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JONATHAN EDWARDS, DISPOSITIONALISM AND SPIRIT CHRISTOLOGY

S. MARK HAMILTON

INTRODUCTION

Looking into the relationship that Christ's humanity shares with the Spirit of God is called Spirit Christology. There are a variety of theologians in the Christian tradition—Jonathan Edwards being a significant, though underappreciated one—who have made the case that the constitution, identity and agency of the God-man is intimately bound up with how we make sense of this pneumatologically-specific aspect of Christology. What we conclude about Edwards' Spirit Christology is inimitably linked to those conclusions we make about Edwards' trinitarianism. And at the heart of Edwards' trinitarianism is what is now more than a quarter-century-long debate about the extent to which Edwards developed and employed a *Dispositional Ontology*. In this article, I trace the development of this dispositional reading of Edwards, after which I measure the impact that this dispositional reading has had for making sense of several aspects of Edwards' Spirit Christology. In this way, this article is concerned primarily with prolegomena to interpreting Edwards and in particular, interpreting his Spirit Christology.

To measure this impact is a three-stage move. The first move is definitional and is concerned with the question: what *is* a dispositional ontology? Here I consider some of the broad contours of the dispositional ontology reading of Edwards' metaphysics, focusing primarily on the seminal work of its progenitor, Sang Hyun Lee. Some readers of Edwards may well find themselves already thoughtfully committed to one side or the other of the debate surrounding Lee's conclusions. There are still others who remain either uncommitted or unconscious of the more systematic implications that this dispositional reading of Edwards presents for understanding (or misunderstanding, as the case may be) his theology. Pursuant to a clear understanding of the third part of this article, it is fitting that we rehearse some of the fundamentals of this dispositional interpretation of Edwards. For, the Lee-thesis, as it is commonly referred to, has not only remained an integral set of philosophical assumptions for several recent and important engagements of Edwards' theology, its adoption appears to be increasingly less critical. Because it is my intent here to deal primarily with the secondary literature, particularly in the first two parts of article,

quotations of Edwards himself appear less frequently than some readers might hope. Unfortunately, canvassing such highly-nuanced interpretive developments in order to engage a more recent expression of them sometimes means selecting those passages that seem to lend the most support to this or that portion of the overall argument. In other words, readers should expect a little less Edwards and a little more Lee in this first part.

The second of this three-move strategy is developmental and is concerned with this question: to what extent has a dispositional reading of Edwards' metaphysics since governed interpretations of Edwards' theology? This is, of course, a huge question. For this reason, I will only attempt to proffer a meaningful rather than a comprehensive answer. In this section, I look specifically at Edwards' so-called *Dispositional Soteriology*. Because it is far more important to the larger argument of this article to show *that* interpretive developments have appeared since the debut of Lee's dispositional reading of Edwards than it is to delve into the details of *how* such developments have since been received, I have kept this part of the argument relatively brief. For more extended, critical engagements of a dispositional soteriology reading of Edwards, I will, in due course, point my readers elsewhere.

The third and final move—what makes up the bulk of this article—is exploratory and considers the most recent instalment of this interpretative tradition. I call it *Dispositional Christology*. I have self-consciously limited this exploration to Edwards' Spirit Christology for fear of falling deeper into the rabbit-hole that is Edwards' Christology at large. The reason for this, as we shall see, is that the challenges of reading Edwards according to a dispositional Christology are set in clear relief by a closer examination of the pneumatic aspect of Edwards' account of the God-man. I conclude with several suggestions for an alternate reading of Edwards' Spirit Christology. Let us turn now to Lee.

I. DISPOSITIONAL ONTOLOGY: A DEFINITION

The longstanding and controversial claims that have motivated much of the recent interest in Edwards' metaphysics are those made by Sang Hyun Lee, in his formidable work, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.¹ Lee's work remains, despite several challenges to it, one of the

¹ There are several helpful summaries of Lee's thesis that can be found in his, 'Editor's Introduction', *WJE*: 21:1-106, 'Grace and Justification by Faith Alone', and 'God's Relation to the World', in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton: Princeton University, 2005), pp. 130-46 and pp. 59-71, respectively. Other summaries, both critical and helpful, include: John J. Bombaro, 'Jonathan Edwards's Vision of Salva-

most influential interpretations of Edwards' philosophical-theology to date, having all but completely governed the bulk of scholarly interpretations of Edwards' metaphysics until the recent past. Those who have since Lee's mantle, include, George Hunsinger, Michael McClymond, Gerald McDermott, Anri Morimoto, Amy Plantinga-Pauw, and more recently, Seng Kong Tan.

According to Lee, Edwards '[re-conceived] the nature of reality itself', the result of which was Edwards' self-conscious and 'thoroughgoing metaphysical reconstruction of his entire theology'.² Lee claims that Edwards rejected traditional Aristotelian-scholastic metaphysics, because of 'the inadequacy of the old metaphysics of substances and substantial forms to function as the intellectual framework in an age that was increasingly thinking of reality in terms of motion, power, and relationship laws'.³ Aristotelian-scholastic metaphysics, as Lee describes, is a specific reference to Aristotle's, and later, Aquinas' designation between being as substance and being as accident. According to Lee, Aristotle regarded,

substances as either fully actual or purely potential, this not allowing any middle point between potentiality and actuality. So a substance or the existence of an entity cannot be in a state of a habit. Although the place of habits in the potentiality/actuality metaphysics is fully developed only in Saint Thomas, it is clear already in Aristotle that habits play a role only on the level

tion', *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 45-67, et al., 'Dispositional Peculiarity, History, and Edwards's Evangelistic Appeal to Self-Love', *Westminster Theological Journal* 66 (2004): 121-57, 'The Formation of Jonathan Edwards' Metaphysics', *The Clarion Review* (January 2004): 8-19 (Versions of various sources have more recently and collectively in: John J. Bombaro, *Jonathan Edwards' Vision of Reality: The Relationship of God to the World, Redemption and the Reprobate*, The Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011); Oliver D. Crisp, 'Jonathan Edwards on Divine Nature', *Journal of Reformed Theology* 22 (2009): 175-201, et al., 'Jonathan Edwards' Ontology: A Critique of Sang Hyun Lee's Dispositional Account of Edwardsian Metaphysics', in *Religious Studies* 29 (2009): 1-20; Stephen R. Holmes, 'Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee', in Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp, eds. *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 99-114 (hereafter, 'Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology?').

² Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 3 (hereafter, *PTJE*).

³ Lee, *PTJE*, p. 10. According to Crisp, 'such radical revisions to traditional Aristotelian ways of carving up ontology into substances and their properties was very much a part of the intellectual furniture of the period in which Edwards was active' (Crisp, 'Jonathan Edwards' Ontology', p. 7).

of the accident and not the substance. So habits, according to Saint Thomas, occupy the unique ontological status of being neither fully actual nor purely potential. By participating both in potentiality and in actuality, habits help explain how potency can be moved to actuality.⁴

Rejecting Edwards' commitment to any vestige of the philosophical inheritance of Aristotle, Lee argues that Edwards went on to develop a 'modern conception of reality as a dynamic network of dispositional forces and habits', according to which, created things are no longer substances which possess dispositions but *are themselves dispositions*—real, active tendencies or principles of action that possess various powers even if unactualized.⁵ Then turning to Edwards' theology proper, Lee carries his revisionist account of Edwards' metaphysics into his reading of Edwards' doctrine of God, claiming that 'Edwards's dispositional definition of the divine being means that God is inherently a tendency toward and increase or self-enlargement of God's own being. God, in other words, is truly actual, but he is also inherently disposed to achieve that actuality again and again as the divine disposition is further exercised'.⁶ Let's look a bit closer at Lee's two principal, controversial claims. Looking closely at these two matters will inform our exploration of Edwards' dispositional Christology in the final analysis.

According to Lee's first claim, Edwards altered such distinctions as 'forms and substance', substituting them for more modern designations of 'dispositions and habits'.⁷ Lee defines his understanding of Edwards' use of 'habit', as 'a mode of reality apart from its manifestations in actual actions and events. A habit, as an abiding, though latent principle, is also law-like for Edwards, in that it actively and prescriptively governs the occurrence and character of actual events'.⁸ Lee's second claim follows from the first, namely, that Edwards was ultimately compelled to reconsider the nature of God's very existence. Lee concludes that 'Edwards' dispositional ontology, which underlies his re-conception of the divine being, is the clue to the originality and unity of Edwards' philosophical theology as a whole'.⁹ On Lee's reading of Edwards, he maintains that Edwards fundamentally reworked the nature of God's very existence to meet his own dispositional account of reality. In short, Lee's argument is

⁴ Ibid., pp. 4, 7.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 20-22.

⁶ Lee, *PTJE*, pp. 170, 184 (emphasis added).

⁷ Ibid., p. 4; see also: Lee, 'God's Relation to the World', pp. 59-60.

⁸ Lee, *PTJE*, p. 4.

⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

that Edwards ultimately rejected classical theism.¹⁰ For God to be dispositional by nature requires that 'God is inherently a tendency toward an increase or enlargement of God's own being'.¹¹

Similar in part to Lee's claim of the insufficiencies of pre-eighteenth-century metaphysical categories to satisfy the demands of enlightenment thinkers, Lee argues that Edwards 'replaced the older notion of God as the absolutely self-contained *actus purus* with the dynamic conception of God as at once eternally actual and inherently and inexhaustibly self-enlarging'.¹² Lee goes so far as to suggest that Edwards' notion of God

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 104, 170. There are now not a few dissenting opinions regarding this claim. The first to seriously call Lee's dispositional approach to Edwards into question is Stephen Holmes. Of the variety of criticisms Holmes levels against the Lee's thesis, it is Lee's notion of God's 'self-enlargement' that comes to the fore. According to Holmes, 'the Lee-thesis leads Edwards toward a wholesale rejection of classical theism, according to which, God is *actus purus*—a simple (non-composite), self-existent, fully actualized being.' The impact to Lee's account of Edwards' Christology, Holmes argues (quoting Lee's *Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*) is that '[b]oth the generation and the procession of the Spirit are described as "exercise[s] of the Father's disposition" (p. 192). Given this, the trinitarian grammar that demands that the origin of the Spirit is different from the origin of the Son is seriously endangered by Lee's constructions', see: Stephen R. Holmes, 'Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee', in Paul Helm and Oliver D. Crisp, eds., *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologians* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003), pp. 99-114. The Lee thesis has many adherents in the Edwards fraternity whose work rests squarely on the assumption that Lee's thesis is the most accurate explanation of Edwardian metaphysics and for this reason, Lee's thesis is likely to endure in these quarters, despite recent challenges to it. See e.g.: Oliver D. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹¹ Ibid., p. 184.

¹² Holmes, 'Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee', p. 110. The Latin phrase, *actus purus*, is 'a term applied to God [describing him] as the fully actualized being, the only being not in potency; God is in other words, absolutely perfect and the eternally perfect fulfilment of himself. It is of the essence of God to be *actus purus* or *purissimus* insofar as God, self-existent being, is in actu (q.v.), in the state of actualization, and never in *potentia* (q.v.) in the state of potency or incomplete realization. This view of God as fully actualized being lies at the heart of the scholastic exposition of the doctrine of divine immutability (*immutabilitas Dei*, q.v.)'. See: Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), p. 24.

ought best to be spoken of in terms of ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’.¹³ God’s act of first creation is, on this interpretation of Edwards, simply the ‘increase or enlargement of God’s own being’.¹⁴ On this account, Edwards perceived God himself as a disposition and that the second and third persons of the Trinity become no more than the ‘exercise of the Father’s disposition’.¹⁵ In the end, Lee’s account of Edwards’ theism does not merely move Edwards away from his own tradition (which, in the case of his trinitarianism would be located among the Protestant Scholastics), it moves him all but entirely outside the boundaries of doctrinal Orthodoxy.¹⁶ Despite several efforts to push back on Lee’s dispositional ontology from Holmes and more recently from Crisp, the Lee-thesis has since been co-opted and developed, perhaps no more prominently or explicitly than in Anri Morimoto’s work on Edwards’ soteriology.

