

# An Unpublished Essay on the Trinity

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*Language updates, notes, and formatting*  
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IT IS COMMON when speaking of the Divine happiness to say that God is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of Himself, in perfectly beholding and infinitely loving, and rejoicing in His own essence and perfection. Accordingly, it must be supposed that God perpetually and eternally has a most perfect idea of Himself, as it were: an exact image and representation of Himself ever before Him and in actual view. From this arises a most pure and perfect act or energy in the Godhead, which is the Divine love, his complacence and joy. The knowledge or view which God has of Himself must necessarily be conceived to be something distinct from His mere direct existence.<sup>1</sup> There must be something that answers to our reflection. The reflection (as we reflect on our own minds) carries something of imperfection in it. However, if God beholds Himself so as to have delight and joy in Himself from it, then He must become his own object. There must be a duplicity, a twofold nature. There is God, and there is the *idea* of God, if it is proper to call a conception of what is purely spiritual an “idea.”

If a man could have an absolutely perfect idea of all that passed in his mind, all the series of ideas and exercises which are in every respect perfect as to their order, degree, and circumstance during a particular space of time (such as the last hour), then to all intents and purposes he would really be what he was during that last hour all over again. And if it were possible for a man to perfectly contemplate all that is in his own mind in an hour by reflection, exactly as it is and at the same time that it is, then a man would really be two during that time. He would indeed be double; he would be twice at once. That is, if a man had a perfect reflective or contemplative idea of every thought he had at the same moment he had that thought, and of every exercise of his mind at the same time he exercised it, and so on through a whole hour, then the idea he has of himself would be himself again.

Note that by having a reflective or contemplative idea of what passes in our own minds, I don't mean consciousness only. There is a great difference between a man having a view of himself, a reflective or contemplative idea of himself so as to delight in his own beauty or excellency, and mere direct consciousness. If we mean by consciousness whatever is in our minds besides the mere presence in our minds of what is there, then consciousness is nothing more than a power to view or contemplate what passes by reflection.

Therefore, as God understands Himself with perfect clearness, fullness, and strength, and views His own essence (in which there is no distinction between *substance* and *act*, but what is wholly *substance* is indeed wholly *act*), that idea which God has of Himself is absolutely Himself. This representation of the Divine nature and essence is in fact the Divine nature and essence again. So

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<sup>1</sup> This may make sense philosophically, psychologically, and perhaps even logically, but it suggests that the “Idea” of God is separate from God, as if the Son were not one with the Father, nor tangible, nor empowered and imbued with the will of the Father, nor acting as the Father on behalf of the Father. Although Edwards later addresses these issues, he doesn't fully overcome this inconsistency; maybe that's why it was never published. – WHG.

that by God's thinking of the Deity, the Deity must certainly be generated. **Hereby another person is begotten.** There is another Infinite Eternal Almighty, most holy and yet the same God, having the very same Divine nature.

And this Person is the second person in the Trinity, the Only Begotten and dearly Beloved Son of God. He is the eternal, necessary, perfect, substantial, and personal idea which God has of Himself. That this is so, seems to me abundantly confirmed by the Word of God.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing can agree more than this with the account the Scripture gives us of the Son of God, of His being in the form of God, and of His express and perfect image and representation: (2Cor. 4:4) "Lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (Phil. 2:6) "Who being in the form of God." (Col. 1:15) "Who is the image of the invisible God." (Heb. 1:3) "Who, being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person..."

Christ is called the face of God (Exod. 33:14). The word in the original is "presence." It signifies face, looks, form, or appearance. Now what can so properly and fitly be described with respect to God, as God's own perfect idea of Himself? He has a view of His own essence at every moment. This idea is the "face of God," which God sees just as a man sees his own face in a mirror. It is this form or appearance by which God eternally appears to Himself. The root that the original word comes from signifies to look upon or behold. Now, what is it that God could look upon or behold in so eminent a manner as He would His own idea or perfect image of Himself, the one which He has in view? This is what is eminently in God's presence, and it is therefore called "the angel of God's presence," or "face" (Isa. 63:9). That the Son of God is God's own eternal and perfect idea of Himself is something we have much more expressly revealed in God's Word. First, Christ is called "the wisdom of God." If we are taught in the Scripture that Christ is the same as God's wisdom or knowledge, then it teaches us that He is the same as God's perfect and eternal idea. They are the same, as we have already observed, and I suppose none will deny it. But Christ is indeed said to be the wisdom of God (1Cor. 1:24, Luke 11:49 – compare with Matt. 23:34). And Christ speaks in Proverbs under the name of "Wisdom," especially in the 8th chapter.

