnational Christology – immediate or gradual?*

Miscellany 487 above leaves no doubt that the work of the Spirit is immediate in a *temporal* sense in the incarnation, in that it is the Spirit who conceives the human nature of Christ, and then it is by the Spirit that the hypostatic union is brought about. The uniting of the historical man Christ to the *Logos* (God the only-begotten, eternal Son), is by the Spirit, in the two ways indicated above: (a) in Trinitarian relationship as the *Logos ensarkos* but the *Logos* nevertheless, he is loved by God as a man but he is still loved by God as his only begotten Son, that "love of God" being "the Holy Ghost"; and (b) by perichoresis, presumably, he is constituted as one human-Divine "person" by the Spirit who is the communion (which as is the case with "all divine communion," is the "Holy Ghost") to his one person, of understanding and will. The 'anointing' at Christ's baptism is only a confirmation of what happened in his conception by the Spirit in the Virgin's womb, for Edwards.

Temporal immediacy of the Spirit's work is common to all the parties in this dialogue, however. What distinguishes the viewpoints is what happens at the moment of conception, and how it happens with respect to immediacy or mediacy of the inter-relations of the divine persons involved. We will consider these in order.

2.b. *The act of the Spirit in Edwards' view of conception – creation or restoration, to prelapsarian condition or 'superman' status*

Although *Miscellany 487* contains the statement that the incarnate Son received his human nature "of the Virgin Mary," it is not clear in Edwards' explanations

of the hypostatic union what Mary actually contributed in a genetic sense. In *Miscellany No. 709*⁵⁹¹ Edwards reaffirms similar notions to that in 487 concerning the role of the Spirit, but he is adamant about the necessity that the same Spirit “that acted as the principle of union between the manhood of Christ and the person of the Son” is also the Spirit who “should make the manhood of Christ” or give “his manhood being.” The assuming implies a uniting, Edwards insists, but “the making is what belongs to assuming.” Thus in fact, Edwards insists that the Spirit made the humanity of Christ “out of nothing.” Close inspection of the final passage of this entry, will confirm that it is not just the new entity of the Word made flesh that the Spirit begets at the incarnation. A consequence of the necessity that the one person of the Spirit must both make the humanity and unite that humanity with God, is that in the act of the assumption there was also an *ex nihilo* act of creation of the humanity to be brought into union with God. This highlights the prominence of the first union of the persons of the Trinity in the Edwardsean conception of the union that is the incarnation. This seems to go beyond the assertions of Calvin and Owen and gives justification to the concern that the incarnate union is described in ahistorical ways in Edwards, and in fact aligns him with Menno Simons on this issue.

2.c. *The agency of the Spirit in Edwards’ view of the incarnation of Christ ... Mediate or Immediate?*

A conclusion that we may draw from the close examination of *Miscellanies 487* above, is that Edwards’ conception of the union of the *Logos* with humanity is as immediate as the union that is between the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity. The key to understanding Edwards’ apparent ‘mediation’ of the humanity to the *Logos* is that the mediation is effected by the Spirit as the *vinculum caritatis*. Therefore it is really not a true ‘mediation’ if understood within Edwards’ ontology. It is analogous to the essential union of Christ as the God-man with the Trinity, the union in which he existed as the *Logos asarkos*. Edwards’ conclusion here is that the Word incarnate is the same person as the Word within the Trinity eternally.

⁵⁹¹ *Miscellanies 709, YE 18, 333-335.*

In a later entry, *Miscellanies 766*, Edwards confirms that the Holy Ghost “acts as a means of conveyance of the understanding and will of the divine *Logos*, to the understanding and will of the human nature, or of the union of these understandings and wills.”⁵⁹² He does acknowledge that Christ’s knowledge is portrayed as both his own and that which the Spirit gives him. This can only be true if the Spirit is the bond of the personal union. The spirit of the human *Logos* is the Holy Spirit in the same sense that he was the spirit of the eternal *Logos* – a more immediate relationship cannot be imagined. *Miscellanies 764b* confirms this immediacy in Edwards’ understanding that “the Holy Spirit is the bond of union by which the human nature of Christ is united to the divine, so as to be one person.” Edwards repeats the notion that the Spirit was given to Christ in a unique sense, that is, “not by measure,” as in the case of other humans. And this relationship is so immediate, that is, “there is such an union between this human nature,” that his words are, in fact, the words of God (John 5:33-34).⁵⁹³

The immediacy of *relations* gives rise to an immediacy of the *action* of the Spirit in effecting the incarnation. This is implied in another entry, *Miscellanies 294*, where Edwards states: “So it was the Spirit’s work to impregnate the blessed Virgin, for it is the office of love to beget; generation is the work of love.”⁵⁹⁴ This assertion is startling, not only for what it depicts of the immediacy of the action of the Spirit to effect the hypostatic union, but also for a pneumatology that becomes so high that the Spirit starts to assume a role (albeit not in the immanent Trinity) normally associated with the Father.

Robert Jenson has captured the essence of Edwards’ argument in *Miscellanies 487* (also *709, 738*), which he believes to be preparatory drafts for the sermon *Excellency*. He applauds Edwards’ daring for what he considers him to have accomplished - the uniting of the passible Jesus of history with the impassible *Logos* of eternity in one person, thereby reabsorbing Christology back into the

⁵⁹² *Miscellanies 766, YE 18, 411-414.*

⁵⁹³ *Miscellanies 764b, YE 18, 411.*

⁵⁹⁴ He conjectures that “It is probable that by this divine love her mind was filled with a divine and holy pleasure instead of sensual pleasure.” *YE 13, 385.*

doctrine of the Trinity: “the Jesus who was born, taught, worked, died and rose is himself ‘one of the Trinity,’ that God is not God without him.”⁵⁹⁵ Jesus is “a perfectly mirroring consciousness over against the Father, which we call the ‘*Logos*,’ and because he is regarded by God with that inner-triune regard that is the Spirit.” This is achieved by the indwelling of the Spirit who is the bond of the personal union of the *Logos* and the man, such that “the Spirit of the *Logos* is so the spirit of the man Jesus that the *Logos* and the man are the same subject.” Jenson considers Edwards to have achieved an “Alexandrian” mutual interpenetration of God and Jesus, in part by classically Puritan means, that is, by the doctrine of the Spirit.⁵⁹⁶

What Jenson does not acknowledge explicitly, is that this ‘achievement’ relies on the Augustinian conception of the Spirit. That the hypostatic union is crafted after the fashion of the pneumatological union in the Godhead is evident, and in this assertion, Plantinga Pauw is correct. The reasoning of Edwards only ‘works’ if this is understood throughout. And it is this that makes the work of the Spirit in the incarnation immediate, rather than mediated.

It is possible that the use of the terms ‘mediate’ and ‘immediate’ may contribute to the source of confusion in this debate. The way in which Edwards accomplishes his goal is one that involves union by “indwelling of the Spirit” within the incarnate *Logos*. In that sense, Holmes is right when he suggests that the involvement of the Spirit is a mediated one. It is the underlying interpretation that Edwards is employing his usual understanding of the Spirit as *vinculum caritatis*, in his usual Augustinian psychological way, that causes Plantinga Pauw to suggest therefore, that the involvement of the Spirit is immediate, in that one cannot conceive of a more immediate involvement of the Spirit than that which he occupies with the Son (and the Father) in the eternal, immanent Trinity. The confusion arises also with regard to what entities are considered to be in a mediated relationship. The immaterial aspect of the incarnate *Logos* could not be more immediately related to the Spirit. In the material aspect, that is his human

⁵⁹⁵ Jenson, 1988a, 122.

⁵⁹⁶ Jenson, 1988a, 119.

flesh and bones, there is also (given the holistic integrity of human personhood in the biblical, Hebrew understanding of this) a relationship that is as immediate as it can be. But this is what causes Edwards to express the humanity of Christ in the ahistorical ways Plantinga Pauw speaks of. Therefore a distance opens up between the humanity of Christ and fallen humanity, in a way that could be understood as less immediate. It will certainly mean that the humanity of Christ will not be vicarious for all humanity as in Barth's conception. This leads us now to speak to the moral consequences of the immediacy of the Spirit's relation and action in the incarnation.

2.d. *Moral and metaphysical fallenness in Edwards' view of the incarnation*

*Miscellany No. 709*⁵⁹⁷ is a long entry on how Christ was "sanctified, and sent into the world" (John 5:36) by the Spirit. Edwards by the term 'sanctification' means it in the "setting apart to offices" sense. The outpouring of the Spirit upon him at his baptism, by which he was "set apart" for the anointed office of Messiah, is interpreted by Edwards as being symbolic of what had already happened in his incarnation. There the Spirit had "sanctified, and sent him into the world" in the sense that he "was conceived by the Holy Ghost." This involved both his giving "his manhood being," and "communicating the divine personality from heaven to earth in giving being to Christ's manhood." "And this God did by an act of sanctification," Edwards, adds, "or by an imparting of the Spirit of holiness." There are therefore two aspects in which the Spirit was involved in an immediate sense in the incarnation: as the maker of his manhood, and in the assumption of that flesh into the person of the Son. The Spirit thus made the humanity of Christ "out of nothing" and that same Spirit performed the act of union, so making that which was "as yet unmade," the divine-human person of the Son of God. Although the primary meaning of "sanctified" here is with regard to metaphysics and office, as always in Scripture, and evidently in Edwards' intention here, it has moral consequences also. The Word made flesh is holy not merely because He is God, but because his flesh was created as holy in the womb of Mary.

⁵⁹⁷ *Miscellanies 709, YE 18, 333-335.*

If the moral holiness of Christ from conception is implicit in entry 709, the immediacy of the Spirit's action is unequivocally evident where it matters with respect to the issue of moral holiness in *Miscellanies* 767. There Edwards speaks of it precisely as the “*immediate* work of infinite, omnipotent, holiness itself”⁵⁹⁸ which ensures that the Christ child is indeed “that holy thing” born in Mary (Luke 1:35). This is important for Edwards' predominantly sacrificial and substitutionary understanding of the atonement. This immediacy ensures for Edwards that the humanity as directly created by and united to the *Logos* by the Spirit is protected immediately (in a temporal sense) at conception from moral corruption (and yet, somehow, not from metaphysical imperfection).

The prominence and immediacy of the Spirit in Edwards' incarnation seems to ‘overpower’ the divine-human entity that is God in flesh, and this in fact leads to distance between humanity, as that is understood in all other humans. Owen's model of the incarnation, by contrast, is one in which the Spirit, as a person conceived of in a Cappadocian sense, interacts with the Son as a divine-human person, in a truly mediated and less dominating fashion. Thus in Owen, both the moral and metaphysical imperfections are perfected mediately rather than immediately (in the non-temporal sense), though the protection of the person of the Son is immediately present in a temporal sense from conception onwards. In the language of popular psychology, the relationship between the Spirit and Christ in Edwards' understanding of the incarnation is co-dependent, whereas that in Owen is one of inter-dependence.

Holmes' conclusion that the relationship between the *Logos* and the humanity of Christ is *mediated* by the Spirit is understandable given that it is facilitated by the Spirit's *indwelling*. Christology involving the category of indwelling no doubt looks mediated, and might lead to the conclusion (prematurely) that Edwards espouses an inspirational Christology. It is by the Spirit, as Edwards conceived the ‘indwelling’ Spirit in Christ, that the relationship becomes immediate, that is, as immediate as relationship can be in Edwards' theology. The legitimacy of the Augustinian understanding of the Spirit is debatable as indicated in chapter II,

⁵⁹⁸ *Miscellanies* 767, *YE* 18, 414 (emphasis mine).

but in Edwards' mind, this would, one suspects, make the relationship he envisaged an immediate one. It is in this sense that Edwards' conception is in fact different to that in Owen, who comes at the issue with a Cappadocian understanding of the Spirit, as opposed to an Augustinian one, and who therefore does exhibit an inspirational aspect in his Christology. A brief excursus into the Christology of Owen is necessary at this point to bring that of Edwards into clearer perspective.

Comparison with Owen's Spirit Christology

What particularly characterizes Owen's Trinitarian understanding is his use of the theological device of 'appropriation' to enable him to overcome the strictures of the *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* principle. This principle was held by both the Cappadocians and Augustine, and most strongly maintained by Augustine.⁵⁹⁹ It is one special application of the Cappadocian 'appropriation' principle in particular, which Owen employs. Within the context of the economic revelation of God, the persons of the Son and the Spirit in their particular condescensions within that economy,⁶⁰⁰ only 'consent' was required of the other persons, not their direct involvement. This led Owen to be able to secure the hypostatic uniqueness of the Son and the Spirit in the economy⁶⁰¹ and to articulate a dynamic inter-relationship between the divine persons with hypostatic distinctiveness in the economy, and to avoid "an impoverished exposition of the atonement in terms of the undifferentiated action of God."⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ This is the primary point in Alan Spence's article "Owen and Trinitarian Agency," *SJT* 43 (1990), 157-173. Hereafter, "Spence, 1990a."

⁶⁰⁰ Although Owen acknowledges John of Damascus for this insight, as Spence indicates John had "no ambition to do more than gather together and summarize the best theology of the Greek Fathers."

⁶⁰¹ Unlike Edwards, Owen draws a veil over the immanent Trinity and maintains a significant distance between the immanent and economic Trinities. He does look to the Christological event for discerning what can be discerned with regard to the *ad extra* works and nature of God in three persons in the economy, rather than to the psychological analogy. He has more distrust of reason than Edwards, and a desire to guard the transcendence of God. His epistemology is Aristotelian – what we do know of the incomprehensible God is mediated through his operations, specifically the economy, but for Owen this does not tell the whole story about God in His *ad intra* existence and inter-personal relations. He countered both the Quakers in their belief in access to knowledge of God through intuition, and the Socinians, who sought to understand God's essential nature through reason.

⁶⁰² Spence, 1990a, 172.

Owen's desire to demonstrate the extensive involvement of the Spirit in the whole advent of Christ relates to two dynamics: (i) he wished to employ the *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* principle to demonstrate the deity of the Spirit by his close association with the Son's incarnational activities in which the Son shows dependence on the Spirit; and (ii) he wished to defend the distinctive *personhood* of the Spirit against the Socinians who granted the Spirit's activity a 'divine' status, but insisted he was not a person but a quality in the divine nature or God's power. This is where he employed his 'appropriation' principle with respect to the Spirit. The Spirit acts "according to his own will" and acts as the distinct agent in the incarnation ... "As unto the formation of the human nature it was the act of the Spirit."⁶⁰³ This principle not only helps Owen find a way to make the Son uniquely the one who assumes the human nature (and not the whole Trinity), but also to find a way to secure the activity of the Spirit as a person in his activity in the life of Christ and in Christians, without violating the *ad extra sunt indivisa* principle. Owen accomplished this with what was an essentially Cappadocian understanding.

Owen thus was able to demonstrate what Spence would call a balanced Christology in which two aspects of it are preserved. The first is one in which Christ as *Logos*, or "God among us" is the *dispenser* of the Spirit – this is the 'incarnational' aspect of Christology emphasized in the Patristic era sometimes at the expense of the second aspect, in which Christ is the *receiver* of the Spirit. This second aspect is the 'inspirational' category of Christology in which Christ is the prototype man of faith, dependent on the Spirit for sanctifying grace, anointed by the Spirit for service for God. In this Antiochene understanding, the danger of over-emphasis leads to reduction of Christology to merely inspirational categories. Spence implicates the concept of "indwelling" as a case of this, in that the unity of the person of Christ is endangered thereby. In applying this to Edwards who clearly advocated "indwelling" of the Spirit in his understanding of the incarnation, care is required. Edwards' use of the category of indwelling

⁶⁰³ Owen, J. *The Works of John Owen*, (Goold, W.H. ed.) (London/Edin.: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850-55) I, 225, cited in Spence, 1990a, 165.

employs the Augustinian conception of the Spirit, and this makes his Christology more “incarnational” than “inspirational”. It does however qualify as Antiochene in the sense of the endangering of the integrity of the person of Christ that Spence speaks of. The danger of too great an emphasis on the Spirit’s involvement in which Christ is the receiver, seems to be one that Edwards courts. In Edwards’ view of Christ as described above in *Miscellanies 487* and *Excellency* there is a “co-dependence” and blurring of the persons of the Spirit and Christ, just as there is the incipient danger of monism in his theology of the union of the saints with God.

