

THE GLORY THAT SHALL BE – THE INCREDIBLE DIVINISATION OF HUMANS!

By Craig Martin White

To a Christian, the ancient Egyptian Pharaohs possessed a corrupt belief in the afterlife. In their belief system they became stars after death, dwelling in the constellation of Orion with their god and father, Osiris. It may be that this belief stemmed from the early truths which were expounded by God's servants - the Egyptians may well have corrupted the truth as other religions have done. This reminds me of the resurrection chapter, ICor 15:

“There are also celestial [ie heavenly or divine] bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the **glory** of the celestial is one, and the **glory** of the terrestrial is another.
There is one **glory** of the sun, and another **glory** of the moon, and another **glory** of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in **glory**.
So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:
It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in **glory**: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power
It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body [see John 3:5; 12:24; Rom 6:5; Mark 4:30-32]
“ ... And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly”
(verses 42-44, 49)

As Christians are destined to inherit, as offspring, the Father's very glory, we shall be filled with holiness, brightness, cleanliness, perfection, righteousness and radiate light. As such we will fulfill what it means to be glorified. As the Psalmist writes:

“At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps 16:11).

And in ICor 2:9:“But as it is written, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” ” (cp Rom 8:18).

“They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house;
And Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.
For with Thee is the fountain of life: [cp Rev 22:1; 21:6; John 7: 37-39; 4:10; Is 12:2-3]
"In Thy light shall we see light" (Ps 38:8-9)

Christians - literal descendants of God!

As Christ dwells in us via the holy spirit, He is our life (Col 3:3-4; Eph 5:30; ICor 6:15; 12:12-14) and as such, we become a part of God and become an extension of His being or life because the holy spirit is joined with the human spirit - we inherit the very life of God Himself!. When the physical dies, the spirit in man essence remains with God, either at the spot where we have been buried, or a place which He chooses to place it which is in heaven. He will re-issue our essence, memory and character which is stored in the miniscule substance known as the ‘spirit in man’ mentioned in several scriptures (ICor 2:11; Ezra 1:1; Job 32:8; Eccl 12:7; Zech 12:1).

The brain enables the mind to operate - it consumes a disproportionate amount of the body's energy (20%) and produces a disproportionate amount of the body's heat. But it is this human spirit that gives man ‘understanding’ or mind (Job 32:8,18; Prov 20:24,27), placing him on a plain far greater than the animals and enables him to have a relationship with God - a relationship, by the way, which God outlines, not something which we may derive and offer to Him.

"If we are not careful, we can very quickly begin to think that the spirit in man possesses conscious sensation, thought and awareness independent from the brain. This is wholly wrong! The spirit in man, of itself, cannot sense, cannot think, cannot reason, cannot know. The brain performs these tasks. But to engender the exquisite qualities which constitute the human mind, the spirit in man must be added". ("Why the vast difference between animal brain and human mind? Part V", *Plain Truth*, June 1972:42).

Perhaps the Hindi belief in the 'third eye' (symbolised by the painted red dot on their foreheads) is a corruption of ancient knowledge. The Bible has a lot to say about our minds and the forehead. In fact, the frontal area of the brain is the most complex of all parts of the brain, being responsible for intellect, learning and personality; reasoning, consciousness and judgment. Some have gone so far as stating that the pineal gland, residing deep within the brain, may have something to do with this "third eye". Because it responds to light and alerts the body to whether it is

light or dark (controls our biological clock) and is the regulator or regulators (eg it has certain control over the thyroid gland), it is thought by some to be the heart of the brain and an aid in stimulating human mind. Further, it controls the sleep, reproduction, growth, temperature, blood pressure, tumour growth, mood, the immune system and may even be a factor in longevity.

