

Towards a Model of Indwelling: A Conversation with Jonathan Edwards and William Alston

Ray S. Yeo
Carolina Graduate School of Divinity

Abstract: In this paper I attempt to provide a model for understanding the theological, psychological and metaphysical dimensions of the Spirit's indwelling in sanctifying grace by synthesizing Jonathan Edwards' theological psychology with William Alston' model of indwelling. However, despite its promise, the Edwards-Alston synthesis faces substantial difficulties associated with a literal and direct union between divinity and humanity. Nevertheless, the difficulties could be avoided if we take the mediatory role of Christ's humanity more seriously and conceive of indwelling grace as an infusion of Christ's human *unitive drive* through the Holy Spirit's abiding presence within his people.

1. Introduction

Central to the thought of Jonathan Edwards is his theologically sophisticated psychology of grace or what is sometimes called his "religious psychology of the heart" (Walton 2002, 5).¹ Discussion of this important subject can be found not only in his famous *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* but also throughout his vast corpus of writings including his sermons and miscellanies entries. Edwards' understanding of the psychological functioning of grace may not be entirely original; much of what he says can be found in some form in his Puritan and Protestant forbearers.² However, his treatment of the subject is unsurpassed in the Puritan literature in terms of the level of precision, thoroughness and systematic sophistication.³ Hence, it remains one of the deepest and most fecund theological psychologies of grace in the Protestant tradition and the heart of his account comes

¹ Harold Simonson (2004, 5) claims that the notion of the *sense of the heart* "summarizes Edwards's whole system of thought".

² Brad Walton (2002) challenges the claim made by scholars such as Perry Miller, John E. Smith and J. Rodney Fulcher that Edwards' religious psychology presents "a clear break" from earlier Puritan tradition. By examining the Puritan writings of the sixteen and seventeen century, Walton mounts a convincing case that "far from representing a discontinuity with puritan traditions, Edwards's *Religious Affections* is, in fact, a conservative extension of traditional puritan 'heart religion' into the context of the Great awakening" (Walton 2002, 1).

³ Walton (2002, 231) came to this conclusion after surveying a wide range of Puritan writings.

down to his foundational doctrine of the *infusion of grace* where he locates the basis and source of the engraced Christian life.

Meticulous and systematic as Edwards was, his theory of infusion, however, did leave some important issues unaddressed and could benefit from the important work of contemporary philosopher William Alston who shares a similar interest with Edwards to develop a model for understanding the work of the Holy Spirit in the psychological lives of believers. This essay is an attempt to bring these two thinkers together into conversation for the purpose of advancing towards a deeper and more satisfying account of indwelling along the direction set out by Alston and Edwards.

Before we begin with the discussion, it should be noted that the purpose of this essay is simply to explore one aspect of the indwelling of the Spirit that is of common interest to Alston and Edwards. It is not meant to be an exhaustive account for the reality of indwelling but simply a modest constructive proposal for understanding an important aspect of indwelling that draws upon the work of Alston and Edwards. Specifically, the focus of the essay is on the individual psychological transformation of believers.

The attention on the individual psychology of the believer is not meant to undermine the social and ecclesiastical dimension of indwelling in any way. The social and individual aspects of indwelling grace are both essential to the Christian life. Nevertheless, to echo Alston, despite the importance of the social dimension, it must also be recognized that the indwelling operation of the Holy Spirit in the process of sanctification does not “bypass the inner psychological development of each individual” (Alston 1989, 225) either. For the purpose of this essay, my focus will simply be on an important aspect of the individual psychological dimension of indwelling as highlighted by Edwards and Alston. With this aim in mind, we shall begin by examining Edwards’ doctrine of the infusion of grace.

2. Grace as Infusion

Grace, for Edwards, denotes not only the gracious free judicial justification of God for sinners but also the reality of the infusion of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers (*WJE* 2:469). He makes an important distinction between the gift of “infused grace” and other gracious gifts of the Spirit that does not involve infusion (*WJE* 13:171). The key difference between the two being that infused grace involves an influence of the Spirit that is internal and inherent within the subject’s nature and heart, whereas the influence of non-infusive grace remains external (*WJE* 8:157). By this he means that the Spirit’s work of infusion exerts a kind of inhering and abiding influence within the subject such that it becomes an integral aspect of the individual and the very nature of the individual can be rightly said to have changed into a spiritual nature. In contrast, there are other more external influences, gifts and works of the Spirit that do not involve such integral and inhering change of quality or disposition within an individual’s nature (*WJE*: 2:202-203).

The internal or infusive work of the Spirit is of great significance to Edwards because, according to him, God's ultimate purpose for humanity is for them to love and know his supreme glory; it is an end that cannot be achieved by their fallen human nature but only through a deep and genuine internal change of the fallen nature to a spiritual one.⁴ Such a change of nature requires a redemptive grace that is infused within the believer rather than one that is merely adventitious.

Another important difference between infused grace and other non-infusive operations of the Spirit upon the human mind is that the former introduces a new supernatural principle to the functioning of the soul or human nature whereas the latter does not.⁵ Edwards, echoing his Reformed predecessors, held that this crucial difference is also what distinguishes "common grace" from "special" or "regenerative grace". For him, "common grace is only the assistance of natural principles" and is hence limited to assisting "the faculties of the soul to do that more fully, which they do by nature" (*WJE* 18:155). Special grace, on the other hand, infuses and introduces a wholly new and qualitatively distinct supernatural principle to the functioning of the faculties of the soul. It lays a new inhering supernatural foundation within the soul such that the recipients of special grace are able to exercise their faculties in a way that is above their natural potential (*WJE* 17:410-411).

Edwards takes the infusion of a new spiritual principle to occur in the human heart or will. He conceives of this new principle to be a kind of new fundamental inclination implanted within the faculty of inclination or will. However, he does not mean to isolate the effect of infusion merely to a single faculty. Edwards sees infusion as affecting the whole human person including the understanding and he is able to affirm this because he views the faculty of understanding and will (or inclination) as functionally intermeshed (*WJE* 1:272). The regenerated will with its newfound spiritual inclination "consents" to the religious ideas in the understanding and therefore alters the axiological appearance of those very ideas to the subject. As remarked by Morimoto, "the infusion of grace cures the will and, through this cured will, transforms the person's understanding faculty, so that the convert may see the beauty and holiness of God." (Morimoto 1995, 16). Hence, for Edwards, the infusion of grace in the will also serves as the basis for the illumination of the understanding in the form of a consenting delight towards the idea of God.

The infusion of grace brings about a new psychological reality for the regenerate and serves as the basis for the spiritual life (*WJE* 8:157-158). In particular, it grants them a supernatural *divine sense*, not available to natural man, which allows believers to perceive the holiness of God in supreme delight. The supernatural sense does not merely allow them to see more of divine goodness

⁴ The term "spiritual nature" is typically used by Edwards to mean a human nature that has been infused with the divine Spirit and thereby takes on various qualities that reflect the nature of God's Spirit.

⁵ Paul Ramsey observes that "Edwards used the word 'principle' in the sense of the Latin *principium* or the Greek *arché*. The word 'principle' means a source or beginning or spring of disposition and action. But it also means the direction, shape, or contours of human hearts and lives, as in the root of our word 'archetype,' or the *arché* or formative power of Plato's ideas, such as justice or beauty, or triangularity" (Ramsey 1989, 16).

compared to the natural man; rather, the saints are able to experience something that is wholly qualitatively distinct from any kind of sensations of the natural mind (*WJE* 2:262). It is akin to gaining a new sense not unlike a blind man gaining the sense of sight (*WJE* 2:205). This new divine or *spiritual sense* is Edwards' well-known theory of spiritual perception which has received much attention in contemporary Edwardsean Studies.⁶

3. Infusion as Indwelling Spirit

One of the most important features regarding Edwards' understanding of infusion is that he sees the Holy Spirit as the very thing that is infused within the hearts of believers. For him, the infusion of grace within the soul as a new enduring and inhering disposition, habit or internal "principle of holy action" (*WJE* 2:398) is equivalent to the indwelling of the Spirit within the saints. Hence, he asserts that "there is no other principle of grace in the soul than the very Holy Ghost dwelling in the soul and acting there as a vital principle" (*WJE* 21:196).