II. DISPOSITIONAL SOTERIOLOGY: A DEVELOPMENT

Lee’s theory, having offered up a revision to Edwardsian metaphysics—divine and otherwise—has resulted in several attempts to square Lee’s thesis to the rest of Edwards’ theology. Foremost among those to develop Lee’s thesis is Anri Morimoto. It is Morimoto who takes Lee’s dispositional ontology into Edwards’ soteriology, developing the concept of what he calls a Dispositional Soteriology. Lee himself attempted to make several inroads into Edwards’ soteriology with his dispositional ontology proposal. For example, according to Lee, among the more impactful implications of Edwards’ dispositional ontology (beyond that which characterizes his trinitarianism) is its effect upon the Spirit’s work of justification regeneration and sanctification. Lee argues that,

¹³ Lee, *PTJE*, p. 203.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

¹⁵ Lee, *PTJE*, p. 192. It should be noted that Lee has since developed this notion in the revised edition of his work to include all three divine persons as at once actuality and disposition. I am grateful to Seng Kong Tan for pointing this development out to me.

¹⁶ According to Holmes, Lee’s reading of Edwards is a rejection of ‘the basic grammar of orthodox Trinitarian theology that was developed by the patristic theologians and enshrined in the ecumenical creeds’, ‘Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology?’, p. 105. For more on Edwards’ Protestant Scholastic heritage, see: Adriaan C. Neele, *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), ch. 1.

A disposition is a law that certain type of action or event should occur upon certain kinds of occasions. The most fundamental occasion necessary for the divine disposition to exercise in the regenerate, this precondition is the Holy Spirit's immediate action of causing an act according to the divine disposition. But according to Edwards' epistemology and the logic of disposition, appropriate sense data have to be received from outside the mind or order for the internal disposition to be triggered into exercises. Since the disposition involved is the third person of the Trinity, the appropriate external sense data would come from earthly embodiments of the transcendent beauty of God. The beauty of God embodied in time and space functions as the occasion that triggers the habit of grace to exert itself into acts of knowing and loving that true beauty.¹⁷

Like Lee, Morimoto characterizes dispositionalism as a specific mode or character of being, inherent to all [by means of the atoning work of Christ], and by which all individuals are then enabled, under certain natural constraints of its 'law-like powers and forces', to actuate their innate, ontological tendencies (i.e. habits or dispositions) to be saved without any 'particular acts and exercises' of faith.¹⁸ 'In Edwards' dispositional view', Morimoto claims, 'all being is a disposition, an active tendency to realize itself in certain ways'.¹⁹ Elsewhere Morimoto argues that, 'being is, for Edwards, essentially a network of laws that prescribe certain actions and events to take place on specified occasions. These laws are active and purposive tendencies, or dispositions, that automatically come into "exertion" when the specified circumstances are met'.²⁰ John Bombaro helpfully describes Morimoto's dispositional soteriology as, 'a logic of being in terms of law-like powers and forces, in which dispositions are conceived as active and real tendencies that have ontological reality even when unexercised'.²¹ In other words, dispositional soteriology refers to

¹⁷ 'Editor's Introduction', *WJE* 21:56-8.

¹⁸ Bombaro, 'Dispositional Peculiarity', p. 123. According to Bombaro, 'particular acts and exercises', are references to 'means or ordinances', or 'the gospel of Jesus Christ and its accompaniments'.

¹⁹ Morimoto, *Catholic Vision*, p. 6 (emphasis added). For a helpful and additionally constructive account of Edwards' soteriological deployment of Morimoto's dispositional ontology, see: Steven M. Studebaker, 'Jonathan Edwards's Pneumatological Concept of Grace and Dispositional Soteriology: Resources for an Evangelical Inclusivism', *Pro Ecclesia* 14.3 (2005): 324-39.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²¹ Bombaro, 'Dispositional Peculiarity', p. 123. It is notable that Bombaro goes on to out that 'McDermott suggests that, in Edwards's theology, theoretically there is enough non-Christian revelation in the world to mechanistically 'trigger' the [universally applied] disposition and justify the religiously

the specific action of an individual's inherent tendency toward salvation. On Morimoto's way of thinking about Edwards' soteriology, individuals are enabled, under certain natural constraints of its 'law-like powers and forces', to actuate their innate, ontological tendencies (i.e. dispositions or habits) to be saved, without any 'particular acts and exercises'.²²

Morimoto's development of a dispositional soteriology has had the most significant impact on discussions of Edwards' doctrine of justification, particularly as it relates to Protestant and Catholic debates surround the infusion and imputation of divine grace.²³ And cleverly organized in terms of what Morimoto calls Edwards' *Catholic Concerns* and *Protestant Concerns*, Morimoto fixes at one notable point upon Edwards' doctrine of infused grace, thus drawing him into the middle of Lombardian and Thomistic pneumatological discussions regarding *gratia increata* and *gratia creata* or 'uncreated' and 'created' grace. Roughly, this debate orbits around whether the infusion of the Holy Spirit to human persons amounts to his indwelling them either holistically—Lombard's view—or as a habitual principle—Thomas' view.²⁴ And this forms provides the footing for Morimoto to summarily describes Edwards' Protestant concern as the notion that salvation is neither achieved nor maintained by anything but 'God's immediate and continual activity from above', while at the same time describing Edwards' Catholic concern in terms of how 'the transformative power of grace effectuates in human nature a real and qualitative change that regenerate persons enjoy [as] an abiding reality of salvation created with them'.²⁵ So that we might see the extent of this

or philosophically inclined', p. 124. The result of those who contend for an Edwardsian inclusivism necessarily argue for his private abandonment of particularism, and more importantly, his Christocentrism, see: McDermott, 'Jonathan Edwards, John Henry Newman, and non-Christian Religions', in Paul Helm and Oliver D. Crisp, eds., *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 129-30.

²² Ibid., p. 123.