The Godhead is thus begotten by God's loving an idea of Himself; and He shows forth that idea in a distinct subsistence or person; thus there proceeds a most pure act: an infinitely holy and sacred energy arises between the Father and Son in mutually loving and delighting in each other, for their love and joy is mutual. (Prov. 8:30) "I was His delight daily, rejoicing always before Him." This is the eternal and most perfect and essential act of the Divine nature, in which the Godhead acts to an infinite degree and in the most perfect manner possible. The Deity becomes all-acting. The Divine essence itself flows out and is, as it were, breathed forth in love and joy; so that the Godhead in this acting presents yet another manner of subsistence. And from here proceeds the third Person in the Trinity: the Holy Spirit, who is the Deity-in-action, for there is no other act but the act of the will.

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<sup>2</sup> The Father is from none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son (Westminster Confession of Faith 2.3). 1Jn. 5:7; Matt. 3:16; 28:19; 2Cor. 13:14; Jn. 1:14; 15:26.

We may learn by the Word of God that the Godhead, or the Divine nature and essence, does subsist in love. (1 John 4:8) “He that does not love does not know God; for God is love.” In the context of this passage, I think it is plainly intimated to us that the Holy Spirit is that Love, as in the 12th and 13th verses. “If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us; this is how we know that we dwell in Him ... because He has given to us from His Spirit.” It is the same argument in both verses. In the 12th verse, the apostle argues that if we have love dwelling in us, then we have God dwelling in us. And in the 13th verse, He clears the force of the argument by this: that love is God’s Spirit. Seeing that we have God’s Spirit dwelling in us, we have God dwelling in us, assuming we accept that God’s Spirit is God. It is also evident by this that God’s dwelling in us, and His love being in us (or the love that He has exercised), are the same thing.<sup>3</sup> This is likewise intimated in the last verse of the foregoing chapter. There the apostle was speaking of love as a sure sign of sincerity and of our acceptance with God. Beginning with the 18th verse, he sums up the argument this way: “and by this we know that He abides in us: by the Spirit that He has given us.”

The Scripture seems in many places to speak of love in Christians as if it were the same as having the Spirit of God in them, or at least the same as the prime and most natural breathing and acting of the Spirit in the soul. (Phil. 2:1) “If there is therefore any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affections and mercies, fulfill my joy so that you are like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” (2Cor. 6:6) “By kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned.” (Romans 15:30) “Now I beseech you, brothers, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit.” (Col. 1:8) “Who declared unto us your love in the Spirit.” (Rom. 5:5) “Having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.” (Gal. 5:13-16) “Do not use liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” The Apostle argues that Christian liberty does not make way for fulfilling the lusts of the flesh in biting and devouring one another and the like, because a principle of love, which was the fulfilling of the law, would prevent it; and in the 16th verse, he asserts the same thing in other words: “This I say then: walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.”

The third and last office of the Holy Spirit is to comfort and delight the souls of God’s people; and thus one of His names is the Comforter; and thus we have the phrase of “joy in the Holy Ghost.” (1Thess. 1:6) “Having received the Word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. 14: 17) “The kingdom of God is ... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 9:31) “Walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.” But how well does this agree with the Holy Ghost being God’s joy and delight? (Acts 13:52) “And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost” – meaning, I suppose, that they were filled with spiritual joy.

This is confirmed by the symbol of the Holy Ghost, viz., a dove, which is the emblem of love or a lover, and it is so used in Scripture, and especially often so in Solomon’s Song, (1:15) “Behold you are fair; my love, behold you are fair; you have dove’s eyes:” i.e. “Eyes of love;” and again

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<sup>3</sup> Or it may be that God-dwelling-in-us is evidenced and expressed by our acting out the love of God, rather than the Love-of-God and God being the “same thing.” That is, the Principle of Love is not the same as the Principal of Love. – WHG

in 4:1 the same words are used; and in 5:12, “His eyes are as the eyes of doves,” and in 5:2, “My love, my dove;” and in 2:14 and 6:9. This I believe is the reason that the dove alone of all birds (*except the sparrow in the single case of leprosy*) was appointed to be offered in sacrifice: because of its innocence, and because it is the emblem of love, love being the most acceptable sacrifice to God. It was under this similitude that the Holy Ghost descended from the Father on Christ at His baptism, signifying the infinite love of the Father toward the Son Who is the true David, or beloved, as we said before.

The same thing was signified by the appearance of the Holy Ghost descending in the shape of a dove from the Father to the Son, as was signified in the voice of God at the same time, viz., “This is My well-Beloved Son in Whom I am well-pleased.”