It is significant to note that this Edwardsean view of infusion differs from the Thomistic conception. On the Thomistic tradition, the grace that is infused within the soul is "created grace". It is a created human disposition of charity, distinct from the Holy Spirit, that is "superadded" to the natural power of the will (*Summa Theologiae*, IIa IIae q.23 a.2). Edwards, however, follows in the Augustinian tradition and equates the *love of God* with the Holy Spirit and sees the person of the Spirit as that which is infused in the saints.⁷ On his understanding, the disposition of love that draws us to God is the very same mutual love that binds the Father and the Son – the Holy Spirit (*WJE* 21:121). Hence, when believers are infused with the Holy Spirit in the process of sanctification, they are simultaneously caught up in the eternal Trinitarian love within the Godhead and thereby participate in the Trinitarian life (*WJE* 8:132).

One of the important consequences of Edwards' conception of indwelling grace as sketched above is that it introduces an element of *deification* or *theosis* to his doctrine of infusion. According to him, the divine Spirit is given to indwell the regenerate as a new internal "principle of life and action". This indwelling of the Spirit changes "the nature of the soul" and brings about a "new nature" that is in some sense "divine", according to the divine principle of life that is infused within it. The new nature of the soul now "admits divine light" and is able to perceive the glory of divine realities (*WJE* 13:462-463). The theosis of Edwards is especially evident in his *Treatise on Grace* where he equates the new principle of saving grace in the heart of the regenerate with the principle of divine love. As mentioned, this divine principle is nothing other than the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Thus he states that "holy and divine love dwells in their hearts, and is so united to human faculties that 'tis itself become a principle of new nature" (*WJE* 21:194). For

⁶ For some of the important contemporary secondary literature on Edward's theory of spiritual perception, see Erdt (1980), Lee (1988), McClymond (1998), Miller (1948) and Smith (1959).

⁷ Augustine made this identification in *De Trinitate*, VI.7.

Edwards, the saints partake of the divine nature because “the nature of the Spirit of God is divine love” and that very same divine nature or love in the Holy Trinity is communicated and infused as a divine principle in the hearts of the redeemed so that the new nature of the soul becomes “spiritual” and, by extension, divine (*WJE* 21:191-192). Hence, as it turns out, Edwards’ explication of the sanctifying action of the Spirit amounts to a kind of *theosis*, a quite literal and direct partaking of the divine nature such that the new nature acquired through the infusion of the Spirit is also in some sense the divine nature.⁸

The evaluation of Edwards’ *theosis* will be addressed later in the paper, but for now there is a more critical issue that requires further elaboration: What does it mean for the person of the Spirit to be infused within the human soul as an internal disposition or principle? More precisely, in what way can a divine person, as opposed to merely the effect of his action or influence, be said to be so united with the faculties within the soul of man so as to form a new nature and intrinsic vital principle? Edwards’ thinking on this issue does not seem to be entirely fleshed out. From his writings, he seems to think that the person of the Spirit is somehow present within the soul and directly acting “after the manner of an abiding, natural, vital principle of action” (*WJE* 18:157). That is to say, the person of the Spirit does not *become* a disposition when infused in the hearts of the saints; instead, when he is infused, he has freely chosen to apply his sovereign agency in a way (or pattern) that is functionally consistent with an inhering law-like disposition or principle of action that exerts a dispositional-like influence upon the regenerated human psyche. He, however, did not elaborate on the nature of the Spirit’s infused or indwelling presence and action and how they might differ from his omnipresence and ordinary action upon creation in general. His explanation of this seemingly mysterious union and indwelling presence does not go much further beyond the assertion that the divine Spirit is united with the soul of man and acts after the manner of a divine principle in the heart.⁹ Yet, without saying something more regarding such a foundational concept, it leaves Edwards’ account underdeveloped and unilluminating in this important aspect. In particular, it leaves his account unclear as to the way in which the indwelling union or presence of the Spirit is a kind of deeply personal, internal and intimate kind of presence and influence that is over and above his divine omnipresence and ordinary (i.e., non-indwelling) action in the world as the New Testament seems to depict indwelling.¹⁰ In light of this deficiency, in the remainder of this essay, I hope to draw upon the work of William Alston to further develop Edwards’ fecund psychology of infused (or indwelling) grace and provide a model for the nature of the Spirit’s indwelling union and presence in the

⁸ Edwards did not use the term “*theosis*” explicitly, but a great number of Edwardsean scholars including Stephen Holmes (2000, 58), Michael McClymond (2003, 153) and William Danaher (2004, 42) have considered Edwards’ view of sanctification as a version of “*theosis*”.

⁹ Robert Caldwell came to the same conclusion noting that Edwards did not know how the saints’ mysterious union with God works but “that it does happen, Edwards was completely convinced” (Caldwell III 2006, 120).

¹⁰ For more details on this point, see Alston’s discussion on the personal, internal and intimate nature of the Spirit’s indwelling presence in the next section.

human psyche as an inhering principle or disposition of love that was lacking in Edwards' original account. Hence, it is to Alston that we shall now turn to.

4. Alston's Model of Indwelling

In his insightful essay, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, Alston (1989) examines two common models for understanding the nature of the Spirit's work of transforming and sanctifying believers. Beginning with the "fiat" model, Alston characterizes this position as one in which God directly produces "new dispositions and tendencies" within the psychological structures of believers and thereby transforms them into the kind of person he desires. It is a fairly one-sided affair with God simply implanting a new disposition within a person with minimal input, consent and contribution from the agency of the human subject. God simply decrees the transformation and the individual is changed. Alston (1989, 233-235), however, criticizes this picture of sanctification and indwelling as being too impersonal and hence fails to do justice to the rich interpersonal and familiar description of the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry in the New Testament (e.g., Romans 8:15-16).

The second model he examines is the "interpersonal" model where the ministry of the Spirit is understood more along the paradigm of interpersonal relationships and interactions.¹¹ On this view, the Spirit sanctifies the believer in a manner similar to the way human beings usually influence one another, "seeking to evoke responses, voluntary and otherwise from the other person". Hence, whereas on the "fiat" model, sanctification could in principle be accomplished without any kind of personal engagement between God and man, this is not possible on the "interpersonal" model. God transforms us through interacting with us on an interpersonal level; it is an interaction that respects our "personal integrity", choices and agency (Alston 1989, 236-238).

Alston is more sympathetic towards the "interpersonal" model even though he finds the "fiat" model somewhat plausible as well despite his initial criticism. Nevertheless, he argues that the two models ultimately fall short in one important aspect – they both fail to account for the "internality" of the indwelling ministry of the Spirit. Alston notes that the description of the Spirit's indwelling in the New Testament is a form of presence within believers that is over and above the Spirit's omnipresence. God is internally present to the saints in a way he is not to creation in general and none of the models examined are able to adequately account for this "special mode of internality" (Alston 1989, 241). The same inadequacy can be said for Edwards' account of infusion as well. Infusion understood as the Spirit acting after the manner of a disposition within the saints does not really address the issue of how the Spirit's action upon the human subject in sanctification is "more intimate" than his ordinary action upon everything else in general.¹²

¹¹ Kevin Vanhoozer (2002, 100-124) is a contemporary example of one who rejects the impersonal "fiat" model in favor of the "interpersonal".

¹² William Wainwright has argued that, for Edwards, the crucial difference between God's operations in the minds of unbelievers and the saints is that "the latter are God's acts and the former are not" (Wainwright

In light of the weakness Alston sees in the two models, he then argues for the “partial life sharing” account as a model for understanding the nature of the Spirit’s indwelling presence. Such a model is understood as the human subject partially sharing in various psychological elements of the Holy Spirit and thereby resulting in a partial merging of psychological lives between the subject and God. In our everyday relationships with others, we do not have direct experiential access to the thoughts, beliefs, experiences and motivations of another in the same direct manner that we have of our own, no matter how intimate our relationship may be. There are “physical and psychological barriers” between us that “insulates” one human psyche from another to some degree. A “partial life sharing” between the Holy Spirit and an individual would then involve a “breaking down” of such “barriers that normally separate one life from another”, allowing believers to be more intimately related to God than to any other human being (Alston 1989, 246). On this model, the Holy Spirit would share elements of his psychological life with the saints so that the elements might be “immediately available” to believers just as their own psychological elements are available to them. Moreover, these shared psychological elements would also exert a certain level of influence on an individual’s motivation, action and cognition, just as one is typically influenced by his or her own psychological states and dispositions (Alston 1989, 246).