Edwards is as keen as Owen to demonstrate the involvement of the Spirit with Christ in his incarnation and life, and in doing so to defend the deity of Christ against the Arians.⁶⁰⁴ He certainly wishes to articulate the hypostatic uniqueness of the Spirit also, but in a questionable way. The appearance in Edwards’ conception of the *Logos ensarkos* is of a Christ who lacks real incarnation, and therefore lacks integrity as a person. Owen can speak of a dependent Christ without that danger because there is a tethering of the two aspects of Christology as understood within a Cappadocian framework. Edwards seems to overly individuate the Spirit, thereby contradicting the *ad extra sunt indivisa* principle without the qualifications Owen employs.⁶⁰⁵ Indeed, Edwards overly exalts the Spirit, even calling him the begetter at one point, because his individuation is achieved still within the Augustinian framework.

Edwards is much keener to unite the God of the economy with the God of the immanent Trinity. His method of doing so is to employ the Augustinian psychological view of the Spirit as the mutual Love and communion of the Father for the Son, as is evident in the *Miscellanies 487*. It seems to me that Edwards seeks to employ Owen’s understanding of the hypostatic uniqueness of the Spirit (and the Son), but without dependence on the Cappadocian

⁶⁰⁴ He mentions the Arians in *Excellency of Christ*, 169 and in *Miscellanies 117*, *YE 13*, 283.

⁶⁰⁵ Edwards seems to be doing in his *Observations* what Owen does by way of creating the exception to the undividedness principle in the condescensions for the economy as agreed in the covenant of redemption. Edwards is more concerned there with temporary subordination than he is with the appropriateness of the individuated actions of the persons, however.

undergirding which Owen had. This does leave Edwards prone to de-humanizing Christ because the union of the immanent Trinity is what determines the ‘union’ in the God-man. Edwards appears at times to describe Christ as God-man because the Spirit of God indwells a human form. ‘Indwelling’ in Edwards takes its character from his understanding of the Spirit within the immanent Trinity. This is what preserves the unity or integrity of the Christ as ‘one’ person, in Edwards’ thinking. God is ‘one God’ in Edwards’ eyes because of the Spirit who is the union of the Father and the Son. Therefore, if the Spirit ‘indwells’ the Son *ensarkos*, this is analogous to his state and even includes his state *asarkos*, with respect to the Spirit. However, the identity of the Son seems overshadowed by that of the Spirit.

Ascertaining where Edwards stood on the matter of whether the human nature of Christ was fallen in a metaphysical sense only, or in both a moral and metaphysical way hinges on the interpretation of what Edwards intended in a key passage in *Miscellanies 664*.⁶⁰⁶ If a hermeneutic similar to the ‘analogy of faith’ principle by which any passage of Scripture is interpreted by all of Scripture, is applied to what Edwards said about this issue elsewhere, and when comparison is made with what Owen believed, it seems apparent that Edwards meant metaphysical fallenness only.

Owen’s Christology involved the Spirit’s protection of the true humanity of Christ in that he maintained that the *Logos* is in union with the man Jesus *mediately* through the Spirit, and not immediately as in traditional Christology. The humanity of Christ could therefore undergo a gradual perfecting.⁶⁰⁷ The Holy Spirit in Edwards’ as opposed to Owen’s theology, is the immediate agent of the incarnation, and therefore he protects the Son from the influence of corruption of humanity from the start. The Spirit is the “person that acted as the

⁶⁰⁶ This entry was not yet published in its full form when Holmes wrote *God of Grace*, as he acknowledges in fn. 37, 137. It is now published as entry 664b in *YE 18*, 202-211.

⁶⁰⁷ Owen, John. *The Holy Spirit, His Gifts and Power: Exposition of the Spirit’s Name, Nature, Personality, Dispensation, Operations and Effects*, abridged by George Burder (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1960), 93-96. See also Spence, Alan. “Christ’s Humanity and Ours: John Owen” in Schwöbel, C. and Gunton, C. E. (eds.), *Persons Divine and Human* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 74-97.

principle of union between the manhood of Christ and the person of the Son⁶⁰⁸ in both crafting the humanity of Christ, and then effecting his hypostatic union. This is more immediate than in Owen's case. The Spirit both creates what seems to be a new order of humanity that in some way disconnects with the fallen order of humanity in Adam. This new 'superhumanity' is then united to the *Logos* by the Spirit's "indwelling". This close association ensures that all of the moral corruption present in post-Paradise humanity which might be passed on through Mary is negated. Progressive physical, mental and social development is permitted in Edwards' Christ but not moral progression.

In summary, therefore, it is primarily with respect to his second assertion that we are inclined to agree with Plantinga Pauw's view that Holmes "overplays" the similarities between Owen and Edwards. Here Holmes quotes Edwards' *Miscellanies 664* to demonstrate that Edwards' Christ assumed a fallen humanity: "They [the angels] saw him in the human nature – its mean, defaced, broken, infirm, ruined state – in the form of sinful flesh." Certainly this unequivocally affirms that Christ's humanity was understood to be in a metaphysically imperfect state. Even in its final phrase, this statement does not, however, settle the issue concerning whether Edwards believed that the humanity of Jesus was a *sinful* humanity. Edwards' words "in the form of sinful flesh" could mean 'form' as in appearance, as in the passage in Romans 8⁶⁰⁹ to which it is likely Edwards was referring. There is too much evidence elsewhere in Edwards' corpus of a belief in a morally impeccable humanity in Christ. Furthermore, the quotation from this entry, in context, refers to Christ as he goes to the cross, and the tenor of it suggests the traditional understanding of Christ as Sin-bearer taking the place of humanity in a vicarious state of assumed guilt, but not inherent sinfulness.

⁶⁰⁸ *Miscellanies 709, YE 18, 334.*

⁶⁰⁹ "God... sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh." (Romans 8:3, KJV). This passage is of course a controversial one, the interpretation of which is critical to the impeccability debate. Our point here is that it is quite feasible that Edwards was referring to this verse understanding it in its traditional interpretation as a reference to the fallen metaphysical state, but not the morally fallen state of Christ's humanity. The NIV suggests this interpretation by its translation of "'flesh'" as "body".

It is admitted that Edwards is not always consistent in this matter and it is difficult to reconcile some aspects of this Christological speaking and writing. For example, sometimes he appears to say that the Spirit creates the humanity of Christ *ex nihilo*,⁶¹⁰ while on another occasion he uses “the substance of a mother” to form it, but has to purify it by his “infinitely powerful influence” as “agent” in this “immediate work of infinite, omnipotent, holiness itself” to “prevail over any ill influence.”⁶¹¹ Why would a new humanity need any purification if the genetic contribution of Mary is avoided altogether. The most difficult issue to clarify in Edwards’ view is how the metaphysical-moral distinction can be maintained. Edwards clearly speaks of the physically weakened state of the humanity of Christ, which apparently did not receive correction by the Spirit’s agency at conception. Here Edwards simply seems to follow what he sees by way of biblical affirmation, without seeking to reconcile this.

It does appear, therefore, that the similarity between Edwards and Owen on this issue is overplayed. This I conclude in light of Owen’s more Cappadocian understanding of the Trinity, his relative distrust of reason, his maintaining that the immanent Trinity is inscrutable, his approach to what is revealed of God through the economy by examination of the Christ, as revealed through Scripture, rather than through psychological analogy, and in light of his more mediated, and therefore more inspirational Christology, in which the progressive sanctification of Christ inspires the Christian in the same manner and direction.

Pneumatic theosis grounded in incarnational participation? Evaluative Comparison with Barth’s Christology

In reflecting on the Christologies of the two Puritans, Owen and Edwards, it becomes apparent that Owen has more points of connection with Karl Barth than does Edwards. The common approach of Barth and Owen was to look to the *oikonomia* as the source of revelation and elucidation of the Trinity. Barth was not content like Owen to leave the ‘inscrutability’ of the immanent Trinity

⁶¹⁰ *Miscellanies* 709, *YE* 18, 335.

⁶¹¹ *Miscellanies* 767, *YE* 18, 414.

veiled. However, his approach in the unveiling of the immanent Trinity was by looking to the 'unveiling' of Jesus Christ in the economy, and to insist that there is nothing 'back of' that revelation, and so to coalesce the Trinities. Both would not embrace Edwards' relatively Enlightened, philosophical, psychological approach which in the end shapes his concept of the Christological hypostatic union. With regard to Patristic ontology also, Owen shows more affinity with Barth, who, though he worked within a basically Augustinian framework, articulated the 'modes' in a manner more reflective of Cappadocian persons, and avoided the excessive individuation evident in Edwards.

With regard to the issue of the mediate as opposed to immediate role of the Spirit in Christology, Barth is again more akin to Owen than to Edwards. Barth and Owen have consensus with regard to their understanding that Christ's human nature was perfected gradually in life and death through suffering, and that his history inspirationally models progressive sanctification for the saints. All three are convinced of the sinlessness of the person of Christ as God-man. However, Owen and Barth prefer the view that Christ depended on the power of the *hypostasis* of the Spirit to overcome the sinfulness inherent in the humanity of the first Adam, to maintain that sinlessness in life, and then through the cross and resurrection to purify that humanity, and elevate it to heaven. By contrast, in Edwards, the human nature received by the *Logos* is purified of moral defilement (though not metaphysical fallenness), at conception by the immediate action of the Spirit, whose identity becomes blurred with that of the human spirit of Christ. All three believe in the eternal nature of the humanity of Christ, and of the importance of that truth for the union of the saints with Christ as human. The only difference is that in Edwards, the humanity of Christ is morally perfect when it is united to the *Logos*. For Owen and Barth that humanity is perfected through the suffering of death and then elevated to the throne as perfected humanity.

Recapping what has been said about Edwards' view of the union of God and man in Christ, two main points stand out. The first is that in the crafting of the reality of the hypostatic union, the Spirit plays an important role. The second is that this

hypostatic union in Christ takes its character from the other unions, the union of the immanent Trinity by the Spirit, and the union of the saints with God enacted by the Spirit, in light of the Spirit's essence as the mutual love of the Father for the Son.

Both of these points weigh into the manner in which Edwards views the humanity of Christ and its importance in salvation. First, the relative importance of pneumatological union of the saints *with God* leads Edwards to stress the divinity of Christ rather than his humanity, in the incarnate Christ. His is an incarnational rather than an inspirational Christology, therefore. This bodes well for the ability of Christ to function as mediator on behalf of the interests of a holy God. However, in that the true humanity and personhood of Christ are somewhat compromised, the full identification with humanity in mediation, and the High Priesthood of Christ seem somewhat to be in jeopardy. The humanity which Christ does assume is protected from conception, by the Spirit, from the moral imperfection of humanity. Barth's assessment of Edwards' view of the humanity of Christ, might as a consequence be that it has been minimized, and along with that the vicarious dimension of that humanity and the ability of Christ to function in a truly representative manner for humanity.

Barth followed the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed with rigour,⁶¹² and the Nicene *homoousion*, as set out in that creed, according to T.F. Torrance, "provided him with the key insight into the Trinitarian faith that what God is in his saving revelation in history as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he is the inherent relations of his own eternal being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit."⁶¹³ Barth's doctrine of the hypostatic union was one which followed the Creed closely and he therefore affirmed that in Jesus Christ, the divine and human natures are united in one person, without separation and without confusion. He would therefore reject any fusion between the divine and the human. As such, Barth was equally concerned to let God be God, and not man, as he was to let man be

⁶¹² This is evident in paragraph 11, *CD I/1*, 423ff. as Barth expounds the doctrine of "The Eternal Son."

⁶¹³ Torrance, T.F. *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*, ((Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1990), 170. Hereafter this work is designated as "Torrance, T.F., 1990a."

man and not God. At the same time Barth held on to the indivisible oneness between Jesus Christ and God the Father, “for Christ is both of one and the same being as God and of one and the same being as man.” As Torrance succinctly expresses it, “For Barth, as for Athanasius, the incarnation must be understood with the utmost realism: God in the undiminished reality of eternal divine being has become man in the undiminished reality of human being, yet without ceasing to be God.”⁶¹⁴ Barth would perhaps be concerned about a level of ‘confusion’ in the divine-human union of Edwards with respect to the clear identities of the Spirit and the Son, but his greatest concern would be with regard to realism with respect to the human reality in Edwards’ formulation of his theology of the incarnation. For Barth to say that Christ was fully human meant just that. This is where the necessity of the *anhypostasis* arose for Barth. He understood Jesus to be authentic man only as Son of God, and could not therefore “understand how this destroys his true humanity.”⁶¹⁵ The Barthian distinction “the Word was made flesh, not flesh the Word”⁶¹⁶ is an expression that captures the essence of how Barth viewed the humanity of Christ.

Christ’s solidarity with humanity was essential to Barth’s formulation of the fourfold “for us” theology that is central to Barth’s doctrine of reconciliation, in which the Son of God, who goes to the “far country” in obedience, does so in the strictest possible sense, standing “in our place.”⁶¹⁷ He can only be the “Judge Judged in our Place”⁶¹⁸ if he has become fully human. Christ’s full solidarity with humanity was essential also in the raising up of the human essence into the Son of God in exaltation, thus enabling the second aspect of reconciliation.⁶¹⁹

Barth would have been particularly concerned also with Edwards’ analogy between the union by the Spirit in the immanent Trinity and that in the hypostatic union. Barth in an excursus in *CD IV/2* made a special point of emphasizing the uniqueness of the union of the divine and human natures in the one *hypostasis* of

⁶¹⁴ Torrance, T.F. 1990a, 169.

⁶¹⁵ Bromiley, 1979a, 198.

⁶¹⁶ *CD IV/2*, 71.

⁶¹⁷ *CD IV/1*, 186ff.

⁶¹⁸ *CD IV/1*, 211ff.

⁶¹⁹ *CD IV/2*, 70ff.

the Son, and he specifically differentiates it from the union of the Father, Son and Spirit in the one God.⁶²⁰ As far as the paralleling of the hypostatic union with that of the members of the body of Christ with Christ, Barth approves only an “indirect parallel, but in so doing it confirms rather than negates the uniqueness.”⁶²¹ The place of the Spirit in the incarnational union is to maintain the sinlessness of Christ in his assumption of a fully human nature, as Christ depended on the Spirit in his humanity.⁶²²

It is not within the scope of this thesis to fully expound the importance of the humanity of Christ in Barth’s theology. Suffice it to say that Barth based his anthropology on Christology,⁶²³ such was his conviction that Jesus was “true man” and “real man.” Just as in his divinity he was “God for God” and “God for man,” so in his humanity he was “man for God” and “man for man.” The concept of Christ’s humanity as “fellow-humanity”⁶²⁴ was prominent in Barth’s theology, and it was, as he said, not a matter of mere occasional help, but “a matter of dying for them.” The mysterious fellow-humanity of Jesus was rooted for Barth in the mystery of God himself, the triune God of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. As God is not alone but exists in “a co-existence, co-inherence and reciprocity,” he is as such “the original source of very I and Thou.”⁶²⁵ And this Trinitarian relationship is repeated *ad extra* as it is “reflected in God’s eternal covenant with man as revealed and operative in time in the humanity of Jesus.” Therefore, Barth concluded that it is only in the humanity of Jesus that the “connection between God and man is brought before us.”⁶²⁶

Barth, as expressed through his concept of the divine election, considered the incarnation as primal history or primal decision in God, and he therefore spoke

⁶²⁰ *CD IV/2*, 51-60.

⁶²¹ *CD IV/2*, 51-60.

⁶²² *CD IV/2*, 92-95.

⁶²³ *CD III/2*, 207.

⁶²⁴ *CD III/2*, 207f.

⁶²⁵ *CD III/2*, 218.