²³ Notably, a relatively recent surveyor of the Protestant doctrine of justification, John Fesko, while noting Alister McGrath's inclusion of Edwards into the broader Reformed tradition, nevertheless follows the trend of recent scholarship, which contests Edwards' theological orthodoxy on this point, and that, as a result of Morimoto's claims; see: John V. Fesko, *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R: 2008), pp. 34-9. McGrath, by contrast, positions Edwards' formulation of justification, well within the boundaries of the Reformed tradition; see: Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2005), pp. 208-18, 291.

²⁴ Morimoto, *Catholic Vision*, p. 42-3.

²⁵ Morimoto, *Catholic Vision*, p. 7 (emphasis added).

impact, let us briefly consider the following three aspects of Morimoto's reading of Edwards' soteriology.

First, it makes Edwards' doctrine of the justification effectual *only* in the sense that it universally infuses all people with a disposition. For, according to Morimoto, the unexercised, or 'bare possession of [this disposition] constitutes regeneration and, therefore, salvation'.²⁶ Second, given the emphasis of dispositional soteriology upon 'ontological transformation (i.e. infusion) and not legal imputation', Edwards' notion of faith is as the necessary and volitional act of union to Christ whereby, what is natural (i.e. not moral and thus meritorious) receives its 'due recognition', because this act is love—what Thomas Schafer once argued is the Roman Catholic notion of 'formed faith'.²⁷ Putting the first two points together, Morimoto suggests that, 'In Edwards's view of faith, the division between Christians and non-Christians is not simply a division between those who have faith and those who do not. Rather, the difference lies in whether or not the disposition in faith has been actualized'.²⁸ Third, finally, and following from the first two points, Morimoto's dispositional soteriology attempts to redraw certain historical lines, once drawn from Edwards to his traditionally recognized, theological benefactors (i.e. the Reformers, Protestant Scholastics, and the Puritans), now to Roman Catholics such as Thomas Aquinas and Peter Lombard.²⁹ At this, Morimoto and several of his exponents go a step or two further, suggesting that because of Edwards' supposed admiration for the metaphysical successes gained by non-Christian religious commentators and ancient philosophers in revealed theology, *and* because Edwards had supposedly conceded to the reasonableness of Deist objections to particularism, *and* because of his supposed use of a natural typology as a solution to such objections, *and* because of his development of a dispositional soteriology, Edwards 'clearly opens the possibility that these heathen could have used revelation for their own spiritual benefit—a notion that is incoherent unless it means they can be saved'.³⁰

²⁶ Bombaro, 'Jonathan Edwards's Vision of Salvation', p. 47.

²⁷ Morimoto, *Catholic Vision*, p. 97.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6 (emphasis added).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 92. Interestingly, Morimoto also cites Tillich's, 'to accept acceptance' (cited as: Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. [1951, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963], 3:222, 224-26, 228) as possessing some explanatory value for making sense of Edwards.

³⁰ Gerald McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 141.

There is, of course, a great deal more that might be said about reading Edwards along the lines of a dispositional soteriology. Indeed, no book-length response to Morimoto's thoughtful *Catholic Vision* has yet appeared. That said, any additional commentary need not detain us here. For, the point of this otherwise brief engagement with Lee and Morimoto is necessary for clarity's sake to set the stage for the ensuing exploration and to show that Edwards' philosophical theology faces a variety of new worrisome consequences that seem to emerge in the wake of a dispositional interpretation of Edwards' metaphysics and theology. And with this now before us, we come to *Dispositional Christology*.

III. DISPOSITIONAL CHRISTOLOGY: AN EXPLORATION

So impactful has Lee's theory of Edwards' dispositional ontology been that it has gone on to fund (at least in part) several explorations of not only Edwards' soteriology, but now—in some ways as the next logical step—Edwards' Christology. It is perhaps best to think of these works as in varying degrees *governed* by Lee's thesis rather than as explicit Christological out-workings of it.³¹ That is, they seem to assent to some or all of Lee's dispositional reading of Edwards as an assumption—incorporating it as part of their investigative prolegomena—but provide little specific evidence for just how it bears upon Edwards' Christology at large. Hence the following exploration.

Edwards' Christology is in itself an enigma. Discerning those particular points at which the Lee-thesis actually makes a significant conceptual difference for our understanding Edwards' doctrine of the *person* of Christ (as opposed to work of Christ) is all the more challenging. Thus, in what remains of this article, I will attempt to stake out such differences by

³¹ According to what is the first explicit inquiry of Edwards' Christology that assumes the explanatory power of Lee's thesis for making sense of Edwards' broader metaphysics, Michael Bush argues that, 'One of the most fruitful insights of recent Edwards studies is Sang Hyun Lee's recognition that the metaphysics underlying Edwards's understanding of reality is a "dispositional ontology" [...]. It is in this relational, dispositional perspective that it makes sense to say of Edwards that everything is Christological, even though Edwards does not proceed methodologically in a Christocentric way; perhaps one might say that for Edwards, reality is Christocentric, in that Christ is at the center, holding everything together, but theology is not Christocentric at the level of method (at least not in the way it is for Karl Barth) because Jesus Christ is not the key to the answer to every theological question', *Jesus Christ in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Phd Thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 2003), pp. 12-13.

interacting with the recent, and formidable work of Seng Kong Tan. Tan's treatment of Edwards' Christology is among the most thorough to appear in the literature. A discerning reader of both the Patristic and Thomistic traditions—both of which play a considerable part in his treatment and classification of Edwards—Tan offers up a philosophically sophisticated reading of several aspects of Edwards' Christology. Interestingly, it is in his (relatively brief) treatment of Edwards' Spirit Christology—a subject that has to date, not received a great deal of attention in the literature—where Tan's dispositional assumptions about Edwards' metaphysics are most apparent. For the sake of brevity and clarity, in what follows, I consider what I think are three points of Tan's treatment of Edwards' Spirit Christology where assumptions about Lee's dispositional ontology appear, the results of which present several challenges to our understanding of Edwards' Christology. The first is a matter of the *pneumatic identity* of the God-man. The second is a matter of the *pneumatic constitution* of the God-man. The third is a matter of the *pneumatic agency* of the God-man. As we shall see, from the first matter to the last, there is what appears to be a momentum of sorts to the problems that are generated by a reading of Edwards' Christology with dispositional ontology as part of the interpretive equation. Let us take the pneumatic identity problem first.

