

CHAPTER FOUR: AN HISTORICAL LITERATURE REVIEW: DEIFICATION OR THEOSIS IN THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH

I. INTRODUCTION

The second chapter dealing with the biblical foundations showed that the Scriptures give a firm biblical basis for cultivating a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. It showed that the nature of this life is a covenantal life that is restored and deepened by the incarnation and embraced through repentance and faith. Moreover, it illustrated that this life is enriched by the sacraments of baptism and Lord's Supper and embraces every aspect of life. Furthermore, it demonstrated that this life is a mysterious life that transcends human understanding. In addition, it showed that the significance of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the Holy Spirit involves being identified with Christ, living in Christ and Christ living in the believer, being conformed to Christ and resting in Christ.

The third chapter dealing with John Calvin's understanding of living in union with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit showed that his understanding of living this kind of life is consistent with what was discovered regarding the biblical foundations. Moreover, this chapter enriched what was discovered in the chapter dealing with the biblical foundations. Of particular interest for this study is what Calvin taught regarding becoming a partaker of God's divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). According to Calvin, becoming a partaker of God's divine nature entails an ontological union with God that is a sort of deification (*quasi deificari*). To be sure, believers do not share in the essence of God, but they share in the properties of this essence. This appears to be presupposed in what Calvin taught regarding the image of God, union with Christ, engrafting, glorification and the Trinitarian life.

This chapter will build on what was discovered in the previous two chapters. On the one hand, it is a continuation of the previous chapter because it deals with the theological foundations of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it is a new one for its focus is primarily on the theme of becoming a partaker of God's divine nature. More precisely, its focus is on believers being deified or undergoing theosis.

Usually, the literature review is a consideration of what four or five key *contemporary* scholars are saying about the issue under discussion. Because deification or theosis is an important theme in patristic and Eastern Orthodox theology, this chapter gives a *historical* theological review through church history of how deification or theosis has been argued, nuanced, understood and applied.

My general hypothesis is that it appears that many Reformed Christians not only do not experience what a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is, but also do not intentionally live this kind of life. It is my suspicion that this situation would be the same in many Evangelical denominations. Instead of intentionally living God-generated lives embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, many Christians appear to live dis-embedded, self-generated lives. My first research question is: "To what extent is or was the spirituality of (young) adults in my congregation and in a neighbouring congregation characterized by various forms of affective detachment or dis-embeddedness between Christ and themselves?" My second research question is: "Will going through a 10-week spiritual learning experience meant to equip (young) adults to learn to live a God-generated life embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit serve

as a stepping stone to move Christians from living dis-embedded, self-generated lives to God-generated lives of being embedded with Christ in the Father?” Since participating with Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit in the inner Trinitarian life is the purpose of being deified or undergoing theosis, I consider an *historical* theological literature overview warranted.

This historical theological literature overview is organized according to church families.¹ Thus, after having reviewed one representative from the second century church, a review is given of one representative from the Eastern liturgical family (Eastern Orthodox), one from the Western liturgical family (Roman Catholicism), one from the Lutheran family, one from the Methodist-Holiness families, and one from the Baptist family.

From the second century Church, Irenaeus was chosen for the historical overview.² In the chapter dealing with the biblical foundation, Irenaeus was quoted as having written, ““Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . through His immeasurable love, has become what we are, that He might cause us to be even what He Himself is.” Essentially, Irenaeus is saying here that the Son of God became a human being so that human beings might become deified. Thus, it will be beneficial for our understanding of deification or theosis if we understand the context of this statement. Moreover, Irenaeus’ theology contains all the essential elements of what would come to be regarded as the characteristically patristic understanding of theosis.

From the Greek Orthodox tradition, Gregory Palamas was chosen. According to some, Gregory Palamas was the greatest individual theologian in the Eastern Tradition and

¹ For an overview of these families, see J. Gordon Melton (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of American Religions: A Comprehensive Study of the Major Religious Groups in the United States and Canada* (Tarrytown: Triumph Books, 1989).

² For Irenaeus, Palamas, Luther, Wesley and Pinnock, see also Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2004), 17-86. I am indebted to Karkkainen for my first foray into this historical review.

highly esteemed within his tradition as a teacher of deification.³ Moreover, the development of the patristic tradition of theosis by Eastern Orthodox theologians like Palamas has become a standard statement on theosis.⁴ Among his contributions is what he taught about the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ not only being the point of contact between humankind and God, but also the channel through which our flesh is glorified or shone upon. Moreover, he vigorously defended that human beings do not partake of the essence of God, but of his energies. This is strikingly similar to what Calvin taught about the flesh of Jesus being the point of contact between humanity and divinity and humankind not becoming a partaker of the essence of God, but of the qualities of this essence. Furthermore, the Chalcedonian axiom of *distinctio sed non separatio* underlying Calvin's Christology and anthropology also appears to underlie Palamas' Christology and anthropology. Thus, it will be beneficial to compare and contrast Palamas on this particular point and determine to what extent Palamas' and Calvin's understanding of theosis are similar and different.

From the Roman Catholic tradition, Jean Daniélou was chosen. Running as a golden thread through this whole study and the ten-week learning experience is participating in the love the Father has for the Son and the Son has for the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This is not only what is involved being a partaker of God's divine nature, it is also the goal of participating in the nature. According to Daniélou, the Trinity of Persons constitutes the structure of Being. Because this Trinity of Persons is a Trinity of love, love is as primary as existence.⁵ Moreover, one of the key aspects of the

³ Kärkkäinen, 27-28.

⁴ J. Todd Billings, "United to God through Christ: Assessing Calvin on the Question of Deification," *Harvard Theological Review* 98:3 (2005): 316.

⁵ Besides being a scholar of Alexandrian theology, Daniélou also served as a theological expert at the Second Vatican Council. Cf. Carl Olson, "Jean Daniélou's Master Key" at http://old.catholicexchange.com/vm/index.asp?vm_id=6&art_id=11872%20

golden theme is that participating in the Father-Son love relationships is covenantal in nature. According to Daniélou, faith is a covenantal act in which humankind gives itself to the God who has first given Himself to humankind. Thus, it will be beneficial to see how a good understanding of Daniélou will enrich our understanding of these fundamental concepts of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

From the Lutheran tradition, Martin Luther was chosen. Chapter two noted that when Calvin refers to union with Christ as a spiritual union, he does not mean a metaphorical union, but a real one. This real union was further defined as being an ontological union through faith. The new Finnish interpretation of Luther has discovered that Luther also taught an ontological union with Christ through faith. In fact, according to this interpretation Christ is ontologically present in and through faith in the life of the believer. Thus, it will be beneficial to see how a good understanding of Luther will enrich our understanding of Calvin.

From the Methodist-Holiness families John Wesley was chosen. Chapter two showed that God entered into a covenant relationship with humankind because He wanted it to embody Him as his image to creation. Thus, the goal of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is that embody God's divine nature to creation. Wesley considers the renewal of the image of God to be the heart of Christianity for it is through the renewal of the image of God in human beings that creation is renewed. Thus, it will be beneficial to see how a good understanding of Wesley will enrich our understanding of being the image of God by embodying God's divine nature to creation.

From the Baptist family, Clark Pinnock was chosen. Both in the chapter on the biblical basis and the chapter on John Calvin, it was noted that the Holy Spirit is the One who

enables us to live with Christ in the Father. Pinnock's *The Flame of Love* develops this pneumatological theme in a way that few others have done before. Thus, it will be beneficial to see how a good understanding of Pinnock's pneumatology will enrich our understanding of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

II. CHURCH FAMILIES

A. The Second Church: Irenaeus⁶

Irenaeus was born and raised in a Christian family in Smyrna in the first half of the second century. Before moving to Gaul where he became bishop of Lyons in 177, he had been a disciple of Polycarp. Because Valentinian Gnosticism was infiltrating his church in Lyons, Irenaeus wrote a long treatise entitled *Against the Heresies* defending the Christian tradition against Gnosticism.⁷ He also wrote another major work entitled *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* in which he gives a catechetical summary of the Christian faith.

Irenaeus asserts that human beings are not just united with or embedded in God with their spirits, but with their bodies and souls. Thus, he writes, "For the glory of God is a living

⁶ For this section, I am indebted to Simon Tugwell, "The Apostolic Fathers and Irenaeus," in Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold (eds.), *The Study of Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 107-09.

⁷ On Valentinian Gnosticism, see: "Valentinus and the Valentinian Tradition" at <http://www.gnosis.org/library/valentinus/index.html>; Stephan A. Hoeller, "Valentinus: A Gnostic for All Seasons" at <http://www.gnosis.org/valentinus.htm>; Bentley Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism, Vol. 1: The School of Valentinus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980). For Irenaeus' two works, see Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* at in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1* at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-55.htm#P6120_1360484 and *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* at http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/irenaeus_02_proof.htm. On Irenaeus, see John Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (London: Routledge, 1897); H.B. Timothy, *The Early Christian Apologists and Greek Philosophy Exemplified by Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973), 23-39; Louis Bouyer, et al., *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers in History of Christian Spirituality, Volume 1*, trans. Mary P. Ryan (New York: The Seabury Press, 1963), 252-255.

man.”⁸ Likewise, “God predestined that the first man should be of an animal nature, with this view, that he might be saved by the spiritual One.”⁹

According to Irenaeus, humankind was born as a child. Thus, he writes, “Now, having made man lord of the earth and all things in it, He secretly appointed him lord also of those who were servants in it. They however were in their perfection; but the lord, that is, man, was (but) small; for he was a child; and it was necessary that he should grow, and so come to (his) perfection.”¹⁰ Therefore, in order for the flesh of man to attain union with God, it needs to pass through many stages. Accordingly, Irenaeus writes:

For the new covenant having been known and preached by the prophets, He who was to carry it out according to the good pleasure of the Father was also preached; having been revealed to men as God pleased; that they might always make progress through believing in Him, and by means of the [successive] covenants, should gradually attain to perfect salvation.¹¹

This growth will continue in the new heaven and the new earth.¹²

Adam and Eve fell into sin because they were not able to wait for this progressive growth. Consequently, they acted irrationally and used their freedom to usurp what they had to wait for.¹³ Yet, God had a reason for creating humankind with the freedom to fall into sin.

According to Irenaeus, without this freedom

. . . it would come to pass, that their being good would be of no consequence, because they were so by nature rather than by will, and are possessors of good spontaneously, not by choice; and for this reason they would not understand this fact, that good is a comely thing, nor would they take pleasure in it. For how can those who are ignorant of good enjoy it? Or what credit is it to those

⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.20.7.

⁹ Ibid., III.22.3.

¹⁰ Ibid., *Proof of Apostolic Preaching*, 12. While this may be possible, Gen. 1-3 does not provide sufficient information to make this claim.

¹¹ Ibid., *Against Heresies*, IV.9.3.

¹² Ibid., V, 32-36. While this may be possible, there is insufficient Scriptural warrant to make this claim.

¹³ Ibid., IV, 38.4.

who have not aimed at it? And what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest?¹⁴

The growth to perfection that humankind was intended to reach, but interrupted by the fall into sin, was reached, in principle, when the Son of God took on human flesh. Thus, by taking on human nature, the Son of God joined the human and divine natures. Consequently, the incarnation lays the basis for humankind to be able to live in union with God and receive incorruptibility and immortality. Accordingly, Irenaeus writes:

For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God. For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first, incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are, so that the corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality, that [we] might receive the adoption of sons?¹⁵

Without the incarnation of the Son of God, salvation would not be possible, according to Irenaeus, for the incarnation was necessary to destroy sin and overcome the power or bondage of death.¹⁶ Thus, he writes, “For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death.”¹⁷

Yet, the incarnation is insufficient to bring about the destruction of sin and bondage of death and thus achieve incorruptibility and immortality through union with God. Christ also has to annul Adam’s disobedience. Drawing on Eph. 1:10, Christ did this through what

¹⁴ Ibid., IV.37.6. While this is an interesting observation, there is insufficient scriptural warrant to make this claim.

¹⁵ Ibid., III.19.1. When Irenaeus speaks about being joined to God, he is referring to a relational union.

¹⁶ For this and the next three paragraphs, I am indebted to Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 119-126.

¹⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.18.7

Irenaeus refers to as recapitulation (*anakephalaiōsis*).¹⁸ This recapitulation involved Christ obediently retracing and reversing Adam's disobedience. This is how Christ gains victory over Satan, sin and death. Thus, he writes:

He has therefore, in His work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam, and trampled upon his head, as thou canst perceive in Genesis that God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed."¹⁹

In order to do the work of recapitulation by reversing and retracing Adam's disobedience, Christ also has to suffer and die. Irenaeus sees this metaphorically depicted in the analogy between the tree of knowledge and the tree of the cross. Thus, he writes:

And not by the aforesaid things alone has the Lord manifested Himself, but [He has done this] also by means of His passion. For doing away with [the effects of] that disobedience of man which had taken place at the beginning by the occasion of a tree, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; " rectifying that disobedience which had occurred by reason of a tree, through that obedience which was [wrought out] upon the tree [of the cross].²⁰

In this work of recapitulation, Christ not only retraced the disobedience of Adam, but of every age of all human beings. Thus, Irenaeus writes:

Being thirty years old when He came to be baptized, and then possessing the full age of a Master, He came to Jerusalem, so that He might be properly acknowledged by all as a Master. For He did not seem one thing while He was another, as those affirm who describe Him as being man only in appearance; but what He was, that He also appeared to be. Being a Master, therefore, He also possessed the age of a Master, not despising or evading any condition of humanity, nor setting aside in Himself that law which He had appointed for

¹⁸ In some sense, the incarnation is also part of the work of recapitulation since it recapitulates Adam being created. On the other hand, it lays the basis for the work of recapitulation.

¹⁹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.21.1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, V.16.3. This work of recapitulation through obedience and suffering is strikingly similar to what is known in Reformed theology as the active (perfectly fulfilling the law) and passive (suffering and death) obedience of Christ. Johannes Van Oort has shown that Calvin's doctrine of the Person and work of Christ has much in common with Irenaeus even though he does not use the term "recapitulation." See Johannes Van Oort, "John Calvin and the Church Fathers," in Irena Backus, *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 685-86. Cf. Billings, 322.

the human race, but sanctifying every age, by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself.

Then he adds:

For He came to save all through means of Himself—all, I say, who through Him are born again to God—infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men. He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness, and submission; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord. So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise. Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be "the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence," the Prince of life, existing before all, and going before all.²¹

Thus, for Irenaeus, incarnation and recapitulation reconstitute humanity and result in victory over sin and death.²²

Since Adam's sin was the wrong use of freedom, human freedom must be used properly to be embedded in God again and experience living in union with God.²³ For, as Irenaeus writes,

. . . in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves. On the other hand, they who have not obeyed shall, with justice, be not found in possession of the good, and shall receive condign punishment: for God did kindly bestow on them what was good; but they themselves did not diligently keep it, nor deem it something precious, but poured contempt upon His super-eminent goodness.²⁴

²¹ Ibid., II.22.4. While the death of Christ is sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole human race, it is efficient only for his new covenant community. See, e.g., Mk. 10:45 and Jn. 10:11.

²² Although Irenaeus does not explain how, recapitulation also takes place in Mary. See Ibid., III.21.4; V.19.1; V.21.1. Cf. Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 187.

²³ In order for this to be true, Irenaeus first has to establish that after the fall into sin, the human will is still free. If the human will is not free after the fall into sin and union with God is still possible, then it follows that freedom of the human will is not necessary for union with God.

²⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.37.1. See chapter two, excursus nine on monergistic regeneration.

In exercising our free will, however, we must remember that we are God's workmanship.²⁵ Thus, God, in exercising his freedom, is the One who makes, while man is the one who is made.²⁶

Through this wrong use of freedom, incarnation, recapitulation and right use of freedom, Irenaeus taught that humankind's destiny is spiritual, just as the Gnostics claimed. It was, however, not just a destiny that involved humankind's spirit, but his spirit and body.

Excursus one: Irenaeus and theosis

This study is about the nature and significance of cultivating a God-generated life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Chapter three noted that being embedded with Christ in the life of the Trinity involves deification and leads to deification. The following insights of Irenaeus both support and develop this understanding of theosis or deification

First, Irenaeus taught that Christ had to annul and reverse the effects of Adam's disobedience by recapitulating his creation with his incarnation and his disobedience with his obedience and death so that deification or theosis can take place. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three regarding being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit being a relationship that was re-membered, re-embedded and deepened by the incarnation.

Second, a dematerialized, elitist Gnostic spirituality was the occasion that Irenaeus taught that this deification did not just affect the soul, but also the body. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three about being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit being a relationship

²⁵ Ibid., IV.39.2

²⁶ Ibid., IV.11.2

that affects all aspects of life. Third, Irenaeus taught that the wrong use of the free will was the cause of humankind's separation from God and the proper use of the free will is the human agency for being joined to God and deified again. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three about being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit being a relationship that is personally embraced in faith.²⁷ Through faith we remain united to the Trinitarian life in Christ through the Spirit and through lack of faith we become separated from this Trinitarian life.