⁶²⁶ *CD III/2*, 218-222.

freely of the humanity of God. It was in fact the humanity of God,⁶²⁷ in his union with man in Jesus Christ, the God-man, that had escaped Barth in his earlier years, and which once discovered, became “fundamental to his whole theology.”⁶²⁸ With respect to sanctification in particular, Barth in his Christocentrism emphasized sanctification primarily as the work of Jesus Christ,⁶²⁹ and this applied even to subjective sanctification. This makes it necessary that Christ overcame humanity in its sinfulness and having purified it, exalted it by his ascension. The emphasis on Christ in sanctification in Barth, stands out in contrast to the pneumatologically weighted emphasis in sanctification in Edwards, as we shall see. Barth’s emphasis on the transcendence of God necessitated a distinction between the Son in heaven and the Holy Spirit on earth, and as a result he concludes that the subjective sanctification is a “remote operation” of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s action in even subjective sanctification is to direct the believer to walk in the *participatio Christi*. Participation in Christ is central to the whole doctrine of reconciliation in Barth. Our point here is that in the two movements of that one act of reconciliation, involving the condescension and exaltation of Christ for us, and resulting in our justification and sanctification, overcoming our pride and our sloth, it is critical that Christ himself on our behalf has overcome that pride and sloth himself. He did so, not by receiving a humanity in which these no longer exist, but by receiving a humanity which he overcomes by the power of the Spirit, remaining sinless throughout.⁶³⁰

The intention in the phrase in the Nicene Creed indicating that Jesus Christ is “of one being (*homoousios*) with the Father” was to affirm that the encountered person of Jesus was none other than God, and God not merely *in* a human being, but as human. At times Edwards highly pneumatic concept of the hypostatic union makes his theology fit with the first, rather than the second of these propositions. The essential grammar of the New Testament involves a two-fold

⁶²⁷ This is expressed for example in statements such as this one: “It is precisely God’s *deity* which, if rightly understood includes his *humanity*.” Barth, K. *The Humanity of God*, (trans. Thomas, J.N. and Weiser, T.) (London: 1961), 42.

⁶²⁸ Thompson, J. “The Humanity of God in the Theology of Karl Barth,” *SJT* 29 (1976), 250.

⁶²⁹ “Jesus Christ is our sanctification.” *CD* II/2, 777.

⁶³⁰ *CD* I/2, 39-41.

movement by Christ. The first movement is one which the Council of Nicea emphasized. This was what has been termed the *anhypostatic* or God-humanward movement. This emphasized the idea that in Christ we had God coming to humanity *as God*. What the Nicene debates underplayed was the corresponding *enhypostatic* movement entailing the presentation of the incarnate Son as our *fellow human*, of humanity to the Father. The movement of God's reconciliation and representation of humanity to himself as human was neglected. The church was so focused on defending the deity of Christ against the Arians that it failed to take seriously enough the humanity of Christ and therefore the upward movement of the exalted Son of Man, and our High Priest. It is in this *enhypostatic* aspect that Edwards' Christology was also lacking, in his case also due to an emphasis on defending the deity of Christ against Arians in his day. It is also a missing emphasis in the evangelical tradition he helped to spawn.

In paralleling the role of the Spirit in incarnational Christology with the union within the immanent Trinity, and in emphasizing that this union makes possible (not real) the union of the saints with God, Edwards downplays the Son's coming into union with humanity as a category and as a whole. There is no place in the humanity of Edwards' Christ for an ontological understanding of the incarnation of the kind that Barth envisaged, by which God has become man and therefore has affected humanity as an entity or an ontological category.⁶³¹ And secondly, there is therefore no place for the healing of a humanity that has been forever assumed by God in Christ.⁶³² Edwards sounds perilously close to sounding Apollinarian⁶³³ in his descriptions of the uniting of the historical man Christ to the *Logos*, and in his assertion that it is the communing by the Spirit of 'understanding' to the one human-Divine person that is his consciousness of his

⁶³¹ Barth's concept of Christ's fellow-humanity is just that – it is inconceivable to imagine him as a solitary man – Jesus without his fellow-men (*CD III/2*, 209): "If we see Him as one, we do not see Him at all." If we see Him, we see with and around Him in ever-widening circles His disciples, the people, His enemies and the countless millions who have not yet heard His name." *CD III/2*, 216. Christ's assumption of humanity was by its nature ontological for Barth.

⁶³² The statement 'that which He has not assumed He has not healed' comes originally from Gregory of Nazianzus.

⁶³³ Holmes (2001a, 137) comments that Owen was able to make "all the assertions that Apollinarian Christology is unable to", but it is not clear that Edwards is able to do so with the same clarity.

nature as the only-begotten Son or *Logos*. Jenson's affirmation of the Edwardsean model - "the Spirit of the *Logos* is so the spirit of the man Jesus that the *Logos* and the man are the same subject"⁶³⁴ - sounds much like the Apollinarian depiction of the eternal *Logos* expropriating the human soul of Jesus in such a way that human initiative was replaced by God. The mind of Christ was not regarded as human in Apollinarianism. This rendered the human life of Jesus as "something of a charade," and his representative action as Saviour and Priest was compromised. Edwards walks that line a little too closely, it must be concluded.

The Communicatio Idiomatum

Reference has been made above to Ramsey's opinion that there is a distinction to be made between the *spoken* Christology of Edwards, and his brainstorming in the provisional, and therefore less reliable, *Miscellanies*. Ramsey attempts to show a greater affinity in Edwards with Barth than I have reflected thus far. The spoken Christology to which Ramsey refers is one in which the union of the two natures of Christ are described by means of a qualified form of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which he believes to be the interpretative and "shaping influence on the Christology JE preached in sermon, "*The Excellency of Christ.*"⁶³⁵ Ramsey believes Edwards drew directly from Francis Turretin's *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae*, in his following of a Calvinist, rather than Lutheran Christology, in general, but also, specifically, in his employment of a modified view of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

The Lutherans, in their desire to affirm the reality of union of the two natures, spoke of one nature directly communicating with, or interpenetrating the other. The properties of the divine nature were formally communicated to the human nature of Christ in the personal union, in this view. This enabled the Lutheran view of the ubiquity of the flesh and blood of the human nature of Christ. Calvinists in their desire to emphasize the free grace of God as the ground of

⁶³⁴ Jenson, 1988a, 119.

⁶³⁵ *YE* 8, fn.7, 731.

union laid stress on the movement from the divine, assuming the human nature into itself. They clarified that the communication of the two natures was in and to the *person* of Christ. The union and the communication is in Him. The properties of the natures become common to the person. Continental Reformed theologians like Turretin reflected a moderated position by distinguishing between an abstract communication between the two natures as in the Lutherans, which they rejected in favour of the notion of a communication of properties from both natures to the person of Christ. This enabled a distinction to be made between Jesus Christ as a person, who is omnipotent, for example, but whose human nature is not.

Holmes, on the one hand, is certain that Edwards' position "that Christ took personal identity and nothing else from the divine Son, and so had no 'superhuman' abilities at all" is a "radical denial" of the *communicatio idiomatum*.⁶³⁶ Ramsey, on the other hand, sees more affinity in Edwards with Turretin's view. Holmes' view is expressed from the perspective of his positive assessment of Edwards' incarnational model with respect to that of Owen, an understanding I have challenged. Holmes is sure that Edwards left room for the "genuine possibility" of some sanctification of the humanity of Christ,⁶³⁷ for example, which seems inconsistent with what has been noted in Edwards' portrayal of the immediate 'sanctification' at conception of the human nature of Christ.

The gap between the spoken and written Christologies, proposed by Ramsey, is difficult to reconcile in light of the likelihood that the sermon in which Edwards most clearly articulated his Christology, was based on and is consistent with the drafts of it in *Miscellanies 487* and its related entries. Ramsey is not afraid of incorporating the *Miscellanies* himself, when he needs to. The claims Ramsey makes with respect to this differentiation, with respect to his adopting the modified view of the *communicatio idiomatum* that Turretin espoused, and with respect to affinity with Barth, are nevertheless worthy of at least some

⁶³⁶ Holmes, 2001a, fn. 42, 138.

⁶³⁷ Holmes, 2001a, 138.

consideration. This is especially justified in light of the fact that Ramsey demonstrates awareness of the challenges in Edwards' pneumatically dominant theology.

Barth explicitly indicated his preference for the Reformed over the Lutheran understanding with respect to the *communicatio idiomatum* (CD IV/2, 66-69). In this he does resemble Edwards, as all agree. Barth also seems to adopt a modified form of this concept, however, in a manner that also bears striking resemblance to the thought of Turretin. Barth sees the union of the natures of Christ as "mutual but differentiated participation" in three forms: communication of attributes, graces and operations, that is, the union as act, one act of exination and exaltation (104-111). The unity of the one person of Christ was thereby safeguarded.

In his commentary on the considerable literature of Edwards on the eternal progression of union of the saints with God which he calls *Heaven is a Progressive State*, Ramsey makes the following statement which has an obvious Barthian⁶³⁸ ring to it: "The foundation for understanding the entirety of *End of Creation* is laid not only in the going forth of the Son of God into the far country of a human nature, but also in the return of the Son of Man to the Father's house, taking that human nature (and creatures of the same nature) with him into the inner-trinitarian life of God."⁶³⁹ This is his interpretation of the emanation-remanation language of participation in God which Edwards uses in the *End*. What this statement summarizes is Ramsey's assessment that Edwards' doctrine of the eschatological vision of God is inseparably entwined with his doctrine of the union of his created and redeemed people with himself, which is a union that is in Christ. It is a union with a Christ, moreover, who, as a consequence of the hypostatic union, is both fully divine and fully human. Ramsey therefore makes his case for a *spoken* Christology in the sermons Edwards preaches on Christ and

⁶³⁸ The source of our suspicion of this intention is Ramsey's explicit highlighting of parallels between themes in Edwards' doctrine of participation and those in Barth in footnote 3, of the Appendix III, *YE8*, 736-7.

⁶³⁹ *Heaven Is a Progressive State*, Appendix III, *YE 8*, 730.

eternal union of saints in Christ, which gives greater weight to his humanity than some of his “theological speculations” on the two natures.

Ramsey argues that a robust Christology, including the affirmation of his full humanity, is required to achieve the critical argument of the *End* - God’s glorifying himself in the redemption of the saints by glorifying them in Christ, and thus in a Trinitarian way.⁶⁴⁰ What God does in bringing his people into communion with himself such that they are glorified, he does to them in Christ. In glorifying Christ he glorifies them, but in so doing he has glorified himself, for Christ is God. For this apparatus to work, requires a Christ who is not just fully God. He must become fully human by the incarnation in order to authentically enter into union with the humanity he represents. It is the sermon, *The Excellency of Christ* in particular in context with the contemporaneous sermon *Heaven is a World of Love*, which are the primary sources of Ramsey’s contention.

The scope of the *Excellency* sermon is from eternity to eternity. It begins with an extolling of the great worthiness of Christ in light of the implausible combinations of excellencies in Christ, as God and as man. It then moves to what for Edwards is the supreme excellency of Christ, which is the conjunction in the person of Christ of “such *really* diverse elements which otherwise would have been thought utterly *incompatible* in the same subject.” From there it moves into consideration of the diverse excellencies towards humans that “otherwise would have been *impossible* to be exercised towards the same *object*.”⁶⁴¹ It culminates in showing how Christ’s admirable conjunction of excellencies was displayed in his acts in what he *did* from eternity to eternity. The Christology reflected in this sermon is critical for understanding Edwards’ view of the eternal union of the saints in Christ with God. This union, as we have noted, begins in this present life at conversion, by infusion of the Spirit, but it is eternal in its nature in Edwards’ view. It is brought towards completion (but never quite completed) in

⁶⁴⁰ It has been pointed out that Edwards does not invoke the Trinitarian apparatus fully in *End*, but that it is eminently reasonable to see it as implicit given his concurrent and earlier work on the Trinity in the preparatory *Miscellanies*, *Charity and Its Fruits* (1738, *YE* 8, 125ff.), the *Essay on the Trinity* (unknown date) and in the sermon the *Excellency of Christ* (1738).

⁶⁴¹ *YE* 8, 731.

eternity, first by means of the marriage of the Lamb, an event he views as the “*transitus*” to heaven, which then, secondly, entails a progressiveness in seeing God in the beatific vision, and enjoying him forever. Significantly, Edwards’ understanding of beatific vision, in contrast with the medieval view, involves union more so than vision.⁶⁴²

The specific value of Edwards’ *spoken* Christology however lies in the amplifying of the specific manner in which the union of the two natures of the God-man is accomplished. This in turn elucidates the nature of the eternal divine-human union of the saints, and prevents this union, in Ramsey’s view at least, from becoming pantheistic or monist on the one hand, and Platonist on the other. One statement from *Excellency* which Ramsey cites in support of the affirmation of the full humanity of Christ, and of the union of the saints with that humanity in Edwards, is the following: “For Christ being united to the human nature, we have advantage for a more free and full enjoyment of him, than we could have had if he had remained only in the divine nature.”⁶⁴³

Ramsey appears to anticipate the dangers I have suggested in the Edwardsean emanation-remanation participation in God by the Spirit if isolated from a participation that is firmly grounded in the incarnation. He states that it is not enough to speak merely of the eternal role of the God-man in forever manifesting the “knowledge”, “love” and “happiness” of God to his redeemed creatures in heaven. He adds that it is not sufficient to “keep steadfastly in mind the words of the High Priestly Prayer for comprehending *End of Creation*: ‘that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.’” Ramsey insists that Edwards fully grasped that for saints to become “partakers of the divine nature” (II Peter 1:4), the incarnation, that is the union of the two

⁶⁴² Here Ramsey is not averse to quoting a *Miscellanies* to make his point. The notion that Christ must be the God-man in order for the eternal progressive union of the saints to be possible is actually present in the *Miscellanies* entitled *Heaven Made More Glorious After The Day Of Judgement*: “All communicated glory to the creature must be by the Son of God who is the brightness or shining forth of his Father’s glory ... For all that God doth by Christ as the medium of communication between himself and the creature since Christ became God-man, or at least since as God-man he has been glorified and enthroned as Lord of the universe he doth by Christ as God-man, in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell... .” *Miscellanies* 954, cited in *YE* 8, 718.

⁶⁴³ *Excellency of Christ*, 196.

natures of Christ, was a necessity and was fully linked with his concept of the eternal *theosis*. There is in Edwards after all, an eternal connection between an incarnational Christology and eschatology.

The distinctive originality of Edwards, according to Jenson,⁶⁴⁴ was to affirm that Jesus Christ takes his people with him into the beatifical vision. As Edwards ends his *Excellency* sermon he quotes John 17:21-23 and then adds, “Christ has brought it to pass, that those whom the Father has given him should be brought into the household of God; that he and his Father, and his people, should be as one society, one family; that the church should be as it were admitted into the society of the blessed Trinity.”⁶⁴⁵ The Son’s coming did not mean the divestment of the divine nature but its communication with an assumed human nature in the person of Jesus Christ. And this *assumptio carnis* is eternal for Edwards. This second person in the Godhead will never lay aside his humanity. And for Edwards the beatific vision is seeing Christ in heaven, for in seeing the God-man and so participating in his union with the Father, we see God.

The specific *spoken* Christology in question here is therefore, according to Ramsey, that of the union of the two natures of Christ by means of the *communicatio idiomatum*, in its modified Turretinian form, involving the communication of attributes, in one person. The communication and not merely the union of divine and human attributes in the *person* of Christ led Edwards not only to reject the kenotic theory. It in turn facilitated the manner in which he explained participation of saints in God for eternity. Once they ‘closed’ with Christ, they had as a consequence closed with God. And because the incarnation is eternal and irreversible, Jesus Christ forever became the source of their knowledge and love and joy of God. Thus, the specific eschatology which is determined by this Christology is, as Ramsey notes, that of an eternal beatification through “participation in the divine nature” which is an eternal participation of the three persons’ very own participation in one another by *perichoresis* or *circumincessio*. Ramsey concludes that there is unmistakably in

⁶⁴⁴ See Robert Jenson in 1988a, 177-85, and Paul Ramsey in *YE8*, 736.

⁶⁴⁵ *Excellency of Christ*, 196.

Edwards' theology a fundamental and inseparable relation between the 'communication of attributes' in Jesus Christ and the *perichoresis* (*circumincessio*) of the Triune Identity. The participation of elect humans in Christ is thus a participation of the love of God the Father to Christ.⁶⁴⁶ This theme of 'uniting consent' and 'other-love' in turn became the paradigm for Edwards' theological ethics.

