

Title: Covenant of Redemption in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards: The Nexus between the Immanent and the Economic Trinity

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary trinitarian theologies tend to hold that the doctrine of the Trinity, especially the immanent Trinity, became impractical, speculative, and abstruse over the years in the history of Christian theology. In response, the recent theologies of the Trinity explore various practical implications of the doctrine of the Trinity with emphasis on God's economic work of redemption in history. However, the Reformed idea of the covenant of redemption helps us to reconsider whether the doctrine of the Trinity, even of the immanent Trinity, has been really so impractical.

In this study, I argue that the Reformed idea of the covenant of redemption in the theology of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) sheds a new light on the practical significance of the doctrine of the Trinity because the inner-trinitarian eternal pact between the Father and the Son has practical relevance for salvation in the Christian life. The doctrine of the covenant of redemption is the nexus between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. If God's plan of redemption is eternal and is therefore located already in the immanent Trinity, it is no longer valid to criticize the immanent Trinity as abstruse and impractical because salvation of the elect hinges on the eternal pact made within the immanent Trinity.

In chapter 1, I identify the criticism of the immanent Trinity as one of the major features of today's discussion. In chapter 2, I examine doctrinal and exegetical developments of the doctrine of the covenant of redemption by major Reformed thinkers who possibly influenced Edwards. In chapter 3, I constructively describe and examine Edwards's trinitarian theology of the covenant of redemption. It presents a counter example to contemporary discussion that stresses the impractical nature of the immanent Trinity.

Chapters 4 through 7 examine major manifestations of the practical implications of the covenant of redemption in various aspects of Edwards's theology: creation, justification and sanctification, church and national covenants, and history and eschaton. Finally, chapter 8 revisits the trend of contemporary trinitarian theologies and reiterates the contribution that the retrieval of the doctrine of the covenant of redemption can possibly make to trinitarian theologies today.

This study also emphasizes the methodological importance of paying attention to the historical context of the research object even if one conducts a study in systematic theology.