Excursus two: the humanity of Christ and theosis

Irenaeus wrote, "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . through His immeasurable love, has become what we are, that He might cause us to be even what He Himself is."²⁸ One hundred forty years later, Athanasius drew out the implication of this statement and wrote that the Son of God "became man that we might become God."²⁹ Against Arius and his followers, Athanasius also defended a *homoousios* Christology which asserted that Christ is "of one substance" with the father as opposed to being "of similar substance" (*homoiousios*). The doctrine of theosis is either implicitly or explicitly derivative of this *homoousios* Christology. As Murphy notes, "'Athanasius' [and implicitly Irenaeus'] soteriology was inextricably bound up with his Christology. God's intention from the beginning of the world was to make his church and those men and women in it genuine partakers of the Divine. Christ's assuming

²⁷ *Mutatis mutandis* (the necessary changes having been made) with regard to the free will.

²⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V, Preface at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-63.htm#P8903_2545596.

²⁹ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 54:3 at http://www.monachos.net/patristics/athanasius/di_plain_1-26.shtml.

human flesh was the practical means to realize this objective.”³⁰ Thus, the Father sending his Son to this earth could be called “a deifying mission.”³¹ This has rightly been called “the very essence of Christianity.”³² In other words, “God descends to the nadir of existence—fallen humanity, marked by death—so that a pathway of ascent can be made for humans to the Divine.”³³ Thus through the descent of the divine person of Christ human beings become members of Christ’s body and are re-embedded into God’s Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.³⁴

This is an important observation for this study because being re-embedded into the life of the Trinity through ontological union with the human nature of Christ safeguards this ontological union from being a pantheistic ontological union between humanity and the divine nature of Christ.³⁵

³⁰ Murphy, *Consuming Glory: A Classical Defense of Divine-Human Relationality Against Open Theism* (Eugene, Ore: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 216.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974), 97; see also Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 121.

³³ Murphy, 217. Jeffrey Finch writes, “It is evident, therefore, that the writings of Irenaeus cannot be marshaled to support the neo-Palamite position that the fathers of the Church grounded the possibility of sanctifying participation in God upon a real distinction between an intrinsically incommunicable divine essence and God’s communicable energies. Irenaeus assumes and implies that the divine persons of the Holy Spirit and the Son are no less communicable than are the divine perfections which Irenaeus clearly locates within what he repeatedly insists is God’s entirely simple essence. The divine essence is unknowable, according to Irenaeus, only in the specific sense that the fullness of who and what God is remains incomprehensible, inexhaustible, and immeasurable.” Jeffrey Finch, “Irenaeus on the Christological Basis of Human Divinization” in Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (eds.), *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology* (Eugene, Ore: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 102-03.

³⁴ Cf. Lossky, 121. Finch writes, “Although he never employed the language of theōpoiesis or theōsis, already present in the theology of Irenaeus are all the essential elements of what would come to be regarded as the characteristically patristic understanding of sanctification as divinization: restoration of prelapsarian likeness to God and incorruptibility, initiated by the union of human nature with divine nature through the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of the Eternal Son, appropriated existentially as adoption by God and infusion by the Holy Spirit, and finally perfected eternally through the face to face vision of God.” Finch, 86-87.

³⁵ Although it is beyond the scope of this study to offer a history of the doctrine of theosis or deification, the following summary as that pertains to the Greek Patristic Tradition is helpful. In his *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Norman Russell writes, “In summary, until the end of the fourth century the metaphor of deification develops along two distinct lines: on the one hand, the transformation of humanity in principle as a consequence of the Incarnation; on the other, the ascent of the soul through the practice of virtue. The former, broadly characteristic of Justin, Irenaeus, Origen, and Athanasius, is based on St. Paul’s teaching

B. The Greek Orthodox family: Gregory Palamas³⁶

Gregory Palamas was a monk of Mount Athos who later became Archbishop of Thessalonica. He lived from 1296-1359. As a monk, he led a quiet life of contemplation and constant prayer within the hesychast (*heschia* = quietude) tradition. The goal of this constant

on incorporation into Christ through baptism and implies a realistic approach to deification. The latter, typical of Clement and the Cappadocians, is fundamentally Platonic and implies a philosophical or ethical approach. By the end of the fourth century the realistic and philosophical strands begin to converge. In Cyril the realistic approach becomes more spiritualized through the use he makes of 2 Peter 1:4; in Maximus the philosophical approach comes to be focused more on ontological concerns under the influence of his post-Chalcedonian Christology.” Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 14. Comparing the Antiochene fathers to the Alexandrian fathers, Russell writes, “For the Alexandrians the transformation of the flesh by the Word is mirrored in the transformation of the believer by Christ. For the Antiochenes the deliberate and willed nature of the union of the human and the divine in Christ finds its counterpart in the moral struggle that human beings need to experience before they can attain perfection. Just as without Platonism there is no philosophical approach to deification, so without a substantialist background of thought in Christology there is no basis for a realistic approach.” *Ibid.*, 14-15. Regarding the transition to the Byzantine tradition, Russell writes, “Through Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor deification became established in the Byzantine monastic tradition as the goal of the spiritual life. The two most influential teachers of this final phase, Symeon the New Theologian of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries and Gregory Palamas of the fourteenth, emphasized the experiential side of deification.” *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁶ For this section, I am indebted to John Meyendorff (ed.), *Gregory Palamas: The Triads* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 1-22. For an in-depth introduction to the work of Gregory Palamas, see John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 2nd ed. (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974); *ibid.*, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974). See also “Knowledge, Prayer, Vision: Three Foundational Aspects of the Theology of St Gregory Palamas” at http://www.monachos.net/patristics/palamas_theology.shtml; George Florovsky “St Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers” at http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/florovsky_palamas.html; Panayiotis Christou, “The Teaching of Gregory Palamas on Man” at http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/christou_palamas.html; Nick Trakakis, “Gregory Palamas on the Relationship Between Philosophy and Theology” in *Theandros: An Online Journal of Orthodox Christian Theology and Philosophy*, Vol. 3 1 (Fall 2005) at <http://www.theandros.com/palamas.html>. For theosis or deification: see Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 117-37, 157-59; Christoforos Stavropoulos, “Partakers of Divine Nature” in Daniel B. Clendenin (ed.), *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 183-192; Hilarion Alfeyev, *The Mystery of Faith: An Introduction to the Teaching and Spirituality of the Orthodox Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), 184-198; John Meyendorff, “Theosis in the Eastern Christian Tradition” in Louis Dupré and Don E. Saliers (ed.), *Christian Spirituality: Post Reformation and Modern in World Spirituality: An Encyclopedia of the Religious Quest, Volume 18* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 470-76; Rowan Williams, “Deification” in Gordon S. Wakefield (ed.), *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 106-108; Dumitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God in Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Volume 2, The World: Creation and Deification*, trans. Ioan Ionita and Robert Barringer (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000), 191-200; Michael Welton, *The Pearl: A Handbook for Orthodox Converts* (Salisbury: Regina Orthodox Press, 1999), 141-143; Alexei V. Nesteruk, *Light from the East: Theology, Science, and the Eastern Orthodox Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 112-117; Frances Colie, “Mary: Model for Christian Life and Community,” in Jaroslav Z. Skira and Myroslaw I. Tataryn (eds.), *Windows to the East: Eastern Christian in a Dialogue with Charity* (Toronto: Novalis, 2001), 209-223. For a comparison between Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism, see Stanley N. Gundry and James Stamoolis (eds.), *Three Views on Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

prayer was “the transfiguration of the entire person—soul and body—through the presence of the incarnated God, accessible to the conscious ‘certitude of the heart’.”³⁷ As a theologian, the main point Palamas argued was the uncreated God was accessible to everyone through personal experience because in the fullness of time God had taken on human flesh.³⁸

A Greek Italian philosopher named Barlaam challenged this. According to him, no direct knowledge of God was accessible to the human mind.³⁹ Moreover, Barlaam had a deep disdain for monks whom he considered as “intellectually unqualified fanatics.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, when he made an investigation into the Hesychast method of prayer—the basis for their experiential knowledge of God—he was shocked to learn that not only the mind, but also the body could contribute to experiential knowledge of God and be transfigured by divine light.

In order to deal with the controversy and challenge presented by Barlaam, Palamas wrote *Triads in Defence of the Holy Hesychasts*. Five major themes dealt with in these Triads are: philosophy and salvation, knowledge beyond knowledge, the Hesychast method of prayer⁴¹ and the transfigured body, deification and the uncreated glory of Christ, and essence and energies of God.

³⁷ Meyendorff, *Gregory Palamas: The Triads*, 3.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁹ Barlaam believed that only dialectical conclusions (= hypothetical possibilities) were possible, whereas Palamas believed that also apodictic conclusions (= capable of demonstration) could be reached

⁴⁰ Meyendorff, 6.

⁴¹ The prayer that often was prayed was the Jesus Prayer, a prayer “aimed at developing the habit of constant prayer” (1 Thess. 5:17). The prayer consists of a single petition: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me” (or a slight variation of this). When praying this prayer, it should be remembered that ‘the name of the Lord’ is “not just an identifying label, but the very presence of the power of God.” What is true of the name of the Lord in the Old Testament is also true of the name of Jesus in the New Testament (Acts 3:6; Phil. 2:10). Calling Jesus “Jesus” is acknowledging Him as Saviour. Calling Him ‘Christ’ is a confession that He is the Messiah. Calling Him ‘Lord’ is proclaiming that He is your master and king. Calling for ‘mercy’ is asking for Jesus’ “kindness, compassion, self-sacrificing love; it is ‘tender mercies,’ healing mercies. Hebrew word is *hesed*, which means ‘steadfast love,’ a love that perseveres to save the beloved. It keeps giving, even to the ungrateful and selfish, like Hosea’s love to his adulterous wife. In Greek, the word for mercy is *eleos*: Lord, have mercy’ is *Kyrie, eleison*. That word, *eleos*, resonates poetically with the Greek word for olive oil, *elaion*.

Baarlam and Palamas differed on the degree of authority one could assign to Greek philosophy. Whereas Barlaam freely made use of this philosophy, Palamas would only use it after it had been purified. Thus, he writes:

Is there then anything of use to us in this philosophy? Certainly. For just as there is much therapeutic value even in substances obtained from the flesh of serpents, and the doctors consider there is no better or more useful medicine than that derived from this source, so there is something of benefit to be had even from the profane philosophers—but somewhat as in a mixture of honey and hemlock.⁴²

Moreover, Barlaam insisted that secular education is necessary to know God; for Palamas, knowledge of God cannot be made dependent upon human knowledge. Romans 1 clearly contradicts Barlaam. Thus, Palamas writes, “For if a worthy conception of God could be attained through the use of intellection, how could these people [i.e., the pagans] have taken the demons for gods, and how could they have believed the demons when they taught man polytheism?”⁴³

Olive oil was essential to the ancient world; it provided light, food, and when mixed with medicinal herbs it made a healing balm. The Good Samaritan bound the wounds of the beaten man with *elaion*. So Jesus’ *eleos*, mercy, is an intrinsic aspect of his character; it is steadfast and constant, and streams toward us unceasingly.” Yet, because we keep forgetting that we need this love, we need to ask for it. “We lapse into ideas of self-sufficiency, or get impressed with how nice we are, and lose hold of humility. Asking for mercy reminds us that we *need* mercy. It reminds us that we are still poor and needy, and fall short of the glory of God.” Frederica Matthewes-Green, “The Jesus Prayer” (Vancouver: Regent College Audio, 2007). Matthewes-Green adds, “The key to constant prayer is realizing that it does not consist of heaping up words, but of drawing near God and remaining in his presence. So it’s not necessary to keep ‘talking at’ God, making requests or thinking of new ways to phrase things. It’s like an old married couple sitting together in front of the fire on a winter evening. They don’t have to fill the air with words: it’s enough to just be near each other.” Ben Anderson, unofficial teacher of Orthodox theology, adds this insight, “But one technique that is accessible to us all, and that is recommended for all of us who wish to practice the Jesus Prayer, is that which is instructed by St. John of the Ladder. He teaches that when saying the Prayer, to say it with attention and focus, even if this means concentrating on each word that is spoken. ‘Keep your mind within the words of your prayer’, he says. This is no easy task, and may take some time to accomplish. Usually building a fire involves lots of smoke that gets in your eyes and is quite a bother at first. But when the fire takes hold, it is a pleasure to sit and watch and be warmed by it for hours on end. So it is with the Prayer of Jesus. At first we are clumsy, but eventually our halting efforts, with God’s help, bear fruit. And when we have learned to pray with attention, humility, and simplicity, and God sees that we are serious, he himself establishes, by His grace, the Prayer in the heart, and the fire of God is experienced—not simply as one sitting by a bond fire, but as one immersed in it, yet not burned, but rather purified and transfigured. So the goal of this is that loving union with God that was lost so long ago” (Ben Anderson, unofficial teacher of Orthodoxy: personal email).

⁴² Meyendorff: *Gregory Palamas: The Triads* I, 1, 20; cf. *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴³ *Ibid.* I, 1, 18; cf. *Ibid.*, 26.

Barlaam asserted that all human knowledge was based on perception by the senses.

Palamas, however, maintained that the Christian experience of God was beyond nature since man is capable of transcending his own nature. Thus, Palamas writes:

The human mind also, and not only the angelic, transcends itself, and by victory over the passions acquires an angelic form. It, too, will attain to that light and will become worthy of a supernatural vision of God, not seeing the divine essence, but seeing God by a revelation appropriate and analogous to Him. One sees, not in a negative way—for one does see something—but in a manner superior to negation. For God is not only beyond knowledge, but also beyond unknowing.⁴⁴

The reason humankind is capable of transcending its own nature is because it possesses an organ of vision that belongs neither to the senses or intellect. Thus, Palamas writes:

This is why their vision is not a sensation, since they do not receive it through the senses; nor is it intellection, since they do not find it through thought or the knowledge that comes thereby, but after the cessation of all mental activity. It is not, therefore, the product of either imagination or reason; it is neither an opinion nor a conclusion reached by syllogistic argument.⁴⁵

Thus, God remains transcendent in his essence, but immanent in his workings.

Regarding prayer and the posture of the body, Palamas writes:

⁴⁴ Ibid., I, 2, 4; cf. Ibid., 32. Elsewhere Palamas writes: “But he does not consider that the vision of which he has been deemed worthy *is* simply the Divine Nature. Just as the soul communicates life to the animated body—and we call this life ‘soul’, while realizing that the soul which is in us and which communicates life to the body is distinct from that life—so God, Who dwells in the God-bearing soul, communicates the light to it. However, the union of God the Cause of all with those worthy transcends that light. God, while remaining entirely in Himself, dwells entirely in us by His superessential power; and communicates to us not His nature, but His proper glory and splendour.” *Triads*, I, 2, 23; cf. Meyendorff, 39. Meyendorff comments, “Thus, apophatic theology [describing God by negation only in terms of what God is *not*, rather than what God *is*] is much more than a simple dialectical device to ascertain the transcendence of God in terms of human logic. It also describes a state, beyond the conceptual process, where God reveals himself positively to the ‘spiritual senses’.” Ibid., 15.

⁴⁵ Ibid., I, 2, 18; cf. Ibid., 35. This organ of vision would appear to be the *nous* or mind. See chapter two, excursus seven. In a personal email, Matthew-Green writes, “Christ is Life, on the other hand, and in a mystery he is Light as well; in some indescribable way he literally is Light. In the Nicene Creed we say, ‘Light from Light.’ Those who tune in to the voice and presence of God, and gain the habit of doing that continually, fulfill the instruction to ‘pray constantly.’ Those who most immerse themselves in God tell us that there is an ‘Uncreated Light’ that they begin to perceive. It is not like the light of this world, as glorious as it is. The Uncreated Light fills body as well as soul. ‘If your eye is healthy, the whole body will be full of light’ Christ said. And some saints have been literally illuminated in this way. A recent example is St Seraphim of Sarov. The story is told by an eyewitness, his friend Motovilov. <http://www.st-seraphim.com/motovil.htm><http://www.st-seraphim.com/motovil.htm>.”

You know that we breathe our breath in and out, only because of our heart . . . so, as I have said, sit down, recollect your mind, draw it—I am speaking of your mind—in your nostrils; that is the path the breath takes to reach the heart. Drive it, force it to go down to your heart with the air you are breathing in. When it is there, you will see the joy that follows: you will have nothing to regret. As a man who has been away from home for a long time cannot restrain his joy at seeing his wife and children again, so the spirit overflows with joy and unspeakable delight when it is united again to the soul.

He then adds:

Next you must know that as long as your spirit abides there, you must not remain silent nor idle. Have no other occupation or meditation than the cry of: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!’ Under no circumstances give yourself any rest. This practice protects your spirit from wandering and makes it impregnable and inaccessible to the suggestions of the enemy and lifts it up every day in love and desire to God.⁴⁶

This kind of bodily posture in prayer caused Barlaam to call the monks “people-whose soul-is-in-their-navels.” Palamas reacted by emphasizing that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the body is not evil, but good.⁴⁷ Moreover, the soul coexists with the body and uses it as its instrument.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the inner man is naturally conformed to external forms.⁴⁹ Thus, God’s “revelation of His presence and of His Sanctifying Spirit touches both the spiritual and the physical sides of man. Without this presence and this sanctification no real communion with God is possible.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 59-60. Cf. *Ibid.*, *Gregory Palamas: The Triads*, 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 2, 1; cf. *Ibid.*, 41.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 2, 3; cf. *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 2, 8; cf. *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁰ Meyendorff, 17. While the revelation of God’s presence and of his sanctifying Spirit does touch both the spiritual and the physical sides of man, Palamas fails to substantiate how the inner man is naturally conformed to the external forms (although the folding of our hands or the bowing of our knees when we pray does seem to affect our inner being in one way or another). In a personal email, Frederica Mathewes-Green writes, “This [i.e., what Palamas writes about prayer, breathing and posture] sounds utterly strange to Western ears, because we have never been able to come to a conclusion about whether God is really inside us and permeating all Creation—or is he outside somewhere, “changeless” like a statue is changeless (therefore cannot be involved in this changing world), perhaps a mere watchmaker. Dwelling in the presence of this static God would be, if nothing else, tedious. So theology is an opportunity to employ the restless mind, and competitive theology a way for bright men to distinguish themselves.” She continues, “The idea that God really is inside us, that Christ truly is ‘in your heart,’ never quite goes away, however, for the simple reason that it’s true; he actually is there.