"Named after a French psychologist, Philippe Pinel, who first described the gland in the human brain, it is only slowly beginning to be understood in its functions. It has both neural and endocrine properties, and in simple vertebrates such as the lamprey the organ is mounted on a stalk close to an opening in the skull and functions as a photoreceptive organ. Photoreceptive structures linked with the pineal body are still observed in higher vertebrates such as reptiles and even some species of birds. In mammals the pineal body is not light-sensitive, but a neural connection remains between the eyes and the gland. Thus the functions of the pineal body in an animal are linked with surrounding light levels." ("Pineal Body," Microsoft (R) Encarta. Copyright (c) 1994 Microsoft Corporation. Copyright (c) 1994 Funk & Wagnall's Corporation.)

We may never know exactly where the 'spirit in man' essence exactly resides within our brains at this time, but we do know that the chemical and electrical impulses which the brain produces, is not all there is to 'mind'. Recently I came across the following fascinating article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (3 November 1997) on "How our brains are set for signals from God":

"United States researchers believe that they have discovered a "God spot" in the brain - a circuit of nerves which could explain humanity's almost universal belief in a deity.
"A study of epileptics [and the deeply religious] who said they had experienced spiritual states revealed that a spot in the front of the brain appeared to become electrically active, when they thought about God ...
"... Research is at an early stage, but the scientists said the results appeared to show that the phenomenon of religious belief could be inbuilt in humans."

Is it possible that the 'spirit in man' resides somewhere near the forehead and that is where (and how) God inspired the prophets and apostles; where the holy spirit fuses with our spirit in man essence; and where Satan and the demons influence people, by radiating their evil impulses into human minds?

He, the God Who is called our Father, is therefore literally the Father, and we literally the unborn children. When we die our unconscious spirit in man essence remains joined with the eternal holy spirit – the very life of God Himself ("But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" - ICor 6:17). As such, we are assured of eternal life, because when God awakens or regenerates us in the resurrection, it will be with a new body. A body that will actually be composed of the holy spirit having put on Christ and bearing the image of the Father, which will contain your character and memory, to continue our relationship with God for eternity. As the holy spirit fills the universe (but is not necessarily in everything - it is not in Satan for instance), it doesn't matter where one dies: in the deepest ocean, on the highest peak, blown to pieces by a bomb or as an astronaut in outer space! God will provide a new body for you from His spirit essence which will be filled with light, energy and power - shining with brilliance and radiating rays of beauty.

We will inherit God's life and have life inherent within ourselves, exactly as Christ was given life in Himself (John 5:26; Rom 8:29-30. See also other scriptures on this life that God is offering us: Eph 4:18; 2:21; IJohn 1:2; Rom 8:11,16-17; 12:4; ICor 6:7; John 15:5).

Currently our human body, the brain specifically, is the 'temple' or dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (ICor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 2:22). It becomes part of us and connects us directly with God, being His children, but as yet not born. But at our birth, in the resurrection, we will be given new bodies similar to Christ's (Phil 3:21; ICor 15:42-53). It will be, as it were, the fused human spirit/holy spirit that grows to form the new body, which will be fully composed of God's spirit, and will have no fleshly components (ICor 15:44-45), a separate personality from God, yet joined to God because the holy spirit fills the universe and beyond.

It should also be noted here that according to the scriptures we are yet to inherit a new body. This should tell us two things. First, we do not have an immortal soul which floats off to heaven (whether it be out there somewhere or another dimension); and second, we are not yet 'born again' nor have experienced the 'new birth'. If we already had the new body, we would be born again. Instead a new babe is in formation in our minds, which resides in our brains and as such the new birth is yet future (John 3:6; ICor 15:50-51).

God is the 'ground of all being' – the fountain and sustainer of life; the source of existence; the centre of everything. Therefore He is the only One with the power to resurrect and to create. None else can. In His wisdom He has created us for a purpose. And in His mercy He allows us to die and to lie 'asleep' for a little while, waiting for the breaking of a new day, when light will be shed across the globe, and Christ, with awesome power, and according to His promise, will resurrect us to eternal life, joy and glory. How wonderful are His ways; and how sure and faithful He is to adhere to His promise.

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. **Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead**" (Is 26:19).