The psychological elements that are shared may include experiences, feelings, attitudes, tendencies, values or beliefs. The nature of such sharing is twofold. First, it is a cognitive sort of sharing. The believer shares in the divine psychological life by being cognitively aware of these psychological states in the same way that he or she is directly aware of his or her own. Second, it may also be a conative kind of sharing. The human subject is not only aware of the various psychological elements but also shares in certain divine conative tendencies such as love, compassion and various motivations of the divine mind. This conative sort of sharing would allow individuals to affectively experience the divine tendencies, urges or motivations in varying degrees of strength. According to Alston, the human agent’s conative system need not simply be replaced by God’s. Rather, he suggests that the divine conative tendencies may be introduced into the human agent’s conative system in an initially “weak, isolated and fragile” manner, existing side by side with the agent’s own sinful tendencies (Alston 1989, 251). For Alston, it is possible that these new divine tendencies might be considered alien by the agent until he or she psychologically appropriates and nurtures it in a certain way (Alston 1989, 246). The transition from the initially “weak, isolated and fragile” cognitive and conative sharing of the divine psychological elements to a “full-blooded” integration of these elements in one’s psychological system may require a prolonged and drawn out process of responding freely and rightly to God’s personal interactions and coming to own them in a certain way (Alston 1989, 249).

Alston maintains that the cognitive and conative aspects of divine sharing constitute what it means to participate in the life of God. He contends that our

2010, 211). This point, however, still does not address the issue of “internality” as raised by Alston. One could further question what difference is there between God’s act of bringing about various mental dispositions within the saints’ minds and his act of parting the Red Sea, for example.

spiritual rebirth could very well begin with a gracious initiative of God to share and introduce his divine psychological elements into our conative and cognitive system. Although such introduction may commence in an initially faint and fragmented manner, it nevertheless provides the basic divine psychological resources from which they could mature organically through our free cooperation and eventually come to transform and sanctify us in comprehensive ways. Hence, in this fashion, believers literally partake of the divine psychological life and come to be united with God in a personal and internal manner (Alston 1989, 251-252).

Alston's model is not meant to be taken as an exhaustive claim on the meaning of indwelling union with God. There might very well be other aspects of participation in the divine life that are not captured by his account. However, he thinks it is likely that indwelling union may at least include a sort of partial psychological union similar to what he has described.

5. Problems with Edwards' and Alston's Accounts

Alston's account of the Holy Spirit's indwelling is quite insightful and turns out to be very complementary to Edwards' own understanding of Spirit infusion or indwelling. More significantly, it is able to fill out, in an illuminating way, Edwards' underdeveloped idea of an indwelling union between the person of the Holy Spirit and the human psyche. Nevertheless, their proposals for a literal human and divine merger do face a number of significant difficulties that ultimately render them theologically and philosophically untenable.

Starting with Alston, two philosophical objections can be raised against his model. First, psychological states, such as desires, beliefs and attitudes, are complex states constituted by representational content, relationships with other mental states, subjectivity and other psychological elements, some of which cannot be shared among two distinct individuals. For instance, the propositional content of a belief such as "the person next to me is my wife" is constituted by indexical content (content whose references are determined only relative to their context of occurrence) that cannot be shared in a straightforward manner. Moreover, many conscious psychological states such as thoughts, experiences, occurrent desires and attitudes are all partially constituted by a subject's subjectivity, and it seems that the same subjectivity cannot be shared among distinct conscious subjects.¹³ It has been argued by Linda Zagzebski that subjectivity, unlike capacities or properties, is absolutely unique and cannot be shared by multiple individuals. It is not a property; it is not a 'what' but an "irreducibly first-personal" "way of being" that cannot be communicated to another being (Zagzebski 2001, 415). When I am consciously experiencing a desire, it is *me* who is experiencing it. Another person may have a very similar conscious episode of desire, but his desire would not be exactly the same as mine. This is because his unique subjectivity would shape the

¹³ I use the term *subjectivity* in the sense employed by Linda Zagzebski to mean a mode of existence that is irreducibly first person with a unique first person point of view.

phenomenological content of the conscious desire in a way that differs from my unique subjectivity (my unique first person point of view). It would also seem impossible for me to have an exhaustive cognitive grasp of his conscious experience of the desire because I can never assume his unique subjective point of view. For this reason, Zagzebski contends that “it is impossible that two distinct persons could have had even one experience in common” (Zagzebski 2001, 417). Therefore, the direct and literal sharing of psychological states may not be as unproblematic as Alston assumes it to be.

Despite what was asserted above, in her later publication, Zagzebski has argued that it may be possible for God to share in the subjective experiences of the human subject in virtue of a power of his cognitive perfection which she terms “omnisubjectivity” (Zagzebski 2008, 232). Nevertheless, even granting divine omnisubjectivity, the problem highlighted above still remains for Alston’s account. God may have the cognitive perfection to share in our conscious subjective point of view, but it is fairly clear that the human minds of believers do not share in the subjective point of view of the divine mind. However, Alston’s proposal involves believers sharing in various divine psychological elements that are constituted by divine conscious subjectivity. Hence, the problem remains.

The second and more serious difficulty for Alston’s account pertains to the plausibility of a finite human being directly sharing in the psychological elements of a transcendent and infinite deity. God’s psychological life is so utterly and radically distinct from humanity’s that it raises serious questions regarding the metaphysical possibility of sharing in the tendencies, feelings and beliefs of the divine mind to begin with. The psychological elements of the Holy Spirit as a divine and triune being bear a kind of inherent trinitarian and perichoretic psychological structure that is so dissimilar to non-triune and non-divine beings like us that it is difficult to see how the psychological, metaphysical and ontological chasm between God and humanity can be crossed to allow for a direct and literal partial merging of psychological lives. In this regard, Alston’s attempt to make human minds bear the load of a triune and divine psychological life is surely on tenuous grounds.

Perhaps it could be argued that Alston’s model may still be preserved if the sharing of the divine psychological life is taken to be the sharing of merely a minute aspect of the Spirit’s divine psychological elements. In this way, the human mind is therefore not required to bear the full load of a triune and transcendent psychological state. Such a move, however, has its own difficulties. The psychological states and dispositions of the divine triune mind are presumably inherently structured in a perichoretic and trinitarian way. If these states or dispositions were to be abstracted to the point where they lose their trinitarian structure so that they could be shared by a non-trinitarian human mind, then they would also essentially cease to be divine. This is because being trinitarian is ontologically necessary for being divine; hence, if the divine psychological states and dispositions were to be abstracted to the point where they cease to retain their inherent trinitarian structure, they would also thereby cease to be divine. In other words, the sharing would no longer be a direct and literal sharing in the divine psychological life of the Spirit as Alston originally intended it to be. Instead, what we

end up with is a sharing in a created abstraction that is neither divine nor Spiritual.¹⁴

Turning to Edwards and his *theosis* in particular, there are also several philosophical and theological objections that could be raised against his psychology of grace. To begin, his understanding of divine indwelling faces a similar difficulty that confronts Alston's account. According to Edwards (*WJE* 13:367-368), the minds of the regenerate participate in the same intra-Trinitarian divine love or delight (i.e., the Holy Spirit) that the Father has towards his perfect idea of himself (i.e., the Son). However, it is difficult to see how a finite and often sinful human mind could bear a disposition for a divine psychological state. As mentioned, the divine mind seems to be utterly distinct in kind from regenerate human minds in its perichoretic trinitarian psychological structure and being. As far as we can tell, sincere Christians throughout the history of the church do not possess a trinitarian mind in the same way that God does. Thus, on what grounds can we hold that regenerate human minds are able to bear the same divine psychological states that God does in his trinitarian divinity? Edwards attempts to force a kind of direct meshing of the divine mind with the human mind in a very strong and literal way. But can his conception of infusion be ultimately coherent given the drastically different kinds of minds between divinity and humanity?

Edwards seems to be aware of such an objection to his theology and was ready to take the bold step that not many theologians are willing to. In his *Miscellanies* entry on *Deity*, he states that "if we should suppose the faculties of a created spirit to be enlarged infinitely, there would be the Deity to all intents and purposes, the same simplicity, immutability, etc" (*WJE* 13:295). Edwards was ready to pursue his *theosis* to its natural conclusion and see the distinction between divine and human minds as not one of kind but simply of degree. Hence, human minds are a kind of lesser divine mind to begin with and were the power of their faculties to be extended infinitely they would be practically indistinguishable from the uncreated divine trinitarian mind. Edwards' rather bold vision of *theosis* is sure to cause less adventurous theologians some concern, not least because of the deep rooted tradition of thinking about God as radically transcending his creation in degree and in kind.¹⁵ In the last analysis, Edwards' *theosis* faces the same philosophical challenge as Alston's account: finite and unperfected human minds, even when regenerated, simply do not have the required trinitarian kind of mind, divine resources and cognitive environment to bear the load of a triune and divine psychological life of love. The chasm of divine transcendence cannot be bridged.¹⁶

¹⁴ This move hence collapses the account to the "created grace" position that Edwards and Alston want to avoid.