Palamas' understanding of deification or theosis is based on his understanding of having been created in the image and likeness of God.⁵¹ A human being is created by God's divine energy with an independent, immortal soul and a dependent, mortal body. The soul is mobile and gives life to the body. The main functions of the soul are intellect, reason and spirit (*nous*, *logos* and *pneuma*) reflecting the three persons of the Trinity, Father (*nous*), Son (*logos*) and Holy Spirit (*pneuma*).⁵² In this way, human beings are capable of receiving the

And charismatic and pentecostal movements keep arising, as the Holy Spirit reasserts his intimate presence, and proves he is a Person of the Trinity and not merely the love between Father and Son." She concludes, "A recent book points to an explanation for this that I think is quite convincing. David Bradshaw's *Aristotle East and West* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) notes that the word *energeia* is all through the New Testament ("for God is energizing in you, both to will and to energize for his good pleasure"), but that when Jerome made his Latin translation there was no equivalent. So he used *opus*, work -- and as a result God was pictured as being like a sculptor who put the finishing touches on his statue, Creation, and stood back. We can draw conclusions about the sculptor by studying Creation, but we don't expect that he is really *inside* it, animating it with his life. Bradshaw proposes that East and West began to divide at that point, but the split was not recognized for a thousand years, until the controversy between Palamas and Barlaam." See also George C. Papademetriou who writes, "For Palamas and the other Fathers of the Church, the body participates in prayer and helps the mind to pray. Bodily acts such as fasting, vigils, kneeling, sitting down, or standing are ways in which the body participates in prayer." George C. Papademetriou, "The Human Body According to Saint Gregory Palamas" at <http://www.new-ostrog.org/palamas.html>. See also the author who writes, "It is interesting to note that Gregory did indeed advocate the use of a 'psycho-somatic technique' in the hesychast method of prayer; yet he did so not out of a conviction that this was an essential necessity (rather, he saw it principally as in aid for beginners), but rather out of a conviction that *refusing* to admit the validity of a type of prayer involving the body would be to negate the reality of the intimate and foundational unity of the human person. This unity, when properly attuned, may not only serve as the source of wholeness in personal sanctification, but allows the *whole person* to take an active part in the progression toward a sanctified state". Monachos Net: Orthodoxy through Patristic, Monastic and Liturgical. Study, "Gregory Palamas: Knowledge, Prayer, and Vision: Three foundational aspects of the Theology of St Gregory Palamas" at http://www.monachos.net/library/Gregory_Palamas_Knowledge,_Prayer,_and_Vision. In her lecture at Regent College on the Jesus prayer, Matthewes-Green shared this anecdote about the effect of this kind of Eastern prayer life. She said, "I recently spent some time with Fr. Roman Braga, an 85-year-old Romanian monk who spent long years in communist prison. During his period of solitary confinement (he said, "the first six months were the hardest"), deprived of all writing or reading matter, he discovered depths of prayer. He said, 'We could not go outside ourselves, so we went inside ourselves' and discovered what he calls 'the inner universe' where God reigns. Though he was already a priest when he was arrested, he says that he had his conversion in solitary confinement, because that is where he truly learned to pray." Matthewes-Green, "The Jesus Prayer."

⁴⁹ For this paragraph, I am indebted to Panayiotis Christou, "The Teaching of Gregory Palamas on Man."

⁵⁰ Christou writes, "One could call this image *microtheos* rather than *microcosmos*." See *Ibid.*, 2. While the inner being or soul of a person does receive the eternal life of the Father in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, there is no basis in Scripture to compare the three functions of the soul to the three Persons of the Trinity.

⁵¹ Meyendorff, *Gregory Palamas: The Triads*, 18-19.

⁵² Kärkkäinen, 29. The Reformed understanding of the "communication of idioms" is that the properties or attributes of both the divine and human nature are each attributed to the *Person* of Jesus. Lutherans, however, believed that the properties of both natures not only are attributed to the Person of Christ, but that Jesus' human *nature* also takes on divine properties. See, e.g., J. van Genderen and W. H. Velema, *Beknopte Gereformeerde*

divine, uncreated light emitted from the Trinity. The first man also received God's divine Spirit (Gen. 2:7), making him a partaker of God's nature. However, when he fell into sin, he withdrew himself from God's Spirit. Adam's fall had effects on the natural and spiritual state of all human beings. They all die and by nature are not participants of God's divine nature.

This is why the incarnation was necessary. When the Son of God took on our human flesh, He became in his body or flesh "the source of humankind's deification or theosis. Thus, being 'deified' means 'being in Him', that is, participant of His Body, which is penetrated (in virtue of the 'communication of idioms' in the hypostatic union) with divine life, or 'energy'." Thus, in man's experience of God, the flesh of Christ is the point of contact. Palamas himself formulates it this way:

Since the Son of God, in his incomparable love for man, did not only unite His divine Hypostasis with our nature, by clothing Himself in a living body and a soul gifted with intelligence . . . but also united himself . . . with the human hypostases themselves, in mingling himself with each of the faithful by communion with his Holy Body, and since he becomes one single body with us (cf. Eph. 3:6), and makes us a temple of the undivided Divinity, for in the very body of Christ dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9), how should he not illuminate those who commune worthily with the divine ray of His Body which is within us, lightening their souls, as He illumined the very bodies of the disciples on Mount Tabor?

Palamas continues:

For, on the day of the Transfiguration, that Body, source of the light of grace, was not yet united without our bodies; it illuminated from outside those who worthily approached it, and sent the illumination into the soul by the intermediary of the physical eyes; but now, since it is mingled with us and exists in us, it illuminates the soul from within.⁵³

Dogmatiek, 2e druk (Kampen: Kok, 1993), 421. For Calvin, "communication of idioms" is a hermeneutical term rather than an ontological one. Thus, for him it is a way of "express[ing] Christ's unity without defining the mechanics of that unity or threatening the integrity of the natures of that unity." See Stephen Edmondson, *Calvin's Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 216-17.

⁵³ Cited by Meyendorff, *Gregory Palamas: The Triads*, 19.

This divine ray of light is not created, but uncreated light of the divinity of Christ shining through his humanity. Thus, union with God in Christ, the source of deification or theosis, does not entail a union with the essence of God in Christ, but a union with the properties or energies of this essence. This distinction is meant to safeguard the transcendence of God while at the same time doing justice to his immanence in the Body of Christ.

Excursus three: Gregory Palamas and theosis

Chapter three noted that being embedded with Christ in the life of the Trinity involves deification and leads to deification. The following insights of Palamas both support and develop this understanding of theosis or deification.

First, Palamas taught that human beings can anthropologically be deified because God has created them with a soul that is able to receive the energies of his divine nature. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapter two and three that when God entered into covenant with Adam and Eve, He was able to do so because He had created them with a soul that was able to receive his own divine Spirit. Moreover, Palamas confirmed that the fall into sin involved Adam and Eve willfully dis-membering and dis-embedding themselves from God's Spirit, the source and means of theosis.

Second, Palamas taught that humankind's point of contact with God is the flesh of Jesus Christ. Thus, being deified means being in Christ, i.e., a participant of his body that is penetrated because of the communication of idioms in the hypostatic union with divine life or energy. This harmonizes in part with and develops what was taught in chapter two and three

regarding the flesh of Christ being the channel through which the life of the Godhead flows into those who are joined to Him.⁵⁴

Third, Palamas taught that (constant) prayer is learning to rest in the presence of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that theosis or being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit begins with resting in the Trinitarian life.

Excursus four: the divine energies of God and theosis

Excursus three noted that Palamas taught that believers are not joined to the essence of God, but to the energies of his essence. About this distinction, Timothy Ware wrote:

This distinction between God's essence (*ousia*) and His energies goes back to the Cappadocian Fathers . . . however remote from us in His essence, yet in His energies God has revealed Himself to men. These energies are not something that exists apart from God, not a gift which God confers upon men: they are God Himself in His action and revelation to the world. God exists complete and entire in each of His divine energies . . . It is through these energies that God enters into a direct and immediate relationship with mankind. In relation to man, the divine energy is in fact nothing else than the grace of God; grace, not just a 'gift' of God, not just an object which God bestows on men, but a direct manifestation of the living God Himself, a personal confrontation between creature and Creator . . . When we say that the saints have been transformed . . . by the grace of God, what we mean is that they have a direct experience of God Himself. They Know God—that is to say, God in His energies, not in His essence.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ "In part" refers to that fact that this study presupposes the Calvinistic understanding of the "communication of idioms" and not the Greek-Orthodox/Lutheran understanding because a human nature (i.e., Christ's) that takes on properties of the divine nature no longer is a human nature. See also what was written in chapter 3, excursus thirteen dealing with the Calcedonian axiom of *distinctio sed non separatio*.

⁵⁵ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin, 1963), 77-78. Ware is also known as Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia. Cf. Murphy, 219. Duncan Reid gives the following helpful metaphor. He writes, "What we have here is the vision of a sort of penumbra of glory, or a field of energy that surrounds the trinitarian Godhead. In this way the universe can be considered as lying within God's field of energy or 'field of resonance' while at the same time remaining distant from and contingent upon God's superessentiality." Duncan Reid, *Energies of the Spirit: Trinitarian Models in Eastern Orthodox and Western Theology* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 133. According to Reid, Palamas was the first who developed a systematic formulation of the doctrine of the divine energies. *Ibid.*, 4. While the Palamite distinction between the essence (*ousia*) and energies (*energeia*) of God was developed on the basis of experience and is, therefore, in essence not a

This observation is important for our study because it highlights that being re-embedded into the life of the Trinity through participation in the divine, uncreated energies of God and not the divine essence of God does not involve a pantheistic merging of the human and divine natures. This observation also harmonizes in part with what Calvin taught that believers are not united to the essence of God, but to the qualities or properties of this essence.⁵⁶

C. The Roman Catholic family: Jean Daniélou⁵⁷

Jean Daniélou (1905-1974) was a patristic scholar. He was one of the founders of the Sources Chrétiennes, a bilingual collection of patristic texts. Some of his works provided a great stimulus for the development of Roman Catholic covenant theology. Daniélou served as an expert to the Second Vatican Council. In 1969, he was made a cardinal. In his *God and the Ways of Knowing*, Daniélou records what God says of Himself and how humankind gets

philosophical theory, the distinction *ousia* and *energeia* does have a Greek philosophical history (as does the Western theological terminology of *ousia* and *dunamis* [power]). Thus, the Eastern Orthodox terminology has roots in the Platonic distinction between two ontological planes: particular essence or the plane of the sensible and general essence (i.e., the idea behind it) or the plane of the intelligible. The latter is the source of the former and is thus also referred to as “beyond the essence” or superessential. Ibid., 8. This study does not assume this twofold Platonic distinction. Thus, while it may appear that the Chalcedonian axiom *distinctio sed non separatio* underlying Calvin’s Christology and anthropology also appears to underlie Palamas’ Christology and anthropology, this is in actual fact only *appears* to be the case. See also the next footnote.

⁵⁶ “In part,” because there is no ontological similarity, only a *functional* one between Calvin and Palamas. See Carl Mosser, “The greatest possible blessing: Calvin and deification *Scottish Theological Journal* 55:1 (2005): 54-55. Reid also gives the following enlightening insight into this ontological and functional distinction when he writes, “There are two traditional ways of speaking to God’s being, either as identical with the activity of God (identity principle) or as differentiated from God’s activity (doctrine of energies).” Ibid., 121. Whereas the doctrine of the energies has Platonic roots, the identity principle has Aristotelian roots as Aristotle identified *ousia* and *energeia*. Thus, for Aristotle there is nothing “beyond the essence” or superessential about God. Accordingly, when Calvin speaks about believers participating in the qualities or properties of the essence of God, they are in actual fact participating in the essence of God.

⁵⁷ I will be summarizing Daniélou’s book *God and the Ways of Knowing*, trans. Walter Roberts (New York: Meridian Books, 1957). For more on Catholic spirituality, see David Tracy, “Recent Catholic Spirituality: Unity amid Diversity” in Louis Dupré and Daon E. Saliers (eds.), *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern in World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 143-173. This essay deals with John Henry Cardinal Newman, Baron Friedrich von Hügel, Karl Rahner, Bernard Lonergan, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Edith Stein, Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day, Charles de Foucauld and Mother Teresa.

to know this God. It serves as an excellent guide into his understanding of deification or theosis by being drawn into the Trinitarian life and participating in this life through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

After having dealt with knowing God through his action in the world (the God of the religions) and knowing God through philosophy (the God of the philosophers), Daniélou deals with the God of the faith. The God of the faith is the God who manifests Himself not only in his action in the world, but in history of salvation, culminating in Jesus Christ, revealed in the Scriptures, and guarded and disclosed in the Church.⁵⁸ In this way, the God of the faith differs from the God of religion who is only known through his action in the world and the God of the philosophers who is really not much more than a transcendent principle. The God of the faith is a covenant God who unilaterally takes the initiative and irrevocably commits Himself to his people by way of a covenant (Gen. 15).⁵⁹ He is known through faith, i.e., lovingly putting one's full weight on Him and his revelation.⁶⁰

When a person places her faith in this covenant God, she discovers that He is a God of truth, justice, love and holiness. God is a God of truth (*emet*) because his revelation is firm and faithful.⁶¹ God is a God of justice (*tsedeq*) because He keeps his commitments and shows Himself to be faithful.⁶² God is a God of love (*chesed*) because He unilaterally helps those He is committed to and is protective of his relationship with them.⁶³ God is holy (*qodesh*) because He is the transcendent other who inspires a thirst in people to be cleansed and united with Him.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Daniélou, *God and the Ways of Knowing*, 93-100.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 102-05.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 107-09.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 106-11.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 111-18.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 118-24.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 124-38.

In Jesus, God makes himself known as a God who eternally exists in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit who form the structure of being and the essence of Christianity. According to Daniélou, the essence of Christianity is “the appeal addressed to man by the Father, inviting him to share in the life of the Son through the gift of the Spirit.”⁶⁵ Thus, he writes:

The first word that a child hears the Church speak over him is: ‘I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ He is thrown, as a creature of flesh and blood, into the abyss of Trinitarian life, to which all life and all eternity will have no other object than to accustom him. It is in the gift that It makes of Its own life that the Trinity at the same time communicates and reveals Itself, estranging man from his own ways and views in order to transfer him into Itself.⁶⁶

Elsewhere, Daniélou articulates it this way:

This is the heart and core of the irreducible originality of Christianity, that the Son of God came among us to reveal these two intimately related truths: that there is within God himself a mysterious living love, call the Trinity of Persons; and that in and through the Son we men are called to share this life of love. The mystery of the Holy Trinity, known to us through the Word made flesh, and the mystery of the deification of man in him—that is the whole of our religion, summed up in one person, the person of Jesus Christ, God made man, in whom is everything we need to know.⁶⁷

This Trinitarian God makes Himself known to his people by way of his covenantal relationship with them. Because this covenant is an intimate relationship between God and his people, it foreshadows the incarnation.⁶⁸ The Father accomplishes his plans of creation, redemption and sanctification through the Word and the Spirit.⁶⁹ The way the Father, Son and Holy Spirit work in time is a reflection of their intra-trinitarian relationship.⁷⁰ The Father

⁶⁵ Ibid., 140.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 140-41.

⁶⁷ Ibid., *The Lord of History: Reflections on the Inner Meaning of History*, trans. Nigel Abercrombie (New York: Meridian Books, 1968), 118.

⁶⁸ Ibid., *God and the Ways of Knowing*, 146.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 145-51.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 151.

is the eternal *arche* or origin of the Trinity.⁷¹ The Son is the creative, illuminative Word and wisdom, eternally begotten by the Father and living in the Father, through whom all things are created and held together.⁷² The Spirit is the personal, irresistible power proceeding from the Father and the Son giving life to God's creation and grace to his people.⁷³ He divinizes the soul, bringing it into the sphere of the Trinity. As Daniélou writes, "In this new activity, which is that of the creation of the cosmos of grace, the Holy Spirit is revealed with greater clarity. First, it appears as divine; it is the *Holy Spirit*, i.e., its function is, strictly speaking, the divinization of the soul; it brings us into the sphere of God, and that is the whole purpose of Christianity."⁷⁴ These three Persons eternally coexist and co-inhere in one another.⁷⁵

Our knowledge of the Trinity is dependent upon the Scriptures and the Tradition of the Church. This tradition of the Church is an infallible tradition that does nothing but transmit the faith in the Trinity.⁷⁶ Thus, Scripture and Tradition give access to God's revelation.⁷⁷ Building on Scripture and Tradition, theology seeks to understand the mystery of the trinitarian God in faith without violating this mystery.⁷⁸ The Holy Spirit creates a new intellect in the theologian of faith that gradually grows more luminous as it shares in the knowledge that God has of Himself. As Daniélou writes:

This new intellect is at first rudimentary, but, as it comes into play, it gradually grows more luminous; it shares in the knowledge which God has of Himself. The intellect is already a rough sketch of the vision; only the veils of the flesh still blur the outlines. Developing through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, through the gift of science and the gift of understanding, the new intellect

⁷¹ Ibid., 151-52.