This is why the Gospel message is primarily future oriented – it is about the return of Christ the Messiah, the setting up of His millennial reign and the resurrection of the saints. Other religious groups brood over a dead Christ on a cross – that is their 'Gospel'. But the true Gospel is primarily future oriented and one which focuses on the end-time prophecies, the second coming of Christ, the millennial reign of the Messiah, the setting up of the Kingdom of God and Christian glorification.

Divinisation in Early Christianity

Perhaps some early 'Christian' writings reflect beliefs of primitive true sabbatarian Christianity in terms of Christian destiny and human purpose upon the earth. Here is what some of the early church 'fathers' taught concerning human destiny:

"For we cast blame on Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, **then at length gods**" (Irenaeus (AD c125-203), *Against Heresies*, Book IV, Chapter XXXVIII; ANF, Vol. I, pg 522)

Irenaeus further said that we are empty receptacles designed to be filled by God for: "God shall be glorified in His handiwork ... for the perfect man consists in the comingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father....For this is why the Word became flesh, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and **thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.**"

Clement of Alexandria (AD 155-220): "Christians, with whom has been mingled the regal gold, the Holy Spirit Accordingly, as wine is blended with water, so is the Spirit with man" and for man to inherit immortality: "to be imperishable is to **share in Divinity**" (*Strom.* V.10.63).

"in order that the human, by communion with the divine, **might rise to divine**, not in Jesus only, but in all those who believe, but enter on the life that Jesus taught" (Origen (cAD 185-254), *Origen Against Celsus The Anti-Nicea Fathers* volume 4 Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James ed. T & T Clark Edinburgh 1989 page 475)

"And thou shalt be a companion of Deity, and a co-heir with Christ, no longer enslaved by disease., For thou hast become God ... For the Deity (by condescension,) does not diminish aught from the dignity of His divine perfection; **having made thee even God unto His glory!**" (Hippolytus (cAD 170-236) *The Refutation Of All Heresies*, chapter XXX; ANF, Vol. V, pg 153)

"**If, therefore, man has become immortal, he will also be God.** And if he is made God by water and the Holy Spirit after the regeneration of the laver he is found to be also joint-heir with Christ after the resurrection of the dead" (Hippolytus, *Discourse On The Holy Theiphany*, (section) 8; ANF, Vol. V. pg 237).

"thy body shall be immortal and incorruptible as well as they soul. **For thou hast become God.** All the things that follow upon the divine nature God has promised to supply to thee, for thou was deified in being born to immortality" (Hippolytus, *Philos.* X.34)

Cyprian (AD 200-260): "He is the power of God, He is the reason, He is His wisdom and glory; He enters into a virgin; being the Holy Spirit, He is endued with the flesh; God is mingled with man. **This is our God, this is Christ, who, as the mediator of the two, puts on man that He**

may lead them to the Father. What man is, Christ was willing to be, that man also may be what Christ is."

Athanasius (AD 29-373): "For the Son of God became man so **that we might become God.**" (*De inc.*, 54, 3:PG 25, 192B) and "The Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, **that we might be deified**" (*De Dec.* para.14). "He was God, and then became man, and **that to deify us**" (*Orat.I.* para.39).

Gregory of Nyssa (AD 335-395) stated: that Christ's fleshly presence on the earth "**deified** everything kindred and related to mankind".

"There is nothing remarkable in man being the image and likeness of the universe: for the earth passes away, the sky changes, and all that is contained therein is as transient as that which contained it. (Lossky, Vladimir *Orthodox Theology* Translated By Kesarcodi-Watson, Ian and Ihita St. Vlacidimir's Seminary Press Crestwood, NY 1989 page70)

Pseudo-Dionysus (5th/6th centuries) stated that salvation "can only happen with divinization of the saved. **And divinization consists of being as much as possible like God**"... as much as possible in union with God. (ibid. page 198 *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, chapter 1 :3)

"The Word of God [Christ] is now God as He had been man, **in order to deify mankind together with himself**" (Eusebius (cAD 267-339), *Demonstratio Evangelica* iv.14).