*(That God’s love or His loving kindness is the same as the Holy Ghost seems to be made plain by Psalm 36:7-9, “How excellent [or “how precious” in the Hebrew] is Your loving-kindness O God: therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings; they shall be abundantly satisfied [“watered” in the Hebrew] with the fatness of Your house, and You shall make them to drink of the river of Your pleasures; for with You is the fountain of life and in Your light we shall see light.”*

*Doubtless that precious loving-kindness, and that fatness of God’s house, and the river of His pleasures, and the water of the fountain of life, and God’s light that are spoken of here, are the same thing. By this we learn that God’s loving-kindness is the Holy anointing oil that was kept in the House of God, that it was a type of the Holy Ghost represented God’s love, and that the “River of water of life” spoken of in the 22nd chapter of Revelation, which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, is the same as Ezekiel’s vision of Living and life-giving water, which in Psalm 36 is called the “Fountain of life” and “river of God’s pleasures.”*

*But Christ Himself expressly teaches us that the “spiritual fountains” and the “river of the water of life” means the Holy Ghost.<sup>4</sup> (John 4:14; 7:38, 39). That the “river of God’s pleasures” here means the same as the pure “river of the water of life” spoken of in Revelation 22:1, will be much confirmed if we compare those verses with Revelation 21:23, 24; 22:1, 5 [see the notes on chapters 21, 23, and 24]. I think if we compare these places and weigh them, we cannot doubt but that it is the same happiness that is meant in Psalm 36:8-9).*

So this well agrees with the similitudes and metaphors that are used about the Holy Ghost in Scripture, such as water, fire, breath, wind, oil, wine, a spring, a river, a being poured out and shed forth, and a being breathed forth. Can there be any spiritual thing thought, or can there be anything belonging to any spiritual being to which such metaphors so naturally agree, as to the affection of a Spirit? The affection, love, or joy, may be said to flow out as water, or to be breathed forth as breath or wind. But it would [not] sound so well to say that an idea or judgment flows out or is breathed forth.

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<sup>4</sup> We need to be cautious with what Edwards says here. The sign or symbol, and the thing signified or symbolized, are not the same, and must not be equated. The trail or wake of something cannot be equated to what made them. This is what idolatry springs from, and what mysticism often leads to. God is Creator; He is not His Creation – that would be pantheism. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person, and not mere action or force. – WHG

It is no way different to say of the affection that it is warm, or to compare love to fire; but it would not seem natural to say the same of perception or reason.<sup>5</sup> It seems natural enough to say that the soul is poured out in affection, or that love or delight are shed abroad: (Rom. 5:5) “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts;” but it suits nothing else belonging to a spiritual being.

This is that “river of water of life” spoken of in the 22nd [chapter] of Revelation, which proceeds from the throne of the Father and the Son, for the “rivers of living water” or “water of life” are the Holy Ghost, by the same apostle’s own interpretation (John 7:38, 39); and the Holy Ghost being the infinite delight and pleasure of God, the river is called “the river of God’s pleasures” (Ps. 36:8), not “God’s river of pleasures”, which I suppose signifies the same as “the fatness of God’s House”, which those who trust in God will be watered with, and I suppose it signifies the same thing which “oil” typifies.

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. The communion of saints is twofold: it is their communion with God, and it is communion with one another: (1John 1:3) “That you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” Communion is a common partaking of good, either of excellency or happiness, so that when it is said that the saints have communion or fellowship with the Father and with the Son, it means that they partake with the Father and the Son of their good, which is either,

(1) their excellency and glory:

2Peter 1:4, “You are made partakers of the Divine nature”;

Heb. 12:10, “That we might be partakers of His holiness;”

John 17:22, 23, “And the glory which You have given Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and You in Me”); or

(2) of their joy and happiness:

John 17:13, “That they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”

But the Holy Ghost, being the love and joy of God, is His beauty and happiness. And thus our communion with God consists in our partaking of the same Holy Spirit: (2Cor. 13:14) “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen.” They are not different benefits, but the same that the Apostle wishes here, viz., the Holy Ghost: in partaking of the Holy Ghost, we possess and enjoy the love and grace of the Father and the Son, for the Holy Ghost is that love and grace. And therefore I suppose this is what is meant by 1John 1:3 mentioned above. We are said to have fellowship with the Son and not with the Holy Ghost, because that fellowship consists our fellowship with the Father and the Son, even in partaking with them of the Holy Ghost.