III.1. Dispositionalism and Christ's Pneumatic Identity

Tan is mostly straightforward about his thinking that Edwards articulates (albeit in Edwards' own way) something like what Ian McFarland has recently called *Pneumatic Chalcedonianism*.³² To this end he says, 'Edwards favors the pneumatic Christology of Irenaeus rather than a more developed Logos Christology that describes the divinity as the ointment of Christ's human nature'.³³ However, Tan's reading of Edwards on the Spirit of God *as a divine person and a divine disposition* seem to imperil both the Spirit's personhood and the manner of his indwelling of the humanity of Christ.³⁴ Tan himself introduces this worry when he distinguishes between the Spirit as disposition and the Spirit as pure act when he says, 'since the divine "Habit and Act" are [for God] identical, *the Spirit of God is both "the disposition [...] of the divine mind" as well as the pure and perfect act of God*'.³⁵ Elsewhere Tan argues that 'as God's *disposi-*

³² Ian A. McFarland, 'Spirit and Incarnation: Toward a Pneumatic Chalcedonianism', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16.2 (April, 2014): 143.

³³ Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, pp. 112-13.

³⁴ Caldwell observes that Edwards' 'formulation of the Holy Spirit as divine love threaten[s] the personhood of the Spirit', *Communion in the Spirit*, p. 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 'Trinitarian Action', pp. 128-29 (emphasis added). See also: Jonathan Edwards, 'Discourse on the Trinity', in Sang Hyun Lee, ed., *The Works of*

tion is identical to God's act, divine Love [i.e. the Spirit] is in perfect fruition in God'.³⁶ With such delicate (i.e. Trinitarian) concepts in view, we need to move forward with the greatest of care. For, not only are we trading in some of the most refined and subtle categorical distinctions about the divine nature, we are interpreting one interpreter's (Tan) interpretation of another (Edwards). This is where mistakes can be quickly compounded. That said, what I am claiming is that on a dispositional reading of Edwards' account of the divine nature, the risks run high to depersonalize the personhood of the Spirit of God.³⁷ Being himself conscious of such risks, Tan admits of the fact that 'Edwards's trinitarianism comes under fire for depersonalizing the Holy Spirit—the well-worn critique of the Augustinian psychological analogy'.³⁸ Despite this, in other places Tan seems to equate Edwards' account of the person of the Spirit with a mere disposition, saying that for Edwards, '[t]his disposition in God—the Holy Spirit—is both the moving and final cause of the creation'.³⁹ The

Jonathan Edwards in 26 Volumes, Vol. 21 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957–2006), p. 122 (emphasis added).

³⁶ Ibid., *Fullness Received and Returned*, pp. 15–16 (emphasis added). I think we might be better off reading Edwards in light of Bruce Marshall's helpful explanatory statement, 'The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son eternally as love in person, the suit and seal of the Father's infinite donation of himself to the Son, infinitely returned by the Son', 'The Deep Things of God: Trinitarian Pneumatology', in Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering, eds. *The Oxford Handbook on the Trinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 407 (emphasis added).

³⁷ Interestingly, a similar claim is made by Thomas Weinandy, namely that 'The Holy Spirit is love fully in act'. He does, however, without diminishing either the personhood of the Spirit or the Son, see: 'Trinitarian Christology: The Eternal Son' in Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering, eds. *The Oxford Handbook on the Trinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 390. In his treatment of Augustine's pneumatology, Chris Holmes helpfully explains some of the mechanics of how this construction works, saying that, 'All three are love, but the Spirit is love in a distinct sense. That the Spirit is love (charity) is because the Spirit proceeds as love from the Father. The Spirit cannot author anything other than love, for that is what the Spirit is. However, unlike the Son, who is eternally born of the Father, the Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and/through the Son. The Spirit proceeds from the Son too, but the Son has this only from the Father. The Spirit has a different originating relation with respect to the Father than the Son does—proceeding rather than begetting—and so is love in a different way', *The Holy Spirit*, *New Studies in Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), p. 173 (emphasis added).

³⁸ Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, p. 13.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 55.

question for us is: which is it? Who (or what) is the Spirit, on Tan's reading of Edwards' account of Christ's pneumatic identity? A divine person? A divine disposition? Both? Unfortunately for us, these are muddy theological waters that are made muddier by Edwards' own lack of clarity on this point; something which, as we have already seen, Tan is also quick to point out. However, a clue to Tan's thinking on the matter—what I take to be a clue to the evidence of his indebtedness to Lee (and thus to the momentum of the problems that are at issue here)—appears at two points.

The first clue is his admission—directly following Lee—that, '[Edwards] not only restated the Reformed tradition by appropriating many philosophical ideas of his time but also *advanced a thorough reconstruction of the substance ontology of the Western theological tradition*'.⁴⁰ By 'thorough reconstruction', I take Tan to mean not only that Edwards renovated his metaphysics in general, as Lee suggests, but that he renovated the metaphysics of the divine nature, as Lee also goes on to suggest. The second clue appears in Tan's discussion of God's 'self-enlargement', something about which much has been made by Lee. Similar to Lee, who we recall argues that, 'God is inherently a tendency toward an increase or enlargement of God's own being', it seems that Tan appears to ground Edwards' controversial emphasis on God's self-enlargement Christologically. Tan explains that 'the temporal "Becoming" of God, (and the world) in some sense echoes the "becoming" that happens in the eternal, hypostasis differentiation within God'.⁴¹ Accordingly, we ought to regard this 'self-enlargement' as a consequence of Christ's being enfleshed and therefore restrict such assertions to his human nature.⁴²

Now, of the two points, this later one is arguably the most significant clue to Tan's assumptions about the Lee-thesis. So, what does all this mean? And how is this a Christologically-specific problem for the pneumatic identity of the God-man? Edwards' own apparent lack of clarity on these matters aside, a dispositional reading of his account of Christ's divine nature that amounts to something less than full divine personhood and therefore less than a full divine nature is a possibility that seems to be compounded by a dispositional Christology. In other words, if the Spirit is merely a disposition and the Spirit indwells the humanity of Christ dispositionally, he does so, on this reading of Edwards' Christology anyway, in

⁴⁰ Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, p. 4, n. 7 (emphasis added). In personal correspondence, Tan explains that Edwards' 'thorough reconstruction' of Western theological sensibilities may not have been so thorough as to include depersonalizing the Spirit.