¹⁵ Regarding the importance of divine transcendence in the historic Christian tradition, refer to William Placher's work where he traces the foundational theme of divine transcendence in the premodern theologies of Aquinas, Luther and Calvin (Placher 1996, 21-68).

¹⁶ This point is not incompatible with the incarnation, at least on the *two minds view* of the incarnation. The two minds view (which will be touched on later in the paper) does not require a mixing of the divine mind with the human mind of Christ.

Apart from its philosophical problems, Edwards' account of indwelling also faces several theological difficulties that stem from his pneumatologically driven understanding of the saints' union with God. Edwards was dissatisfied with the traditional Reformed conception of the Holy Spirit's soteriological role as the one who applies the benefits of Christ to the believer. He thought that to assign the third person of the Trinity the role of merely applying the benefits of Christ denigrates the importance of the Spirit in salvation. In response, Edwards consciously deviates from the tradition and makes the Spirit the very benefit that was purchased by Christ's sacrifice to be gifted to the saints via infusion, thereby giving the Spirit greater prominence in the economy of salvation (*WJE* 21:190-192). However, his self-conscious departure from the tradition is not without its difficulties and encounters at least three significant theological problems.

The first problem pertains to the charge of monism that Edwards faces during his time and continues to face in contemporary scholarship.¹⁷ Simply put, monism is, in the words of George Claghorn, "the doctrine of believers being or becoming one with the divine substance" (Claghorn 1989, 633). Edwards opens himself up for such an accusation primarily because of the way he characterizes the nature of the saints' union with God. As we have seen, on his account, the person of the Spirit is infused within the soul of the saints as an inhering and abiding divine vital principle such that human nature itself is transformed to a spiritual nature. In addition, Edwards does not make any distinction between the economic and immanent Trinitarian operation of the Spirit in the process of infusion. The Spirit exerts himself within the hearts of the saints in the same way that he does within the immanent inner-Trinitarian life of God (*WJE* 13:513).¹⁸ Therefore, his understanding of infusion entails a very direct and literal participation of believers in the immanent intra-Trinitarian love. The issue of monism comes into the picture when this divine act of infusion is rendered as an infusion of the divine essence or substance within the soul or being of the saints. On this understanding, the saints act and function from a vital principle that is essentially the divine essence and are hence literally divine in a way that threatens the transcendence of God.

Edwards is adamant that his doctrine of infusion does not imply a communication of the divine essence to believers.¹⁹ He insists that all he meant was that a certain property or attribute of God (i.e., his holiness) is communicated in infusion, not the divine essence or substance. Nevertheless, Edwards' plea of innocence is not altogether convincing given especially his affirmation of divine simplicity. Like many other Reformed theologians of his era, Edwards held to the doctrine of divine simplicity. He affirms that there are, strictly speaking, no "real distinctions" in the Godhead other than the divine persons (*WJE* 21:131-132). Therefore, despite Edwards' insistence that what is communicated is merely an

¹⁷ Regarding the accusation of monism in Edwards' time, see *WJE* 8:638.

Contemporary scholars have variously accused Edwards of being a Pantheist (Woodbridge 1904, 401, 406), Panentheist (Crisp 2010) and Neo-Platonist (Whittemore 1966). These positions can be construed as a form of monism.

¹⁸ Cf. Caldwell III (2006, 113).

¹⁹ For Edwards' refutation of this accusation, see *WJE* 8:638-640.

attribute of God, that cannot strictly speaking be the case given that God is metaphysically simple with no distinct attribute to communicate.²⁰ What in fact is communicated, on Edwards' account, cannot be anything less than the immanent person of the Spirit himself. However, such a stance runs into serious theological difficulties. As argued by Oliver Crisp, for Edwards, "each of the divine persons shares the one divine essence. So to refer to a divine person is to refer to the divine essence and (given divine simplicity) to refer to the divine essence is to refer to God" (Crisp 2010, 117). Therefore, self-communication via infusion, when coupled with his endorsement of divine simplicity, entails a fusion of the divine essence with human faculties to form a vital principle within the soul that is constituted by the divine essence. Understood in this way, divinely infused humanity is divine in a very strong and literal way. They share in the divine essence and hence, would not be altogether inappropriate to consider them as a junior fourth member of the Godhead. Such a theological position threatens the transcendence of God and blurs the distinction between divinity and humanity.²¹

The second major difficulty with Edwards' doctrine of infusion is the way it marginalizes the humanity of Christ with regards to the saints' participation in the Trinitarian life and their vital union with Christ.²² Although Edwards conceives of the believers' union with the Spirit via infusion as the same basic reality as their union with Christ, he nevertheless views union with the Spirit as logically prior to vital union with Christ.²³ The saints are first and foremost united to the Spirit and only in a subsequent and derived manner are they united to Christ. Moreover, the way in which he makes the connection from Spirit-union to vital union with Christ is to equate the Holy Spirit with the Spirit of Christ. The saints enjoy vital union with Christ via infusion because the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of Christ.²⁴ The problem with such a move is that Edwards has effectively removed the humanity of Christ from his account of vital union with Christ. Edwards uses the term "Spirit of Christ" virtually as a synonym for the Holy Spirit and certainly sees the "Spirit of Christ" as a divine Spirit rather than a human one.²⁵ In this regard, Edwards has deviated considerably from his theological predecessors, especially Calvin. Whereas Calvin insisted that it is in virtue of our union with Christ in his humanity and not the Son

²⁰ For a more detailed treatment of this point, see Crisp (2010, 116-118).

²¹ Edwards' theistic idealism does not help him out of this problem either. On Edwards' idealism, created humanity exists only as a set of ideas in the divine mind. Via infusion, the divine love (i.e., the person of the Holy Spirit) of the divine mind is incorporated into the minds of believers such that regenerated human minds now function from the newly infused vital principle that is essentially the divine essence or substance. To be infused with the divine essence is to be incorporated into divinity in some way. Although regenerated humanity is not identical to God, it is not entirely distinct either (and hence threatens the transcendence of God). The divine substance or essence is immanent within the being of the saints, similar to the way the soul is immanent within the body but not identical with it, and draws them into the Godhead.

²² This criticism applies to Alston's "partial life sharing" model as well.

²³ Robert Caldwell makes the same point and provides a detailed argument for the priority of believers' union with the Spirit over union with Christ in Edwards' thought. For details, see Caldwell III (2006, 121-126).

²⁴ See, for instance, *WJE* 2:199-200.

²⁵ For instance, see *WJE* 8:332. See also *WJE* 3:280 and *WJE* 2:392-393.

in his divinity or the divine Spirit that we participate in the Trinitarian life,²⁶ Edwards mostly bypasses the humanity of Christ and thrusts believers directly in the immanent Trinitarian life through the immediate infusion of the divine Spirit in the being of the saints. This displacement of Christ's humanity by the divine Spirit has been perceptively observed by William Evans:

Given the extraordinary stress placed by Calvin on union with the incarnate humanity of Christ, and also the emphasis placed by Edwards' Puritan forbears on affectionate communion with Christ's humanity, it is interesting to note that in his presentation of the theme of union with Christ Edwards virtually ignores the humanity of Christ. This is doubtless because, for Edwards, the goal of salvation is an immediate union with the divine. While the humanity of Christ is relevant to the initial work of redemption (the active and passive obedience of Christ) and it has the role of mediating a revelation of the deity, the Holy Spirit has to a great extent displaced the concrete theanthropic person of Christ in Edwards' presentation of applied soteriology.²⁷

In addition to the above difficulty, one also has to question the soteriological logic of Edwards. Is the immediate object of the saints' union the divine Spirit or the human Christ? Are believers first and foremost substantially united to the humanity of Christ and in virtue of that union united to God, or are they directly and immediately united to the divine Spirit thus bypassing the humanity of Christ in the process? Calvin and many of his theological descendants have held that believers are united to the man Jesus through the Spirit and via that unity enjoy union with God, hence making the immediate object of our union the human Christ rather than the divine Spirit.²⁸ However, on Edwards' account, the Spirit is no longer merely the means of union but has instead become the immediate and direct object of union. Such a view undermines the centrality of Christ's humanity in the saints' union and participation in God's Trinitarian life.²⁹

In marginalizing the humanity of Christ, Edwards' account of infusion faces a third theological difficulty that is related to the second: it undermines the

²⁶ See *Commentary on John* 6:51 and *Institutes* 4.17.8-9. Regarding Calvin's emphasis on union with Christ's humanity, see Wallace (1995, 145-149).