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<sup>5</sup> Edwards wrote a famous treatise called “Religious Affections” dealing with the emotionality of Revivalism. His concept of affection is perhaps different than ours today. To Edwards, affection is a felt response to an object that is brought forth by an understanding of the nature of the object. Where there is no understanding of that object, there can be no affection, regardless of how much emotion may be present. He felt that affection differs from passion in that affection does not overpower and captivate the will. Passion *enslaves* the will, but affection is an *exercise* of the will. Perhaps with that in mind, having looked at man’s affection toward God, Edwards now considers God’s affection toward Himself. God has a perfect understanding of Himself, and so His affection toward the Son and the Holy Spirit is indeed an exercise of His perfect will, perception, and understanding. - WHG

Our communion with the Son also eminently consists in this: that we drink into the same Spirit. This is the common excellency and joy and happiness in which they all are united. It is the bond of perfectness by which they are one in the Father and the Son, just as the Father is in the Son.

I can think of no other good account that can be given of the apostle Paul's wishing grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in the beginning of his Epistles, without ever mentioning the Holy Ghost – as we find thirteen times in his salutations in the beginnings of his Epistles – unless the Holy Ghost is Himself the love and grace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. And in his blessing at the end of his second Epistle to the Corinthians, where all three Persons are mentioned, he wishes grace and love from the Son and the Father in the communion, or in the partaking, of the Holy Ghost – the blessing is from the Father and the Son *in the Holy Ghost*. But the blessing from the Holy Ghost is *Himself*: the communication of Himself. Christ promises that He and the Father will love believers (John 14:21,23), but no mention is made of the Holy Ghost; and the love of Christ and the love of the Father are often distinctly mentioned, but never any mention of the Holy Ghost's love.

*(This I suppose is the reason why we never have any account of the Holy Ghost's loving either the Father or the Son, or of the Son or the Father loving the Holy Ghost, or of the Holy Ghost loving the saints, although these things are so often predicated of both the other Persons.)*

And this I suppose is that blessed Trinity that we read of in the Holy Scriptures. The Father is the Deity subsisting in the prime, un-originated, and most absolute manner, i.e. the Deity in its direct existence. The Son is the Deity generated by God's understanding, or having an idea of Himself and subsisting in that idea.<sup>6</sup> The Holy Ghost is the Deity subsisting in act, or the Divine essence flowing out and breathed forth in God's Infinite love to, and delight in, Himself. 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.

It is a maxim amongst divines that everything that is *in God is God*, which must be understood of real attributes and not of mere modalities. If a man should tell me that the immutability of God is God, or that the omnipresence of God and authority of God is God, I should not be able to think of any rational meaning of what he said. It hardly sounds to me proper to say that God's being without change is God, or that God's being everywhere is God, or that God's having a right of government over creatures is God.

But if it meant that the real attributes of God, viz., His understanding and love, are God, then what we have said may in some measure explain how it is so, for Deity subsists in them distinctly; so they are distinct Divine Persons.

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<sup>6</sup> Here again, Edwards implies that the Son is not co-eternally begotten of the Father of the same substance, but is a product of the Father's after-thought of Himself. He goes on to suggest by his definition of the Holy Spirit that the Holy Spirit is not a separate person, and then concludes that He is. But he seemingly disproves it by saying that the Holy Spirit does not love, and is merely God-Love in action. Edwards understands and rejects the heresy of modalism, but confuses the issue by these descriptions. This treatise is obviously a work-in-progress as Edwards struggles to work out the implications; and so I believe it should not be taken as his final thoughts on the matter of the Trinity. His conclusions on pages 9 and 10 are nonetheless profound and deeply moving.  
– WHG

One of the principal objections that I can think of against what has been supposed, concerns the Personality of the Holy Ghost: that this scheme of things does not seem well to consist with [the fact] that a person has both understanding and will. If the three in the Godhead are Persons, they each doubtless have understanding; but this scheme makes the understanding one distinct person, and it makes love another. How therefore can this love be said to have understanding? (*Here I would observe that it has not been the habit of divines to suppose that these three had three distinct understandings; rather, all had one and the same understanding.*)

In order to clear up this matter, let it be considered that the whole Divine office is supposed to truly and properly subsist in each of these three – God and His understanding and His love – and that there is such a wonderful union between them that they are, after an ineffable and inconceivable manner, One-in-Another; so that One *has* Another, and they have communion *in* One Another, and they are, as it were, predicable<sup>7</sup> One-of-Another. As Christ said of Himself and the Father “I am in the Father and the Father is in Me,” so may it be said concerning all the Persons in the Trinity: the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, the Holy Ghost is in the Father, and the Father in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost is in the Son, and the Son in the Holy Ghost. And so the Father *understands* because the Son Who is the Divine understanding is in Him; the Father *loves* because the Holy Ghost is in Him; the Son *loves* because the Holy Ghost is in Him and proceeds from Him; the Holy Ghost – *the Divine essence* – is Divine, but He understands because the Son – *the Divine Idea* – is in Him.