In making comment on the validity of these claims to a distinctive 'spoken Christology' in Edwards that grounds *theosis* in the humanity of Christ, a first comment is that the *perichoresis* that supposedly achieves this is one of doubtful validity, as already noted. Secondly, one cannot help but notice even in these discussions an implicit emphasis on the Spirit. Ramsey's observations do not overcome the suspicions of the confusion of the identities of the Spirit and Christ. They do not overcome Barth's objection to the drawing of an analogy between the immanent union in the Trinity, and that in the person of Christ. In that the humanity of Edwards' Christ is Spirit-dominated, rather than Spirit-empowered, as in Owen's Christ, still leaves its integrity somewhat suspect. In a correspondent manner, even if it is grounded in the humanity of Christ, as Ramsey insists, for *theosis* to be reality it is required that there be experienced on the part of its recipients, a pneumatologically empowered 'closing' with Christ. The entering into humanity of Christ has not in itself achieved anything in and of itself and for humanity as a whole. If the whole Edwardsean corpus including the mature writings are to be considered and carried over into these sermons, the union of the saints in the Son, the union of humanity and deity in the Son, and

⁶⁴⁶ Ramsey (*YE* 8, 735) has shown evidence of the holding together of the "two wheels of God's providence" – eschatology (as in heaven, so on earth) and incarnational Christology (as on earth, so in heaven) in Edwards by the holding together of the participation of humans in the Son and therefore in their participation in the love of the Father for the Son. He makes reference to the fact that in his conclusion of *The Excellency of Christ* sermon in 1738, in his discussion of human "participation of the divine nature" he repeats almost word for word what he had said two years earlier in his discussion of the beatifical vision in his sermon on Romans 2:10 (see *YE* 8, 723 in Appendix III where Ramsey refers to this sermon (cross-referenced in *Miscellanies* 678) and transcribed by John Herron Edwards, edited by Wilson Kimnach in the Yale Collection.). The beatifical vision is spoken of as "having communion with Christ" which means "partaking with Christ in his enjoyment of God," or "partaking with him in his sight of God," as the Son knows the Father and having "in their measure the same joy in their love of the Father." Ramsey suggests that this is a two-way movement (*circumincessio*): "[T]hey being in Christ shall partake of the love of God the Father to Christ."

the union of the Son with the Father *is the Holy Spirit*. Therefore even when Edwards is discussing *Christological* participation in the *Excellency of Christ* and “*Beatific vision*” sermons he will revert to speaking of the union as *pneumatological* and analogous to a union in the eternal immanent Trinity which therefore need not necessarily include the humanity aspect.⁶⁴⁷

That the very heart of *theosis* for Edwards is pneumatological, is borne out by his exposition of the *theosis* passage (II Pet.1:4). In his sermonising on eternal union in the Son, when he does become specific about how this union occurs, it is by the Spirit. In a sermon on I Corinthians 13, for example, Edwards reflects his consistent view of the Spirit as the hypostatic *nexus* of the love of God between the Father and the Son which the saints enter: “It is all from the same influence influencing the heart ... The Spirit of God is a spirit of love... The nature of the Holy Spirit is love; and it is by communicating himself, or his own nature, that the hearts of the saints are filled with love ... *Hence the saints are said to be ‘partakers of the divine nature’* [II Pet. 1:4] (italics mine).”

It is the pneumatological dimension of union of the saints with God in Christ which particularizes the union for the saints only. There is nothing of a union of all humanity with Christ because of the incarnation in Edwards’ theology. Union with Christ was only for those who were eternally elect and only for those, therefore, who experience the work of the Spirit in regeneration and conversion and sanctification. This was at the heart of Edwards’ increasing concern that his parishioners avoid nominalism, and that they be truly regenerate, as his ministry

⁶⁴⁷ As Edwards explains union with and in Christ in expounding John 17 in the closing section of *Excellency*, for example, he expresses that eternal conforming of the believers to Christ as a “kind of communion in the Sonship of the eternal Son.” He states that their union with Christ is a more intimate one than that with God the Father because He possesses only the divine nature whereas Christ taken on our nature (*Excellency*, 195-196). The excessive individuation apart, this does seem to validate Ramsey’s point that Edwards understood the need to ground *theosis* in the humanity of Christ. However, one cannot forget that Edwards’ intrinsic understanding of that union in his discussions elsewhere where he uses the same biblical passage, is of a union that is a pneumatological union *analogous to that in the Trinity* in all eternity, prior to the incarnation. A case in point is *Miscellanies 94*: “When Christ says to his Father (John 17:26) that he would declare his name to his disciples, ‘that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,’ I can understand nothing else by [it] but that the Holy Spirit might be in them and dwell in them, *which is the love of the Father to the Son* (emphasis mine).” *Miscellanies 94, YE 13*, 265. Interestingly, Ramsey sees the transformation of the saints depicted by Edwards in *Excellency* in both *moral* and *metaphysical* terms, presumably reflecting what he envisaged for Christ on earth.

in Northampton developed, and particularly in the wake of the “surprising conversions” of the Great Awakening under the influence of the Spirit.

Ramsey has in a lengthy footnote⁶⁴⁸ noted themes in the soteriology of Karl Barth that he senses may parallel those in Edwards’ participation Christology and eschatology. He concedes that Barth did not speak to the issue of heaven as a progressive state in light of the fact that volume V of the *Church Dogmatics* which would have expressed his eschatology, was never written. He does note a parallel of Edwards’ ‘communication of properties’ Christology with Barth’s “exchange of properties in the history of the incarnate Christ” in IV/1 and IV/2 (the Lord as Servant and the Servant as Lord), and wonders how he might have developed this in his discussions of God’s end in redemption.⁶⁴⁹ He then itemizes themes in Edwards’ Christological-eschatological participation theology that he deems as finding some paralleling in Barth’s later theology.⁶⁵⁰

What is deficient in these parallels is the failure to demonstrate the respective weightings of incarnational Christology and vicarious Christology for all humanity in these two theologians. Edwards and Barth do have in common that they value the Trinity as central in theology, and they do share a view of the significance of Christ that is “expungeable”. It is *how* the significance of Christ is expungeable that requires probing however.

⁶⁴⁸ Appendix III, *Heaven Is a Progressive State*, YE 8, 736-7.

⁶⁴⁹ Ramsey offers the suggestion that the direction of Barth’s thinking concerning heaven as a place of progressive growth to perfection may have paralleled Edwards’ thought, though this is not explicit anywhere in the *CD*. His suggestion is based on a reminder by way of Daniel L. Migliore of Princeton of Barth’s “light-hearted (but not flippant) remarks about his intention to inquire in heaven about Augustine, Thomas, Luther, Calvin and Schleiermacher only *after* inquiring about Mozart;” and “his plan to spend, say, a couple of centuries conversing with Schleiermacher about proper theological method etc.” YE8, 737.

⁶⁵⁰ YE 8, 737. These are (i) the “inexhaustible richness of the living, triune God, whose being-in-love is freely extended to his creatures”; (ii) the “inexpungeable significance of Christ for human salvation as the eternal mediator in and through whom we ever know and love God”; (iii) “salvation as participation in the triune life of God” which does much more than merely reverse the effects of the Fall in restoring human dignity; (iv) the “prevenience of God’s grace now and forever in all his relations with humanity, opening and empowering human response in joy, gratitude and obedience”; (v) the “communal as well as personal reality of the new creation here and hereafter”; (vi) the “new life in communion with God and fellow creatures not as the extinguishing but as the establishment and fulfilment of our true humanity as finite creatures”.

Edwards and Barth do both espouse the necessity of the humanity of Christ for bringing of humans into union with God by their being in union “in Christ.” However, Barth’s entering of Christ into humanity is just that. In Christ all humanity has been affected. Humanity itself has been raised to the throne of God in Christ. Edwards was a proponent of what has become the popular evangelical view that Christ in entering humanity in a way that kept him from its defiling elements, brought into being a new order of humanity. As the last Adam who is “second man from heaven” as opposed to the first who was “of the dust of the earth” (1 Corinthians 15:47), he formed a new heavenly order of humanity of all those who by pneumatological conversion and union are united to Christ. These are the elect chosen in Christ as federal Head in eternity past. One can therefore see why the pneumatological and therefore experiential or realized aspects of conversion and sanctification were so important to Edwards.

B. The widening gap: incarnational divergence, soteriological divergences

The divergence with respect to Christology in fact leads to growing divergences in other aspects of the theology of Barth and Edwards. Edwards by his emphasis on the pneumatological union of the saints with God in order that they might come into the benefit of the union of God with humanity, plays down the importance of the incarnation for the participation of God in humanity *per se*. This is consistent with the particularism from the outset within Edwards’ view of election and salvation, which stems from his view of the decree of God to glorify himself in the saints he has chosen to be the Bride of Christ. The creation of the church is in fact the end for which the universe was created. There is little emphasis in Edwards’ soteriology, therefore, on Christ entering humanity as an ontological reality or category, so that his actions become representative for humanity as a whole. The atonement in and from its conception, is limited in its accomplishment and application in Edwards. Justification, and more importantly, for Edwards, sanctification, are realities only for those who experience the pneumatological union that places them in Christ. Only for them, it seems, does

the value of the incarnation matter. The union of God with humanity in Christ is not with humanity as a whole but within the particularistic elective decree of God for those human beings who are chosen to be the church in union with Christ in God. The Son of God must become human for this union to occur for them, but this will only become their reality once it is effected by the Spirit's infusion into them at conversion. Unlike Barth, for Edwards the incarnation does not bring about a 'real' change in the condition of the universe, and in and for all humanity, which is real whether humans enter that reality or not.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give detailed consideration of the doctrines of the vicarious humanity of Christ, the atonement and election in the theology of Edwards, as these influence, and are influenced, by his view of the incarnation and humanity of Christ. The first of these is given some consideration in light of the close relationship of this doctrine to that of the incarnation.

Vicarious humanity

The humanity of Christ and the hypostatic union of Christ does have importance to Edwards' doctrine of union of the saints with Christ, as has been noted. The purpose of this in Edwards' mind was relational rather than ontological, however. For Barth, as also for Athanasius, the essentially Nicene notion of God *not merely indwelling* man in Christ, but really *becoming man* in Christ led to the conclusion that the life and activity of Christ from incarnation through redemption, resurrection and on into exaltation was "profoundly *vicarious*."⁶⁵¹ This was true for all man, because God had become man. Edwards' doctrine of the incarnation did facilitate an active obedience on behalf of *redeemed* humanity (the elect) of a Christ whose humanity was perfected at birth by the Spirit such that a holy life was inevitable. But the most important reason for the incarnation for Edwards was that in representative relationship with man, the atonement could secure that relationship in a transactional sense. This forensic dimension would prepare the way for union with God that was union in Christ as a result of the infusion of the Spirit. Christ's humbling of himself made possible a

⁶⁵¹ This phrase is borrowed from T.F. Torrance, 1990a, 161.

relationship between a holy and transcendent God with humans (the elect). This passage in the sermon *Excellency of Christ* expresses this thought flow well:

His condescension is great enough to become their friend: 'tis great enough to become their companion, to unite their souls to him in spiritual marriage: 'tis great enough to take their nature upon him, to become one of them, that he may be one with them: yea, it is great enough to abase himself yet lower for them, even to expose himself to shame and spitting; yea, to yield up himself to an ignominious death for them. And what act of condescension can be conceived of greater?⁶⁵²

Edwards may even use the title 'God-man' for Christ which is an interesting parallel to that in Barth, and his expressions of the representative work of Christ may sound similar. In the *Excellency* sermon he establishes the right of Christ to universal reign by virtue both of his full deity and on behalf of humanity by virtue of his representative obedience as man, for mankind.⁶⁵³ However, although Edwards believed that the obedience of Christ in life was vicarious in addition to his atoning death, his conception of "vicarious humanity" differs from that of John Owen and Barth in three significant ways:

(i) Edwards viewed the humanity of Christ as perfect from its inception by means of the virgin birth, as already noted.⁶⁵⁴

(ii) The obedience of Christ in humanity was not vicarious because he assumed what was corrupt in that humanity and healed it. The vicariousness is of a

⁶⁵² *Excellency of Christ*, 165.

⁶⁵³ *Excellency of Christ*, 169.

⁶⁵⁴ The following passage in the sermon *Excellency* corroborates what has been noted above in the *Miscellanies*. This passage comes in a context where Edwards moves from expounding the excellencies of the *person* of Christ, to the concomitant excellencies of his *acts* as vicarious: "And though his infinite condescension thus appeared in the manner of his incarnation, yet his divine dignity also appeared in it; for though he was conceived in the womb of a poor virgin, yet he was there conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. And his divine dignity also appeared in the holiness of his conception and birth. Though he was conceived in the womb of one of the corrupt race of mankind, yet he was conceived and born without sin; as the angel said to the blessed Virgin, Luke 1:35. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." *Excellency of Christ*, 172 (emphasis mine).

forensic and substitutionary nature in Edwards. He was obedient for us (the saints) and the merits of his active obedience have become ours. He also endured the penalty of our disobedience and thereby the merits of his passive obedience of the cross have become ours. But the healing of an assumed, corrupt humanity has no part in Edwards' theology.

(iii) Edwards viewed the humanity of Christ, and his obedience therein, as vicarious only for the elect who would come into union with Christ by the Spirit in conversion, not for humanity as an entity.⁶⁵⁵

The whole tenor of the *Excellency* sermon and this section in particular, is to give emphasis to who Christ is for us. A humanity assumed by Christ is exalted to the throne and believers in it. The critical node where divergence emerges between Edwards and Barth is that in Edwards, this vicarious role is for the elect who are in predestined union with Christ from eternity past but who will not enter into the union with Christ until the Spirit effects regeneration and by infusion brings about that union. This particularization of humanity to include only those "in Christ" is emphatic in Edwards. There is the necessity of "accepting him" if we would receive the benefits of Christ's representative humanity. This message is everywhere emphasized in Edwards, and his sermon *The Reality of Conversion*⁶⁵⁶ lays particular emphasis on this.

By comparison with Barth therefore, there is a minimization of the significance of the incarnation in an ontological sense, that is, in a representative and all-inclusive sense. It has been suggested by Gunton that the underlying presuppositions which shaped Augustine's doctrine are that of Platonism, and this, I fear percolates into Edwards' theology of the incarnation and its effect.

⁶⁵⁵ The latter two points are illustrated in the *Excellency* sermon where Edwards describes the active obedience of Christ in our stead but not as a partaker in humanity in a vicarious way for all, as in Barth: "Fallen man is in a state of exceeding great misery, and is helpless in it; he is a poor weak creature ... But Christ is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah"; he is strong, though we are weak; he hath prevailed to do that for us which no creature else could do. ... Fallen man is polluted, but Christ is infinitely holy: fallen man is hateful, but Christ is infinitely lovely: fallen man is the object of God's indignation, but Christ is infinitely dear to him: we have dreadfully provoked God, but Christ has performed that righteousness which is infinitely precious in God's eyes." *Excellency of Christ*, 184.

⁶⁵⁶ *The Reality of Conversion*, in *Sermons: A Reader*, 83ff.

Augustine reflected a suspicion of the material world. This leads to his reluctance to give due weight to the full materiality of the incarnation. The features of Augustine's Christology as assessed by Gunton are reflected in Edwards. Gunton suggests that in Augustine's thought "...some account of the divinity of the historical Christ is a necessary condition of a Christian Trinity, as distinct from some merely rational Triad" and that "...a firm hold on the material humanity of the Son is a prerequisite for a doctrine of the Trinity that does not float off into abstraction from the concrete history of salvation." But significantly he adds, "In that connection, it must be said that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is more important for Augustine than that of the humanity. The refutation of Arianism is central for him... ." ⁶⁵⁷ As a result of the influence of Augustine, Gunton is convinced that, with the notable exceptions of John Owen and Edward Irving, "Western theology has for the most part failed to develop adequate conceptual equipment to ensure due prominence to Christ's full humanity." ⁶⁵⁸ Edwards is not quite as suspicious of the material world, but he is greatly concerned about Arianism too, ⁶⁵⁹ and his incarnational theology is thus not, in my opinion, an exception to the Western characterization given here.

This area of divergence with Barth is a consequence of the elevation of the role of the Spirit in Edwards' soteriological aim, which is the bringing about of union of the saints with God, in Christ. In place of an ontological change affecting all humanity, Edwards' incarnation prepares for a relational union with Christ pre-eminently expressed in the marriage metaphor which is so prominent in Edwards' description of the union of saints with Christ. It is a union made real only if it includes the incarnation *and* the forensic transaction of the cross *and* the Spirit's effecting of conversion in those saints. The relational dynamic is prominent because it best achieves the notion of oneness that fulfills Edwards' higher theological aims as noted earlier. These ideas of spiritual/relational rather than ontological union are illustrated well in this extended quote from *Excellency of Christ*:

⁶⁵⁷ Gunton, 1990a, 37.

⁶⁵⁸ Gunton, 1990a, 36.

⁶⁵⁹ See *Miscellanies* 117, *YE* 13, 283. Plantinga Pauw (2002a, 21,25,35,93, 99-100, 104,108) also notes Edwards' concern with Arianism.