⁷² Ibid., 153-61.

⁷³ Ibid., 161-66.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 166-67.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 167-71.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 186-91.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 191.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 191-200.

makes the mind familiar with divine realities, and enables it to grasp them in all their fullness and to assess the evidence which they present.⁷⁹

This is the divining faith the church fathers spoke of that contemplates God and leads to the love of God.⁸⁰ This God is the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁸¹

This God not only reveals Himself through the evidence of his works, which theology reflects upon, He also reveals Himself directly to the soul and is felt in the soul.⁸² In doing so, the Trinity raises the soul above itself and divinizes it. As Daniélou writes:

However, the theologians explain to us what constitutes the experience of the saints. They tell us that the Trinity, by touching the soul with Its grace, raises her above herself and divinizes her. This makes her share in the love with which God loves Himself, and in the knowledge with which He knows Himself. Spiritual man is endowed with new powers and new senses, which accustom him to this divine darkness, inaccessible to carnal man, and enable him to penetrate deeply into it.⁸³

Consequently, the soul shares in the trinitarian love life, enabling it to perceive the things of God (1 Cor. 2:9-10). This is why God created humankind. This is what Irenaeus meant when he wrote, “The glory of God is living man, and the life of man is the vision of God.” Since the Trinity dwells in the Church and baptism incorporates a person into the Church, the

⁷⁹ Ibid., 200. When Daniélou speaks about grasping divine realities “in their fullness,” I find his language too bold.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 200-02.

⁸¹ Ibid., 203-14.

⁸² Ibid., 213, 363. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “In Sacred Scripture the term ‘soul’ often refers to human life or the entire human person. But ‘soul’ also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God’s image: ‘soul’ signifies the spiritual principle in man.” See “Catechism of the Catholic Church,” accessed at <http://overkott.dyndns.org/ccs-search.htm>. This understanding of the soul appears to be consistent in the authors under review in this chapter.

⁸³ Daniélou, *God and the Ways of Knowing*, 215-16. Murphy writes, “In Roman Catholic theology, theosis has not typically been thought of as either primarily eschatological nor as a universal phenomenon applicable to all Christians. Rather, it is entirely a *hic et nunc* phenomenon capable of realization among a select few people of saintly stature.” He adds, “Further, unlike some other versions of theosis, it is not thought of as a state of sinless perfection or complete sanctification. Rather [citing *The Catholic Encyclopedia* under ‘mysticism’] it is ‘a more perfect knowledge of God possible in this life, beyond the attainments of reason even enlightened by faith, through which the soul contemplates directly the mysteries of Divine light. The contemplation of the present life is possible only to a few privileged souls, through a very special grace of God: it is the *theosis mystike enosis* [enosis = union].” cf. George M. Sauvage, “Mysticism,” in K. Knight (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2002, at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10663b.htm>.

Trinity enters the soul at baptism (Jn. 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17; cf. 4:6).⁸⁴ Thus, God takes the initiative and makes the baptized soul the temple of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵ When He does, the Son imparts the divine energy of his human nature to the soul through the ministry of the Church.⁸⁶ Thus, as God's first creation arose from the primordial waters through the work of the Spirit, so God's new creation arises from the baptismal waters through the Spirit.⁸⁷

This life of the Trinity granted at baptism gives a person access to union with God, the mystery of divine adoption.⁸⁸ This mystery of adoption makes a person a brother of Christ who conforms to Christ and shares in the life of Christ.⁸⁹ Thus, Christ is the pattern and the source of our conformity. As Daniélou writes:

The life of grace is, then, a conformity to Christ. But it is not only a question here of an external imitation, but of a sharing in the very life of Christ. Thus Christ is not only the pattern, the archetype according to which we ought to re-form our soul; He is also the source from which alone the life of grace can be unfolded in us.⁹⁰

Prayer is a way of focusing and purifying the noticing mind and becoming aware of the presence of the Trinity within us. It “consists of making ourselves present to him who is present to us. God is present to us, but we are absent to him. To pray is to become aware of his presence. Presence is much more a matter of being attentive than it is physical proximity;

⁸⁴ Ibid., 217.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 217.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 219.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 222-23.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 225. While the language of Scripture sometimes seems to support the *ex opera operato* view of the sacrament of baptism, for instance, baptism being “the washing of regeneration,” this is sacramental language “where the sign is depicted as if it were the matter itself. We also do that when we say that a bank note is \$10, even though it only seals our entitlement to \$10.” See J. Van Bruggen, *Annotations to the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. A. H. Oosterhoff (Neerlandia: Inheritance Publications, 1991), 180.

⁸⁹ Daniélou, *God and the Ways of Knowing*, 229.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 230.

it is above all a spiritual act.”⁹¹ This spiritual act is a descending into the sanctuary of our souls where God dwells (Jn. 14:23). It involves:

pass[ing] through three regions: the region of distractions, which is easy enough to get beyond; next, the region in which we discover ourselves with all of our good and bad feelings (we generally stop here, because this region is very difficult to pass through); and finally, the depths of ourselves, the region in which the Trinity dwells, and into which we must do our best to descend directly, as a stone falls to the depths of the sea.⁹²

Thus, Christian has mystical knowledge of God to the extent his consciousness, through intellect and love, takes hold of the mystery of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 17:3).⁹³

Excursus five: Daniélou and theosis

Chapter three noted that being embedded with Christ in the life of the Trinity involves deification and leads to deification. The following insights of Daniélou both support and develop this understanding of theosis or deification.

First, Daniélou taught that God’s relationship with his people is an intimate covenant relationship unilaterally initiated by God. This intimate covenant relationship was a foreshadowing of the incarnation when God would visibly dwell among his people in the person of Jesus Christ and unite Himself to them with his humanity. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is a covenantal relationship re-membered, re-embedded and deepened by the incarnation.

⁹¹ Ibid., *Prayer: The Mission of the Church*, trans. David Louis Schindler, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 19

⁹² Ibid., 19-20.

⁹³ Ibid., *God and the Ways of Knowing*, 236-42.

Second, Daniélou taught that the Trinitarian relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the structure of being and the essence of Christianity. Thus, when the Father enters into covenant with his people, He invites them to share in the life of the Son through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This harmonizes with and develops further what was discovered in chapters two and three that being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is sharing in the love the Father has for the Son and the Son has for the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

Third, Daniélou taught that when God's people enter into the life of the Trinity, they are divinized or deified. According to Daniélou, this is the whole purpose of Christianity.⁹⁴ This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit involves becoming a partaker of the divine nature or being deified and leads to deification. Moreover, while Daniélou considers deification to be the whole purpose of Christianity, Calvin considers this to be the greatest possible blessing.

Fourth, Daniélou taught that the three Persons of the Trinity eternally coexist and co-inhere in one another. This implies that when God's people enter into the inner Trinitarian life and are deified, they join in this interpenetrating, inter-trinitarian life also known as *perichoresis*. This harmonizes with what was discovered in chapters two and three that by inviting us into their eternal community of love, the three Persons of the Trinity are inviting us to dance with them so that we allow them to permeate and inhabit the different spheres of life through us as they permeate and inhabit one another.

⁹⁴ While this is the whole purpose of Christianity, it appears that, according to Daniélou, the majority of Christians do not achieve this purpose in this life.

Fifth, Daniélou taught that deification or living in the life of the Trinity is a mystery. This harmonizes with what was discovered in chapters two and three that deification or being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is a mysterious relationship.

Sixth, Daniélou taught that knowledge of the deified or Trinitarian life is dependent upon the Scriptures and the Tradition of the Church. This harmonizes with what was Calvin taught that being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is nurtured in the church because the church is the mother of believers. In fact, participating in the communal life of the Trinity is impossible without the church because this growth and renewal is nurtured in the communion of saints.

Seventh, Daniélou taught that when the Holy Spirit deifies the soul through entry into the Trinitarian life, He divinizes faith and gives a new intellect to those who are divinized so that they enjoy new powers and new senses that perceive the things of God. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that faith is the means through which we embrace the Trinitarian life and remain in this Trinitarian life.⁹⁵

Eighth, Daniélou taught that the mystery of adoption into the Trinitarian family of God makes a person a brother of Christ who conforms to Christ and shares the life of Christ. Thus, Christ is not just the pattern of conformity, but also the source of this conformity. This harmonizes with what was discovered in chapters two and three that deification or being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit involves being in Christ and Christ being in his body and his body conforming to Him as pattern and source.

⁹⁵ *Mutatis mutandis* regarding this only attainable by saints.

Excursus six: the supernatural and theosis

This study noted that Daniélou taught that the Spirit is the personal, irresistible power proceeding from the Father and the Son giving life to God's creation and grace to his people.⁹⁶ He divinizes the soul, bringing it into the sphere of the Trinity. It noted that Daniélou wrote, "In this new activity, which is that of the creation of the cosmos of grace, the Holy Spirit is revealed with greater clarity. First, it appears as divine; it is the *Holy Spirit*, i.e., its function is, strictly speaking, the divinization of the soul; it brings us into the sphere of God, and that is the whole purpose of Christianity."⁹⁷ These three Persons eternally coexist and co-inhere in one another.⁹⁸

While Danielou does not use the word "supernatural" grace here, he does mean supernatural grace. John Culp writes:

The Roman Catholic understanding of the relationship between the supernatural and the natural further develops the doctrine of the supernatural. Roman Catholic theology emphasizes the presence of the supernatural in the natural rather than the distinction between the supernatural and the natural. Emphasizing the presence of the supernatural in the natural retains the importance of God for the created world. Without the supernatural, the natural lacks a goal or purpose for existence. The natural by itself cannot overcome the limits that define its existence and nature.⁹⁹

Culp adds:

In contrast to much modern Protestant thought, the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural occurs in the context of the Holy Spirit's activity in human existence rather than in the context of the nature of God. The supernatural is considered under the rubric of sanctifying grace. This context gives additional evidence that the doctrine addresses the presence of God in human existence rather than the nature of God's existence. God

⁹⁶ Ibid., 161-66.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 166-67.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 167-71.

⁹⁹ John E. Culp, "Supernatural and Sanctification: Comparison of Roman Catholic and Wesleyan Views," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31 2 (1996) at http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrn/31-35/31-2-08.htm

gratuitously grants the supernatural in order to fulfill human, or non-divine, existence.¹⁰⁰

This is an important observation for this study for it shows that God's covenant community achieves its goal or *telos* of glorification through the supernatural presence of God in creation in general and humankind in particular. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapter two that God created humankind with a soul that has "an openness to the world" and an "openness to God." It further harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that creation is the theater of God's glory that embodies his glory. This is possible because God's supernatural grace is present in creation in general and humankind in particular. The observation in this excursus is also important because it shows how God being present in creation with his divine energies is the same as God being present in creation with his supernatural grace. Moreover, it confirms that this supernatural, energetic presence needs to be understood in terms of the Chalcedonian axiom *distinctio sed non separatio*.

D. The Lutheran family: Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483-1546) is known for his monastic life, teaching on justification by faith, his 95 theses, his excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church and his translation of the Bible into German.

According to Luther, Christ is the basis for justifying faith because He really bears the sins of all human beings in his human nature in order to make satisfaction for them with his

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. For more on the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural occurring in the context of the Holy Spirit's activity in human existence and considered under the rubric of sanctifying grace, see the theology of Karl Rahner. Veli-Matti Karkkainen notes that "This line of reasoning connects modern Catholic theology with the theology of the Eastern fathers. The goal of human existence is God. The sanctifying grace in the power of the Spirit makes us finally godlike, 'godded,' which effects union with God. The Holy Spirit as God's free self-communication (Rahner) makes this union possible." Karkkainen, 80.

own blood.¹⁰¹ Thus, Christ becomes a sort of collective person who in his person unites the sins of all people.¹⁰² Yet, because Christ is not only true man, but also true God, uniting the sins of all people in his person brings about an enormous tension in his life. Consequently, Christ's divine nature fights against the sins in his human nature and conquers them.¹⁰³

Through faith, according to Luther, human beings participate in this victory because they participate in the person of Christ who is the victory. Therefore, Luther writes: "To the extent that Christ rules by His grace in the hearts of the faithful, there is no sin or death or

¹⁰¹ I am drawing on the new Finnish interpretation of Martin Luther. My primary source for navigating Luther will be Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*, ed. and intro by Kirsi Sjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). Mannermaa's book is based primarily on Luther's lectures on Galatians in 1535. Because Mannermaa initiated this new Finnish interpretation, this interpretation is also referred to as the Mannermaa School. This school has produced dissertations on the following aspects of Luther's work: on the main principles and perspectives of the new Finnish interpretation, see Juhani Forshberg, *Das Abrahambild in der Theologie Luthers: Pater fidei sanctissimus in Veröffentlichungen des Institut für europäische Geschichte, Bd. 117* (Wiesbaden: Frans Steiner Verlag, 1984); on the theological and philosophical elements that left the idea of participation in Christ, see Risto Saarim, *Gottes Wirken auf uns. Die transzendente Deutung des Gegenwart-Christi-Motivs in der Lutherforschung in Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, Bd. 137* (Wiesbaden: Frans Steiner Verlag, 1989); on the *theosis* motif, see Simo Peura, *Mehr als ein Mensch? Die Vergöttlichung als Thema der Theologie Martin Luthers von 1513 bis 1519 in Veröffentlichungen des Institut für Europäische Geschichte. Bd 152* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1994); on Luther's theology being simultaneously totally a theology of faith and totally a theology of love, see Antii Raunio, *Summe des christlichen Lebens. Die "Goldene Regel" als Gesetz der Liebe in der Theologie Martin Luthers von 1510 bis 1527* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2001); on Luther's use of the concepts "Nichts" and "nihil" in relation to their polar opposite, "being" ("sein," "esse"), see Sammeli Juntunen, *Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther in den Jahren von 1510 bis 1523* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft, 1996); on Luther's doctrine of the Trinity and Pneumatology, see Pekka Kärkkäinen, *Luthers trinitarische Theologie des Heiligen Geistes, in Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, Bd. 208* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2005). An introduction into the new Finnish interpretation of Luther is: Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (eds.), *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). This book contains essays by Tuomo Mannermaa, Simo Peura, Antii Raunio, Sammeli Juntunen and Risto Saarim with responses by Robert Jenson, Carl Braaten, William Lazareth and Dennis Bielfeldt. See also Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Union with God*, 37-66. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to determine the accuracy of the new Finnish interpretation. Legitimate questions have been asked. For instance, "Since the texts do not explicitly recognize divinization as their 'organizing center.' is it not possible that the interpreter's own projection is responsible for finding it there?" And "Do the Finns sometimes interpret Luther's idiomatic expressions too literally? For instance, 'Greta gives herself in love to Hans' would not normally be interpreted as 'Greta gives to Hans her being,' or 'Greta participates in the being of Hans.'" It has been rightfully observed that "the Finns must give more attention to the task of defending their methodological starting point." See Dennis Bielfeldt, "Response to Sammeli Juntunen, 'Luther and Metaphysics' in Jenson and Braaten (eds.), *Union with Christ*, 166. For further bibliographical information on the new Finnish interpretation of Luther, see Risto Saarim's website at <http://www.helsinki.fi/~risaarim/luther.html#alpha>.

¹⁰¹ Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* (1535) in Jaroslav Pelican and Walter A. Hansen (eds.), *Luther's Works*, Vol. 26 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 277.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, LW 26:280.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, LW 26:282.

course. But where Christ is not known, there these things remain. And so all who do not believe lack this blessing and this victory. ‘For this,’ as John says, ‘is our victory, faith’ (1 Jn. 5:4).”¹⁰⁴ Thus faith and Christ essentially or ontologically belong together.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, Christ is not only favour, i.e., the removal of God’s wrath and the forgiveness of sins; He is also gift, i.e., the real presence of Himself in the life of the believer. Luther himself puts the latter this way:

Therefore a Christian, properly defined, is free of all laws and is subject to nothing, internally or externally. But I purposely said, “to the extent that he is a Christian” (not “to the extent that he is a man or a woman”); that is, to the extent that he has his conscience trained, adorned, and enriched by this faith, this great and inestimable treasure, or, as Paul calls it, “this inexpressible gift” (2 Cor. 9:15), which cannot be exalted and praised enough, since it makes men sons and heirs of God. Thus a Christian is greater than the entire world. For in his heart he has this seemingly small gift; yet the smallness of this gift and treasure, which he holds in faith, is greater than heaven and earth, because Christ, who is this gift, is greater.¹⁰⁶

This gift of the real presence of Christ in the life of the believer makes her a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) and the attributes of this nature, such as righteousness, life, light

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., *LW* 26:282.