Understanding may be predicated<sup>8</sup> of this love because it is the love born of the understanding, both objectively and subjectively. God loves the understanding and that understanding also flows out in love, so that the Divine understanding is in the Deity subsisting in love. It is not a blind love. Even in creatures, there is consciousness included in the very nature of the will or act of the soul. And though perhaps it is not such that it can be properly said that it is a seeing or an undemanding will, yet it may truly and properly be said to be such in God. That is because of God’s infinitely more perfect manner of acting, so that the whole Divine essence flows out and subsists in this act, and because the Son is in the Holy Spirit. This is true even though [love] does not proceed from Him, because the understanding must be considered as prior in the order of nature to the will, or to love, or to acting, both in creatures and in the Creator. The understanding is so in the Spirit that the Spirit may be said to know, just as the Spirit of God is truly and perfectly said to know and to search all things, even the deep things of God.<sup>9</sup>

*(All Three are Persons, for they all have understanding and will. There is understanding and will in the Father, because the Son and the Holy Ghost are in Him and proceed from Him. There is understanding and will in the Son, because He is understanding and because the Holy Ghost is in Him and proceeds from Him. There is understanding and will in the Holy Ghost, because He is the Divine will and because the Son is in Him.*

*Nor is it to be looked upon as a strange and unreasonable figment that the Persons should be said to have an understanding or love by another person’s being in them, for we have Scripture ground to conclude so concerning the Father’s having wisdom and understanding or reason that*

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<sup>7</sup> Each affirms or declares the attributes and qualities of the others; their Oneness is conditioned upon it. - WHG

<sup>8</sup> That is, understanding is the necessary pre-condition of love, as Edwards is about to explain; see fn. 5 - WHG

<sup>9</sup> 1Cor 2:10

*it is by the Son's being in Him; because we are there informed that He is the wisdom and reason and truth of God, and hereby God is wise by His own wisdom being in Him. Understanding and wisdom is in the Father as the Son is in Him and proceeds from Him. Understanding is in the Holy Ghost because the Son is in Him, not as proceeding from Him but as flowing out in Him.)*<sup>10</sup>

But I don't pretend fully to explain how these things are, and I am sensible a hundred other objections may be made, and puzzling doubts and questions raised that I can't solve. I am far from pretending to explain the Trinity so as to render it no longer a mystery. I think it is still the highest and deepest of all Divine mysteries, 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 say something further than what has been our habit to say of it, though there remain many things pertaining to it that are incomprehensible.

It seems to me that what I have supposed here concerning the Trinity is exceeding analogous to the Gospel scheme, and agreeable to the tenor of the whole New Testament, and abundantly illustrative of Gospel doctrines. That might be particularly shown, if it would not exceedingly lengthen out this discourse.

I shall now only briefly observe that many things that have been habitually said by orthodox divines about the Trinity are hereby illustrated:

- Hereby we see how the Father is the fountain of the Godhead, and why when He is spoken of in Scripture, He is so often, without any addition or distinction, called God. This has led some to think that He alone was truly and properly God.
- Hereby we may see why in the economy of the Persons of the Trinity, the Father should sustain the dignity of the Deity, that the Father should have it as His office to uphold and maintain the rights of the Godhead, and that He should be God not only by essence, but as it were, by His economical office.
- Hereby is illustrated the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, proceeding from both the Father and the Son.
- Hereby we see how that it is possible for the Son to be begotten by the Father, and for the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and Son, and yet all the Persons are Co-eternal.
- Hereby we may more clearly understand the equality of the Persons among themselves, and that they are in every way equal in the society or family of the three.

They are equal in honor: besides the honor which is common to them all, viz., that they are all God, each has His peculiar honor in the society or family. They are equal not only in essence, but the Father's honor is that He is, as it were, the Author of perfect and infinite wisdom. The Son's honor is that He is that perfect and Divine wisdom itself, the excellency from which arises the honor of being the author or Generator of it. The honor of the Father and the Son is that they are infinitely excellent, or that infinite excellency proceeds from them; but the honor of the Holy Ghost is equal, for He is that Divine excellency and beauty itself.