²⁷ Evans (2008, 99).

²⁸ See, for instance, Calvin's comments in *Commentary on John*, 17:21. A similar point is made by T.F. Torrance when he asserts that "the Reformed doctrine of the Communion of the Spirit is not a doctrine of communion in spirit or even simply a doctrine of communion in the Spirit, but a doctrine of Communion in Christ through the Spirit" (Torrance 1959, cvi).

²⁹ The shift from Calvin to Edwards in the Reformed tradition is a gradual one. Evans observes that whereas "Calvin places particular emphasis on a "substantial" union with the incarnate humanity of Christ, through which salvation in its fullness is communicate", "for later Federal theology, however, the Holy Spirit functions as a surrogate for an absent Christ instead of mediating a personal presence... thus, the humanity of Christ often tended to become little more than a matter of historical importance, a necessary precondition for the atonement" (Evans 2008, 81, 83).

significance of the humanity of Christ in the sanctification of believers. Whereas the previous difficulty pertains to Edwards' doctrine of the believers' union with God, the third difficulty relates to his doctrine of sanctification. To be clear, Edwards does assign an important role to Christ's humanity in the believers' sanctification. Christ as the God-man is the indispensable means by which the knowledge of God's glory is communicated to all creation (*WJE* 20:221). Nevertheless, the humanity of Christ never really takes on the foundational and primary role that the divine Spirit does in his overall account of sanctification.³⁰ The holiness of the saints is first and foremost the effect of divine love infused in the soul. Hence, in his analysis of Edwards' pneumatology, Ross Hastings arrives at the following conclusion:

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.³¹

In Edwards' thought, Christ's humanity is significant only in the sense that it fulfills the preconditions necessary for the possibility of God's soteriological gift of transforming power.³² However, the actual life-giving power of salvation is not found in his incarnate humanity, but instead, in an immediate union with the divine Spirit. For Edwards, the foundation and engine of sanctification remains the divine Spirit exerting himself as an abiding divine principle of love, and the humanity of Christ plays no discernible role in the formation of such a divine disposition that drives the sanctification of believers. The consequence of his account is that it introduces a disconnect between the human sanctification of Christ and the sanctification of believers that may be theologically problematic. It was argued by Sinclair Ferguson that the New Testament's vision of sanctification places Christ's own human sanctification as the cause and basis of the sanctification of believers.³³ Hence, for those who agree with Ferguson or who are theologically motivated to see a more intimate causal grounding of Christian sanctification in the sanctified

³⁰ Ross Hastings came to a similar judgment when he made the following comment: "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 my assessment, plays second fiddle to the truth that union is effected in the saints by the Spirit's infusion" (Hastings 2005, 284).

³¹ Hastings (2004, 150).

³² Hence, he argues that God must be incarnate for divine self-communication of his glory to creation to be possible (*WJE* 8:439-442).

Hastings makes a related observation, noting that the hypostatic union of Christ "makes possible (not real) the union of the saints with God" (Hastings 2005, 298-299).

³³ Ferguson argues that the claim of Jesus in John 17:19 provides the "programmatic statement" for the foundation of sanctification in the New Testament. He observes that "in the most fundamental sense, the New Testament views Jesus as the author of sanctification, its pioneer (archegos)... The human holiness that becomes ours through the Spirit has its origin in the holiness wrought out by Christ throughout the course of the incarnation" (Ferguson 1996, 143).

humanity of Christ, they may find Edwards' account to be theologically unsatisfactory. Since, for Edwards, what drives and empowers the Christian life and growth in holiness is a divine principle grounded in the immanent divinity of the Spirit rather than a human principle grounded in the ongoing incarnate humanity of Christ.³⁴

6. Two Modifications to Alston's Account

The difficulties raised above poses a number of serious challenges for Edwards' and Alston's accounts of indwelling and threaten to render their proposals ultimately untenable. Nevertheless, I suggest that there are two modifications one can make to Alston's original account to overcome the challenges that were raised and yet preserve the model's fruitfulness for understanding the nature of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. The first modification pertains to the kind of psychological elements that are shared between individuals. If our first objection to Alston's theory is accurate, it seems that his assertion that God's attitudes, beliefs and tendencies may be "as immediately available to me as my own" (Alston 1989, 246) must be qualified to exclude divine psychological states or dispositions that are constituted by elements that cannot be shared with another human subject. What could be shared are divine dispositions and tendencies that do not involve conscious subjectivity and indexical representational content. The underlying assumption here is that there are psychological dispositions that do not entail conscious subjectivity and indexical content, such as the disposition to be hungry which is to be distinguished from the conscious and subjective experience of hunger. On the proposed modification, it is dispositions of this sort that are being shared with the believer.

The second modification corresponds to our other objection against Edwards' and Alston's accounts regarding the philosophical difficulties associated with a literal merging of a human and divine mind. These difficulties could be avoided if one inserts a vital Christological step and instead of insisting that the human subject shares directly in the various divine psychological elements of the Holy Spirit, one takes the subject to share in the human psychological life of the man Jesus. Therefore, on this modification, humanity does not share directly in the immanent divine psychological life within the Godhead but only as it is incarnated in the human psychological life of Christ. The human life of Christ thus serves as a mediatory for man's union and participation in the life of God. Humanity is only indirectly united with the psychological life of God via being directly united with the human mind of Christ. Consequently, on this revision, believers only share in the human mind of the incarnate Christ and are not required to bear the load of a divine

³⁴ One of the reasons for this neglect of the humanity of Christ lies in Edwards' 'Spirit Christology'. It has been argued by Hastings that "Edwards sounds perilously close to sounding Apollinarian in his description of the uniting of the historical man Christ to the Logos" (Hastings 2005, 299). If Hastings is right in his criticism, then it is to be expected that there is a downplaying of the human spirit and mind of Christ in his overall understanding of sanctification and the saint's vital union with Christ.

and inherently Trinitarian psychological state or disposition. It hence avoids the difficulty of having finite and non-Trinitarian human minds share directly in the psychological elements of a radically transcendent and inherently Trinitarian divine mind.³⁵

7. A Modified Account of Indwelling

In light of the above two modifications, my proposal for understanding the nature of divinely infused grace is to equate it with a modified Alstonian partial life sharing model of indwelling. On this modified account, for God to infuse his love within our hearts is for the resurrected and living incarnate Christ to partially share his ongoing human loving disposition with us by means of the Holy Spirit. Such a disposition is one that does not involve conscious subjectivity and indexical representational content. Moreover, it is in virtue of this infused grace or love that believers can begin to overcome the domination of sin and come to love the holiness of God.

In addition to avoiding the two philosophical difficulties mentioned in the previous section, the modified account also allows us to circumvent the theological problems that plagued Edwards' original theory. To begin, by making the content of infusion the human loving disposition of the man Jesus rather than the divine loving disposition of the Spirit, it sidesteps the worry of believers being infused with the metaphysically simple divine essence (assuming one holds to divine simplicity as Edwards did) and so undermine the transcendence of God. In addition, such a move also avoids the theological problem of marginalizing the humanity of Christ in the saints' union with God and their sanctification by making Christ's humanity their immediate object of union rather than the divine Spirit. On the revised account, it is the human loving disposition of Christ that is infused within believers and serves as the causal grounds of sanctification and the means by which they are united to God. Hence, the humanity of Christ is no longer marginalized and comes to take center stage in the sanctification of believers and their union with God through the human disposition of the living Christ that is infused within them.

Following Edwards, the human loving disposition Christ shares with his church could be understood as consisting of a certain motivation for union and a good-seeing tendency towards God. Edwards conceives of the infused principle as a new disposition or capacity to perceive and appreciate the goodness and beauty of God in joyful delight. This infused disposition is also a kind of love, since part of what it means to love someone is to appreciate the ways in which that person is

³⁵ It should be noted that on this modified account we are not merely pushing the difficulties to Christ. The hypostatic union of Christ's divine and human nature does not face the same sort of difficulties that confront Edwards' and Alston's account of Spirit union between believers and God. Christ's human and divine mind share in the same subjectivity; therefore, his hypostatic union circumvents the problems associated with two distinct subjects sharing in the same conscious experience. In addition, on the *two minds view* of the incarnation (which will be touched on later), there is no direct and literal merging of the divine and human mind as there is in Edwards' and Alston's account of Spirit indwelling.

good. Love is nourished and constituted by such an appreciation, without which it is difficult to see how anyone can love. In addition, Edwards also views the new disposition as playing an important unitive role in the regenerate's relationship of love with God. For him, love includes a unitive component; that is, it involves a longing to be together with the one loved and a coming to see the good of another as one's own. Hence, he argues that love "includes a desire of union with the object as well [as] a desire of the welfare of the object" (*WJE* 21:326). This unitive desire in the regenerate is of course generated by the infused disposition and it motivates one to "union and intercourse" with God (*WJE* 21:326-327).