¹⁰⁵ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 18. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen writes, “The main contribution of the Mannermaa School has been the creation of a new methodological framework for the interpretation of Luther. As such, the main methodological thesis of the Mannermaa School is to criticize the neo-Protestant, neo-Kantian distinction between God’s ‘essence’ and ‘effects,’ which means that we do not have any means of knowing anything about God; we only can know the effects of God in our lives. This so-called ‘transcendental-effect’ orientation, originated by the German philosopher Hermann Lotze in the nineteenth century, has blurred the meaning of the real presence of Christ in Luther research, they claim. This older paradigm has argued that Luther was moving beyond the old scholastic metaphysics with its idea of ‘essence’ toward a more relational view of knowledge. Based on neo-Kantian philosophy, this view believes that theology cannot know anything about the ‘essence’ (ontology) of God, only recognize his ‘effects’ in us. The Mannermaa School argues that this kind of reasoning does not reflect Luther’s ‘realistic’ ontology but rather is a later philosophical construction” See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Union with God*, 38-39. See also Sammeli Juntunen, “Luther and Metaphysics: What Is the Structure of Being according to Luther?” in Jenson and Braaten (eds.), *Union with Christ*, 129-160. Cf. Dennis Bielfeldt, “Response to Sammeli Juntunen, ‘Luther and Metaphysics’ in Jenson and Braaten (eds.), *Union with Christ*, 161-166.

¹⁰⁶ Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, in *LW* 26:134. See also Simo Peura, “Christ as Favor and Gift: The Challenge of Luther’s Understanding of Justification” in Jenson and Braaten (eds.), *Union with Christ*, 42-69; Ibid., “What God Gives Man Receives: Luther on Salvation” in Jenson and Braaten (eds.), *Union with Christ*, 76-95. Cf. Carl E. Braaten, “Response to Simo Peura, ‘Christ as Favor and Gift’ in Jenson and Braaten (eds.), *Union with Christ*, 70-75.

and love.¹⁰⁷ Faith ontologically communicates these divine attributes to her because Christ and faith are essentially or ontologically united.¹⁰⁸

Because faith ontologically unites a person to Christ, Christ gives faith its form or reality and not love inspired by grace as scholastic theology taught because this love essentially remained a human love whereas Christ ontologically unites his own divine attributes to faith.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Christ is not only the object of faith, but also the subject (actuality; *Seinswirklichkeit*). Luther writes:

. . . faith takes hold of Christ and . . . He is the form that adorns and informs faith as color does the wall. . . It takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself. Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is sitting in this darkness as God sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai and in the temple. Therefore our “formal righteousness” [i.e., essential, ontological righteousness] is not a love that informs faith; but it is faith itself, a cloud in our hearts, that is, trust in a thing we cannot see, in Christ, who is present especially when He cannot be seen.¹¹⁰

Thus, faith is not quality that clings to the heart apart from Christ, but Christ is ontologically present in faith itself.¹¹¹ As such, faith ontologically unites us to God in Christ because “it possesses the whole fullness of the essence of God in Christ.”¹¹²

Luther’s exposition of Galatians 2:20 shows just how close a believer’s ontological union with Christ is. Essentially or ontologically the believer and Christ become one person.

As Luther writes:

When he says: “Nevertheless, I live,” this sounds rather personal, as though Paul were speaking of his own person. Therefore he quickly corrects it and says: “Yet not I.” That is, “I do not live in my own person now, but Christ

¹⁰⁷ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 20.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 23-25.

¹¹⁰ Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* in *LW* 26:129-30.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, *LW* 26:356.

¹¹² Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 30.

lives in me.” The person does indeed live, but not in itself or for its own person. But who is this “I” of whom he says: “Yet not I”? It is the one that has the Law and is obliged to do works, the one that is a person separate from Christ. This “I” Paul rejects; for “I,” as a person distinct from Christ, belongs to death and hell. This is why he says: “Not I, but Christ lives in me.” Christ is my “form” [i.e., my ontological reality] which adorns my faith as color or light adorns a wall . . . “Christ,” he says, “is fixed and cemented to me and abides in me. The life that I now live, He lives in me. Indeed, Christ Himself is the life that I now live. In this way, therefore, Christ and I are one.”¹¹³

This ontological presence of Christ drives the terror of the law, sadness of mind, sin, hell away from the believer.¹¹⁴ It also joins a believer to Christ more intimately than a husband to his wife.¹¹⁵ This oneness must not be divided or separated.¹¹⁶

This ontological presence of Christ in the believer in faith makes a person God, not in substance, but in participation (2 Pet. 1:4).¹¹⁷ In faith, the believer participates in God because God is present in faith in all his fullness divinizing the believer. “He fills us,” writes Luther, “in order that everything that He is and everything He can do might be in us in all its fullness, and work powerfully, so that we might be divinized throughout—not having only a small part of God, or merely some parts of Him, but having all His fullness.”¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* in LW 26:167.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., LW 26:167-68.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., LW 26:168-69.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., LW 26:168. The *Formula of Concord* does separate or divide Christ and the believer when it defines justification as the imputation of the forgiveness of sins and the indwelling of Christ in the believer as a separate experience that occurs subsequent to this imputation. Mannerman asks, “This discrepancy between the view of the FC and the position of Luther makes one wonder which view actually represents ‘the Lutheran’ understanding of this doctrine. I would argue that, even though the FC is part of the normative confessional texts accepted by many Lutheran churches, with regard to this *locus* the Lutheran teaching is most fully expressed particularly in the doctrine of justification formulated by Luther himself.” He then adds, “In fact, this argument is based on the interpretation presented in the FC itself. At the end of the FC’s article on justification (Article III), an explicit reference is made to Luther’s commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535). The FC says that this ‘beautiful and splendid exposition’ (i.e., Luther’s commentary) contains the ‘proper explanation’ (*eigentliche Erklärung*) of the righteousness of faith.” Mannerman concludes, “Because the FC itself says that Luther’s *Lectures on Galatians* has the final authority concerning the doctrine of justification, it is possible to present the Lutheran understanding of this issue on the basis of this commentary of Luther.” See Mannerman, *Christ Present in Faith*, 5-6.

¹¹⁷ Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* in LW 26:100, 247.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., *Predigt* (1525) cited by Mannerman, 45.

Consequently, a believer's works are divinized works because Christ informs or becomes incarnate in them.¹¹⁹ Thus, Christ Himself is the subject of a believer's good works.

As Luther writes:

“Therefore,” says Paul, “whatever this life is that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.” That is, the Word I speak physically is not the word of the flesh; it is the Word of the Holy Spirit and of Christ. The vision that enters or leaves my eyes does not come from the flesh; that is, my flesh does not direct it, but the Holy Spirit does. Thus hearing does not come from the flesh, even though it is in the flesh, but it is in and from the Holy Spirit. A Christian speaks nothing but chaste, sober, holy, and divine things—things that pertain to Christ, the glory of God, and the salvation of his neighbor.

Luther continues:

These things do not come from the flesh, nor are they done according to the flesh; nevertheless, they are in the flesh. I cannot teach, preach, write, pray, or give thanks except by these physical instruments, which are required for the performance of these activities. Nevertheless, these activities do not come from the flesh and do not originate there; they are given and revealed divinely from heaven. Thus also I look at a woman with my eyes, yet with a chaste vision and not in desire for her. Such vision does not come from the flesh, even though it is in the flesh; the eyes are the physical instrument of the vision, but the chastity of the vision comes from heaven.¹²⁰

Therefore, living by faith involves allowing Christ to do his work in and through us, i.e., live by faith and love one's neighbour.¹²¹

Because Christians live partly in the flesh and partly in the Spirit and the desires of the flesh fight against the Spirit of Christ, allowing Christ to do his work in and through us

¹¹⁹ Ibid., *Lectures on Galatians* in *LW* 26:266.

¹²⁰ Ibid., *LW* 26:171. Mannermaa believes that the strict distinction between justification and sanctification is not characteristic of Luther's theology. According to him, Andreas Osiander's teaching on justification and divine indwelling is an important background to this strict distinction. See Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 49. About this background Simo Peura writes, “However, the problem of Osiander's doctrine was not actually his claim that justification was based on God's indwelling in a Christian, but the philosophical presuppositions of this claim. Osiander (in opposition to Luther) separated Christ's human nature and divine nature from each other and broke the *unio personalis* in Christ. Therefore Christ's human nature and everything that he did as a human being on the cross had only an instrumental and subsidiary role in redemption as well as in justification.” See Simo Peura, “Christ as Favor and Gift (donum); The Challenge of Luther's Understanding of Justification” in Jenson and Braaten (eds.), *Union with Christ*, 46.

¹²¹ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 54, 63. Cf. Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* in *LW* 27:56. According to Luther, the ultimate norm for loving one's neighbour is his need. In order to discern this need, one should practise the Golden Rule. See Luther in *LW* 27:57-58. Cf. Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 64.

will not be without a struggle. In this conflict, however, the ontological presence of Christ in faith works like a leaven slowly but surely permeating the whole dough of our life.¹²² As

Luther writes:

Thus we have received the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:23), and the leaven hidden in the lump; the whole lump has not yet been leavened, but it is beginning to be leavened. . . . If I look at my flesh, I feel greed, sexual desire, anger, pride, the terror of death, sadness, fear, hate, grumbling, and impatience against God. To the extent that these are present, Christ is absent; or if He is present, He is present weakly. . . . For just as Christ came once physically, according to the time, abrogating the entire Law, abolishing sin, and destroying death and hell, so He comes to us spiritually without interruption and continually smothers and kills these things in us.¹²³

This leavening process will be completed when we receive new bodies on the day of Christ's return.¹²⁴ Thus, even though there is progress in the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit in this life, a believer cannot become sinless in this life.¹²⁵

Because Christ through his Spirit is the subject of a believer's good works, a believer should continue to cry to Him for mercy and help in the midst of the conflict and setbacks.¹²⁶ In fact, the Spirit Himself is continually crying day and night within believers, even though they do not discern this with their senses. Because believers do not hear the Spirit crying in their hearts, they must take hold of the Word of promise (e.g., Gal. 4:6). Thus, Luther writes:

Thus in the Exodus the Lord says to Moses at the Red Sea (14:15): "Why do you cry to Me?" That was the last thing Moses was doing. He was in extreme anguish; therefore he was trembling and at the point of despair. Not faith but unbelief appeared to be ruling in him. . . . How then did he cry? Therefore we must not judge according to the feeling of our heart; we must judge according to the Word of God, which teaches that the Holy Spirit is granted to the afflicted, the terrified, and the despairing in such a way that He encourages

¹²² Mannermaa rightly notes that the image of leaven is also used in the Orthodox teaching of *theosis*, See Ibid., 59.

¹²³ Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* in *LW* 26:350. Luther uses "flesh" here in the sense of his fleshly or old nature as opposed to his spiritual or new nature.

¹²⁴ Ibid., *LW* 26:350-51.

¹²⁵ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 65-67.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 71.

and comforts them, so that they do not succumb in their trials and other evils but conquer them though not without very great fear and effort.¹²⁷

This Word of promise gives birth to a believer like a womb gives birth to a child because through the Word “we receive fire and light, by which we are made new and different, and by which a new judgment, new sensations, and new drives arise in us.”¹²⁸

Luther pictorially depicts this when he writes:

Therefore just as in society a son becomes an heir merely by being born, so here faith alone makes men sons of God, born of the Word, which is the divine womb in which we are conceived, carried, born, reared, etc. By this birth and this patience or passivity which makes us Christians we also become sons and heirs. But being heirs, we are free of death and the devil, and we have righteousness and eternal life. This comes to us in a purely passive way; for we do not do anything, but we let ourselves be made and formed as a new creation through faith in the Word.¹²⁹

Because for Luther the Word functions as womb, the church functions as a mother while the teachers of the church function as fathers.¹³⁰ According to Luther, this is because the means of grace are essential signs that convey the essence of what they represent, namely, the presence of God in Christ. Thus, Christ is both an objective reality outside the believer as well as a subjective reality within the believer.¹³¹ Consequently, the Christ who is essentially or ontologically present in the Word and in faith enables a believer to live in essential or ontological union with God.

¹²⁷ Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* in *LW* 26:383.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, *LW* 26:392.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, *LW* 26:392.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, *LW* 26:441-41; 430.

¹³¹ Mannerman, *Christ Present in Faith*, 83-86.

Excursus seven: Luther and theosis

Chapter three noted that being embedded with Christ in the life of the Trinity involves deification and leads to deification. The following insights of Luther both support and develop this understanding of theosis or deification.

First, Luther taught that through faith believers participate in Jesus' victory over sin and the devil because through faith they participate in the person of Christ who is this victory. Thus, because through faith believers are ontologically connected to Christ in this way, Christ is not only favour, i.e., the removal of God's wrath and the forgiveness of sins, but also gift, i.e., the real presence of Himself in the life of the believer. This ontological presence of Christ in the believer involves participation in the divine nature or being deified. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapter two and three that through faith we are ontologically embedded into Christ, partake of the divine nature and are deified.

Second, Luther taught that Christ is the subject of faith giving it its form and reality through the Holy Spirit, adorning and informing it as color does a wall. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapter two and three that through faith Christ comes to live in our souls and becomes our inner teacher.

Third, Luther taught that because Christ is the subject of faith, believers' works are divinized works because Christ becomes incarnate in them. Moreover, he taught that this does not mean that believers become sinless in this life. On the contrary, there is a constant struggle between the flesh and the Spirit in a believer's life. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that being embedded with Christ in the Father through the Spirit is a mysterious relationship that transcends human

understanding. Moreover, it harmonizes with what Calvin taught that the Chalcedonian axiom of *distinction sed non separatio* is the epistemological secret to experiencing the mystery of being ontologically embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

Excursus eight: faith and theosis

Chapter two noted that receiving God's Father-Son love into our soul through keeping our "noticer" on Jesus and remaining embedded in Him through faith involves receiving knowledge (*epignosis*) of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, Peter writes, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us by his very great promises (*epangelmata*), so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (2 Pet. 1:3-4). Consequently, receiving Jesus into our soul appears to find its entry point in the knowledge a person has of Him in his mind. This knowledge of Jesus through faith, in turn, is the human avenue that leads to becoming a partaker of God's divine nature.

Chapter three noted that according to Calvin, faith is a "firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit."¹³² Yet, "the Holy Spirit does not first of all bestow the capacity of faith; rather, he bestows this capacity even as he 'inserts' (*insero*) the believer in

¹³² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. John T. McNeill (ed.), trans. Ford Lewis Battles, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), III:2, 7:551.

the new man.”¹³³ Consequently, “the Spirit’s illumination of the mind is always a consequence of man’s being incorporated into the Word; knowledge of the promise is a predicate of participating in the true Humanity.”¹³⁴ In other words, “faith yields *unio mystica* as an immediate result, and conversely, faith always remains dependent on *unio mystica*.”¹³⁵

Chapter three also noted that this union of Christ that leads to faith and faith that leads to union with Christ is a firm knowledge that “possesses the whole soul, and finds a seat and resting place in the inmost affection of the heart.” It “enter[s] our heart and pass[es] into our daily living, and so transform[s] us into itself that it may not be unfruitful for us.” This faith as knowledge does not contrast faith with knowledge, but *is* knowledge. According to Alvin Plantinga, this is true in at least two ways. First, faith is knowledge of its object, i.e., the stunning significance of God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Second, faith is an extraordinary cognitive process or belief producing mechanism involving the direct action of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁶ Moreover, chapter three noted that for Calvin, faith is not only a new way of knowing, but also a new way of seeing.

This chapter noted that Luther taught that because through faith Christ and the believer are ontologically connected, Christ is the subject of faith giving it its form and reality, adorning and informing it as color does a wall.

This observation is important for this study because it reaffirms that faith is the human means through which the Holy Spirit re-members us to Christ and re-embeds us into the Father. Moreover, faith is the human means through which the Holy Spirit re-embeds the

¹³³ Victor A. Shepherd, *The Nature and Function of Faith in the Theology of John Calvin* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1983), 20.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹³⁵ S. P. Dee, [no title] cited by Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard in Columbia Series of Reformed Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 85.

¹³⁶ Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 256.

Father into us by re-membering us to Christ. This faith has its anthropological locus in the mind (*nous*). This confirms that it is through the use of our noticing mind or “noticer” that we partake of the divine nature and experience theosis.

D. The Methodist-Holiness families: John Wesley¹³⁷

John Wesley (1703-1791) was one of the leaders of the Methodist movement. Theologically, Wesley was deeply influenced by writers in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition. In his 1756 "Address to Clergy," he commends the Church Fathers, "chiefly those who wrote before the Council of Nicea," because they were "the most authentic commentators on Scripture, ...nearest the fountain, and eminently endued with that Spirit by whom all Scripture was given." Among the ante-Nicene theologians he commends Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement and Origen. He also insists that his beloved authors have "some acquaintance" with such post-Nicene writers as Chrysostom, Basil, Jerome, Augustine "and above all, the man of a broken heart, Ephraem Syrus." In other references to his favorite authors, Wesley added "Makarios the Egyptian."¹³⁸ This Eastern Orthodox influence is noticeable especially in

¹³⁷ For this section, I am indebted to Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology for Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998). Since many in the Holiness family trace their roots to John Wesley, the Methodist and Holiness family are taken together.

¹³⁸ John Wesley, "Address to Clergy," in Thomas Jackson (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986), 10:484-492; Cf. Michael J. Christenson, "Theosis and Sanctification: John Wesley's Reformulation of a Patristic Doctrine" in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 31, no. 2 at http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojml/31-35/31-2-4.htm. About Wesley's use of these sources, Christenson observes, "The issue of Patristic influences, however, is not simply a matter of Wesley appreciating and importing or at least paralleling theological concepts from the 2nd to the 5th centuries Orthodox East and applying them in the 18th century Protestant West. As Ted Campbell documents in his *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, Wesley's use of Patristic sources was "programmatically"—by which he means that Wesley revised and edited his sources rather than preserving their original meaning, and did so with a pastoral motivation and agenda of church reform. Wesley was not an historian but a practical theologian whose mission was to reform a nation. His particular "vision" of Christian antiquity, more than the historical accuracy of his conceptualization, formed his sense of the Tradition. Thus, Wesley's 'programmatically' (pastoral and polemical) use of Patristic sources can be distinguished from what his sources historically meant or taught (Campbell, 20). I suggest that Wesleyan scholars today accept Campbell's historical critique and follow Outler's theological lead by reading Wesley *with his sources*, and not simply reading back into his ancient sources Wesley's distinctive 18th-century vision of perfection or programmatic agenda for reform." Ibid. See also A. M. Allichin, "The Epworth-Canterbury-Constantinople Axis" in *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1991), 35 at

Wesley doctrine of entire salvation or perfection. In order to see how Wesley arrives at this doctrine, we have to begin with his doctrine of original sin.