⁴¹ Lee, *PTJE*, p. 184.

⁴² Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, p. 169, n. 65.

a manner that undercuts not only an orthodox Trinitarianism but also an orthodox Christology. That this is a problem of no mean significance for Edwards' Christology at large should be, I think, quite evident.

Now, lest we think that Tan's work on Edwards' Christology is a whole-sale buy-in, as it were, to the dispositional interpretation of Edwards, we would do well to remind ourselves that Tan is not only conscious of this depersonalizing worry, but that at least at one point he does defend against the idea, however dangerously close he elsewhere gets to making claims to the contrary.⁴³ For our part, such questions are indicative of the momentum of this dispositional interpretation of Edwards to which we previously alluded. Keeping one eye on that, let us now turn and consider dispositional Christology in terms of the pneumatic constitution of the God-man.

III.2. Dispositionalism and Christ's Pneumatic Constitution

What I mean by Christ's pneumatic constitution is the metaphysical make-up of Christ's humanity-plus-Spirit. According to Edwards, 'In Jesus who dwelt here upon earth, there was [sic] immediately only these two things: there was the flesh, or the human nature; and there was the Spirit of holiness, or the eternal Spirit, *by which he was united to the Logos*. Jesus who dwelt among us, was as it were compounded of these two'.⁴⁴ Earlier in the same Miscellany—one upon which Tan spends a good deal of interpretive capital—Edwards explains that,

As the union of believers with Christ be by the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in them, so it may be worthy to be considered, whether or no the union of the divine with the human nature of Christ ben't by the Spirit of the Logos dwelling in him after a *peculiar manner* and *without measure*. Perhaps there is no other way of God's dwelling in a creature but by his Spirit. The Spirit of Christ's dwelling in men causes an union, so that in many respects [they may be] looked upon as one: perhaps the Spirit of the Logos may dwell in a creature after such a manner, that that creature may become one person [with the Logos], and may be looked upon as such and accepted as such.⁴⁵

What is this 'peculiar manner'? And what does Edwards' mean by 'without measure'? What I am interested in here is Tan's account of the Spirit's indwelling of the God-man—Christ's pneumatic constitution—and more to the point, how, if at all, Tan's dispositional assumptions about the Spirit factor into Edwards' understanding of this Christological 'compound'.

⁴³ Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, p. 13.

⁴⁴ 'Miscellany' no. 487, *WJE* 13:531 (emphasis added).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, *WJE* 13:529 (emphasis added).

Tan also poses the question about Edwards' 'peculiar manner' reference to the indwelling, saying: 'if sanctification (whether in Christ or in the saint) involves a self-communication of the Spirit no different from the Spirit's operation *ad intra*, how does Jesus have the Spirit in a "peculiar" manner'?'⁴⁶ It is Tan's assumption of the equivalence between the Spirit's indwelling of the humanity of Jesus and the Spirit's dispositional sort of relation in the Godhead that is the worry about which I am concerned. In order to get at Tan's actual meaning, let us briefly zero in on his account of Edwards' doctrine of sanctification, which is interestingly something that Edwards thinks extends (all at once) to the God-man. This will bring us to the fore of the question of Tan's dispositional ontology and Edwards' account of the Christ's union with the Spirit and the pneumatic agency, to which we will turn next.

How Tan makes sense of Edwards' meaning that the human nature of Jesus is indwelt by the Holy Spirit—and that, Edwards says, 'without measure'—is a two-part answer. The first part, according to Edwards, is that the humanity of Jesus was sanctified. Edwards himself says that the Father 'incarnated [the Son] *by* sanctification' and thereby his humanity was 'quicken[ed], enliven[ed], and beautif[ied]'.⁴⁷ Edwards believes that this indwelling, as Tan rightly points out, is a personal union of the Spirit with the humanity of Jesus. Edwards explains that by 'personal union'—and thereby 'without measure'—he means 'the consequence of God's communicating his Spirit *without measure* to [Jesus'] human nature, so as to render it the same person with him that is God'.⁴⁸ This is the second part of the answer. For, Edwards explains elsewhere, saying, 'in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit the Spirit of God exerts its own proper nature; that is to say, it communicates and exerts itself in the soul in those

⁴⁶ Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, p. 113.

⁴⁷ 'Miscellany' no. 709, *WJE* 18:333 (emphasis added); 'Efficacious Grace', *WJE* 21:123. Such assertions as these raise the question: Just how do we get at Edwards' Spirit Christology? For my part, I think the answer lies in his doctrine of regeneration. For as we have now seen, Edwards thinks that Christ's human nature was sanctified by the Spirit, which amounts to the same sort of change that Edwards thinks saints undergo by the Spirit's regeneration of their corrupt natures. Seeing the manner in which Edwards thinks the soul (as well as the body) is regenerated and is thereby indwelt by the Spirit will, I think, set in relief the manner in which the humanity of Christ is indwelt. In other words, the one who gets to the bottom of Edwards' account of regeneration and its metaphysical substructure will get closer to the bottom of the metaphysics on which his Spirit Christology hangs—a subject where there is still much research to be done.