Much of Edwards' understanding on the infused disposition of love remains compatible and applicable to our modified account of infusion. Hence, in light of his analysis, it is plausible to suppose that for Christ to share his human loving tendency would involve sharing his good-seeing disposition towards God and the motivational drive to be united with the Father.³⁶ I shall term this dual aspect of the disposition Christ shares with members of his church as the *unitive drive* for short. Let us try to develop this notion a bit further.

A helpful way of conceiving the unitive drive is to see it as analogous to a human sex drive. A sex drive dawning in a young boy undergoing puberty may start off weak and without much representational content. He feels a mild urge towards something without knowing exactly what is it that he wants. It is only after acquiring a certain amount of experiences, propositional content and beliefs that he begins to come to understand clearly what he is drawn towards. Moreover, this growing sex drive also instills within him a newfound good-seeing disposition towards members of a certain gender and a certain added capacity to enjoy his relationships with them. Through the development of a sex drive he has come to acquire novel powers of appreciation, perception and enjoyment of the ways in which they are good in a manner not possible before. These new powers of his psyche in turn motivate him towards union of life with members of that gender.

In an analogous fashion, when Christ gives of himself to us, he shares with us his drive towards union with God and his disposition to appreciate, perceive and enjoy the goodness of his heavenly Father in novel ways. The human unitive drive of Christ hence opens up new motivations for union and life with God that are unavailable and psychologically alien to those without this drive. In addition, like a slowly dawning sex drive, the sharing of Christ's unitive drive with us could also be gradual and need not entail an exhaustive sharing of that drive all at once. His human loving tendency could be shared without sharing the full strength of that tendency instantaneously. Therefore, our experience of the unitive drive might very well begin as weak or partial and gradually grow only as we mature spiritually.

Another significant parallel between a sex drive and the unitive drive, especially in the context of Edwards' theory of spiritual perception, is that they are both partially aesthetic in nature. An important aspect of the good-seeing

³⁶ The human loving tendency of Christ would also include his love for fellow humans. However, following Edwards, I take it that a truly virtuous love for neighbor is grounded upon a love for God. Hence, the sharing of Christ's human loving tendency is first and foremost the sharing of an aspect of his human love for the Father. See *WJE* 8:142.

disposition instilled by a sex drive is the capacity to perceive and appreciate the aesthetic beauty of another person in a manner quite distinct from perceptions of beauty without the sex drive. Our human sex drive brings about a unique kind of perception of sexual beauty that typically only arises in relation to perceptions of members of a certain gender. This sex drive is thus able to reveal a unique sexual kind of aesthetic properties that can only be grasped through the sexual perceptions it affords. Similarly, the human unitive drive of Christ grants us epistemic access to a distinct class of aesthetic properties regarding divine realities that can only be perceived through the kind of perceptions the unitive drive makes possible.³⁷

It should be noted that the unitive drive of Christ is not equivalent to a robust virtue of love for God that the Christian life demands. Thus, the sharing of this drive is not incompatible with the existence of sin and immaturity in the life of the regenerate. The unitive drive is simply an aspect of Christ's human love for the Father and not his full virtue of love. Indeed, the love of God within Christ and the hearts of believers is not merely a bare good-seeing disposition or motivating drive; instead, it is a virtuous love that is constituted by concrete representational content, practical wisdom and various skills of self-management that mere bare dispositions lack. Hence, it is important to make a distinction between the unitive drive that is infused and the resultant virtuous love of God that it gives birth to. The former is a disposition without any clear representational content, understanding and practical know-how, which in itself is insufficient to be counted as a kind of psychological attitude or Christian virtue. The latter, on the other hand, is a robust and concrete virtuous love firmly oriented towards the Trinity and divine reality. Nonetheless, despite their differences, the unitive drive does serve as the basis for the formation of a virtuous love for God. Their relationship is analogous to that between a sex drive and romantic love. A sex drive is not equivalent to romantic love, but it is foundational and constitutive of a whole range of romantic phenomena including our romantic delight, appreciations, concerns, attractions, motivations and love. Thus, in a parallel fashion, the unitive drive, as Edwards puts it, lays a "new foundation" in our soul and allows us to use our human faculties in a new way (*WJE* 2:206). It thereby opens up a whole new range of sui generis emotions, experiences, motivations, concerns and appreciations towards God that are not previously available to the natural man (*WJE* 17:411). Moreover, because these novel psychological phenomena towards God and his glory are constituted and made possible by Christ's human unitive drive, there is a sense in which one can affirm that the believer's spiritual life and worship are a result of a participation in Christ's ongoing love for the Father in his human mind.³⁸

³⁷ Edwards conceives of this distinct class of divine aesthetic properties as equivalent to the beauty of holiness or the glory of God. For details on his thinking on divine aesthetics, see Delattre (1968).

³⁸ The importance of the believer's participation in the human mind of Christ and his human love for the Father in our spiritual life and worship is well brought out by T.F. Torrance's essay on "The Mind of Christ in Worship" (Torrance 1975).

8. The Spirit as the Mediating Divine Agent of Christ's Unitive Drive

With the emphasis on the humanity of Christ, the modified Alstonian account hence avoids the problems that confront Alston's and Edwards' original accounts of indwelling. However, by substituting the sharing of the Spirit's divine psychological elements with Christ's human unitive drive, does it run into the opposite problem of removing the Holy Spirit from the picture of indwelling? If not, then how is the human unitive drive of Christ related to the divine Spirit and what role does the Spirit play in the modified account?

The answers to the above questions can be found in the Reformed tradition's view that the Holy Spirit mediates the presence and life of the resurrected Christ to the church (*Institutes*, 3.1.1). On this line of thought, the Holy Spirit plays the crucial role of functioning as the divine vehicle through which the particular and localized human unitive drive of the living Christ is made universally and simultaneously present and available to all members of the body of Christ. This mediating role of the Spirit need not undermine his sovereign personal agency in any way. As suggested by Edwards, the Spirit has freely willed to apply his personal agency after the manner of an inhering dispositional-like influence upon the human psyche. The nature and content of the Spirit's action in infusion is hence to actively apply and sustain the unitive drive of Christ in the hearts of all believers so as to produce a new stable and inhering disposition in them. Without the Spirit's personal and active agency in mediating and applying the content of Christ's unitive drive in their hearts, they would lose their engraced nature immediately. Therefore, the modified account is consistent with Edwards' claim that "if God should take away his Spirit out of the soul, all habits and acts of grace would of themselves cease as immediately as light ceases in a room when a candle is carried out" (*WJE* 21:196).

Giving the Spirit the mediating role, however, does not address the question of how, on the modified account, one can make sense of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is so prominent in the Christian tradition. Specifically, in what sense can one still affirm that the divine Spirit indwells the believer if it is the humanity of Christ that believers are directly united to? One possibility would be to make a distinction between the *act* of infusion and the *content* that is being infused. On the modified Alstonian model, we can take indwelling to denote the divine act of removing or "breaking down" the "barriers that normally separate one life from another" (Alston 1989, 246), in the way suggested by Alston's original theory, and thus grant believers cognitive and conative access to an aspect of the human psyche of Christ. This is an access that we normally do not enjoy with any other human being. In addition, the concept of indwelling could also cover the divine act of implanting, sustaining and nurturing the content of Christ's unitive drive *within* the human conative system of the saints such that the content becomes an inhering disposition of their conative system. Indeed, there are many ways in which one can affirm that the divine Spirit is in some sense dwelling and present within the saints that are short of a substantial merger between the divine Spirit and humanity as suggested by Edwards and Alston. Therefore, regardless of how one wants to spell

out the precise nature of indwelling along these lines, it need not entail a direct ontological union with divinity and therefore does not contradict the claim that the Spirit does indwell the saints to bring about a substantial union with Christ's humanity. Without the divine Spirit dwelling within believers and acting within their psychological system, the human unitive drive of Christ could never be implanted and sustained in them. Hence, in this way, the Holy Spirit remains the indwelling means through whom believers are substantially united with the human Christ without thereby becoming the immediate divine object of their substantial union.