In his sermon on original sin, Wesley writes, “Ye know that the great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God.”¹³⁹ Thus, Wesley considers the renewal of the image of God to be the heart of Christianity.¹⁴⁰ Influenced by the Greek and Syrian Fathers, Wesley compares human beings to a mirror who receive the grace of God in their own lives and then reflect this grace to others and to God’s creation.¹⁴¹ Consequently, image of God does not refer to some innate qualities human beings have, but to their calling or vocation to transmit the grace and love they receive from God.¹⁴² According to Wesley, human beings image God as natural image, political image and moral image.¹⁴³

This natural image consists of the gifts of understanding (or reason), will (or volition) and freedom (or liberty) through which human beings are capable of entering into a conscious relationship with God. Thus, Wesley writes:

[A human being] is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understanding, but a spirit like his Creator; a being endued not only with sense and understanding but also with a will exerting itself in various affections. To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty, a power or

http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/26-30/26-2.htm; Steve McCormick “Theosis in Chrysostom and Wesley: An Eastern Paradigm on Faith and Love” in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 26, no. 1 (Spring 1991) at http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/26-30/26-3.htm; Troy W. Martin, “John Wesley’s Exegetical Orientation: East or West?” in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 26, no. 1 (Spring 1991) at http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/26-30/26-4.htm; David Bundy, “Christian Virtue: John Wesley and the Alexandrian Tradition” in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 26, no. 1 at http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/26-30/26-5.htm; Neil D. Anderson, *A Definitive Study of Evidence Concerning John Wesley’s Appropriation of the Thought of Clement of Alexandria* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004); Randy Maddox “John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy: Influences, Convergences and Divergences” in *Asbury Theological Journal* 45, no. 2 (1990), 29-53; S.T. Kimbrough, Jr. (ed.), *Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002).

¹³⁹ John Wesley, Sermon 44, “Original Sin,” 3.5 in *Works*, 6:64.

¹⁴⁰ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 8.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴² Runyon, *The New Creation*, 13-14.

¹⁴³ Wesley, Sermon 45, “The New Birth,” 1.1 in *Works* 6:66.

directing, his own affections and actions, a capacity of determining himself, of choosing good over evil.¹⁴⁴

The political image consists of representing God as his stewards or vice-regents who take good care of the creation God has entrusted to their care (cf. Ps. 8). The moral image consists in being open to God's love and life, receiving this love and life and communicating this love and life to others. Wesley compares this to "spiritual respiration." Thus, he writes:

God's breathing into the soul, and the soul's breathing back what it first receives from God; a continual action of God upon the soul, the re-action of the soul upon God; an unceasing presence of God, the loving, pardoning God, manifested to the heart, and perceived by faith; and an unceasing return of love, praise, and prayer, offering up all the thoughts of our hearts, all the words of our tongues, all the works of our hands, all our body, soul, and spirit, to be an holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God in Christ Jesus.¹⁴⁵

After the fall into sin, humankind retained the natural image and political image, albeit in distorted forms. The moral image, however, it lost. All three of these functions can only be properly restored through the transforming grace of God.¹⁴⁶

In his sermon on God's love for fallen humanity, Wesley defines grace as God's love for humanity in Christ Jesus. This love is the "the chief ground of [our response in] love, . . . [as] is plainly declared by the Apostle: 'We love him, because he first loved us.'"¹⁴⁷ It is this love that enables humankind to share in God's nature and be renewed in his image.¹⁴⁸

Because love cannot be forced, God's love does not violate human freedom, but assists

¹⁴⁴ Wesley, Sermon 57, "On the Fall of Man," 1 in *Works* 6:215. Runyon stresses that these are not innate capacities, but gifts enabling human beings to carry out their calling. See Runyon, *The New Creation*, 16.

¹⁴⁵ Wesley, Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God," 3.2 in *Works* 5:232-33.

¹⁴⁶ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 19-25. For an in-depth study on Wesley's understanding of grace, see Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology of Grace* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994).

¹⁴⁷ Wesley, Sermon 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," 1.4 in *Works* 6:234.

¹⁴⁸ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 26.

human beings in exercising their freedom in receiving the love of God and being a conduit for this love to others.¹⁴⁹

God's grace or love comes before (*pre-venio*) our being aware of it, awakening us to our true condition. This is necessary because humankind is dead in their trespasses and sins.

Thus, Wesley writes:

Seeing all men are by nature not only sick, but 'dead in trespasses, and sins,' it is not possible for them to do anything well till God raises them from the dead. It was impossible for Lazarus to 'come forth' till the Lord had given him life. And it is equally impossible for us to 'come' out of our sins, yea, or to make the least motion toward it, till he who hath all power in heaven and earth calls our dead souls into life.¹⁵⁰

This prevenient grace, universally offered and working through a person's conscience, awakens the spiritual senses so that a person can cooperate with it.¹⁵¹ When one cooperates in faith with prevenient grace, this grace becomes justifying grace in that it pardons a sinner and restores a person to the relationship for which he was created. At the same time, this justifying grace regenerates a person. According to Wesley, this justifying grace and regenerating grace are two aspects of one event, "in point of time inseparable from each other."¹⁵² Thus, he writes:

As soon as ever the grace of God in the former sense, his pardoning love, is manifested to our soul, the grace of God in the latter sense, the power of his Spirit, takes place therein. And now we can perform through God what to man was impossible . . . We can do all things in the light and power of that love, through Christ which strengtheneth us . . . I rejoice because the sense of God's love to me hath by the same Spirit wrought in me to love him, and to love for his sake every child of man, every soul that he hath made . . . I rejoice because I both see and feel, through the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that all my

¹⁴⁹ Wesley, Sermon 120, "On the Wedding Garment," 19 in *Works* 7:317. See also Runyon, *The New Creation*, 27. Runyon mistakenly lists this sermon as sermon 127.

¹⁵⁰ Wesley, Sermon 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," 3.3 in *Works* 6:512-13.

¹⁵¹ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 29-42. For a critical evaluation of the doctrine of prevenient grace in Wesleyan theology, see Thomas R. Schreiner, "Does Scripture Teach Prevenient Grace in the Wesleyan Sense?" in Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (eds.), *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge and Grace* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 229-246.

¹⁵² Wesley, Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God," 2 in *Works*, 5:223.

works are wrought in him, yea, and that it is he who worketh all my works in me.¹⁵³

This regenerating grace begins the process of the renewing of the image of God. It does so by continuing the renewal of the spiritual senses begun by God's prevenient grace. These spiritual senses (e.g., tasting, Ps. 34:8; seeing, Ps. 119:18; hearing, Mt. 13:15-16; touching, 1 Jn. 1:1) record impressions made upon them through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, enabling a Christian to consciously participate in the divine reality in which he lives, moves and has his being. Thus, Wesley writes:

"The eyes of his understanding" are now open, and he "seeth him that is invisible." . . . He clearly perceives both the pardoning love of God and all his "exceeding great and precious promises." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness has shined" and doth shine "in his heart, to enlighten him with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." All the darkness is now passed away, and he abides in the light of God's countenance. His ears are now opened, and the voice of God no longer calls in vain. He hears and obeys the heavenly calling: he "knows the voice of his shepherd." All his spiritual senses being now awakened, . . . he now knows what the peace of God is; what is joy in the Holy Ghost; what is the love of God which is shed abroad in the hearts of them that believe through Christ Jesus.¹⁵⁴

Consequently, justification and regeneration are also an epistemological event that involves a new way of knowing.¹⁵⁵ This new way of knowing enables a Christian to consciously receive and participate in the divine nature and reflect this nature to others. This is the theosis or divinization the Eastern Fathers wrote about.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Wesley, Sermon 12, "The Witness of Our Own Spirit," 15-16 in *Works*, 5:141-42.

¹⁵⁴ Wesley, Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God," 1.9-10 in *Works* 5:226-27. Runyon points out that Wesley "adapted John Locke's method of empiricism to explain how knowledge of spiritual reality is possible." And, "The typical nineteenth-century perspective, where the subject is the agent of the experience, is reversed in Wesley. In spiritual experience, the experience produces us. *Knowing transforms the knower.*" Runyon, *The New Creation*, 72, 78.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 80-81. Runyon rightly observes: "'Divinization' or 'deification' (*theosis*) should not be understood as becoming a god, but becoming more fully human, that is, becoming what God created humanity to be, the image *reflecting* God as that creature whose spiritual senses are enabled to participate in, to be a partner, and to share in (*koinonia*) the divine life." *Ibid.*, 81.

Whereas regeneration begins the process of the renewing of the image of God, sanctification is the process of perfecting the image of God and enlarging the new birth into every aspect of life.¹⁵⁷ Thus, Wesley did not consider justification as an end in itself, but as a means to the restoration of the image of God. In this work of restoration, sanctification has a negative dimension of the breath of God cleansing the soul of everything inconsistent with it and a positive dimension of learning to perfectly love God and others.¹⁵⁸ The goal of the Christian life was entire salvation that Wesley believed was to begin in this life, not the next. This entire salvation Wesley sometimes referred to as the receiving of a second blessing of grace that would remove the evil root of sin. Thus, he writes, “. . . it shall please our Lord to speak to our hearts again, to ‘speak a second time, ‘Be clean.’” And then only ‘the leprosy is cleansed.’ Then only the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed, and inbred sin subsists no more.”¹⁵⁹ More often, he would refer to entire sanctification as such continuing increase in love that there would be no room left for sin in the human heart.¹⁶⁰ Wesley himself, however, never professed to be entirely sanctified.¹⁶¹

For the sake of mutual edification and the leavening of society, the life of sanctification is to be lived out not in isolation, but in community.¹⁶² Wesley strongly believed that the Christian faith was not a solitary, but a social religion. Thus, he writes:

Directly opposite to this [i.e, solitary religion] is the gospel of Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found there. ‘Holy solitaries’ is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of

¹⁵⁷ Sanctification was often referred to as Christian perfection in Wesley’s days. See Runyon, *The New Creation*, 82.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 82-91. Runyon rightly observes: “Christian perfection is not to be understood as being perfect ‘in our selves,’ therefore, but in the relationship for which we were created and to which we can be restored.” *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁵⁹ Wesley, Sermon 14, “The Repentance of Believers,” 1.20 in *Works*, 5:165.

¹⁶⁰ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 99.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 102-07.

no religion but social, no holiness but social holiness. 'Faith working by love' is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.¹⁶³

Consequently, Wesley also provided the organizational infrastructure for this social religion by organizing societies, classes and bands.¹⁶⁴ Since knowledge of God is found through the physical and spiritual senses, the Lord's Supper was deeply appreciated as a means through which the Holy Spirit communicated the presence of Christ. In fact, Wesley considered the Lord's Supper to be a converting ordinance because it fostered the chief end of religion, the renewal of the image of God, so well.¹⁶⁵ The Holy Spirit likewise laid a foundation of grace through the sacrament of infant baptism to which every baptized person was answerable by becoming a co-participant in the ongoing work of renewal in his or her life.¹⁶⁶

For Wesley, in addition to orthodoxy (right doctrine) and orthopraxy (right practice), Christians needed to cultivate orthopathy (right feelings, affections, experience) through which they consciously participate in the transforming grace or energy of God and have an encounter with God. This is because the grace of God is perceptible. Thus, Wesley writes:

. . . till a man "receives the Holy Ghost" he is without God in the world; . . . he cannot know the things of God unless God reveal them unto him by his Spirit . . . "The natural man discerneth not things of the Spirit of God," so that we never can discern them until "God reveals them to us by his Spirit." "Reveals." that is, unveils, uncovers; gives us to know what we did not know before. Have we love? It is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." He inspires, breathes, infuses into our soul, what of ourselves we could not have. Does our spirit rejoice in God our Savior? It is "joy in (or by) the Holy Ghost." Have we true inward peace? It is "the peace of God" wrought in us by the same Spirit. Faith, peace, joy, love, are all his fruits. And as we are figuratively said to see the light of faith, so by a like figure of speech we are said to feel this peace and joy and love; that is, we have an inward experience of them, which we cannot find any fitter word to express.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Wesley, Preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739) in *Works* 14:321.

¹⁶⁴ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 114-128.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 128-140.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 140-145.

¹⁶⁷ Wesley, "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," Part I, V.27-28 in *Works* 8:106.

Feeling, for Wesley, is being inwardly conscious of impressions made upon the spiritual senses through sources outside oneself, such as words, actions and gestures. The mind tries to interpret these impressions by reflecting upon them in the light of scriptural norms and the tradition of the church.¹⁶⁸ Because a human being is a psychosomatic unity, mind and body work together. In fact, “An embodied spirit cannot form one thought but by the mediation of its bodily organs. For thinking is not, as many suppose, an act of a pure spirit, but the act of a spirit connected with a body, and playing upon a set of material keys.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, experience has sacramental significance for Wesley. This sacramental significance can be distorted either by absolutizing it or by attaching no value to it at all.¹⁷⁰ Experience is right (*ortho*), however, when it has its source in God, is transforming, is social, rational, sacramental and teleological.¹⁷¹ This experience is “important not just subjectively and personally but objectively, because it puts us in touch with the new order of which it is a proleptic sign. In orthopathic faith our experience is incorporated into the unfolding history of salvation and we are given a goal and direction that includes both personal renewal and a participation in the firstfruits of the Kingdom.”¹⁷²

Excursus nine: Wesley and theosis

Chapter three noted that being embedded with Christ in the life of the Trinity involves deification and leads to deification. The following insights of Wesley both support and develop this understanding of theosis or deification.

¹⁶⁸ On the Wesleyan quadrilateral, see Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience* (Grand Rapids: F. Asbury Press, 1990).

¹⁶⁹ Wesley, Sermon 57, “On the Fall of Man,” 2.2 in *Works* 6:218.

¹⁷⁰ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 146-160.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 160-167.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 167.

First, Wesley taught that the renewal of the image of God is the heart of Christianity. Moreover, he taught that a human being is like a mirror that receives the grace of God in one's own life and then reflects this grace to others and to God. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that the goal of God entering into covenant with his people is that, as his image, they would be his image by embodying his divine nature to creation.

Second, Wesley taught that the moral function of the image of God consists in being open to receiving God's love and life and communicating it to others. He compared this to "spiritual respiration" where God breathes into the soul and the soul freely breathes back what it has first received from God. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is an intimate covenantal relationship in which a believer receives the very life and breath of God into his soul.

Third, Wesley taught that because human beings are dead in its trespasses and sins, God's grace comes before (*pre-venio*) their being aware of it, awakening them to their true condition. Moreover, this prevenient grace is universally offered, awakening a person's spiritual senses, enabling her to cooperate with this grace in faith so that she can consciously participate in the divine reality in which she lives, moves and has her being. According to Wesley, this is the *theosis* or divinization the Eastern Fathers wrote about. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapter two and three being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit involves being a partaker of the divine nature or being deified.

Fourth, Wesley taught that in addition to orthodoxy (right doctrine) and orthopraxy (right practice), Christians need to cultivate orthopathy (right feelings, affections, experience) through which they consciously participate in the transforming deifying grace or energy of God and have an encounter with God. They should do this because human beings are psychosomatic unities and the grace of God is a perceptible, proleptic, sign of the new order. In this way, experience has sacramental significance confirming that believers participate with the Trinity in the unfolding history of salvation. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that through faith we cooperate with God, enabling Him to do his work in and through us.¹⁷³ Moreover, it harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in these chapters that cooperating with the Trinity through faith involves being interpenetrated by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and moving or dancing with them as they dance with us. This is the essence of the life of deification or theosis.

Fifth, Wesley taught that whereas regeneration begins the process of the renewing of the image of God, sanctification is the process of perfecting the image of God and enlarging the new birth into every aspect of life. Wesley strongly believed that Christianity was a social religion. This harmonizes and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that living the deified life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is not lived in isolation, but in community and affects all areas of life.

¹⁷³ *Mutatis mutandis* with regard to cooperating with God.

Excursus ten: the will and theosis

According to Wesley, Christians need to cultivate orthopathy (right feelings, affections, experience) through which they consciously participate in the transforming deifying grace or energy of God and have an encounter with God. Theologically, he supports this assertion with his understanding that the grace of God is perceptible. Anthropologically, he supports this assertion with his understanding that human beings are psychosomatic entities. Wesley is right with both assertions.

Chapter two noted that the affections are closely related to the will. This chapter noted that the will is “the mind choosing” and the mind always chooses according to its desires. Thus, the will is the mind acting upon the desires. Chapter two further noted that because the will is the mind acting upon the desires, it logically follows that the will is never undetermined, uncaused or free for desires are never undetermined, uncaused or free.