⁴⁸ 'Miscellany' no. 764b, *WJE* 18:411 (emphasis added).

acts which are its proper nature, natural and essential acts in itself *ad intra*, or within the Deity from all eternity'.⁴⁹ Putting these two things together, it looks *prima facie* like Tan's notion of dispositional indwelling, despite several clear assertions to the contrary, makes Edwards once again fall short of an orthodox Christology. For, if the *ad intra* nature of the Spirit is strictly dispositional (though somehow still personal), and this dispositional nature of the Spirit becomes one with Christ's human nature, then it looks like at least two things happen. First, the humanity of Jesus is itself either reduced to a disposition or completely divinized or perhaps somehow both. This borders on a near-Apollonarian reading of Edwards' Christology, according to which the human mind of the God-man is replaced by a divine agent (or a divine disposition)—in this case the agency of the Spirit. Second, the agency of Christ's humanity seems thus undercut, making him impotent and therefore unable to do the very work he set out to do as a representative of humanity. Tan's assertions of Edwards' Christological orthodoxy notwithstanding, the matrix of doctrinal complexity that Edwards presents seems to me to push in the opposite direction. In the end, I think we can assert that this is critical to understanding Edwards' Spirit Christology at large and that much more work on Edwards' account of 'personal union' and 'without measure' is thus required.⁵⁰ For now, let us consider the third worry that a dispositional reading of Edwards' Christology presents.

III.3. Dispositionalism and Christ's Pneumatic Agency

The third worry is the matter of Christ's human-Spirit agency. This worry arises not so much from direct statements that Tan makes, but from a compound of several assumptions that together bear upon the matter. Let's consider the compound first, after which, I will propose what I think is one implication.

⁴⁹ 'Miscellany' no. 471, *WJE* 13:513 (emphasis added).

⁵⁰ In some further personal correspondence, Tan helpfully explains that by consequence of the forgoing argument, Edwards' reference to 'without measure', would mean that 'saints would potentially have the Spirit as Jesus does since our nature grows sempiternally. Not only is the hypostatic union uniquely Christ's, His possession of the Spirit is "in a peculiar manner" insofar as Jesus has the Spirit as the Spirit of the Logos. Only Jesus can be said to have the Spirit as His own, unlike us'. I am tempted to think and have argued elsewhere that the hypostatic union of the God-man is something that Edwards may have understood as extending (eschatologically) to the saints; see: *A Treatise on Jonathan Edwards, Continuous Creation and Christology*, vol. 1 (Fort Worth, TX: JESociety Press, 2017, A Series of Treatises on Jonathan Edwards), p. 63ff.

According to a dispositional interpretation of Edwards' Christology, these assumptions, which for the sake of brevity and clarity I've broken down into a series of numbered theses, seem to go something like this:

1. All reality is by nature dispositional, which means that—recalling Lee—‘created things are no longer substances which *possess* dispositions but *are themselves dispositions*—real, active tendencies or principles of action that possess various powers even if unactualized’.⁵¹
2. God is himself a disposition. Once again quoting Lee, this means that ‘*God is inherently a tendency toward an increase or self-enlargement of God’s own being*. God, in other words, is truly actual, *but* he is also inherently disposed to achieve that actuality again and again as the divine disposition is further exercised’.⁵²
3. The Spirit, who is God, is thus a disposition. This means that he is either still a personal being or it means that he is merely an impersonal force or it means that he is (rather awkwardly) somehow both. Recall that Tan himself hints at this worry when he says that, ‘since the divine “Habit and Act” are [for God] identical, the *Spirit of God is both “the disposition [...] of the divine mind” as well as the pure and perfect act of God*’.⁵³
4. Christ’s human nature—his body and soul (and its agency)—is not a substance but merely a disposition. This follows from thesis (1). That his human nature is merely dispositional means that he has the potential to do this or that (i.e. Lee’s ‘real, active tendencies or principles of action’) but to do this or that he must be supplied with agential power from another agent (i.e. the indwelling and animating Spirit).
5. The humanity of Christ possesses no agency wherewith to perform any moral act. The Spirit of God is the agent who, to put it bluntly, animates Christ’s humanity, similar to how an astronaut animates a spacesuit.

⁵¹ PTJE, pp. 20-22.

⁵² Lee, PTJE, pp. 170, 184 (emphasis added).

⁵³ Tan, ‘Trinitarian Action’, pp. 128-9 (emphasis added). See also: Jonathan Edwards, ‘Discourse on the Trinity’, in Sang Hyun Lee, ed., *The Works of Jonathan Edwards in 26 Volumes*, Vol. 21 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957-2006), p. 122 (emphasis added).

Summarily speaking, if the human nature of Christ is reduced from a substance to a mere disposition, which, by consequence, means that his human nature is powerless and requires the power of another (that is, the indwelling Spirit, who, as Tan suggests might also by nature be a mere disposition) to perform a morally responsible act, then it appears that the God-man is less than fully human after all. That Christ's human nature is thus powerless on a dispositional reading is corroborated by a metaphysical story about his humanity that claims that his humanity never exists long enough to perform a moral act before the Spirit continuously re-creates his humanity out of nothing at each moment. This is Edwards' doctrine of continuous creation (or at least one version of it).

Discussing the hypostatic union of the God-man, Tan argues that, 'The *unio*, on Edwards' ontology, being a *unio continua*, involves an ongoing moment-by-moment re-creation and re-assumption of the human nature into the person of the Son'.⁵⁴ Those familiar with Edwards' doctrine of continuous creation will doubtlessly understand the implication this has for agency of Christ's humanity.⁵⁵ In short, Christ has no agency in himself, but what is afforded by the Spirit (of the Son). For those less familiar with Edwards' curious account of creation and conservation, Tan goes on to explain his understanding of the matter quite clearly, saying,

As the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit continually gives existence to Christ's human nature (*enypostaton*). As the Spirit of the Son, the Spirit ensures that this individual human nature has personhood in its perpetual in-existence in the Word (*enhypostaton*). In a static idea of the *unio personalis*, the *enypostatos* would have to exclude the *anypostatos*, but in a dynamic conception of the union, the case is quite difference. Of itself the *humanitas* has no *dispositio* to become and remain as the human nature of the Word; it has to be continuously occasioned by divine power. Christ's human nature is not self-perpetuating but is granted both reality and in-existence by the *Dispositio* of God moment-by-moment. The Holy Spirit must continually cause the incarnation

⁵⁴ Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, p. 146.