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<sup>10</sup> Edwards, in this aside, states the Scriptural principles that must be addressed, and that appear to be undermined in part by what he has written so far. I would think that in a later draft, he would have to rework his conjectures to fall into accord with this parenthetical statement. That explains the opening line of the following paragraph and his comments on page 11 below. He sees the problems he has raised, and by trying to explain things "that have went to be said by orthodox divines about the Trinity" he may have created many more unanswerable questions. Indeed, he has. – WHG

It is the honor of the Father and the Son that they are infinitely holy, and are the fountain of holiness; but the honor of the Holy Ghost is that He is holiness itself. The honor of the Father and the Son is [that] they are infinitely happy and are the origin and the fountain of happiness; and the honor of the Holy Ghost is equal, for He is infinite happiness and joy itself.

The honor of the Father is that He is the fountain of the Deity, because it is He from Whom proceed both the Divine wisdom, and also excellency and happiness. The honor of the Son is equal, for He is Himself the Divine wisdom, and it is He from Whom proceeds the Divine excellency and happiness. And the honor of the Holy Ghost is equal, for He is the beauty and happiness of both the other Persons.

By this also we may fully understand the equality of each Person's concern in the work of redemption, and the equality of the Redeemed's concern with them, and dependence upon them, and the equality and honor and praise due to each of them. Glory belongs to the Father and the Son in that they so greatly loved the world: to the Father in that He so loved that He gave His Only Begotten Son: to the Son in that He so loved the world as to give up Himself.

But there is equal glory due to the Holy Ghost, for He is that love of the Father and the Son to the world. Just as much as the two first Persons glorify themselves by showing the astonishing greatness of their love and grace, so too is that wonderful love and grace glorified Who is the Holy Ghost. It shows the Infinite dignity and excellency of the Father that the Son so delighted and prized His honor and glory, that He stooped infinitely low rather than allow men's salvation to injure that honor and glory.<sup>11</sup>

It showed the infinite excellency and worth of the Son, that the Father so delighted in Him that for His sake He was ready to quit His anger, and to receive into favor those who would have received infinitely ill at His Hands. And what was done shows how great is the excellency and worth of the Holy Ghost, Who is that delight which the Father and the Son have in each other: it shows it to be Infinite. The worth of the thing *delighted in* is as great to any one of the Persons as the worth of that delight and joy *itself* which that Person has in it.

Our dependence rests equally upon each in this office. The Father appoints and provides the Redeemer, and the Father Himself accepts the price and grants the thing purchased; the Son is the Redeemer by offering Himself, and He is the price; and the Holy Ghost immediately communicates to us the thing purchased by communicating Himself to us, for He is the thing purchased. The sum of all that Christ purchased for men was the Holy Ghost: (Gal. 3:13,14) "He was made a curse for us... that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

What Christ purchased for us was that we have communion with God [which] is His good, which consists in partaking of the Holy Ghost. As we have shown, all the blessedness of the Redeemed consists in their partaking of Christ's fullness, which consists in partaking of that Spirit which is

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<sup>11</sup> In other words, Christ was more willing to live a perfect life and to suffer the indignity of the cross, than allow men to be saved in any way that might injure God's honor and glory. As John Owen put it, Christ loved the Father more than he detested our sin, and so he took our sins upon himself. - WHG

not given to him by measure<sup>12</sup>: 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. 133:2). Christ purchased for us so that we should have the favor of God and might enjoy His love; but this love is the Holy Ghost.

Christ purchased for us true spiritual excellency, grace and holiness, the sum of which is love to God, which is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the heart. Christ purchased for us spiritual joy and comfort, which is a participation of God's joy and happiness; and that joy and happiness is the Holy Ghost, as we have shown. The Holy Ghost is the sum of all good things. Good things and the Holy Spirit are synonymous expressions in Scripture: (Matt. 7:11) "How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." The sum of all spiritual good which the finite have in *this* world, is that spring of living water within them which we read of in John 4:10, and those rivers of living water flowing out of them which we read of in John 7:38,39; and we are there told it means the Holy Ghost. And the sum of all happiness in the *other* world is that "river of water of life" which proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb, which we read of in Rev. 22:1, which is the "river of God's pleasures"; and it too is the Holy Ghost. And therefore, the sum of the Gospel invitation is to come and take the water of life (verse 17).

The Holy Ghost is the purchased possession and inheritance of the saints, as appears because that little of it which the saints have in this world is said to be the earnest of that purchased inheritance. (Eph. 1:14) It is an earnest of what we are to have a fullness of hereafter (2Cor. 1:22; 5:5). The Holy Ghost is the great subject of all Gospel promises, and therefore He is called the Spirit of Promise. (Eph. 1:13) This is called the promise of the Father in Luke 24:49 and in other places. (*If the Holy Ghost comprehends all good things promised in the Gospel, we may easily see the force of the Apostle's argument in Gal. 3:2: "This only would I know: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?"*) So that it is God of Whom our good is purchased, and it is God that purchases it, and it is God also that is the thing purchased.