Would you have your Savior to be one that is near to God, that so his mediation might be prevalent with him? And can you desire him to be nearer to God than Christ is, who is his only begotten Son, of the same essence with the Father? And would you not only have him near to God, but also near to you, that you may have free access to him? And would you have him nearer to you than to be in the same nature, not only so, but united to you by a spiritual union, so close as to be fitly represented by the union of the wife to the husband, of the branch to the vine, of the member to the head, yea, *so as to be one, and called one spirit*? For so he will be united to you, if you accept of him. ... Was it not a great thing for him, who was God, to take upon him human nature, to be not only God, but man thenceforward to all eternity?⁶⁶⁰

In the final analysis, therefore, it is the pneumatological aspect of the incarnation and then of union of the saints with God that predominates in Edwards. It is one which begins in a theological *a priori* construct – that of the self-reflection of a triune God in the psychological mode. Union in Edwards does not primarily flow out of Christological revelation. It is not presented principally as an *a posteriori* consequence of the Christological revelation as in Barth, nor is it principally drawn from the doctrine of the incarnation and hypostatic union of Christ. Edwards does seek to honour the Spirit in these unions as the “spiritual” unions they are. But as a consequence, they contain neo-Platonic overtones, not being sufficiently grounded in the primary union of soteriology, the union of God with humanity in Christ.

With regard to the atonement and election, the prominence of the doctrine of the union by infusion of the Spirit is at the very heart of Edwards’ particularism. It is this doctrine which is so critical to achieving an “end of creation” which will glorify God by it being his own end. The pneumatological union by the Spirit of

⁶⁶⁰ *Excellency of Christ*, 186, 187. The text emphasized by italics provides an example of a discrepancy between the original of this manuscript as reflected in the Yale edition, *The Sermons* and that in the Banner of Truth edition which reflects nineteenth century editing of Edwards. The anticipation of the criticism of monism may have been the concern that motivated the editors.

the saints with Christ enables Edwards to achieve his goal of demonstrating the glory of God as the ultimate end of the creation of the universe, because in saving and glorifying a portion of humanity who is “the Christ”, God makes Himself His own end. Nothing so highlights the privilege of the elect as this doctrine of pneumatological union. And, by stark contrast, nothing so starkly defines the fate of the reprobate as the absence of this union accomplished by the Spirit. It is the point where Edwards and Barth are at odds, because the union of God with all mankind as created in the image of God, according to Barth, is already achieved in the incarnation with Christ who is ‘the image of the invisible God.’

Summation

It has been established that with respect to the way in which the Spirit brings about the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures of Christ, the Spirit is again given a high place in Edwards’ theology. The specific way in which the Spirit preserved the humanity of Christ in its moral purity from conception has been noted. The consequence of an Augustinian conception of the Trinity and the exaltation of the Spirit in Edwards’ view of the incarnation tends to compromise the historicity of the incarnation and therefore the full identification of Christ with humanity. Edwards viewed the incarnation and atonement of Christ as preparation for the union of the saints with Christ by the Spirit’s infusion. This Spirit-accomplished union of the saints in Christ, as the bride of the Bridegroom, such that together they in some sense constitute the ‘collective Christ,’ is a key concept within the broad scope of Edwards’ understanding of the purpose of God to glorify himself in creation. I conclude that Christological union is underplayed with respect to pneumatological union of the saints with God. This is in contrast with the Christological emphasis of Barth’s soteriology in which the entering of the Son into a humanity which he transforms, and raises to the throne of God, has ontological implications for creation and all humanity.

The work of redemption in Edwards' theology has as its chief aim the *saints'* participation in "the infinite intimacy between the Father and the Son"⁶⁶¹ as enabled by the indwelling of the Spirit in the saints. Although the *Christological participation* of the Saviour in humanity is necessary for that aim to be accomplished, this receives less emphasis, and the participation of the Word in a fully assumed humanity, in all its aspects, both moral and metaphysical, is somewhat compromised. Edwards' link between the Son and his people is one based more on the premundane counsels of God, and on Spirit-enabled realization in human experience, than on the incarnation. The agenda ultimately is that "he (Christ) and his Father and they should be as it were one society, one family; that his people should be in a sort admitted into that society of three persons in the Godhead."⁶⁶²

In fulfilling this agenda, the common link is a spiritual link, in fact, a 'Spirit link'. The elect are not linked in union with Christ merely by the historical reality of God assuming humanity at the incarnation. That link *is* established in God's mind from eternity by the predestining decree, and it is in mind in the accomplishment of the atonement, but the link is only made a reality in those who know the infusion of the Spirit, who then makes good the union of the saint with the incarnate Christ. The securing of the glory of God through the salvation of men depends for Edwards on the securing of a people who are in union with Christ and therefore themselves in union with God,⁶⁶³ such that their glorification is his. In achieving this Edwards conceives of union in the Godhead, then union of the saints with God, and therefore, in that order, and after their nature, of union in the person of Christ.

The determinative dynamic for *theosis* for Edwards is a Spirit dynamic. It is that "the communion of the creatures with God or with one another in God, seems to

⁶⁶¹ *Miscellanies 571, YE 18, 109.*

⁶⁶² *Miscellanies 571, YE 18, 110.*

⁶⁶³ This is evident in many places including, for example, *Miscellanies 103* which purports to explain why human nature has been exalted above angelic nature by the incarnation. This relates ultimately to the end for which the whole universe was made, which was that the Son of God would have a spouse, "the Lamb's wife, the completeness of him who filleth all in all" and thereby God's glory advanced in their glorification.

be by the Holy Ghost.” “’Tis by this,” Edwards assures us, “ that believers have communion with Christ.”⁶⁶⁴ The incarnation is not as important it seems, as the agency of the Spirit in the work of redemption. Edwards is required to develop a doctrine of the saints union with God by his theology of the decree, and the importance of the Spirit’s infusion in that determines the way in which he crafts a theology of the incarnation, rather than the other way around.

In fairness to Edwards he does at times expound a ‘humanity of God’ doctrine that has Barthian overtones. It is acknowledged that there are Alexandrian themes in Edwards’ Christology in which he emphasizes the unity in Christ’s person in all that he did and suffered. He speaks of the Son of God loving the human nature to such an extent that he desired “a most near and close union with it, something like the union in the persons of the Trinity, nearer than there can be between any two distinct [beings].”⁶⁶⁵ The recurring challenge in his Christology, however, is that the hypostatic union is made analogous with that of the immanent Spirit union of the Godhead, and that it is oriented towards beatifying union of the saints with God. In a sermon on Romans 2:10 he asserts that the purpose God had in “assuming a body” was “that the saints might see God with their bodily eyes ... that we might see God as a divine person as we see one another.”⁶⁶⁶ The ultimate purpose of the incarnation relates to a beatific vision which involves union and communion between God and the saints, that is, one of friendship and companionship. This companionship will not be achieved without the new ontological reality that God had become man, but Edwards’ concern is more to show that it occurs by means of Spirit infusion. There are shades of neo-Platonism in this approach, one fears. A salvation effected by a fully human Christ as in Barth honours a theology of creation more fully and enables a uniting of creation with covenant in a more satisfying way.

⁶⁶⁴ *Miscellanies* 487, *YE* 13, 589.

⁶⁶⁵ *Miscellanies* 183, *YE* 13, 329.

⁶⁶⁶ Edwards, Jonathan. *The Works Of President Edwards* (Dwight, Sereno E. Ed.) (New York: Carvill, 1829-1830), 8, 265, cited in Plantinga Pauw, 2002a, 144.

Consideration of the three Spirit unions which dominate the theology of Edwards and their relative weightings, helps to account for Edwards' anthropological and soteriological concerns as they were represented in the previous chapter.

On the one hand, it was apparent that Edwards' Christology is a strongly communal or incorporated Christology. The hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in one person as effected by the immediate action of the Spirit is also a Christology which leads to the union of regenerate humans with Christ, in time and for all eternity. Our humanity is joined to his divinity through his humanity. We have maintained that in Edwards' theology of union the pneumatological overshadows the ontological Christological dimension, but even if the first seems compromised, in Edwards' thinking, both together lead to what becomes a very robust doctrine of union of the humans in Christ, albeit elect humans only. Jenson confirms what we have said above, that the Christological union in Edwards is with an eye towards the union of the saints with God in Christ.⁶⁶⁷ The excellency of Christ can really become the excellency of the believer because of the nature of their union. This union happens pneumatologically for Edwards in conversion, by which human hearts are brought into community with Christ. "Conversion saves, according to Edwards," Jenson points out, "not because it elevates our religious life but because it initiates a specific personal identity of Jesus and the believer."⁶⁶⁸ The believer and Christ "may be justly looked upon as the same," says Edwards. Then he adds what is the defining Edwardsean perspective on union with Christ: "Now there is no other way of different spirits' being thus united than by love."⁶⁶⁹ That love is the Spirit who links the incarnate Christ to God and to humans in Christ. Edwards' union with God therefore may include the humanity of Christ, but it is quintessentially a spiritual union. It is this that will best facilitate his desire to make sure that all who claim to be justified saints are demonstrating that this is a reality by their practical sainthood, that is, by evidence that righteousness and holiness have taken root in their hearts through Spirit-engendered conversion and sanctification.

⁶⁶⁷ Jenson, 1988a, 118.

⁶⁶⁸ Jenson, 1988a, 118.

⁶⁶⁹ *Miscellanies* 398, *YE* 13, 463-4.

Even as we have given attention to the Christological dimensions of Edwards' *theosis*, the pneumatological aspect has protruded. There is indeed an underweighting in Edwards' theology of the humanity of Christ and of divine participation of God in humanity, and for all humanity, in Christ, in a manner that contrasts with Barth's theology. This is compatible with the conclusion reached in the previous chapter. Edwards' participation theology is dominated by its pneumatological aspect to an extent that leaves it vulnerable to charges of mysticism and monism. This highly pneumatological view of *theosis*, and therefore his elevation of sanctification over justification, and his strong emphasis on conversion and realized, progressive sanctification, leave Edwards open to another danger, anthropocentricity. His soteriology became more man-centred than he may have realized. His pastoral concerns and controversies seem to have caused him to lose the divine, Christological, objective focus so prominent in his own Reformed heritage. And despite the communal emphasis that increasingly pervades his theology, the individual's concern with assurance still remains uppermost.

Conclusion: Towards a Trinitarian spirituality of intimacy and contemplation

George Marsden has recently commented concerning Edwards' theology, that he viewed "the most essential dynamic of reality as the intra-trinitarian love of God."⁶⁷⁰ If this is so, and I think it is, then that reality is, for Edwards, given his whole corpus, none other than the person of the Holy Spirit. It is my conclusion that union by the Spirit is a hitherto insufficiently emphasized theme in Edwardsean scholarship. He was significantly motivated by a desire to honour the Spirit in his whole theological endeavour, evidence of which is the prominence of the Spirit in the union of the three Persons of the Trinity, the union of the saints with God, and the union of the divine and human natures of Christ.

I also conclude that he attempted to make the Trinity central, rather than peripheral, to Christian theology. The achievement of Jonathan Edwards, within the ethos of the Reformed theology of his day, in opening the Trinity for human relations, and in elevating the person and work of the Spirit in doing so, was remarkable.

However, significant tensions do arise within this highly pneumatological Trinitarian theology, most of which are, it seems to me, imbalances arising from his desire to honour the Spirit. His largely Augustinian mutual love model of the Trinity places a high emphasis on the Spirit as the union and love of the Trinity, but its strictures hinder the valid expression of the hypostatic freedom of the person of the Spirit he looked for. His highly pneumatological version of *theosis* is built on the concept of the Spirit as the means by which the saints enter into the intra-Trinitarian love and communion of the Trinity, and the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures of Christ is built upon the same principle. The combination of these Spirit-unions leads to a de-emphasis on the incarnational

⁶⁷⁰ Marsden, George. From the mss. of a lecture entitled "Jonathan Edwards in the Twenty-first Century", given at St. Andrews University in March, 2003.

participation of Christ in humanity, and a consequent elevation in Edwards' applied soteriology of subjectively experienced sanctification by the Spirit over justification in Christ.

The positive gains, as well as the tensions or deficits of the Trinitarian theology of Edwards as it centred on the nature and inter-relatedness of the three Spirit-unions, are now summarized, along with balancing correctives gained from Patristic thought and dialogue with the theology of Karl Barth, with a view to presenting the relevance of Trinitarian theology, with appropriately balanced Christological *and* pneumatological emphases, for contemporary humanity and Christianity.

Methodology

The importance of the Trinity for theology cannot be overestimated. Theological endeavour, if it is Christian must be centrally *and* methodologically Trinitarian. Edwards understood the importance of the Trinity, and for this he must be credited. Barth went beyond this to making the Trinity and particularly the Christological revelation of it, the primary hermeneutic for Christian theology, and all reality. Edwards was not, regrettably, because of his untimely death, granted the opportunity to systematize his work and to craft a theology that was Trinitarian in form, as well as in content. Whether he would have moved on from a tendency to construct his Trinitarian theology by frequent psychological analogizing 'from below,' and into the hermeneutical practice of making the revelational, Christological event paramount for determining his theology, is an open question. The intra-Trinitarian love of God as the determinant of reality may then have been more Christologically and historically grounded.

Karl Rahner once remarked that one could dispense with the doctrine of the Trinity as false and the major part of religious literature could well remain

virtually unchanged.⁶⁷¹ Rahner's comment if it is true in general, is especially true of Western evangelicalism. Sentiments expressed even recently by one of the "leading evangelical theologians"⁶⁷² of our day, exemplify this. The Trinity remains an almost embarrassing 'mystery' which is often presented alongside other 'attributes' of God. There is little evidence of an understanding within popular Christian thought and practice, of the relevance of the fact that the Trinity, as revealed in Christ and the Spirit, in the economy of salvation, *is who God is*, and that this is the determinative and formative factor influencing all reality - the gospel, spirituality, humanity and all creation. If there is little awareness of the importance of the Trinity in a way that would at least honour its centrality in the theology of one of evangelicalism's greatest influencers, there is even less of the Barthian notion of a Christocentric Trinitarianism and methodology, of analogy from above, and of a Trinitarian ontology of relations. Much of western Christianity unfortunately does not reflect the positive aspects of even Edwards' Trinitarianism. Rather it is the echoes of the anthropocentrism in Edwards' Augustinian and psychological understanding of the Trinity and of sanctification that are heard for the most part in North American evangelical theology, especially. As a result, objective appreciation of Christ and of justification as objective reality, still plays second fiddle in soteriological concerns to the human and subjective experience of conversion, assurance and sanctification.

⁶⁷¹ Rahner, Karl. *The Trinity* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 11.

⁶⁷² A Canadian evangelical has, in a recent review of theological trends the evangelical movement, provided an example of the poor awareness in that tradition of Trinitarian theology. He inappropriately caricatures Trinitarian theologians (inappropriate, especially for Athanasian, Cappadocian or Barthian Trinitarians) in the use of analogy, and appears to chide them for their attempts to elucidate the doctrine of the Trinity. This exemplifies a lack of awareness of the significance of the historic Trinitarian debates. Stackhouse cites Gunton as "arguably the most important theologian of this type" to illustrate his point. Though it acknowledges Gunton's importance, it is a sad and uninformed misrepresentation of Gunton, who would agree about the use of analogy from below. Stackhouse inadvertently illustrates Gunton's concern for the consequences of Augustine's theology for the West, specifically the desire to cover the Trinity in mysterious inscrutability. Stackhouse adds insult to injury by suggesting that Luther and Calvin would surely chide us in the avenue of Trinitarian research "for repeating the scholastic mistake of presuming to venture much beyond the scriptural text into the abyss of Godself." That there is a danger here is to be conceded, but to tar all theologians of the Trinity with one brush is unforgivable. See Stackhouse, John G. Jr. (Ed.). *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method* (Grand Rapids: Baker & Vancouver: Regent College Publishing & Leicester: IVP, 2000), 48.