"Christ came to us, and took upon him our nature and **deified** it" (Chrysostom - AD 347-407).

"... a man, by keeping the directions of God, may receive from him immortality as a reward and **become God**" (Theophilus (cAD 115-181, *ad Autol.* 11.27).

"God became man that you might become gods" stated Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430).

Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa were amongst those that laid the foundations of the Eastern Church. That Church was initially without icons, great liturgies and canonical regulations for governing the church's life which took hundreds of years to develop and be accepted. But in contrast with Rome, the Eastern Churches permit their ministry to marry, reject the primacy of the Papacy (their approach is more collegial), do not accept transubstantiation and believe that they are the true church. They originally believed in the 7,000 year plan and that man is mortal, without an immortal soul.

The Eastern Orthodox Church was originally Sabbatarian!

What is the Eastern Orthodox Church that it should still retain a semblance of the truth about divinisation?: The eastern churches participated in the first seven ecumenical councils which ended with the Second Council of Nicaea in 787AD. Their differences with Rome mounted after that time with the official split eventuating in 1054AD. But originally, the Church of God had scattered for a time in 33AD according to Acts 8:1. Later, after the Roman sacking of Jerusalem 69-70AD, the Church at Jerusalem known as the Nazarenes, fled to Pella (or Petra as some suggest) and remnants of the Church of God were left in Britain and others may have scattered to all sorts of sects. A certain number continued in the eastern congregations in Asia Minor, which observed the Sabbath alongside Sunday observers in the same churches, for a long time. Of these Christians in the second century it was written:

"The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath, and spent the day in devotion and sermons. And it is not to be doubted but they derived this practice from the Apostles themselves, as appears by several scriptures to that purpose." (*Dialogue on the Lord's Day*, p.189. London: 1701. By Dr. T.H. Morer (Church of England).

In the third and fourth centuries we have this witness:

"The ancient Christians were very careful in the observation of Saturday, or the seventh day ... It is plain that all the **Oriental [Eastern] Churches**, and the greatest part of the world, observed the Sabbath as a festival ... Athanasius likewise tells us that they held religious assemblies on the

Sabbath, not because they were infected with Judaism, but to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath; Epiphanius says the same." (*Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Vol. II. Book XX, chap 3, Sec. 1 66.1137, 1138.)

"The observance of the Sabbath among the Jewish Christians gradually ceased. **Yet the Eastern Church to this day marks the seventh day of the week** (excepting only the Easter Sabbath) by omitting fasting, and standing in prayer; the Latin Church, in direct opposition to Judaism, made Saturday a fast day. The controversy on this point began as early as the end of the second century" (*History of the Church*, p.372, 1864 edition; p.205 1952 edition. Quoted in *A History of the Sabbath & Sunday* by John Kiesz, page 17).

Concerning the Council of Laodicea: "From the apostles' time until the council of Laodicea, which was about the year 364, the holy observation of the Jews' Sabbath continued [this was primarily in the East], as may be proved out of many authors; yea, notwithstanding the decree of the council against it." (*Sunday a Sabbath*, John Ley, p. 163. London:1640.)

This is what the Council of Laodicea actually stated: "Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but most work on that day, rather honouring the Lord's Day; and if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ" (Canon 29).

In the fifth century it was written:

"Likewise some meet both upon the Sabbath and upon the day after the Sabbath, as at **Constantinople [ie the Eastern Church]**, and among almost all others. At Rome and Alexandria they do not" (*Ecclesiastical History*, in *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Book 7, Chapter 19).

"Alexandrian Christianity, too, had early adopted Sunday observance. However, in harmony with **Eastern Christianity**, it had also kept the Sabbath as a day of worship and a festival" (*The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, pages 171-2).

One final quote:

"The **Eastern Orthodox Church** is perhaps the best example of this evolution in the practice of Sabbath observance. Even as late as the seventeenth century Samuel Purchas (c. 1577-1626), listing the beliefs and practices of the Greek Church of the Constantinople patriarchate, states that "they solemnize Saturday (the old Sabbath) festively" " (*The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, page 152).