Thus all our good things are *of* God, and *through* God, and *in* God, as we read in Romans 11:36: "For of Him and through Him and *to* Him are all things." (or *in* Him as *eis* is rendered in 1Cor. 8:6) "To Whom be glory forever." All our good is of God the Father; it is all through God the Son; and it all is found in the Holy Ghost, as He is Himself all our good. God is Himself the portion and the purchased inheritance of His people. Thus God is the Alpha and the Omega in this affair of redemption.

If we suppose no more than used to be supposed about the Holy Ghost, the concern of the Holy Ghost in the work of redemption is not equal with the Father's and the Son's. Nor is there an equal part of the glory of this work belonging to Him if He merely applies to us or immediately gives or hands to us the blessing purchased, *after* it was purchased, as subservient to the other two Persons. That is but a little thing [compared] to the purchasing of it by paying an Infinite price, by Christ offering up Himself in sacrifice to procure it; and it is but a little thing to God the Father to give His infinitely dear Son to be a sacrifice for us, and upon His purchase to afford to us all the blessings of His purchase.

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<sup>12</sup> John 3:34

But according to this [scheme that I have laid out], there is an equality. To *be* the love of God to the world, is as much for the Father and the Son to do *from* love to the world, as it is for the thing *purchased* to be as much as the *price* paid. The price and the thing bought with that price are equal. And it is as much to *afford* the thing purchased, as it is for the One who affords the thing purchased to receive the glory for it: it arises from the worth of that thing which He affords; and therefore it is the *same* glory, and it is an *equal* glory; the glory of the thing itself is its worth, and that is also the glory of the One who affords it.

There are two more eminent and remarkable images of the Trinity among the creatures. The one image is found in the spiritual creation: the soul of man. There is in man the mind, and its understanding or idea, and the spirit of the mind (as it is called in Scripture<sup>13</sup>), i.e., the disposition, the will, or affection. The other image is found in the visible creation: the Sun. The Father is like the **substance** of the Sun. (*By substance I don't mean in a philosophical sense, but the Sun as to its internal constitution.*) The Son is as the **brightness** and glory of the disk of the Sun, or that bright and glorious form under which it appears to our eyes. The Holy Ghost is the **action** of the Sun, which is within the Sun in its intestine heat, and being diffusive, it enlightens, warms, enlivens, and comforts the world. The Spirit, because it is God's Infinite love to Himself and happiness in Himself, is like the internal heat of the Sun; but because it is that by which God communicates Himself, it is also like the emanation of the sun's action, or the emitted beams of the sun.

The various sorts of rays of the sun, and their beautiful colors, well-represent the Spirit. They well-represent the love and grace of God, and they were made use of for this purpose in the rainbow after the flood, and I suppose also in that rainbow that was seen round about the throne by Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:3), and round the head of Christ by John (Rev. 10:1), or the amiable excellency of God and the various beautiful graces and virtues of the Spirit. We find these beautiful colors of the sunbeams are made use of in Scripture for this purpose: to represent the graces of the Spirit, as in Ps. 68:13. "Though you lie among the pots, yet you shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold," i.e., like the light reflected in various beautiful colors from the feathers of a dove, whose colors represent the graces of the Heavenly Dove.

I suppose the same thing is signified by the various beautiful colors reflected from the precious stones of the breastplate, and that these spiritual ornaments of the Church are what are represented by the various colors of the foundation and gates of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21; Isaiah 54:11, etc.), and by the stones of the Temple (1Chron. 29: 2). And I believe the variety there is in the rays of the Sun and in their beautiful colors was designed by the Creator for this very purpose; and indeed that the whole visible creation, which is but the shadow of being, is so made and ordered by God as to typify and represent spiritual things, for which I could give many reasons. (*I don't propose this merely as a hypothesis, but as a part of Divine truth sufficiently and fully ascertained by the revelation God has made in the Holy Scriptures.*)

I am sensible what kind of objections many will be ready to make against what has been said, and what difficulties will be immediately found: How can this be? And how can that be!

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<sup>13</sup> Eph 4:23

I am far from affording this as any explication of this mystery that unfolds and renews the mysteriousness and incomprehensibility of it; for I am sensible that however some difficulties are lessened by what has been said, new difficulties appear; and the number of those things that appear mysterious, wonderful, and incomprehensible, is increased by what has been said. I offer it only as a farther manifestation of what of Divine truth the Word of God exhibits to the view of our minds concerning this great mystery.