It is true that Edwards might have delighted in the increased premium placed in the last decade or two on the affections and their influence on behaviour, on relationality rather than religiosity, and on holistically experienced and expressed worship, within our increasingly post-modern and psychologically aware Christian culture. Within especially the trans-denominational charismatic renewal movement, Edwards may have approved of evidences of a touch of the Spirit. One suspects that he would have shaken his head at the fact that his reflections on revival had gone unheeded by those within this movement who have shown an undiscerning obsession with the 'phenomena' often associated with these renewals, which Edwards called the 'no signs' of true renewal. There is reason to think that he would have exhorted Spirit-renewed Christians to show the evidence of the Spirit in their lives through deepened intimacy with the love of the Father and the Son, in the character transformation and loving actions, in the church and in the world, that are the fruit of the Spirit. These issues, as well as that of the anti-intellectualism sometimes present within this movement, Edwards could and can address. However, what he could not do for them in either the mountaintops of their seasons of delight, or their frequent valleys of despair and failure, was to provide a cure for what can, in both seasons, still be an anthropocentric and self-oriented spirituality. This required a different way of seeing. A way of seeing the cosmos and the human soul, through Christological and Trinitarian eyes. To minimize the self and its experience as the subject of theology and spirituality, and to maximize Christ as that subject. And thereby to transform their orientation away from the self, to the Other and to others, in a truly Trinitarian way. This is what Barth could have given to Edwards, and to us.

Barth's appeal to interpret reality within the revelational, Christological paradigm is innately or instinctively appealing. The challenges for Edwards, and I confess for myself, at times, are that on a few occasions, Barth's approach seems to lead to conflict between the Christological and Trinitarian concept of revelation, and the content of biblical revelation of the text, as interpreted by a normal literal hermeneutic. This is true with respect to the humanity of Christ in its moral dimension, and it is also seen with regard to his interpretation of the *hypostases* or 'modes' within the Trinity. The arena in which this arises is that of

the consideration of specific theologies of the Trinity espoused by these two theologians.

The Trinity

A commonality with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, between Edwards and Barth, is that both show evidence of the influence of Augustine, and that both also seek, in significant, but in different ways, to escape his influence. The most obvious Augustinian legacy common to both is with respect to an emphasis, at least as far as the prime conception of the Trinity is concerned, on the unity of the Godhead rather than the triunity.⁶⁷³ A common way in which they differ from Augustine is in negating the tendency to shroud the Trinity in mystery as inscrutable.⁶⁷⁴ Both will ‘say more than has been said,’ but they move from Augustinian influence in different ways. Methodologically, Edwards follows Augustine’s approach in employment of the psychological analogy, but Edwards will ‘say more than has been said’ by appealing to reason. Barth eschews the Augustinian veiling of the Trinity as mystery also, but he does so by throwing off

⁶⁷³ The translator of Augustine in his introduction to the CUA edition has noted this tendency in Augustine’s theology to focus on the unity of God as opposed to the revealed threeness: “(T)he very plan that he (Augustine) follows differs from that of the Greeks. They begin by affirming their belief in the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit according to the Scriptures. . . . But to Augustine it seemed better to begin with the unity of the divine nature, since this is a truth which is demonstrated by reason. . . . The logic of this arrangement is today commonly recognized, and in the textbooks of dogma the Treatise *De Deo Uno* precedes that of *De Deo Trino*.” (McKenna, Stephen, ‘Introduction’ to *Saint Augustine. The Trinity*. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963)). Rahner is convinced that as a result of this separation, salvation history comes to appear irrelevant to the doctrine of God. The consequence of Augustine’s approach is thus the search for the ‘real’ God behind the Three Persons revealed in salvation history, and a modalistic conception of the Trinity (Rahner, Karl. *The Trinity* (New York, Seabury Press, 1974)).

⁶⁷⁴ As LaCugna has indicated, Trinitarian doctrine after Augustine focused on the intradivine relations in the Godhead, creating a disconnect from what is revealed in the incarnation of the Son and the work of the Spirit, and a relocating of the locus of God’s economy within the soul and so radically altering the theoretical basis for the economy. “Medieval Latin theology,” states LaCugna, “following Augustine and reaching its high point in Thomas Aquinas . . . solidified the whole trend toward separating the whole theology of God from the economy of salvation by treating *De Deo Uno* and *De Deo Trino* as discrete treatises.” And then, significantly, she adds, “Theology of the triune God appeared to be added on to consideration of the one God. Unlike the metaphysics of the economy worked out by the Greek Fathers, Scholasticism produced a metaphysics of the inner life of God. It is not coincidental that Christology and pneumatology became irrelevant to theology of God when Trinitarian theology was at its speculative height as a metaphysics of *theologia*.” LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 10-11. Edwards at least overcame the pneumatological irrelevance.

the shackles of Augustinian appeal to analogies from general revelation for elucidation. He will 'say more than has been said' through observation of the historical, Christological revelational event. Barth's appeal to the metaphysics of the economy for his primary source of knowledge concerning the Trinity will enable him to move towards a coalescing of the *oikonomia* and the *theologia*, that is, the economic and the immanent Trinities, and he is greatly concerned to avoid any acceptance of the existence of a God 'back of' the God revealed as He really is, in the economy.⁶⁷⁵ Edwards did not do so, even though his employment of the intra-Trinitarian Love, who is the Spirit who becomes the extra-Trinitarian love to the human elect by pneumatological *theosis*, is a step in this direction.

Hypostatic uniqueness

It is in the development of the 'threeness' of God that Edwards and Barth differ most markedly in their approach. Edwards individuates the *hypostases* in an Idealist fashion within the immanent Trinity, using psychological categories in a manner which, in typical Augustinian fashion, leads to depictions of overly individuated persons, in an anthropocentric manner, that verges on becoming tritheistic. It is as if the prior assumption that God is one within a "One Mind" psychological analogy somehow permits Edwards to individuate the persons without, in his mind, violating the unity of the Godhead. On the one hand, Barth, because he looks to the economy to guide his articulation of hypostatic differentiation, does reflect a Cappadocian ontology of divine 'persons', even if he does prefer the term 'modes of being' to 'persons.' His method of reconciling the one with the three is not strictly an Idealist one, as McCormack has shown, in

⁶⁷⁵ "...the real God would remain behind revelation and we would be back on our quest" (*CD I/1*, 350-351).

For there to be 'good news' of God's taking to Himself precisely that same humanity that cannot approach Him by its own efforts, there needed to be a doctrine of a triplicity which simultaneously stresses the absolute identity of God's being in and through this triplicity. This is what leads to Barth's emphasis on the identity of God's Being as the revealer with God's Being as the revelation. Thus Barth states "if the *tropos apokalypseos* is really a different one from the *tropos huparxeos* and if the *huparxis* is the real being of God, then this means that God in his revelation is not really God (Barth, *CD I/1*, 353). This much is well and good. Torrance hints at the inadequacy of Barth's formulation however, when he poses the question that if the facticity of revelation, in other words its form, and not just its content, involves a doctrine of Trinity, "is it this identity of being which is to be the ground of the doctrine of the Triunity?" (Torrance, 1996a, 214).

that it “does not understand the subjectivity of God as the ideal projection of human subjectivity.” Barth’s is rather, “a critically realistic doctrine of the Trinity which begins, in *a posteriori* fashion, with the fact of divine Self-revelation (and the witness to it of the primitive church) and asks, what must be true of God if God has done this?”⁶⁷⁶

However, Barth, as McCormack has argued, was as far as “he concerned himself with philosophical epistemology at all”, a Kantian Idealist, who through all of his theological endeavour sought to “overcome Kant by means of Kant,” rather than avoiding him.⁶⁷⁷ McCormack’s description of Barth’s method as “critical realism” did in fact point to Barth’s debt to the Kantian philosophical tradition.

As noted in chapter two, therefore, the manner in which Barth articulated the *Seinsweisen* was the result of the wider influence of philosophical Idealism, though not to the extent that Moltmann suggests. Barth’s under-characterization of the Spirit is a consequence also of the influence of Hegelian idealism.⁶⁷⁸ The crucial cause of this was, as we have noted, not incipient ‘modalistic’ tendencies in Barth, but the inadequate integration of the enhypostatic movement represented by the incarnation and specifically the vicarious and priestly roles of Christ within the doctrine of the Trinity. Barth is consequently held back from expressing a fuller and richer conception of the perichoretic energy of the *hypostases*. Thus, in the end, Barth still reflects the Augustinian tendency for the unity of the Godhead to prevail over the threeness.⁶⁷⁹ Barth and Edwards both failed to employ the Cappadocian philosophical revolution of the supremacy of *hypostasis* as an ontological category, and thereby to articulate a oneness of

⁶⁷⁶ McCormack, Bruce L. *Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909-1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 354.

⁶⁷⁷ In a manner that is similar to how Edwards overcame Locke by means of Locke, as Helm describes this in 2003a.

⁶⁷⁸ Torrance, A. 1996a, 245.

⁶⁷⁹ Despite Barth’s protestations against the notion of a discrete ‘I-centre’ or ‘God as singular Subject’, he was not, according to LaCugna, “entirely able to resist using it.” She states that “the only difference is that the divine essence, not the three divine persons, is made the referent of this self-consciousness.” She suggests that Rahner made the same mistake, and as a result, she concludes that “the one self-conscious Subject thus subsists or exists under three modalities” and that “in the end neither Barth nor Rahner was able to break away entirely from the Cartesian starting point” LaCugna, 1991a, 254. The ‘Cartesian starting point’ refers to the ‘extreme individualism of the Cartesian centre of consciousness’.

koinonia with a threeness of *hypostasis*, such as has been re-emphasized in the development of Trinitarian theology since Barth, notably by Zizioulas.⁶⁸⁰

Barth's view of the divine persons as modes of being, therefore, falls short of that of the Cappadocian Fathers in that for Barth, "the essence of God is uni-personal." As the "Sovereign Subject" He is "The God who 'distributes' the divine essence in three modes of being...".⁶⁸¹ This is one of the stress points in Barth's theology. In his invoking of the *concept* of revelation as the basis for his use of *Seinsweise* "independently of the whole biblical testimony to the intra-divine communion as the ground of God's reconciling Self-giving for epistemic communion", he compromises his consistency with the *content* of biblical revelation.⁶⁸²

⁶⁸⁰ Zizioulas, 1995a, and *Being As Communion* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985). See also Torrance's *Persons in Communion* (Torrance, A. 1996a). Unity in the irreducible relationality of each of the persons, has also been stressed by Jüngel (Jüngel, 1982a; see also Jüngel, Eberhard. *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy* (Paul, Garret E. (Trans.)), (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982).

⁶⁸¹ Torrance, A. 1996a, 252. The essential flaw in Barth is as Moltmann states, that he "uses a non-trinitarian concept of the unity of the one God - that is to say, the concept of the identical subject" (Moltmann, 1981a, 144). It should be cautioned that Barth's emphasis on unity in the doctrine of God did not derive from any idealization of mathematical or numerical oneness, nor the idealization of a principle of simplicity, but rather it was a concern with *identity*. Torrance, 1996a, fn.10 alerts us to the fact of the triviality of appeals to the numerals 'one' and indeed, 'three', for the doctrine of the Trinity. In support, he cites Gunton's comments concerning the 'famous and futile quest for analogies of the Trinity in the created world,' their 'weakness is their employment as attempts to illustrate the divine Trinity: The world is used to throw light on God, rather than the other way around, so that attention falls on irrelevancies like the number three rather than on the personal nature of the triune God' (*Persons, Divine and Human*, Eds. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton, (Edinburgh: 1991), 55.). This has definite bearing on Augustine, and Edwards who persisted in their use of analogy 'from below' of this nature. Barth wished, as Torrance suggests, to emphasize that when we meet God's revelation, or are met by the revelation of God, we are met not by part of God, nor by instantiations of the divine, but with the *Person* of God, the identical divine Subject in his singular totality. This is what leads Barth to affirm that what God is toward us he is eternally and antecedently in Himself - "God is action and relatedness antecedently in Himself". Torrance, 1996a, 213-215. Thus, when God meets us we are met by God as he is in Himself. Hence Barth's interpretation of the threeness of God as referring not to "three instances of one deity" but "three events of one deity". *CD*, I/1, 370ff.

⁶⁸² Torrance, A. 1996a, 239. Citing LaCugna's comment that "theological reflection on the nature of God is inseparable from the theology of grace, theological anthropology, Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology" (LaCugna, 1991a, 231), Torrance states that "what is required to be established in dialogue with Barth and in critical assessment of his thought is whether he has provided a sufficiently integrated interpretation of the relations of the divine Triunity to establish, as is necessary, the essential grammar of these other doctrines whose compass extends beyond that of the doctrine of revelation" (Torrance, A. 1996a, 216).

The preoccupation of Barth with the primacy of identity gives rise to an incomplete articulation of how that 'singular' divine identity-in-reiteration relates to the intra-divine relations, which have been made open for human participation, according to the gospel. Barth will describe the openness of the Trinity for humanity in an emphatically Christological way that might well have been completed by Edwards' emphasis on the openness of the Trinity through the Spirit, who is the very essence of the intra-divine relations. Conversely, Edwards' emphasis can tend to be overly pneumatic to the neglect of the groundedness in humanity that Barth's more incarnational emphasis offers.

Trinitarian communion

A more completely *Trinitarian* conception of participation than that in either Edwards or Barth, has been developed by some contemporary Trinitarian theologians,⁶⁸³ by returning to the Cappadocian conception of the Trinity in which the oneness of the three persons is a oneness of communion.⁶⁸⁴ Whereas so much Western thinking is undergirded by Plato's theory of *methexis*, the concept of participation presented in the New Testament as *koinonia* should, as Torrance tells us, "commit us to an irreducibly relational conceptuality denoting a radically interpersonal overlapping or interpenetration of being, where this is conceived in such a way that personal hypostases are fully realized in this and not in any way subsumed by it."⁶⁸⁵ It is this concept that would have prevented Edwards' blurring of the persons of Christ and the Spirit in his Spirit-dominated

⁶⁸³ Zizioulas (1996a), Gunton (1997a), LaCugna (1991a) and Torrance, A. (1996a) are examples. The notion of union in communion is also supported by Moltmann, who writes, "The concept of person must ... in itself contained concept of unitedness or at-oneness, just as, conversely, the concept of God's at-oneness must in itself contained a concept of three Persons." Moltmann, 1981a, 150. Moltmann's terminology of 'united-ness and at-oneness' tends to be too individualistic, and therefore tritheistic, however.

⁶⁸⁴ This union in communion is further expressed by Torrance in this manner: "Theologically speaking, *koinonia* designates a union in God which is such in its transcendent realisation that it can also be spoken of as an *intra*-personal (in addition to *inter*-personal) communion intrinsic to the being of the one, eternal God. In other words, it allows us to speak simultaneously of the person (singular) of God and the persons (plural) of the Trinity. This dynamic in God is such that the question as to which is more fundamental between union or communion is inappropriate and fundamentally anthropomorphic or, indeed, cosmo-morphic - deriving, that is, from a failure to think out of the unique form which the divine communion takes *ad extra*." Torrance, A. 1996a, 256, 257.

⁶⁸⁵ Torrance, A. 1996a, 256.

Christology. This would also have removed the seeming lack of clarity in the identity of the *hypostases* in a Trinity conceived in Idealist terms. This understanding of persons-in-communion would have provided a legitimate way for Edwards to ‘honour the Spirit’ by ascribing to the Spirit the status a distinct divine *person*, not an anthropomorphic individual, through whom the Trinity would be rendered materially open, bringing to full realization the openness created by the participation of Christ in humanity. His concept of *theosis* might also have been more categorically acquitted of the charge of monism if it had been conceived as the *ekstasis* arising from the divine *koinonia* of the appropriately defined persons of the Son and the Spirit.