In summary, the modified Alstonian account of indwelling provides an illuminating model for understanding the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and its relationship with Jesus Christ. On this model, believers can be said to be united to the human mind of Christ by the Spirit in a rather literal way, hence providing one possibility for making sense of what it means for us to be in Christ and for Christ to be in us through the Spirit. Accordingly, it is through the sharing of his unitive drive with us by the Spirit that Christ's human mind is partially merged with ours. Christ is in us and we are in him and quite literally so. Moreover, the modified account also gives proper weight to the mediatory role of Christ's humanity in our sanctification and substantial union with God. For Alston and Edwards, man is directly and immediately united to the divine Spirit and hence, marginalizes the mediation of Christ's humanity. In contrast, on the modified account, the life-giving essence of salvation is grounded upon the ongoing sanctified humanity of Christ such that were the man Jesus to cease loving the Father or existing as a human being, there would be no human unitive drive for the Spirit to mediate to the church. The ontological grounds of Christian sanctification together with our substantial union with God would vanish instantly. The modified model therefore highlights the continual vital relevance of both the Holy Spirit and the human Christ in the church's sanctification. On one hand, the man Jesus' ongoing obedience, love and faithfulness to the Father provide the ontological grounds for our sanctification in the form of his unitive drive. On the other, the continual ministry of the Holy Spirit in vivifying and sustaining Jesus's human love for the Father makes possible for Christ's ongoing human unitive drive which the Spirit then mediates to the saints. In addition, as divine Lord and giver of life, the Spirit also oversees the growth, maturation, preservation and continual application of that human unitive drive within believers in order that the church may come to attain the mind of Christ. The incarnate Son and the divine Spirit are hence both vital agents in making actual (rather than merely making possible) the life-giving participation of the church in the Trinitarian life.³⁹

9. An Objection to the Modified Account

³⁹ I am indebted to Hastings for the distinction between making actual (or real) and making possible the life-giving participation in the life of God. See the second half of footnote 32 on this point.

There is, however, one apparent difficulty which the modified account seems to face that Edwards' and Alston's theories do not. On their proposals, it is easy to see how humanity could partake in the divine life and be taken up into the eternal Trinitarian communion, since on that view the psychological life or faculties of believers are directly merged with the divine Spirit. However, on the modified account, one is instead partially merged with the psychological life of the human Christ. If this is so, is it still a case of participation in the divine Trinitarian life and communion or merely a participation in the human life of Christ?

To answer this, it would be helpful to first consider the traditional orthodox view regarding Jesus. Orthodox Christianity makes a distinction between the person and natures of Christ. The person of Christ, i.e., the Logos, is uncreated and has the status of being a member of the Trinitarian community. Through the incarnation, the Logos comes to acquire a human will in addition to his divine will and for our purposes we will refer to them as the human mind and divine mind of the Logos respectively.⁴⁰ The two minds are distinct but nevertheless ontologically united in virtue of being possessed by the same person. On this conception, the Logos as man is distinct from all other men in one important regard – his person is not created and stands as a member of the eternal Trinity. From this orthodox Christology, one could proceed to argue that the person of Christ as a human being continues to enjoy the *sui generis* intra-Trinitarian communion in virtue of being an uncreated person of the Trinitarian community. As man, his participation in the intra-Trinitarian communion in his human nature or mind would no doubt be different from his participation of that same communion in his divine nature. Nevertheless, it does not make his human participation any less genuine. It simply means that the man Jesus participates in the intra-Trinitarian communion of persons in a human rather than a divine way. The eternal communion between the persons of the Trinity continues to hold even when the Logos is incarnated as man. Therefore, when the church is united to the human mind of Christ through the Spirit, she is also at the same time participating in his ongoing human way of partaking in the intra-Trinitarian communion.⁴¹

A consequence of the modified account of indwelling, unlike Edwards' and Alston's original models, is that believers do not share in the Trinitarian life as divine beings do but only in a manner appropriate to human beings by means of a partial union with the human psychological life of Christ through the Spirit. In other words, *contra* Edwards, the saints do not have a divine principle or disposition infused within their souls, but instead the human disposition of Christ. Nevertheless,

⁴⁰ The two wills view of Christ is affirmed by the Sixth Ecumenical Council in AD 681 and can be traced back to at least Origen of Alexandria. Although affirming that Christ has two wills is strictly speaking distinct from affirming that he has two minds, it seems that having two wills entails having two minds. For a helpful conceptual analysis of the various possibilities in which Christ can have two minds, see Marmodoro and Hill (2010).

⁴¹ T.F. Torrance argues for a similar point, stating that "In Jesus Christ God has embodied in our human existence the mutual knowledge which the Father and the Son have of one another and in the Holy Spirit he gives us communion in the mutual relation of the Father and the Son and thus makes us share in the knowledge which the Father and Son have of one another" (Torrance 1988, 55).

this human way of participation remains a genuine case of partaking in the intra-Trinitarian life. Indeed, it is just as real as Jesus' human participation in the intra-communion of the Trinity.⁴²

10. A Trinitarian-Human Drive

The contention above brings us to a closely related point that should be highlighted. Although we have characterized the unitive drive of Christ as a human unitive drive, it is also in a significant sense a superhuman, or more accurately, a Trinitarian-human drive. The unitive drive of Christ, while considered human in the sense of belonging to his human nature, is nevertheless developed and shaped under the influence of his unique human participation in the intra-Trinitarian communion as the only Son. To a significant degree, the human character dispositions in the earthly and resurrected life of Jesus arose the way they did due to the communion and love he enjoys with the Father as the uncreated second person of the Trinity. This human way of participation in the intra-Trinitarian communion of uncreated persons profoundly influences the human career of Jesus and serves as a crucial basis for the subsequent development of his human unitive drive. Therefore, the human unitive drive of Jesus has genetic roots in the intra-Trinitarian love of uncreated persons that exceeds the possibilities and potential of any created being. In other words, the human unitive drive of Christ cannot be created or replicated; it can only arise as a result of the incarnation of the only begotten Son.⁴³ Consequently, while the unitive drive of Christ is a distinctly human drive, it is nonetheless dependent on the kind of loving intra-Trinitarian communion Jesus uniquely enjoys as the second person of the Trinity in his ongoing human career. It is in this sense that the human unitive drive of Christ is also Trinitarian-human: it is a human disposition unique to the incarnate Son and is not naturally available to any created being who does not also enjoy the intra-Trinitarian communion as an

⁴² Thus, Calvin was right in arguing that the life Christ gives is not the life he has in his divinity but as it appears in his humanity. He remarks, "Accordingly, he shows that in his humanity there also dwells fullness of life, so that whoever has partaken of his flesh and blood may at the same time enjoy participation in life" (*Institutes* 4.17.9). It has even been suggested by Todd Billings that Calvin could be seen to hold to a version of deification or theosis along these lines; namely, that "redemption involves the transformation of believers to be incorporated into the Triune life of God, while remaining creatures" (Billings 2007, 54-55). Whereas, he would be more resistant towards the Edwardsean conception of theosis where there is a mixing of divinity with humanity.

⁴³ An important theological corollary to this point is that there is a significant distinction between Christ's "perfect obedience to the law" and his "unique life of Sonship". Julie Canlis has observed that the Reformed tradition after Calvin has often focused exclusively on the merit of Christ's perfect obedience to the moral demand of the law but fails to give proper weight to his unique life of Sonship. The benefits that Christ bestows on the church are far greater than his perfect satisfaction of the law's moral demands which in principle can be satisfied by any created human person. Instead, the life believers partake of is Christ's unique and sinless life as the only Son – a life that cannot be lived by any created persons, regardless of how perfectly obedient they may be (Canlis 2004, 178-179).

uncreated person of the Trinity.⁴⁴ For this reason, the human unitive drive of Christ can also be conceived as the *sui generis* unitive drive of Trinitarian Sonship in human form. Hence, in this way, the human life of Christ functions as the only way into the intra-Trinitarian life of God for humanity. Were it not for the incarnation together with the Spirit's work of empowering Christ's perfect human love towards the Father and mediating an aspect of that love to us, we would have no way of participating in the intra-Trinitarian communion of Sonship in a humanly suitable manner.⁴⁵ Therefore, in sharing his human unitive drive with the church, Christ thereby also shares with her a power of appreciation, perception and enjoyment of the Father that only the begotten Son in human form can.