I think the Word of God teaches us more things concerning it to be believed by us than have been generally believed. And I think that the Word of God exhibits many things concerning it that are exceedingly more glorious and wonderful than have been taken notice of; yes, that it reveals or exhibits many more wonderful mysteries than those which have been taken notice of. Such mysteries that have been overvalued are incomprehensible things, and yet they have been exhibited in the Word of God, though they are an addition to the number of mysteries that are in it. No wonder that the more things we are told concerning what is so infinitely above our reach, the greater the increase of visible mysteries.

When we tell a child a little concerning God, he does not have in view a hundredth part of what someone is told concerning God in a Divinity School: of the many mysteries on the nature and attributes of God, and of His works of creation, and of Providence. And yet the child knows much more about God, and has a much clearer understanding of things of Divinity, and is able to more clearly explicate some things that were formerly dark and very unintelligible to him. I humbly apprehend that the things that have been observed here, increase the number of visible mysteries in the Godhead in no other manner than this: that by them we perceive that God has told us much more about the Godhead than was generally observed before.

Under the Old Testament, the Church of God was not told nearly as much about the Trinity as they are told now. But what the New Testament has revealed, though it has more opened to our view the nature of God, yet it has also increased the number of visible mysteries; and thus they appear to us to be exceedingly wonderful and incomprehensible. And so also it has come to pass in the Church, that they are being told more about the incarnation and the satisfaction of Christ, and other Gospel doctrines, than about the Godhead.

It is so not only in Divine things, but in natural things. One who looks at a plant, or the parts of the bodies of animals, or at any other works of nature, doing so at a great distance where he has only an obscure sight of it, may see something that is wonderful and beyond his comprehension; but one who is near to it, and views them narrowly, indeed understands more about them. He has a clearer and distinct sight of them; and yet the number of things that are wonderful and mysterious in what appears to him are much more than he saw before. And if he views them with a microscope, then the number of the wonders that he sees will be increased still more, and the microscope gives him a truer knowledge concerning them.

God is never said to love the Holy Ghost, nor are any epithets that indicate love anywhere given to Him. Though so many are ascribed to the Son, such as God's Elect, The Beloved, He in Whom God's soul delights, He in Whom He is well pleased, etc. Yes such epithets seem to be ascribed to the Son as though He were the object of love exclusive of all other persons, as though there were no person whatsoever to share the love of the Father with the Son. To this purpose

evidently He is called God's Only Begotten Son, at the same time that it is added, "In Whom He is well pleased." There is nothing in Scripture that speaks of any acceptance of the Holy Ghost, or any reward, or any mutual friendship between the Holy Ghost and either of the other Persons; nor is there any command to love the Holy Ghost, or to delight in or have any complacency in the Holy Ghost, though such commands are so frequent with respect to the other Persons.

That knowledge or understanding in God which we must conceive of as first, is His knowledge of everything possible. That love which must be this knowledge is what we must conceive of as belonging to the essence of the Godhead in its first subsistence. Then comes a reflex act of knowledge, viewing Himself and knowing Himself, and so knowing His own knowledge, and thus the Son is begotten. There is such a thing in God as knowledge of knowledge, an idea of an idea, which can be nothing else than the idea or knowledge repeated.

The world was made for the Son of God especially. For God made the world for Himself from love to Himself; but God loves Himself only in a reflex act. He views Himself, and so He loves Himself, and so He makes the world for Himself, viewed and reflected on; and that world is the same with Himself: it is repeated or begotten in His own idea – and that is His Son. When God considers making anything for Himself, He presents Himself before Himself, and He views Himself as His End, and that viewing of Himself is the same as reflecting on Himself, or having an idea of Himself. And so to make the world for the Godhead, thus viewed and understood, is to make the world for the Godhead begotten; and that is to make the world for the Son of God.

The love of God as it flows forth *ad extra*<sup>14</sup> is wholly determined and directed by Divine wisdom, so that only those that Divine wisdom chooses are its objects; thus the creation of the world is to gratify Divine love as that love is exercised by Divine wisdom. But Christ is Divine wisdom, so that the world is made to gratify Divine love as exercised by Christ, or to gratify the love that is in Christ's heart, or to provide a spouse for Christ. They are those creatures which wisdom chooses as Christ's elect spouse for the object of Divine love, and especially those elect creatures that wisdom chiefly pitches upon and makes the end of the rest of creatures.

*Source:* <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/trinity/files/trinity.html>

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<sup>14</sup> In an outward direction.