A question of even greater difficulty than that of the *hypostases* relates to that of their relation to the essence of God and the concept of communion. Does the concept of union in communion presuppose the prior concept of being or essence, and is unity of being or essence more fundamental than union in communion? The oneness of God and the cause of divinity is defined by the Cappadocians, for example, in terms of the person of the Father (the *monarchia*) who was conceived as the *fons deitatis* or *arche*.⁶⁸⁶ Torrance argues that an understanding of union in communion obviates the question. Here he comments favorably on the *a posteriori* theology Barth sought to provide, “which thinks *out of* the primordial nature of the triune communion that is to be identified with God and which does not project foreign categories of divine subjectivity on to the Trinity,” and which, therefore, “should not lead to those kinds of debate which is so divided East and West.” Torrance adds that “if Barth's discussion had integrated more effectively the notions of *koinonia* and ‘essence’ or ‘being’, this would have opened the door to a conception of the divine economy which involved a richer integration of communion and communication, a participative ‘worship model’ in interaction with his ‘revelation model’, and an exposition of the triunity of revelation in terms of the *mutuality* of the divine communion.” Had he been less ambiguous in his affirmation of the primordial nature of the interpersonal communion of the Trinity, Barth could have exposed the futility of

⁶⁸⁶ As in Zizioulas, who, following the Cappadocian Fathers, opts for the Father as the source of unity.

any attempt to “determine ultimate origins or ontological grounds in terms of either monist or static notions of divine substance or essence, or of monadic, Cartesian conceptions of a divine ego or ‘subject of consciousness’ - both of which appear to influence to some degree, sections of [his] exposition.”⁶⁸⁷

A doctrine of the Trinity which affirms the mutuality of loving communion made available for humanity in Christ, and by the Spirit, draws together into ultimate identification, source of being and the communion of the Triunity. This is the notion of the open Trinity as described by Moltmann.⁶⁸⁸ The communion of God is not a qualification of a more foundational category of being or substance. The triune communion characterizes reality at the most fundamental level. As Torrance states, “The communion of the Trinity as such constitutes the *arche* and *telos* of all that is. It provides the hermeneutical criterion of all that has existence (of good as well as evil) and compels us to conceive and reinterpret Being in terms of divine personhood and the ultimacy of the intradivine personal communion.”⁶⁸⁹ Barth understood that the critical controls on the understanding of this would have to remain radically theological (and therefore *a posteriori*) and not anthropological, as it became in Augustine (and Edwards). Thus he affirms: “This is the unique divine Trinity in the unique divine unity.”⁶⁹⁰

A Trinitarianism of ‘persons in communion’ does not rule out differentiation of the persons and so it does not cancel the Cappadocian concept of the Father as *Monarchia*. An essential feature of personhood as *per* Zizioulas is the concept of uniqueness and irreplaceability and incommunicable irreducibility.⁶⁹¹ The Trinity is not to be conceived of as archetypal communism. It is a ‘communion of persons’, not a communistic society of the nameless and faceless. The unique identity of the Father, that is, his ‘mode of being’, as the Cappadocians would

⁶⁸⁷ Torrance, A. 1996a, 257-258.

⁶⁸⁸ Moltmann, 1981a, *passim*.

⁶⁸⁹ Torrance, A. 1996a, 259.

⁶⁹⁰ *CD I/1*, 364.

⁶⁹¹ Barth is clear on the unique identity and irreducibility of the Father as Father and *fons* (*CD I/1*, 390ff.), and also with respect to the Son (309ff.) and the Spirit (451). Edwards also affirms the irreplaceability of the Father as “the fountain of the Godhead” (*Essay*, 122, “The Father is) and the irreducibility and irreplaceability of the Son and Spirit also (*Essay, passim*), but his starting point is the *theologia* as opposed to the *oikonomia*, as in Barth.

say, is intrinsic to His name – a Father generates, and He generates specifically a Son and the Spirit. That which is unique and intrinsic to His name as the Son, is that he is generated; and that which is unique and intrinsic to His name as the Spirit is to be spirated. This does not imply subordinationism, or any lack of essential equality. The Father is not honoured if what he begets is less than His equal, and his unique identity as Father does not in any way threaten a perfect communion of persons-in-relation.

Union with God

Perhaps the most surprising element in Edwards, given his western and Reformed setting is his exposition of a theology of *theosis*. I have suggested that, as with his doctrine of the Trinity, the origin of this may also have been Augustine,⁶⁹² rather than the Cappadocians. Edwards' pneumatological mechanism for achieving *theosis* supports this suggestion, as does the fact that eastern notions of this doctrine tend to be synergistic. The effect of an emphasis on deification in Edwards facilitated his desire to honour the Spirit within the economy of God's salvation of humankind. Whilst on the one hand, Edwards' emphasis on union with God by the Spirit resulted in a raising of the profile of sanctification and its experiential human aspects, over justification, in his soteriology, and this was accompanied by a hypostasizing of grace, the positive aspects of this doctrine within his understanding of sanctification should not be overlooked. It enabled Edwards to present a doctrine of sanctification grounded in the filial identity of believers as sons of God, and focused on their being, rather than merely their behaviours, and particularly on their being-in-communion. It enabled him to stress within a revival context especially, the importance of loving relationship as the mark of true spirituality, as opposed to biblical and theological knowledge, on the one hand, and as opposed to experience of emotional and physical phenomena, on the other.

⁶⁹² It is of interest to note that Edwards is referred to as the 'American Augustine' by H. Richard Niebuhr. *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), xvi.

For someone of Edwards' intellectual stature, and his rationalistic influences, the de-emphasis on intellectual knowledge as the measure of spirituality, is surprising. This should not be misconstrued to mean that Edwards was anti-intellectual. The pursuit of theological development by those able to do so, would come under the category of loving God with the mind. However, love was the essence of spirituality, because the Spirit who had infused believers was love, and because by his infusion, they had become sons of God participating in the mutual love of the Father for the Son. The criterion of love or relationality in sanctification, which reflects the teaching of Jesus with regard to the primacy of the 'greatest commandment,' is a cherished notion within the traditions of *theosis*,⁶⁹³ whether western or eastern, and crucial to their understanding of human transformation. Edwards is therefore recommended as a subject for study in light of a resurgence of interest in this doctrine which has been noted within western⁶⁹⁴ and even evangelical theology.⁶⁹⁵

The positive advances gained by Edwards' emphasis on union with God in the doctrine of salvation were tempered by his particular way of construing *theosis*, however. The opening of the Trinity for human relations flowed in Edwards, not from the *koinonia* communion of the divine persons of the Trinity, but rather through the Spirit as the nexus of that communion. This was in keeping with his desire to honour the Spirit. A *theosis* so conceived, does, as we noted, however, invite criticism with respect to incipient monism. We have noted that Barth's Christologically grounded participation model would have balanced Edwards' approach and perhaps have led him to a less mystical approach to spirituality. On other hand, we have noted some of the weaknesses in Barth's understanding of, and his relative under-emphasis on, the Spirit.

⁶⁹³ For a full expression of this in the Eastern tradition see Lossky, V. *Orthodox Theology* (Crestwood New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978), and *The Mystical Theology*, 27; Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* I.1, 1000A Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works (CW)* (Luibheid, C. Trans.) (London: SPCK, 1987), 135ff.

⁶⁹⁴ *Theosis* has in recent years received attention within Reformed/Orthodoxy dialogue. Refer to the bibliography for details.

⁶⁹⁵ The evangelical, Robert Rakestraw, in "Becoming Like God: An Evangelical Doctrine of Theosis," (*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 40 (June 1997)) draws attention to a growing interest in *theosis* within the evangelical tradition. C.S. Lewis, an influencer of evangelicals, makes use the idea of *theosis* in *Mere Christianity* (London: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1952), 153.

Authentic spirituality - Revivalism

Edwards is to be credited with presenting a vibrant applied pneumatology within human experience, thereby championing a spirituality which emphasized the primacy of love as affection and action, in community. He took seriously the expectations of life in the Spirit as this is anticipated by Jesus' teaching in John 14-16,⁶⁹⁶ in the experience of the early church, and in the teaching of the apostles. The tendency towards cerebrally dominant but passionless Christianity in his Reformed heritage is not present in Edwards.

Edwards' tendencies to make too much of human subjectivity in experiencing the Spirit are acknowledged. Yet given that so often in the history of the Christian church, lifeless religion and nominalism has prevailed, Edwards' over-emphasis is understandable, and he has something to say to that malaise. Edwards' at times obsessive concern with revival and with a revivalistic understanding of church history, is also acknowledged. Yet in the midst of seasons of renewal that do come upon the church he has so much to contribute to an understanding of what it means to exert pastoral leadership in that environment. He would have something to say to the tendency to control and quench the Spirit, on the one hand, because of fear of unusual manifestations, or 'disorder',⁶⁹⁷ in church worship. He would also have something to say to the tendency to indiscriminately embrace everything that happens in these seasons, on the other. His criteria of 'loving affections and actions' for assessing the authenticity of a work of the Spirit in the human heart, are perennially valid.

⁶⁹⁶ The expectancy of Jesus with respect to the level of intimacy that he and his Father and his disciples would enjoy after his ascension because of the outpouring and indwelling of the Spirit ("I will come to you ... we will come to him and make our home in him" John 14:18, 23), seems to be high, as is the power that this would unleash in their lives ("greater things than these will you do because I am going to the Father" John 14:12).

⁶⁹⁷ What might be considered 'disorderly' varies within church cultures. What Paul permits in 1 Corinthians 14, for example, would go far beyond the comfort zone of many churches in Anglo-Saxon culture. It is interesting that the rule of thumb that Paul passes on for church leaders in this passage is that of the community. It is a Trinitarian principle – is what is happening, 'for the other,' does it edify the community, and does it elucidate the search of the seeker rather than confound it? Edwards might ask, 'Does it reflect beauty and harmony in the community?'

Christology

We have noted that Edwards' ability to refute charges of monism and mysticism in his theology of pneumatological *theosis* might have been overcome by a more robust incarnational Christology. He places strong emphasis with regard to the person of Christ on the Spirit and specifically the Spirit's origination of the humanity of Christ, and the Spirit's creation of the hypostatic union. By this work of the Spirit, Christ's humanity is protected from the moral corruption, though not the metaphysical imperfections, of Adamic humanity. Christ's humanity is of a new order. He is the "last Adam," and as such not "from the dust of the earth," but the "man from heaven" who is "a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45-47). In this Christ of spiritual union, the humanity of Christ is de-emphasized with respect to his humanity. The hypostatic union is likened to the union within the immanent Trinity, and is anticipative of union of the saints with God by pneumatological union.

Edwards' Christology, for the most part, I have adjudged to be "incarnational", as opposed to "inspirational," in light of his emphasizing the deity of Christ over his humanity. Barth's was more evenly assessed with respect to this classification. The more thoroughly 'ontological' conception of Barth's incarnational Christology leads to a more representative participational soteriology. His emphasis on Christ becoming fully human inspires those in Christ, as they live out their sanctification journeys as humans in the creational order and in identity with Christ died and risen, overcoming 'pride' and 'sloth'. The fullness of identification of Christ as 'fellow human' is inspiring also from the perspective of what he, as representative of all humanity, has accomplished with respect to justification as a *fait accompli* for all humanity, and indeed the whole created order. The pursuit of sanctification is carried out restfully in the joy of already accomplished justification. It was concluded that Barth's soteriology is one primarily of Christological participation,⁶⁹⁸ whereas that of

⁶⁹⁸ Barth did have a more pneumatic phase according to McCormack, between his Anhypostatic-Enhypostatic phase and the final phase (McCormack, 1995a, 328). After the doctrine of election was settled in its Christological form (the influence of Pierre Maury has been documented,

Edwards is more pneumatological. A combination of these emphases would, one suspects, greatly benefit the pursuit of sanctification of the contemporary believer, given a tendency of some to venture into triumphalistic and ultimately discouraging expectations of overly pneumatological views of sanctification, on the one hand, and the tendency of others who rely passively on their justification in Christ and expect too little by way of real transformation in this life.

In some ways each of these theologians fell short of embracing all of the three Christological movements which enrich humanity in Christ.

Three Christological Movements

There are *three* movements of the Son of God in the reconciliation and redemption of humanity, as revealed in the New Testament are as follows:

- (i) The first is the downward participation of the Son, who is fully God (the necessary *anhypostasis*), and who becomes fully human (*enhypostasis*). This includes his incarnation, his active obedience in life and his passive obedience in the death of the cross, for us, and in our stead. For humans in union with Christ, this involves the forensic removal of the guilt of sin (Romans 3) as well as the crucifying of the sin principle at work in human flesh (Romans 6). This achieves justification, and it is the basis for sanctification in its mortification sense.
- (ii) The second movement is Christ's enhypostatic movement in the resurrection and ascent to heaven, and then his ministry as our great high priest, for us and in our stead, at the right hand of the Father. Justification is ratified thereby (Romans 4:13) and sanctification, in its vivifying sense, is made possible by this also (Romans 6, Hebrews 10:9-14).

McCormack, 1995a, 455-8), Barth's theology would, in its most developed phase, be Christologically grounded and Christocentric.

- (iii) The third movement is in the descent of the Spirit (Romans 8), as the alter ego of Christ, to make the presence of Christ as real in them as he was to his disciples on earth. This is, in a sense, therefore, the third movement *of Christ* by his perichoretic participation with and in the Spirit.

In assessing the Christology of Edwards and Barth with reference to these three movements, I wish to draw three conclusions:

- (i) The first is that Edwards in his highly pneumatic concept of the incarnation runs the risk of neglecting the full enhypostatic reality of Christ, and of compromising the benefits, therefore, of both the downward and upward movements of Christ. Edwards' route to an ultimately healed humanity is vicarious to be sure, but his emphasis is more on the forensic accomplishments of the active and passive obedience of Christ for the believer, and it is for the believer only.
- (ii) Secondly, it is my judgement that both Edwards and Barth neglect an aspect of the upward movement of Christ, that is, his high priestly ministry, an area of theology which merits considerable further study.⁶⁹⁹
- (iii) Thirdly, Barth also neglects, at first appearance, at any rate, the second 'downward' movement of Christ, in the Spirit's ministry

⁶⁹⁹ James Torrance, in *Worship, Community And The Triune God Of Grace* (The Didsbury Lectures) (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1996), speaks to this issue. Emphasis on objectivity in worship, not merely with respect to Christ as the object of worship, but as 'worship leader' among his people, initiating and presenting the worship of the saints by the Spirit to the Father in Trinitarian communion, is a rich concept rarely spoken of, and even more rarely entered into. "Experiential" worship is a value which has been increasingly honoured in many evangelical and charismatic churches in the last two decades. This explosion of new worship music and devotion of significant time in services for this worship in many churches is a forward step in light of the staid and cerebrally dominant and passionless ethos that once prevailed. Its emphasis is of course heavily subjective. It will be a further step forward for that worship to gain the High Priestly and Trinitarian perspective Torrance envisages. This is, I think, the 'missing jewel' of the 'missing jewel' Tozer once spoke of. (Tozer, A. W. *Worship, The Missing Jewel* (Camp Hill, PA.: Christian Publications, 1992).

within the believer. By contrast, in order to ‘honour the Spirit,’ Edwards over-emphasizes the spiritual union of believers brought about by the third movement of Christ by the Spirit. Edwards exalts sanctification and pneumatology over justification and Christology, and in so doing, exalts human experience over divine reality, that is, he becomes anthropocentric in his pastoral concerns.

I am not suggesting that Edwards presented a gospel of the Spirit alone. I am of the opinion that he avoids the danger of what Oliver O’Donovan ascribes to “successive revival movements, from the Montanists on.” This was that “by emphasizing the inward moral power of the Holy Spirit unchristologically,” they “ended up bound into the most terrible legalism.”⁷⁰⁰ Edwards would, however, have benefited from O’Donovan’s appeal for the integration of the subjective and objective aspects of salvation, and in particular, his assertion that “the freedom realized in *our* subjectivity by the Spirit is the same freedom as that which Jesus first achieved in *his* subjectivity – ‘objectively’ from our point of view.”⁷⁰¹ O’Donovan speaks of Christian freedom to fulfil the Christian ethic as that which “must already be an aspect of our being-in-Christ” and “the participation in Christ’s authority within the created order.”⁷⁰² The Christian ethic is not merely distinguished from obedience to the law in the old covenant by its “subjective moral power,” but as a consequence of the resurrection of the incarnate Christ which takes us back to and vindicates the created order, the *content* of that ethic is elevated such that moral agents in Christ are empowered as sons to interpret “*new situations*” sharing in the authority “realized in history by Christ Himself.”⁷⁰³ The grounding of Christ in creation and history ensures that human freedom in Christ is not freedom from the moral law. It is not “Christian morality without rules” or “normless ethics.”⁷⁰⁴ Rather, as O’Donovan indicates, “we must complete our account of Christian freedom by saying that the Spirit forms

⁷⁰⁰ O’Donovan, Oliver. *Resurrection and moral order: An outline for evangelical ethics* (Leicester, UK: APOLLOS; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, second edition, 1994), (hereafter “O’Donovan, 1994a”), 24.

⁷⁰¹ O’Donovan, 1994a, 24.

⁷⁰² O’Donovan, 1994a, 24.

⁷⁰³ O’Donovan, 1994a, 24.