The preceding conclusion, however, raises another potential issue regarding the indwelling of the Spirit. In our modified account, we take the content of the Spirit's infusion to be the human unitive drive of Christ rather than the Spirit's own psychological states or dispositions. By making such a move, it seems that the person of the Spirit is made less intimately related and present to believers than in Alston's and Edwards' original models. In response to this issue, it is significant to note that the humanity of Christ, including his human love for the Father, may very well be formed, sustained and empowered by the divine Spirit who functions as the mutual bond and love between the Father and the Son.⁴⁶ Understood in this manner, the infusion of the human unitive drive of Christ could also, in some sense, be construed as the indirect impartation of the Spirit's disposition of love as it is worked out and mediated in and through the humanity of Christ. To be sure, on this modified model, the sharing of the Spirit's disposition of love with believers is not as direct and immediate as on Edwards' and Alston's proposals. Nevertheless, it still allows for a kind of mediated presence of the Spirit's loving disposition within the deepest being of the saints via the Spirit-filled incarnate humanity of Christ.

⁴⁴ A parallel point has been made by Kathryn Tanner. She argues that "the life of the Word is constituted by its dynamic relationships with the other members of the Trinity from which it is inseparable; the Word has no life apart from the other two. In becoming incarnate the Word therefore extends this same pattern of Trinitarian relationships into its own human life so as to give it shape according to that pattern" (Tanner 2010, 140). Tanner's claim supports my point that even in the incarnation the human character, disposition and psychological life of Christ is profoundly influenced by the divine intra-Trinitarian relationships in a way no other created beings can.

⁴⁵ The same point is made by Calvin. He states that "we are the sons of God, because the natural Son of God assumed to himself a body of our body, flesh of our flesh, bones of our bones, that he might be one with us" (*Institutes*, 2.12.2).

⁴⁶ Various proposals for a 'Spirit Christology' have indeed argued that the humanity of Christ is in some way constituted by the Spirit, including Edwards' own proposal. Del Colle defines 'Spirit Christology' as the view that "the Holy Spirit is attributed a constitutive role in the theological and soteriological reality that we identify as the person and work of Jesus Christ" (Del Colle 1993, 95). For a treatment of Edwards' 'Spirit Christology' refer to Seng-Kong Tan's insightful discussion (Tan 2010, 127-150). For various arguments in favor of a 'Spirit Christology' refer to Chapter 4-6 of Myk Habets' work (Habet 2010).

Bibliography

- Alston, William P. 1989. "The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit." In *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theology*. Cornell University Press.
- Aquinas. 1920. *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Second and Revised ed.
- Augustine. 1997. *On the Trinity* The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series: Volume III, edited by Philip Schaff. T&T Clark.
- Billings, J. Todd. 2007. *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ*. Oxford University Press.
- Caldwell III, Robert W. 2006. *Communion in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit as the Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. Paternoster.
- Calvin, Jean. 1960. *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles, edited by John T. McNeill. The Westminster Press.
- _____. 1998. *Calvin's Commentaries: John (Electronic Ed.)*. Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries. Ages Software.
- Canlis, Julie. 2004. "Calvin, Osiander and Participation in God." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6, no. 2: 169-184.
- Claghorn, George S. 1989. "Introduction by George S. Claghorn." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- Crisp, Oliver. 2010. "Jonathan Edwards' Panentheism." In *Edwards as Contemporary: Essays in Honor of Sang Hyun Lee*, edited by Don Schweitzer, 107-125. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Danaher, William J. 2004. *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Del Colle, Ralph. 1993. "Spirit-Christology: Dogmatic Foundations for Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3: 91-112.
- Delattre, Roland. 1968. "Beauty and Theology: A Reappraisal of Jonathan Edwards." *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 51, no. 1: 60-79.
- Edwards, Jonathan. *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online, Volume 32, Correspondence by, to, and About Edwards and His Family*. Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale.

- _____. 1957. *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 1, Freedom of the Will*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1959. *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 2, Religious Affections*, edited by John E. Smith. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1970. *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 3, Original Sin*, edited by Clyde A. Holbrook. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1989. "Concerning the End for Which God Created the World." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1989. "Sermon One: Love the Sum of All Virtue." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1989. "Sermon Twelve: Christian Graces Concatenated Together." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1989. "Sermon Two: Love More Excellent Than Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1989. "Unpublished Letter on Assurance and Participation in the Divine Nature." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1994. *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, the Miscellanies: A-500*, edited by Harry S. Stout. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1999. "A Divine and Supernatural Light." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 17, Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, edited by Mark Valeri. Yale University Press.
- _____. 2000. *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 18, the Miscellanies: 501-832*, edited by Ava Chamberlain. Yale University Press.
- _____. 2002. "'Controversies' Notebook: The Nature of True Virtue." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, edited by Sang Hyun Lee. Yale University Press.
- _____. 2002. "Discourse on the Trinity." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, edited by Sang Hyun Lee. Yale University Press.

- _____. 2002. "Efficacious Grace, Book 3." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, edited by Sang Hyun Lee. Yale University Press.
- _____. 2002. "On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, edited by Sang Hyun Lee. Yale University Press.
- _____. 2002. "Treatise on Grace." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, edited by Sang Hyun Lee. Yale University Press.
- _____. 2002. *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 20, the "Miscellanies, 833-1152*, edited by Amy Pauw Plantinga. Yale University Press.
- Erdt, Terrence. 1980. *Jonathan Edwards, Art and the Sense of the Heart*. University of Massachusetts Press.
- Evans, William B. 2008. *Imputation and Impartation*. Paternoster.
- Ferguson, Sinclair. 1996. *The Holy Spirit*. IVP Academic.
- Habets, Myk. 2010. *The Anointed Son: A Trinitarian Spirit Christology*. Pickwick Publications.
- Hastings, W. Ross. 2004. "'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." Ph.D Thesis, University of St Andrews.
- _____. 2005. "'Honouring the Spirit': Analysis and Evaluation of Jonathan Edwards' Pneumatological Doctrine of the Incarnation." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 3: 279-299.
- Holmes, Stephen R. 2000. *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. T&T Clark.
- Lee, Sang Hyun. 1988. *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. Princeton University Press.
- Marmodoro, Anna, and Jonathan Hill. 2010. "Composition Models of the Incarnation: Unity and Unifying Relations." *Religious Studies* 46: 469-488.
- McClymond, Michael J. 1998. *Encounters with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. Oxford University Press.

- _____. 2003. "Salvation as Divinization: Jonathan Edwards, Gregory of Palamas and the Theological Uses of Neo-Platonism." In *Jonathan Edwards, Philosophical Theologian*, edited by Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp. Ashgate Publishing.
- Miller, Perry. 1948. "Jonathan Edwards and the Sense of the Heart." *Harvard Theological Review* 41: 123-145.
- Morimoto, Anri. 1995. *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation*. Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Placher, William C. 1996. *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking About God Went Wrong*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Ramsey, Paul. 1989. "Editor's Introduction." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- _____. 1989a. "Infused Virtues in Edwardsean and Calvinistic Context." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, edited by Paul Ramsey. Yale University Press.
- Simonson, Harold. 2004. "Introduction." In *Selected Writings of Jonathan Edwards*. Waveland Press.
- Smith, John E. 1959. "Editor's Introduction." In *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 2, Religious Affections*, edited by John E. Smith. Yale University Press.
- Tan, Seng-Kong. 2010. "Trinitarian Action in the Incarnation." In *Edwards as Contemporary: Essays in Honor of Sang Hyun Lee*, edited by Don Schweitzer. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Tanner, Kathryn. 2010. *Christ the Key*. Cambridge University Press.
- Torrance, Thomas F. 1959. *The School of Faith: The Catechisms of the Reformed Church*. James Clarke and Co.
- _____. 1975. "The Mind of Christ in Worship: The Problem of Apollinarianism in the Liturgy." In *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays Towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West*. Geoffrey Chapman Publishers.
- _____. 1988. *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church*. T&T Clark.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. 2002. *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics*. InterVarsity Press.

- Wainwright, William J. 2010. "Jonathan Edwards, God, and "Particular Minds"." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 68: 201-213.
- Wallace, Ronald S. 1995. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*. Scottish Academic Press.
- Walton, Brad. 2002. *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections and Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation and Heart Religion*. Edwin Mellon Press.
- Whittemore, Robert C. 1966. "Jonathan Edwards and the Theology of the Sixth Way." *Church History* 35.1: 60-75.
- Woodbridge, Frederick. 1904. "Jonathan Edwards." *The Philosophical Review* 13.4: 393-408.
- Zagzebski, Linda. 2001. "The Uniqueness of Persons." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 29, no. 3: 401-423.
- _____. 2008. "Omnisubjectivity." In *Oxford Studies In Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Jonathan L. Kvanvig, 231-247. Oxford University Press.