⁵⁵ According to Edwards, 'It will certainly follow from these things [i.e., from the consideration of whether God is constantly upholding the world by his power], that God's *preserving* created things in being is perfectly equivalent to a *continued creation*, or to his creating those things out of nothing at *each moment* of their existence [...]. It will follow from what has been observed, that God's upholding created substance, or causing its existence in each successive moment, is altogether equivalent to an *immediate production out of nothing*, at each moment', 'Original Sin', *WJE* 2:401, 402.

as the Spirit of the Father and Son, creating and uniting the human nature to the Word in one (two-fold) act.⁵⁶

This is one of the most explicit and, consequently, most challenging conclusions of Tan's reading of Edwards' Christology. For, on this view, the humanity of Christ quite literally exists for no more than a moment (however long that is) before the Spirit re-assumes or 'creates' the human nature of Jesus anew at each subsequent moment to the incarnation. The incarnation then is merely the Spirit's inaugural work of the formation and sanctification of a series of numerically distinct, individual slices of time and space which the human nature of Christ occupies and these are, by the Spirit, systematically and chronologically united to the Son. In other words, the incarnation is simply the first of many temporal slices of the earthly career of Christ's human nature that are united to the Son, by the Spirit, for what may be innumerable, duration-less intervals of time that span not only the earthly, but also the heavenly career of Christ's human nature.⁵⁷ Insofar as this account of the pneumatic agency of Christ is held up as Edwards' view, Edwards must no longer be held up as Christologically orthodox.⁵⁸ It is not Tan's reading of Edwards' doctrine of continu-

⁵⁶ Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, p. 146; 'Discourse on the Trinity', *WJE* 21:122. In a more recent (and doubly thought-provoking) work on Edwards' Christology, Tan puts the dispositional ideas of Christ's constitution and agency together, claiming that, 'for Edwards, this continual communication of consciousness from the divine to the human nature just is the communion of natures', 'Jonathan Edwards's Dynamic Idealism and Cosmic Christology', in Joshua R. Farris, S. Mark Hamilton, eds. *Idealism and Christianity, Vol. 1: Christian Theology* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 210.

⁵⁷ It is notable that, however one carves up the metaphysics, it seems that on this reading, there is no end (eschatological or otherwise) to the Spirit's work of sustaining this divine-human relation, in this particular way is ongoing. Now, Edwards certainly does think—and Tan is careful and right to point out—that the Spirit continually communicates and acts as the 'bond of union' and means of conveyance between Christ's human and divine natures. Presumably, Edwards thinks this pneumatic work is ongoing. However, one need not be swept up in the momentum of a dispositional reading of Edwards' Christology to affirm that.

⁵⁸ I have elsewhere argued at length that Edwards' Christological orthodoxy is not impeded by a commitment to a doctrine of continuous creation (see: *A Treatise on Jonathan Edwards, Continuous Creation and Christology*). Briefly, I argue that on an abstract-nature reading of Edwards' account of hypostasis, for example, where the Son bears or exemplifies the human nature of Jesus of Nazareth as a property or set of properties, the Son takes on or assumes a set of (necessary and sufficient) properties essential to human nature—the par-

ous creation that imperils his orthodoxy, however. Edwards' orthodoxy is imperiled on a dispositional interpretation of it because the human nature of the God-man is more God than man. Tan's account of Edwards' doctrine of continuous creation simply fleshes-out the implication for us. For, if the Spirit is the agent of Christ's human nature, then the humanity of Christ cannot properly to be a moral agent. If this is the case, then Christ cannot be said to have done the soteriological work that Edwards and his interpreters think he does.⁵⁹ In the final analysis then, the full swing of this dispositional momentum seems to present more problems than solutions for Edwards' Christology at large, and his Spirit Christology more narrowly.

CONCLUSION

We've covered a lot of ground in this article. We attempted to define the interpretive tradition begun by Sang Lee known as dispositional ontology. We then considered the development of this interpretive tradition at the hands of Anri Morimoto. We then explored several implications that a dispositionally-seasoned-reading of Edwards can have by looking at Seng Kong Tan's reading of Edwards' Christology, and his Spirit Christology

ticular mind and body of Jesus. The God-man thus remains a divine person with a contingent human nature, one that, assuming Edwards' immaterialism, is comprised merely of simple and complex ideas that are nothing but percepts. On this reading of the Spirit's agency in Christ's humanity, Christ's human mind endures from moment to moment, whereas his body does not. His mind being a created substance, remain a constant. His body (being comprised of ideas), however, remains, as Edwards says, 'in constant flux' ('Original Sin', *WJE* 3:404). In other words, Jesus' humanity is not falling out of existence and subsequently being re-created by the Spirit every moment. What the Spirit is doing betwixt the divine and human natures of Christ is continuously creating all of the perceptions of the God-man, not creating the humanity of Christ out of nothing every moment. By consequence, the humanity of Christ retains its agential powers. So also does the Spirit.

⁵⁹ That Edwards' Christology has much to do with his soteriology, and in particular, with the unequal and inaugural sanctifying work of the Spirit is echoed by Tan. Accordingly, Tan argues that 'Edwards constructs his theology of the incarnation upon a Chalcedonian dyophysitism which emphasizes a new relation inaugurated between God the Father and Jesus Christ. The Logos-Jesus unity and Jesus-Father relation, in turn, are built upon a Spirit Christology in which the Father 'incarnated him [the Son] by sanctification'. Edwards thus reintegrates the Father and Spirit into his Christological thinking', 'Trinitarian Action in the Incarnation', p. 130 ('Miscellany' no. 709, *WJE* 18:334).

more specifically. Several things should be clear by this point about the impact that this interpretive strategy has for reading Edwards' Christology. First, it should be clear that a dispositional reading of Edwards' metaphysics has far-reaching interpretive implications. However self-evident this seems, it should also be clear that many of the implications of a dispositional reading of Edwards have yet to be explicitly measured in the literature. For, no one (no one that I am conscious of anyway) has yet explicitly responded to Tan's formidable and copious work. Until such a time, it should remain clear that the momentum of a dispositional reading of Edwards presents some worrisome consequences for the metaphysics that underpin Edwards' Christology, and those that underpin his Spirit Christology in particular.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ I am grateful to Oliver Crisp, Joshua Farris, Doug Sweeney, Seng Kong Tan, and Willem van Vlastuin for comments on previous drafts of this article.