Chapter three noted that even though the will is always determined and caused, this does not mean that the will is passive. On the contrary, the will is inherently active. Thus, God’s monergistic regeneration does not activate the will, but redirects it. It sovereignly prepares the will to will what He also wills. In this way, while initial regeneration is monergistic, continued regeneration is synergistic, i.e., regenerated members of God’s covenant community intentionally will what God also wills and *in this sense* so cooperate as members of the new movement that is rolling towards the new heaven and new earth where all things will be made right and where Christ is all in all.

This observation is important for this study because it shows that theosis is intentionally acquired through the use of the will that has been liberated and redirected by the monergistic regenerating work of the Spirit of God and intentionally cooperates with this

energy of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Paul can say, “To this end, I labour, struggling with all his energy (*energeian*) which so powerfully works within me” (Col. 1:29). Likewise, he can exhort the Philippians to “to continue to work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is energizing (*energon*) in [them] both to will and to act (*energein*) according to his good purpose” (Phil. 2:12-13).

Thus, I cannot agree with the Orthodox understanding of synergistic cooperation with God. When I corresponded about this with Ben Anderson, unofficial teacher of Orthodox theology, he wrote:

Only through the action of grace (God's uncreated energies), can man encounter God, know God, have communion with God, and ultimately, union with God. This union is NEVER a union with the essence of God, but only through and in His grace/uncreated energies.

St. Basil the Great and other Fathers used analogies like this: Take a sword. It is cold steel. It has no properties of fire in and of itself. But put that sword in a fire and it begins to take on the properties of the fire. It begins to heat up, eventually getting hot, glowing red, etc. The fire interpenetrates the sword and the sword, in effect, becomes flame. Yet it remains a steel sword. Yet it also has become something else - a flaming sword.

It is the same way with God's grace. We, in our humanity, have no capacity for the divine in and of ourselves, but only "potential" for it (since we are created in God's image) if we are immersed within the deifying grace of God.

Anderson continued:

The synergistic part of it comes in at this point, though. God never violates our free will. There can be no love without freedom, and so there must be free cooperation with God. He desires no robots, but rather children who love Him and want to be like Him.

As we cooperate with God, obey his commandments, and do what is necessary to mortify our self-love and learn to love the Lord our God and our neighbors as we should, we open our hearts more and more to God's grace. He never barges into our hearts and lives, but says "Behold, I stand

at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and have fellowship with him and he with Me." (Rev. 3:20).

Anderson concluded:

Our part is to open the door of our hearts through obedience, self-denial, fasting, prayer, receiving the Eucharist, alms giving, love for our neighbor, etc., and ask Christ to replace the old self love with His very presence within us. As we do this more and more, we are, in effect, opening the door wider for Him to enter in. Our fellowship and union with Him deepens, and we are changed, transformed, and transfigured into His likeness. We are deified.

We are the sword. He is the fire. Without the fire we are cold, dead steel. By immersing ourselves in the fire of God, we become, by grace (through His uncreated energies), what He is by nature.¹⁷⁴

Murphy—in describing Pinnock’s free will position—describes this kind of synergistic regeneration as follows.

. . . when relational love is located anthropologically, God’s love itself becomes metaphysically immobile and ‘aloof’ *until it is drawn upon by the human agent*. That is, God’s love does not ‘move’ unless it is first given requisite permission by the recipient. God, then, become like a stationary ‘love bank’ from which human beings make autonomous withdrawal as they are so moved by the vacillations of their will. Thus, it is not that ‘we love because he first loved us’ (1 John 4:19), but that we marshal love in ourselves *first* in order that God might love us in proportion to our own autonomous initiative. God does not inspire His own love into human hearts monergistically such that love for Him is the natural and inevitable fruit . . . Rather, God *responds* to human agents as *they* seek and love Him. God takes His salvific cues from humans.¹⁷⁵

Over against locating love for God anthropologically, Murphy locates this love for God *theologically* in the ‘Christ in us’ principle. In this way, “Human love for God is established *in God* such that its reality is produced in humans precisely *because* it is God’s own self-love *given and returned* as the faithful are brought into adoptive communion with

¹⁷⁴ Ben Anderson, personal email

¹⁷⁵ Murphy, 199. As Murphy’s biographical sketch of Pinnock’s theological journey shows, it is only a small step from this understanding of the free will to open theism. Cf. Murphy, 24-45.

the Trinity.”¹⁷⁶ Thus, “our love for God is a response to and the effect of [God’s] love for us . . . for love is not ‘created’ by humans, but by God.”¹⁷⁷

E. The Baptist family: Clark Pinnock¹⁷⁸

God is a social trinity eternally living as three Persons in a powerful, loving relationship of mutuality and reciprocity.¹⁷⁹ The Father eternally expresses Himself in the Son and the Holy Spirit is the bond that unites the Father and Son in love and proceeds as the love between them.¹⁸⁰ Yet, the Spirit is more than the fostering environment of love; as a distinct Person He also participates in this love. Thus, Pinnock writes:

Even this image, ‘bond of love,’ falls short of attributing personality to Spirit, leaving the possible impression of a binity—Father and Son plus a bond—rather than a trinity. It could reduce Spirit to the fostering environment of love. Spirit is more than that, however, being a distinct Person who, besides bonding others in love, shares and participates in it. Spirit bonds the Trinity by being the witness to the love of Father and Son, by entering into it and fostering it, and by communicating its warmth to creatures.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. 199-200.

¹⁷⁸ For this section, I am using Pinnock’s *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996). For a biography of Pinnock’s journey, see Barry Callen, *Clark H. Pinnock: Journey Toward Renewal* (Nappane: Evangel Publishing House, 2000). For critical assessments of Pinnock’s theology, see Rex Koivisto, “Clark and Inerrancy: A Change in Truth Theory?” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 24 (1981), 138-151; Murphy, *Consuming Glory*; Robert M. Price, “Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary,” in *Evangelical Quarterly* 60 (1988), 157-188; Robert V. Rakestraw, “Clark H. Pinnock” in Timothy George and David S. Dockery (eds.), *Baptist Theologians* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990); Archibald J. Spencer, “The Pluralist and Inclusivist Appeal to General Revelation as a Basis for Inter-Religious Dialogue: A systematic Theological Investigation” in Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross, *Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honour of Clark H. Pinnock* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003); Bruce A. Ware, “Defining Evangelicalism’s Boundaries Theologically: Is Open Theism Evangelical?” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45 (2) (June 2002), 193-212; Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Is Reason Enough? A Review Essay,” in *Reformed Review* (April 1981), 20-24; Tony Gray and Christopher Sinkinson (eds.), *Reconstructing Theology: A Critical Assessment of the Theology of Clark Pinnock* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000).

¹⁷⁹ Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 21-36.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 38.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 40.

As such, the Spirit is “the ecstasy that makes the triune life an open circle and a source of pure abundance. Spirit embodies and triggers the overflow of God’s pure benevolence, fosters its ecstatic character and opens it up to history.”¹⁸²

As the Father eternally expresses Himself in the Son, so He temporally expresses Himself in creation through the Son and the Spirit so that creation can share in their powerful, loving relationship of giving and receiving. Thus, creation is a continuation and echo of the movement between the Father and the Son through the Spirit.¹⁸³ The goal of God’s act of creation is that “we may enjoy the responsive relationship that the Son enjoys with the Father. The Spirit seeks to reproduce in the world the interior mystery of God, ever spiraling it back toward God.”¹⁸⁴ The Spirit and the Son do this together. “The Son is the Logos of creation, the origin and epitome of its order, while the Spirit is the artisan who by skillful ingenuity sees to it that creaturely forms arise and move toward fulfillment.”¹⁸⁵ As a skilful artisan, the Spirit not only animates and interpenetrates human beings enabling them to mirror the love of the Trinity in social relationships, but all of God’s creation. Consequently, everything that exists is a sacrament, manifesting the presence and power of the Spirit.¹⁸⁶ Yet, God is more present in human beings than anywhere else. Thus, Pinnock writes:

Because of our intelligence, our deeper and richer experiences, our freedom and openness to God, we stand at the pinnacle of creation and serve as a fuller dwelling place of God than other forms of life do. Created in God’s image, we bear resemblance to the divine Subject and are able to be more conscious of the divine presence. [Human beings] have spirit that can reach out to Spirit and experience God in creaturely life. We are by our creation naturally religious. . . . As spirit, we are made for encountering God and responding to

¹⁸² Ibid., 38.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 49-60.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 60.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 60.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 60-72.

his love. The greatest issue is whether when the Spirit approaches human spirits, he receives a welcome or not.¹⁸⁷

Since forced love is a contradiction in terms and God thus created human beings with the freedom to reject his love, God took the risk that his love would be rejected.¹⁸⁸

Because humankind does not receive the love of the Trinity and mirror this love in an undistorted way, the Logos of creation, the origin and epitome of its order, takes on human flesh and becomes the undistorted receptacle and mirror of this intra-trinitarian love. As the Spirit already anointed and equipped people before the incarnation, so He now anoints and equips Jesus. In doing so, He takes Jesus on a representative journey in which He recapitulates human history in his life, death and resurrection and not only reverses the effect of Adam's sin, but also restored creation. Humankind is incorporated into this new creation through faith. Thus, Pinnock writes:

God effected the conversion of humanity in Jesus, who represented the race and thereby altered the human situation. In his death and resurrection, humanity *de jure* passed from death to life, because God has included it in the event. Its destiny has been objectively realized in Christ—what remains to be done is a human response and salvation *de facto*. The possibility of newness must be laid hold of by faith . . . Because Jesus is a representative, others can share in his death and resurrection by the Spirit. A new situation now exists; we have only to accept what has been done and allow the Spirit to conform our lives to Christ.¹⁸⁹

When people are incorporated into Christ by faith, the life, death and resurrection of Christ becomes a power event that transforms their lives as they personally die and rise with Him through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 73.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 74-77.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 95-96. What Pinnock writes about the new situation for humankind, I hold to be true about the new situation for God's new covenant community. Yet, this new situation is not only true *de jure*, but also *de facto*. God's new covenant community is *de facto* embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit by virtue of God's covenant promises or declarations (*epangelia*). For more on this, see chapter two, excursus ten: being in Christ by virtue of God's covenant promise.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 98-101.

As the Spirit anointed and equipped Jesus for his ministry of reversal and restoration, so the Spirit anoints and equips the Church to continue this ministry of reversal and restoration. Thus, the church is not so much the continuation of the incarnation as it is the continuation of the anointing of Jesus through the Spirit. As the bond of love, the Spirit enables the Church to share in and mirror the powerful, giving and receiving love of the Trinity.¹⁹¹ The Spirit does this not only by giving the Word to the Church, but also the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.¹⁹² He also fosters this community of love by giving the Church gifts.¹⁹³ In order for the Spirit to be able to use the Church as the continuation of the anointing of Jesus, the Church needs to be open to the Spirit just as Jesus was.¹⁹⁴ When the Church is, it will be empowered for mission.¹⁹⁵ Thus, Pinnock writes, “A mission whose goal is the transformation of the world is stupendous. A powerless church can hardly consider it. It presupposes the anointing and empowerment of Spirit.” and He adds, “May the Spirit quicken in us a fresh vision, so that we see ourselves as a continuation of Jesus’ anointing, are enriched with the entire charismatic structure and remember the transforming mission of Jesus. . . . [For] As the church echoes trinitarian relations, it models the coming kingdom and prefigures the destiny of humanity.”¹⁹⁶

This destiny of humanity is to be enfolded in the embrace of the trinitarian life or to enjoy union with God in Christ through the kiss of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 17:3, 26; cf. Lk. 15:20; 2 Cor. 13:13). This is what the Scriptures mean when they speak of salvation as glorification (Jn. 17:24; Rom. 5:1-2) or what the early theologians called *theosis* or

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 113-123.

¹⁹² Ibid., 123-129.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 129-133.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 137-39

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 144-47.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 147.

participation in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4; cf. Eph. 5:31-2; 1 Cor 6:17; Rev. 19:9; 21:2, 9).¹⁹⁷ This is ultimately the meaning of the word *atonement* or unity between God and

humanity (*at-one-ment*). As Pinnock writes:

Actually the word *atonement* speaks to us of the loving relationality into which the Spirit is drawing people. Spirit is bringing us into intimacy with the Father through the Son, who is sharing his divine sonship with us. Spirit calls us to become children of God in and alongside the Son and to join in his self-surrender to the Father. Always the object of the Father's love, the Son has always reciprocated it in the Spirit. God invites creatures to participate in this divine dance of loving communion. God has not left us outside the circle of his life. We are invited inside the Trinity as joint heirs together with Christ. By the Spirit we cry "Abba" together with the Son, as we are drawn into the divine filial relationship and begin to participate in God's life. Union with God is the unimaginable fulfillment of creaturely life, and the Spirit is effecting it in us. This is what the church fathers meant when they said, "God became man, that man might become God" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.19.1; Athanasius *On the Incarnation* 2:54).¹⁹⁸

This union with God begins on earth (Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:9-10).¹⁹⁹ Thus, being saved is not just enjoying God's unmerited favour, but falling in love with God.²⁰⁰ Conversion is the awakening of this love and continuing to freely respond to this love by being open to it (Jn. 21:15). We enter this realm through baptism and actualize this realm through faith.²⁰¹ When we do, the Spirit transforms our inherent image of God into the likeness of God, gradually

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 149-52.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 153-54.

¹⁹⁹ Pinnock makes a distinction between ontic and ontological. Union with God in Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is an ontic reality, but not an ontological one (cf. 130, 181). Kirsi Stjerna writes about this distinction in her editor's foreword to Tuomo Mannermaa's *Christ Present in Faith*. She writes, "Some of the concepts employed in the Finnish edition did not translate easily into English. Mannermaa is well aware of the 'weight' that comes with certain philosophically loaded terms such as 'ontological,' 'essential,' 'real,' 'substantial,' etc. In this work, he frequently uses the Finnish word *onttinen*, which could be translated directly as 'ontic.' In the editing process, and in consultation with Mannermaa himself, the word has been translated 'ontological,' which is the word Mannermaa prefers to use in his current writing. Readers should note that the study will not address the different nuances between the terms 'ontic' and 'ontological,' and no arguments are made in this regard. The word 'ontological,' in Mannermaa's use, underscores the reality of things and events." See *Christ Present in Faith*, vii. What Pinnock means with 'ontic' Mannermaa means with 'ontological.' It appears that Pinnock shies away from referring to our union with God as an 'ontological' union out of fear for pantheism (181).

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 155-56.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 166-72.

and dynamically giving us the mind or attitude of Christ. Death is the end of our journey in this broken world and a return to God where we enter into a Sabbath rest of unbroken communion.²⁰²

Everyone has access to the grace of God in Jesus Christ through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit who “meets people not only in religious spheres but everywhere—in the natural world, in the give-and-take of relationships, in the systems that structure human life. . . . His warm breath streams toward humanity with energy and life.”²⁰³ His breath is also present in other religions, giving these religions partial insight into God’s truth. There and everywhere, the Spirit is continually persuading people to open themselves up to God’s love.²⁰⁴ The criterion for discerning the Spirit’s work is Christological. Thus, Pinnock writes:

The gospel story helps us discern movements of the Spirit. From this narrative we learn the pattern of God’s ways. So wherever we see traces of Jesus in the world and people opening up to his ideals, we know we are in the presence of Spirit. Wherever, for example, we find self-sacrificing love, care about community, longings for justice, wherever people love one another, care for the sick, make peace not war, wherever there is beauty and concord, generosity and forgiveness, the cup of cold water, we know the Spirit of Jesus is present. Other spirits do not promote broken and contrite hearts. Such things tell us where the brothers and sisters of Jesus indwelt by the Spirit are.²⁰⁵

Consequently, the criterion for participation in God’s love is not just cognitive, but also behavioral. In fact, many can honor Jesus without even knowing Jesus.²⁰⁶ Therefore, we can be optimistic with regard to God’s final salvation.²⁰⁷

²⁰² Ibid., 173-83.

²⁰³ Ibid., 187.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 190-208..

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 209-10.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 210-11.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 211-14. Since the Scriptures teach salvation in Christ alone, I remain agnostic regarding those who have not heard the gospel. See Alister E. McGrath, “A Particularist View: A Post-Enlightenment Approach’ in Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips (eds.), *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Grand

While the Spirit bears witness to all of humanity, He does so in a special way in the Church, fostering movement towards the truth, despite its mistakes and errors.²⁰⁸ Since doctrines are not timeless abstractions, but timebound witnesses, the Spirit plays an important role not only in the hearing of the truth, but also in its development. Thus, the Spirit brings to mind new dimensions of the truth and also works in the traditions of the Church.²⁰⁹ The revelation of the Spirit is dynamic and pregnant with significance. As Pinnock writes:

Revelation is neither contentless experience (liberalism) nor timeless propositions (conservatism). It is the dynamic self-disclosure of God, who makes his goodness known in the history of salvation, in a process of disclosure culminating in Jesus Christ. Revelation is not primarily existential impact or infallible truths but divine self-revelation that both impacts and instructs. The mode of revelation is self-disclosure and interpersonal communication. As such it is pregnant with significance and development.²¹⁰

To accomplish this task, the Spirit both inspires the text and illuminates the reader.

Excursus eleven: Pinnock and theosis

Chapter three noted that being embedded with Christ in the life of the Trinity involves deification and leads to deification. The following insights of Pinnock both support and develop this understanding of theosis or deification.