⁷⁰⁴ O’Donovan, 1994a, 25.

and brings to expression the appropriate pattern of free response to objective reality.”⁷⁰⁵ This is the ethic of love, “the overall shape of Christian ethics, the form of the human participation in created order,” but again, that which was “historically realized in the humanity of Christ.” O’Donovan speaks of the necessity of both the ‘wisdom’ or objective sense of love, that is, “the intellectual apprehension of the order of things which disclose how each being stands in relation to each other,” as well as its affective or subjective aspect defined as ‘delight.’⁷⁰⁶

Edwards did articulate just such an ethic of love. As I have concluded, however, Edwards’ theology lacks in creational and incarnational grounding which leaves it open to an over-emphasis on the subjective, or ‘delight’ aspect of love, and therefore to some measure of prescriptiveness with regard to the *ordo salutis*, though not the same extent as his Puritan forbears. Barth too embraced an ethic of love. It might be said that Barth’s theology of conversion and sanctification leaned in the opposite direction to that of Edwards, however, such that his preoccupation with the objective reality of Christ and the Christological participation of humanity, appears to neglect the subjective, pneumatological ‘experience’ of the participants in salvation, and such that the emphasis in Barth’s ethic of love is on its ‘wisdom,’ as oppose to the ‘delight’ aspect.

Edwards sees Spirit-infusion largely as an experientially verifiable reality, within the human subject of salvation, causing him to create a large nature-grace distinction, and a greater divide between the Christian and the non-Christian. This leads to a high degree of emphasis on the subjective experience of sanctification in all its aspects, on individual predestination, and in adherents to this theology, some sense of insecurity that pervades the experience of the intimate love of the Father and the Son mediated by the Spirit’s indwelling. Barth, by contrast, emphasizes the enhypostatic union of Christ with all humanity and therefore the universal justification of the whole creation, including all humanity. In down-playing the spiritual union brought about by the Spirit, Barth

⁷⁰⁵ O’Donovan, 1994a, 25.

⁷⁰⁶ O’Donovan, 1994a, 26.

runs the risk of appearing to embrace universalism, in order to exalt Christ and his full, 'real,' and therefore efficacious, participation in humanity and procurement of justification, for humanity. In the perceived relative down-playing of the subjective aspects, or the experience of the human subject, in salvation, might be accused of encouraging nominalism. A fuller understanding of his emphasis on 'being' rather than experience, of what he means by 'acknowledgement,' and of his view of the self as having no meaning apart from its being in Christ,⁷⁰⁷ he will, on the other hand, be seen to represent what is a healthy and holistic spirituality of contemplation. It is one of joyful restfulness in the 'Yes' of Christ's justification, a joyful looking-away from the subjective self to the objectively real Christ. His is a spirituality of invocation⁷⁰⁸ and loving action in community.

Relevance to Contemporary Evangelical Spirituality

Given that Jonathan Edwards might be considered to have been a key influencer in the birth of the evangelical movement of Christianity, with its high emphasis on conversion and life transformation, it is of interest to reflect on how he might react to its present ethos and character. Sociological analysis has apparently shown that the moral behaviours of evangelical Christians and the general population do not differ significantly.⁷⁰⁹ The irony of this is that sanctification, the Christian life, and subjective experience of God, are often the primary

⁷⁰⁷ On 'acknowledgement' as action, as cognitive and as interpersonal, and on Barth's view of the self, see chapter 1, "Beyond Cartesianism: Self, World, and Experience in Barth's Early Thought," in Mangina, 2001a.

⁷⁰⁸ In *The Christian Life*, (*Church Dogmatics*, IV/4, Lecture Fragments, (Bromiley, Geoffrey, (Trans.), Drewes, Hans-Anton, and Jüngel, Eberhard, (Ed.'s)), (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981)) Barth presents the primary work of reconciliation ethics as "the humble and resolute, the frightened and joyful *invocation* (*Anrufung*) of the gracious God in gratitude, praise, and above all petition." (43) In prayer, the *analogia fidei* is realized for Barth. "Prayer" for Barth, as Mangina notes, "is faith at work, faith already undertaking its inexorable movement toward the active love of God and neighbour." (Mangina, 20001a, 172). The Lord's Prayer in particular is his central text for the ethics of reconciliation. Mangina comments that "Christian address to God is not realized in the depths of the self, but rather in utterance, audible speech (or even singing)." Obedience to the command to pray brings about 'real' conversation with a God who not only speaks, but listens. By his divine agency, and only in this way, is our genuine human agency set free, in such a way that God "lets his own action be "co-determined" by ours." (Mangina, 2001a, 175).

⁷⁰⁹ 131 measures of attitude, behaviours, values and beliefs revealed no visible differences between Christians and non-Christians in North America. The Barna Report, 2000, The Barna Research Group, Ltd. (www.barna.org).

concern of evangelical preaching and theological emphasis. When it comes to assessing the spirituality of modern and postmodern evangelicals over the past two decades, there is an index of assessment which is seldom considered. It is the objectivity/subjectivity index. Despite a greater emphasis on relationality than introspection within postmodernity, the preoccupation with the subjective self, and with man rather than God, still prevails. Bestsellers in the Christian book shops are not expositions of the glory and beauty and adequacy of Christ and the objective realities of the justification and sanctification he has effected for us. Contemporary evangelical humanity is still turned in on itself. Suggesting Edwards' Trinitarian, Spirit theology as a solution to this preoccupation, would be the answer many evangelical theologians might give.

Radical Re-orientation

In fairness to Edwards, an important feature of his approach was his marriage of subjective affections with objective realities. He insisted that authentic religious affections are always accompanied by a conviction of the "reality and certainty of divine things."⁷¹⁰ This is exemplified with respect to doctrines such as the Trinity of which Edwards speaks in the following terms: "such doctrines ... are glorious inlets into the knowledge and view of the spiritual world, and the contemplation of supreme things; the knowledge of which, I have experienced how much it contributes to the betterment of the heart."⁷¹¹ In appealing to Edwards for a solution to the ailments of the contemporary church, drawing attention to this objective aspect of Edwards' approach is important. This aspect of Edwardsean spirituality would go some way towards a radical re-orientation of the Christian culture. I have contended, however, that Edwards' pastoral concerns became increasingly focussed on the subjective and inward aspects of salvation. I have shown that Edwards' elevation of Spirit-theology, in light of his revival experiences, leads to an elevation of sanctification over justification in soteriology, in a manner which makes the subject of soteriology, man, and his subjective experience of regeneration and sanctification, rather than Christ.

⁷¹⁰ *Religious Affections*, 291-292.

⁷¹¹ *Miscellanies 181, YE 13*, 328.

Edwards, despite his increasing emphasis on a spirituality of the relational, did little to avert the subjectivity obsession of North American and perhaps much of western, evangelical culture. His elevating of the Spirit as the nexus of intra-divine relationality within a psychological understanding of the Trinity, and the opening of the Trinity by the Spirit for human relations in analogous Spirit-union fashion, within a psychological framework, is what limited Edwards' ontology of relations and maintained the inward preoccupation of his spirituality. The elevation of the Spirit in his theology translated into an elevation of spiritual subjectivity in practical theology. Assurance of salvation therefore remains as a primary and interminable concern, and resolution is still self-orientated in Edwards' approach even if communal relationships and communal affirmation are the tests.

When it comes to analysis of what constitutes real saving faith, authentic regeneration, and sanctification that has affective integrity and relational harmony, none can probe the depths more fully than Edwards, and his Puritan tradition. The nominal church-goer, the apathetic church, the moralist and the pharisaic behaviourist, need to hear the call to a spirituality of the integrity of the affections and loving action. The counselling and psychotherapeutic approach of addressing the affective roots of behaviour in the unconscious and sub-conscious might even be said to honour the depth-view of depravity of the Reformed-Puritan heritage.⁷¹² However, it seems to me that what may be required for the balancing of this approach is a more contemplative paradigm by which Christian spirituality is 'stood on its head' by the recovery of an orientation away from the self towards Christ, thereby averting the excessive 'tunnelling' into the human self in a direction which seems at times to provide answers to the wrong question asked of the wrong subject.

⁷¹² Richard Lovelace has referred to this in *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1979). Larry Crabb's pilgrimage into an approach to therapy that integrates Freudian and post-Freudian approaches to psychotherapy with a Reformed-Puritan anthropology, on into his emphasis on healing through the 'connection' of the soul in new covenant community, symbolizes the journey and also the limitations of an Edwardsean, Puritan view of spirituality. His latter emphasis moves in the right direction, but the healed human still appears to have an *in cuvatu in se* orientation. The Christological, objective and contemplative approach of Barth and others after him in constructing a more fully Trinitarian way of being and living, has much to contribute to the quest for human transformation.

Barth has a tendency to ‘unask’ questions. The modern question of appropriation is ‘unasked’ by Barth, for example, by changing the subject of the question. The subject of human appropriation becomes one declared by God’s triune identity and disclosed in the history of the One Man, his incarnation, death and resurrection. One can affirm what Mangina has found: “The overturning of modern assumptions is therapeutic.”⁷¹³ I would like to recommend Barth’s objective and *participio Christi* sanctification approach to the Christian life, as having at least some measure of value for the contemporary evangelical culture needs, whether in its modern or postmodern forms.

Pre-modern Postmoderns?

It is interesting to observe claims made by Lee and Daniel that Edwards and Barth are “postmodern” in their relational approach to theology. The Niebuhrian⁷¹⁴ school of interpretation suggests a similar conclusion with respect to Edwards. That both theologians do in their emphasis on love and relationality have an appeal for postmoderns is undeniable. However, claims beyond this warrant closer inspection. With respect to Barth having a ‘postmodern’ approach to anthropology, for example, this seems to fail to recognize what Mangina so aptly unveils, that de-emphasis on the ‘self’ in Barth and post-modernity is a “passing tactical convergence”. For Barth, Mangina notes, the ‘self’ of “the lordly Cartesian ego is a myth – perhaps the preeminent myth of modernity.”⁷¹⁵ For Barth objectively there exists only the concrete reality of the whole person, the new human being created in Christ Jesus. Human identity is grounded solely in Christ Jesus, and this as Mangina points out, exposes “the lie at the heart of modernity’s self-assertive hubris (I can/ I must be everything) and post-

⁷¹³ Mangina, 2001a, 200.

⁷¹⁴ Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 219-220. *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), Niebuhr, Richard R. *Streams of Grace: Studies of Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William James* (Kyoto: Doshisha University Press, 1983). A Kantian tendency towards skepticism of any doctrinal certitude characterizes Niebuhrian theology in a way that does not reflect Edwards accurately.

⁷¹⁵ Mangina, 2001a, 200.

modernity's self-absorbed despair (I am after all nothing)."⁷¹⁶ Barth's polemic against both of these human tendencies, which feed off each other, is, as Mangina suggests, his exposure of pride and sloth in *CD IV/2*.⁷¹⁷ The remedy lies in the enhypostatic movements of Christ bringing justification and sanctification. Barth's alternative to the conflicted modern-postmodern existence is the reconciliation of the human to God in Christ. Thereby God has given us a share in Christ's prophetic work such that in a space created and, defined by these divine reconciling actions, the human person can *be* something definite. The self-receding nature of this is indeed a fortuitous convergence with that of postmodernity. The new identity for Barth is that of the life of an elected one named for participation in fellowship with God with a story that is a unique testimony to divine grace. The identity of the human person is its final destiny in Christ in God. God's action in Christ is the ultimate 'metaphysical' context in which we find ourselves. The broken and sinful lives of Christians in the 'now' serve as parables of grace in a way that points forward to the 'not yet'. As such they are prophetic and therefore they must be active as witnesses "who in their fragile faithfulness point beyond themselves to Another."⁷¹⁸

A relational ontology?

With regard to the issue of a fully relational ontology, both Edwards and Barth make significant advances, but each ultimately falls short of the mark. With regard to relations within the Godhead, and therefore in humanity, Edwards is hindered by his devotion to the psychologically conceived and orientated approach to the intra-divine concept of love, that is, the Spirit. In how this affects human relations, the Spirit emphasis in the experience of salvation tempers the relational approach to spirituality by its concern with the profound introspection and self-absorption of its individual subject.

A fully relational ontology is not convincingly present in Barth either, however. Deddo's positive assessment is that "personal relationality seems to be present

⁷¹⁶ Mangina, 2001a, 201.

⁷¹⁷ Mangina, 2001a, 201.

⁷¹⁸ Mangina, 2001a, 202.

from the beginning of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, even if this does not become clear until later on."⁷¹⁹ In how this works itself out into Barth's anthropology, he sees ample evidence of the presence of the notion of 'persons in relation'. Torrance, however, has given reason as to why sanctification of human persons by means of communion with a Trinity made open though the incarnate Christ may not be as readily discernible as it might have been in Barth. Within his doctrine of the *hypostases* within the Trinity his already preference for the use 'modes of being' over 'persons' reveals that his revelation model does cause him to inadequately articulate the dynamic relations of mutual love within the Trinity. He also "fails to integrate an adequate conception of semantic participation (as this is constitutive of human thought and understanding)."⁷²⁰ As Torrance suggests, "A doxological model which balanced metaphors of 'address' and 'meeting' with those equally important New Testament notions of *koinonia*, communion and participatory being and worship could have addressed these concerns much more adequately."⁷²¹

There is no doubt that the concept of Trinitarian relationality has been advanced by Trinitarian scholarship since Barth, especially by return to a more Eastern and Cappadocian conception of it. However, Barth's less subjective, more Christological and contemplative approach has much to commend it as a more realistic and joyful approach to transformation in participation.

A Spirituality of Intimacy and Contemplation

With regard to how Edwards and Barth envisage transformation through the Trinitarian participation of the Christian, I offer the following summary observations. Edwards does, on the one hand, explicitly and in his whole orientation in theology foster a doxological orientation in spirituality. Edwards' spirituality might therefore be considered to be Trinitarian in that it has an

⁷¹⁹ Deddo, Gary W. *Karl Barth's Theology of Relations, Trinitarian, Christological and Human: towards an ethic of the family* (in the series, *Issues in Systematic Theology*, #4), (New York: Peter Lang Pub. Inc., 1999), 24,25.

⁷²⁰ Torrance, A. 1996a, 261.

⁷²¹ Torrance, A. 1996a, 261.

orientation towards the praise and glory of the Father. However, the emphasis within the Trinitarian theology of Edwards is towards the human participation of the saints in God by the infusion of the Spirit. Edwards' view of spirituality therefore flows out of an emphasis on human participation of the saint in God by the Spirit. Furthermore, his psychological understanding of the Trinity leads correspondingly to a psychological orientation in sanctification, even when loving action becomes his acid test of spirituality. Edwards, because of his pneumatic emphasis expects more by way of experiential intimacy and transformation in the 'now' aspect of the kingdom than Barth. However, his model of spirituality, corresponding to his psychological understanding of the Trinity, is one in which the pursuit of transforming intimacy with God by the Spirit entails a significant degree of contemplation of the human soul rather than the contemplation of Him. Edwards' pursuit of transformation in this life and even in the heavenly experience of the beatific vision, is one in which intimacy, enabled by the Spirit, is more important than vision of God. The pursuit of delightful intimacy of the saint in union with Christ on earth is carried out in tension with an introspective and psychological orientation that sows doubt about the reality of the union, and fosters a self- rather than a 'for the other' Trinitarian orientation.

Barth, by contrast, is much more concerned about the divine participation of God in humanity in Christ. Barth's chief concern in spirituality is therefore not the experience of the human, but that there be a looking away to Christ, in whom and by whom, we interpret our experience. He is concerned much less with introspective reflection on the experiential state of the human soul, and much more with the contemplative looking away to the 'reality' of the One for the many. This 'contemplative' approach does not imply that Barth's spirituality is a mystical one. Prayer, in Barth's way of thinking, is not the deep searching of the self. It is a relational participation with the triune God, and it is real speech to the Father who listens, and in such a way that sets human agency free. Thus, Barth's is a spirituality of contemplation and ethical action, in balance, and its chief concern is the more fundamentally Trinitarian matter of the restoration of human personhood in the personhood of Christ, and the orientation of human persons

towards the Divine 'Other' and then the human 'other.' This is communion among persons, that is, intimacy, but intimacy in which the concern is with the other and not the experience of that intimacy itself. By suggesting that Barth encourages a 'contemplative', spirituality, I mean that Barth would have us be Christocentric in the fundamental orientation of our being, and incarnational, though not anthropocentric, in our pursuit of holiness. For Barth, the triune God is not only good, but is 'the good'. The perspectives of Barth therefore provide a corrective for Edwards in the pursuit of a truly Trinitarian faith which is both Christological and pneumatological.

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