First, Pinnock teaches that God is a social trinity eternally living as three Persons in a powerful, loving relationship of mutuality and reciprocity. The Father eternally expresses Himself in the Son and the Holy Spirit is the bond that unites the Father and Son in love and proceeds as the love between them. Yet, the Spirit is more than the fostering environment of love; as a distinct Person He also participates in this love. Moreover, Pinnock teaches as the

Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 149-209. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore this further at this time.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 216, 241.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 218-237.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 226.

Father eternally expresses Himself in the Son, so He temporally expresses Himself in creation through the Son and the Spirit so that creation can share in their powerful, loving relationship of giving and receiving. Thus, creation is a continuation and echo of the movement between the Father and the Son through the Spirit. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that living the deified life of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is enjoying the love the Father has for the Son and the Son for the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

Second, Pinnock teaches that the Spirit is the One who makes the triune life an open circle and source of abundant life. Thus, the Spirit animates and interpenetrates human beings, seeking to reproduce in them the interior mystery of God that was exemplified and modeled in the Son. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that the Spirit is the One who draws us into this life by uniting us with the Son and consequently is the One who deifies us.

Third, Pinnock teaches that being created in the image of God involves being created with a spirit that can receive and embody or mirror the love of the Trinity. This harmonizes with and develops what chapters two and three discovered that human beings are anthropologically able to be deified because they have been created with an inner being or a soul that enables them to receive God's Father-Son love and undergo theosis.

Fourth, Pinnock teaches that because humankind does not receive the love of the Trinity and embody this love in an undistorted way, the Son of God as the origin and embodiment of its order, takes on human flesh and becomes the undistorted receptacle and embodiment of this intra-trinitarian love. Moreover, Pinnock teaches the Son is able to do

this because the Spirit anoints Jesus and takes Him on a representative journey in which He recapitulates human history in his life, death and resurrection and not only reverses the effect of Adam's sin, but also restores creation. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that human beings are Christologically able to be deified because of the incarnation, life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ

Fifth, Pinnock teaches that humankind is incorporated into this new creation through faith. When people are incorporated into Christ by faith, the life, death and resurrection of Christ becomes a power event that transforms their lives as they personally die and rise with Him through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that faith is the means through which people are re-membered and re-embedded into Christ and consequently are deified.

Sixth, as the Spirit anointed and equipped Jesus for his deifying ministry of re-membering and re-embedding, so the Spirit anoints and equips the church to continue the deifying ministry of re-membering and re-embedding. As the bond of love, the Spirit enables the Church to share in and embody the powerful, giving and receiving love of the Trinity. This harmonizes what was discovered in the chapters two and three that being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit is a relationship where Christ draws his covenant community into his own life and work through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit, enabling her to participate with Him in a deifying movement that is rolling towards the new heaven and new earth where all things will be made right and where Christ is all in all.

Seventh, the Spirit anoints and equips the church for participating in the deifying life and mission of Jesus by giving the Word, the sacraments and spiritual gifts to the church.

This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that the church through the means of grace is the human means through which deification or theosis is achieved.

Eighth, in order for the church to participate in the deifying life and mission of Jesus, it needs to remain open to the Spirit just as Jesus was. Only in this way can it be a proleptic sign of the coming kingdom of God. Being a member and proleptic sign is what is meant by glorification or theosis. This harmonizes with and develops what was discovered in chapters two and three that being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit involves a participation in the divine nature and radiating this nature into every sphere of life.

Excursus twelve: the Spirit and theosis

Chapter two noted that God's intention for entering into covenant is that his covenant community will glorify Him in this world as his image, i.e., embody his divine nature to creation. God's people do not have to glorify Him by embodying his divine nature in their own strength, but can do this in dependence upon Him because God generates his own Father-Son love through the bond of the Holy Spirit—the love the Father has for the Son through the bond of the Holy Spirit and the love the Son has for the Father through the bond of the Holy Spirit—into his covenant community. Thus, God breathed his own uncreated life into Adam's nostrils and embedded him in Himself. Consequently, Adam was able to glorify God by embodying God's divine nature because He was embedded in God's nature through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, humankind is said to be the offspring of God that lives and move and has its being in Him (Ac 17:28). This chapter also noted God's covenant community did not want to glorify God by embodying his divine

nature in dependence upon the Spirit of God, but desired to glorify herself in her own strength. Consequently, she dis-membered and dis-embedded herself from God's Father-Son love through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This chapter further showed that God's covenant community is re-embedded in the Father by being becoming a member of Christ body through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Spirit is the advance installment (*arrabon*) that re-embeds God's covenant community into God. Accordingly, in re-embedding us with Christ in the Father, the Holy Spirit is the source of theosis.

He is the One who regenerates us from self-generated living to God-generated living. He is the One who assures us of being embedded with Christ in the Father by testifying with our spirits that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16). He is the One whom the Father has sent into our hearts and who calls out to his Father, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

Excursus thirteen: glorification and theosis

Chapter two noted that the Scriptures use the expression "the glory of God" in a twofold sense. First, the glory of God is a revelatory act, i.e. it is God on display, God manifested, God shown forth. In fact, the glory of God is the presence of God.²¹¹ This chapter also noted that creation is able to display, manifest and show God forth because God has embedded Himself in creation. Consequently, creation is able to be a theater of God's glory. Moreover, this chapter noted that what was true for creation in general was true for humankind in particular. As the image of God, humankind shone forth the presence of God and was God on display. Thus, as creation in general was a theatre of God's glory, so humankind in particular was a theater of his glory. Furthermore, chapter two noted that Jesus

²¹¹ The second sense is that the expression "the glory of God" is a responsive act referring to creation's response to the revelatory act of God's presence or glory.

is the image of God, the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. His whole mission on earth was to glorify the Father by shining Him forth and being the Father on display. Thus, Jesus' ministry is essentially a reflection of the three Persons of the Trinity eternally glorifying one another in a selfless, self-giving manner.

Chapter three noted that as the bearer of the imprint (*effigies*) of the Father's glory, Jesus re-embeds the image of God in his covenant community and makes this covenant community look like Himself. Thus, Jesus restores and reestablishes the revelatory function of nature and enables his covenant community to once again be a theater of God's glory that bridles and restrains the forces of disorder and chaos in this world by embodying the order of God's divine nature.

This observation is important for this study for it shows what the goal or *telos* of theosis is: embodying the weight of God's glory and irradiating this glory to creation. Consequently, the goal of theosis does not involve losing one's creaturely existence by becoming a mini god, but maintaining one's creaturely existence and being a finite, glorified manifestation of our infinitely glorious, Trinitarian God. It is in being embedded in the glory of the Trinity and theotically shining forth the glory of the Trinity that God's covenant community finds her goal and experiences the joy of this *telos*. Thus, existential estrangement and dis-embeddedness is a constant reminder of being dis-embedded from the glorious goal of one's existence. This is important to remember when a church community as a whole or members of the church feel the sting of "existential estrangement."²¹²

²¹² Murphy, 190

Excursus fourteen: the tradition and theosis?²¹³

In his *What is Christianity*, Adolph von Harnack considers the doctrine of deification to be the result of the corrupting influence of Greek philosophy upon Eastern Christianity. In a disparaging manner he describes it as follows: “The very deification which the future is expected to bring, and which in itself is something that can neither be described nor conceived, is now administered as though it were an earnest of what is to come, by means of ritual acts. An imaginative mood is excited, and disposes to its reception; and this excitement, when enhanced, is its seal.”²¹⁴ In his *History of Dogma*, he claims that Augustine, who himself once taught this doctrine, “brought it to an edifying end.”²¹⁵

But is this so? According to Gerald Bonner, for Augustine “deification is nothing more, but also nothing less, than υιοθεσία, St. Paul’s sonship by adoption.”²¹⁶ Thus, Augustine can say to his congregation:

Therefore as He Himself is the Selfsame and cannot in any way be changed, by participating in His divinity we too shall be made immortal in eternal life; and this pledge has been given to us by the Son of God, as I have already told you; that before we should be made partakers of His immortality, He should Himself be made a partaker of our mortality. For just as He was mortal, not of His nature but of ours, so we shall be immortal, not of our nature but His.²¹⁷

As this chapter has shown, deification is also found in Luther, Calvin, John Wesley and Clark Pinnock. Thus, it would appear that Augustine did not bring the doctrine of deification to an edifying end in the west. On the contrary, it appears that theosis is part of

²¹³ For this section, I am indebted to Mosser, “The greatest possible blessing: Calvin and deification” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55 1 (2002): 36-40.

²¹⁴ Adolph von Harnack, *What is Christianity*, trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), 237.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, *History of Dogma*, Vol. 3, trans. James Millar (London: Williams & Northgate, 1897), 165.

²¹⁶ Gerald Bonner, ‘Deification, Divinization’ in Allan D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 266.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 266. Mosser also writes that deification can be found in Aquinas (Roman Catholic), Jonathan Edwards (Congregational), Augustus Hopkins Strong (Baptist), C. S. Lewis (Anglican), Philip Edegcumbe Hughes (Episcopalian), Thomas C. Oden (Wesleyan), T. F. Torrance (Reformed) and Robert V. Rakestraw (Baptist).

the *catholic* tradition of the church and “something interesting for the Reformed to talk about among themselves.”²¹⁸

Excursus fifteen: spiritual formation and theosis

Union with Christ is considered by some to be the central truth of the doctrine of salvation. For instance, John Murray writes, “[Union with Christ is] the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application, but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ.” And he adds, “the whole process of salvation has its origin in one phrase of union with Christ and salvation has in view the realization of other phrases of union with Christ . . . Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.”²¹⁹ Thus, since the whole process of salvation has its origin and goal in union with Christ, union with Christ is the integrative doctrine of salvation.

Yet, even though this is so, it not often given an explicit treatment in popular post-Reformational Evangelical Systematic theologies.²²⁰ Murphy writes, “Of the roughly forty-eight major theologians since the Reformation who specifically composed a systematic theology (or that which closely resembles one), only nine of them include an explicit treatment of the mystical union.”²²¹

Murphy lists two possible reasons for this omission.

First, it is another example of Evangelicalism and Western theology in general concentrating more heavily on the forensic and object (contra subjective)

²¹⁸ Mosser, 57. I would apply this not just to the Reformed, but to the Evangelical community as well.

²¹⁹ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 161. Cf. Murphy 201.

²²⁰ Ibid..

²²¹ Murphy basis his figures, in part, on Wayne Grudem’s cataloguing of systematic theologies in Appendix 4 of his *Systematic Theology*, 1224-30. Murphy lists as the nine exceptions including Louis Berkhof, Robert L. Dabney, Millard Erickson, Wayne Grudem, Edward Arthur Litton, Edgar Young Mullins, Robert Reymond, Augustus H. Strong, and Henry Clarence Thiessen. Ibid.

aspects of systematization. A second reason is what I perceive to be a general reluctance on the part of Evangelicals to address anything deemed to be too ‘mystical’ or anagogic and, therefore, that which tends not to lend itself as well to systematization as the more *legal* aspects of theology do.

He adds:

For many Evangelical systematicians, the words *mystical* or *mysticism* do not carry with them positive connotations. They seem to smack of a faith in which emotions and doctrinal relativism rule over the synthesization of propositional content (The situation is arguably worse concerning the deification theology I consider later).²²²

Chapter three noted that Calvin considered union with Christ to be of the greatest importance and deification to be the greatest possible blessing. This chapter suggested that for Calvin union with Christ involved deification and leads to deification.

Augustus Strong observes that union with Christ includes regeneration and conversion, which in turn include “repentance, faith, justification, and sanctification.”²²³

Murphy adds glorification to this. He then writes, “*Christus in nobis* (Christ in us) applies to every step—beginning, middle, and end—of the *ordo salutis*.” (order of salvation)²²⁴

Reflecting on the cultivation of a theotic relationality, Murphy writes:

Theosis, in part, may be thought of as a summary term for the subjective, relational nature of salvation. This emphasis on the subjective aspects of salvation is precisely where Pinnock and I perceive a deficiency in Reformed thought. Whereas justification and satisfaction refer to the forensic *appeasement* of God such that created humans might be positionally ‘clean’ in God’s eyes, theosis encompasses the subjective aspects of the *ordo salutis*—regeneration, sanctification, and glorification—and explains each as the sole work of God. Each of these I construe as subspecies of theosis such that we might even rename them, respectively: *inaugural theosis*, *progressive theosis*, and *consummative theosis*.²²⁵

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Augustus Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, Pa: Judson, 1907), 793. Cf. Murphy, 200

²²⁴ Murphy, 200.

²²⁵ Ibid., 220. Murphy adds that Robert V. Rakestraw in his essay, “Becoming like God: An Evangelical Doctrine of Theosis” prefers the term “Christification” over theosis and James Beilby in a lecture on the doctrine of God “Trinification.”

Since this chapter has shown that union with Christ includes deification and leads to deification, that Evangelical and Reformed theology has concentrated more on the objective, forensic aspects of the Christian life instead of the relational, subjective aspects and that Augustine did not bring the doctrine of deification to an edifying end in the west, this study suggests that it is beneficial to cultivate a theotic spirituality of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This will, however, be a theotic spirituality that looks more like that of Irenaeus and Calvin than that of Palamas. Thus, human participation in the divine is ontologically possible not because of the essence-energies distinction, but because the Son of God joined Himself to humanity so that human beings could be joined to God. Moreover, human participation in the divine is ontologically impossible without the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit does not initiate human participation in the divine through human beings cooperating with God's prevenient grace in a synergistic manner, but monergistically.

III. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter built on what was discovered in the chapter dealing with the biblical basis and the theological chapter focusing on what John Calvin taught about being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. It gave an historical theological literature overview organized according to church families. Thus, after having reviewed one representative from the second century church, it reviewed one representative from the Eastern liturgical family (Eastern Orthodox), one from the Western liturgical family (Roman Catholicism), one from the Lutheran family, one from the Methodist-Holiness families, and one from the Baptist family. After the review of each representative an excursus showed how the insight of that representative supported and

developed the understanding that being embedded with Christ in the life of the Trinity involves deification and leads to deification.

In addition, an additional excursus was added to highlight how a particular theme of this representative related to theosis. Thus, excursus two on the humanity of Jesus and theosis showed that since Christ's assumption of a human nature is the practical means to realize theosis, theosis does not involve a pantheistic, ontological union between humanity and the divine nature of Christ. Excursus four on the divine energies of God and theosis showed that since believers are joined to God through his energies and not his essence (*ousia*), theosis likewise does not involve a pantheistic, ontological union between humanity and the divine nature of God.

Excursus six on the supernatural and theosis showed that since in Roman Catholic theology supernatural grace refers to the presence of God in creation, theosis, God's covenant community is able to achieve her creational goal or *telos* of theosis. Excuses eight on faith and theosis showed that (1) since God's covenant community partakes of the divine nature or experiences theosis through knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in God's promises (*epangelmata*), (2) faith is knowledge (Calvin), (3) faith ontologically joins a member of God's covenant community to Christ so that Christ becomes the subject of faith and (4) faith has its anthropological locus in the mind (*nous*), **therefore** theosis is experienced through the use of one's noticing mind or "noticer" in faith.

Excursus ten on the will and theosis showed that since the will is the mind acting upon the desires, members of God's covenant community need to intentionally cooperate with God in faith in growing in theosis. Excursus twelve on the Spirit and theosis showed that (1) since God embedded his Spirit into Adam's soul at creation so that he could

experience and achieve theosis, (2) Adam intentionally dis-embedded himself from God's Spirit and dis-membered himself from the Trinitarian life and (3) Jesus re-membered his covenant community to Himself and re-embedded her in the Father together with Himself through the Spirit that therefore the Spirit is the source of theosis who regenerates from self-generated to God-generated living and who testifies with our spirits what we are indeed embedded with Christ in the Father as his children.

Excursus thirteen on glorification and theosis showed that since God's creational and redemptive goal or *telos* is that his covenant community will show forth and embody the weight of the glory of his divine nature that therefore theosis has its goal in God's covenant community being a finite expression of the infinite glory of God. Excursus fourteen on the tradition and theosis showed that since Augustine did not bring the doctrine of theosis to an edifying end in the west and thus remains part of the catholic tradition of the church, theosis is "something interesting for the Reformed to talk about among themselves."

Excursus fifteen on the spiritual formation and theosis showed that since (1) Augustine did not bring the doctrine of deification to an edifying end in the west, (2) union with Christ includes deification and leads to deification and (3) Evangelical and Reformed theology has concentrated more on the objective, forensic aspects of the Christian life instead of the relational, subjective aspects it is beneficial to cultivate a theotic spirituality of being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit. This will, however, be a theotic spirituality that looks more like that of Irenaeus and Calvin than that of Palamas.

Chapter two noted that if the ten-week learning experience wants to offer a biblical solution to the various forms of affective detachment or dis-embeddness then it is first

necessary to identify this biblical solution. Chapter three and four noted that since God's covenant community is not the first to read the Scriptures, it should also listen to the voice of the Spirit as that comes to it in its own tradition and in the tradition of the church of all ages. Listening to the voice of the Spirit in the tradition of the church alerts God's covenant community to potential dangers and points out promising possibilities. Thus, chapters two, three and four have identified a biblical-theological solution to moving God's covenant community from various forms of affective detachment or dis-embeddedness to being embedded with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit.

Having engaged the Scriptures and tradition in a theological conversation so that a biblical-theological solution could be found for the problem of ontological detachment or dis-embeddedness, how does this solution move God's covenant community from dis-embeddedness from Christ to embeddedness with Christ in the Father through the advance installment of the Holy Spirit? In order to find an answer to this question, this study has to look at culture or the embedded context of the theological conversation. It is to this task that this study now turns.