Gradually the Sabbath and other truths were lost, but divinisation continued in the East and has been a component of their theology for a very long time. To early Christians, being given immortality was equivalent to being ascribed or granted godhead or a relationship with God that is so close and so akin to the life He experiences, that it is divine or godly: we become deified or divinised.

This concept continued in a limited undercurrent over the centuries. For instance the *New Dictionary of Theology* states that Calvin taught that "Christians are admitted, through the Holy Spirit, **to participation in the inner life of the Godhead**" (page 694).

"The passage which Christ quotes [ie John 10:34] is in Ps. lxxxii.6 ... Christ applies this to the case in hand, **that they receive the name of gods**, because they are God's ministers for governing the world. For the same reason Scripture calls angels gods, because by them the glory of God beams forth on the world" - John Calvin, in his *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, Grand Rapids, Wm. Eerdmans Publishing, vol. 1, pg 419.

One wonders whether we may deduce from these quotes how close to the truth on this issue these people were. Note that even famous researcher and trinitarian, Spiros Zodhiates, wrote the following concerning John 1:18:

"The word *monogenees* actually is a compound of the *monos*, 'alone', and the word *genos*, 'race, stock, family'. Here we are told that He who came to reveal God - Jesus Christ - is of the same **family**, of the same stock, of the same race as God. There is ample evidence in the Scriptures that **the Godhead is a family ...**" (*Was Jesus God?*, page 21).

We are destined to have a very close family relationship with God. God is indeed our Father. A father is a member of his family. Thus those in God's family are in the very family of God - the God Family if you wish. Peter Toon, a Protestant, in *Born Again. A Biblical and Theological Study of Regeneration* writes:

"... Paul ... speaks of believers as being changed to bear the image and likeness of God that Christ himself perfectly bears and reflects .. we are to bear the true image of God ... [Christians] **are able to have an intimate communion with their heavenly Father**, just as a child might address his or her earthly father by a familiar term like the Aramaic *Abba* or the English *Daddy* ... **Birth from above is birth into a family** ... Growth in new life is growth into Christ within his body, the church" (page 44-45, 65).

In 1899 an academic book appeared on deification as salvation by WR Inge, *Christian Mysticism*. In it he quotes from the church historian, Professor Harnack:

"After Theophilus, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Origen, the idea of deification is found in all the Fathers of the ancient Church, and that in a primary position. We have it in Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Apollinaris, Ephraem Syrus, and others, as also in Cyril, Sophronius, and later Greek and Russian theologians. In proof of it, Ps 82:6 ("I said, Ye are gods") is very often quoted" (Inge, p. 358).

To this day, the Eastern Orthodox Church still teaches divinisation or deification:

"Eastern Orthodox theological thought regarding humanity, sin, and redemption has always revolved around the concept of theosis. The doctrine is also called deification or divinization ... Simply put, theosis means being deified or becoming like God. Theosis connotes participation in God's nature while maintaining a distinct human nature ... Theosis is held by the Orthodox to be the chief end of Humanity. Humans were created for deification" (Clendenin, Daniel B. "The Deification of Humanity: Theosis", *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994, 120).

The Orthodox view is that the gospel is not primarily the solution to man's problem with personal sin. It is God's provision of divine life in Christ, the beginning of theosis. A residual benefit of beginning the process of deification is the remission of sins. Baptism is the means by which the believer enters into this new life. John Meyendorff summarizes the idea of redemption in Eastern Orthodox theology well. He says:

"Communion in the risen body of Christ; participation in divine life; sanctification through the energy of God, which penetrates the humanity and restores it to its "natural" state, rather than justification, or remission of inherited guilt - these are at the center of Byzantine understanding of the Christian Gospel" (Meyendorff, John. "Man", *Byzantine Theology Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1979, 145-146).

Even the Roman Catholic Church appears to recall a little of this great truth. In the most up-to-date version of the official Catechism of the Catholic Church, released in 1992, Article 460 addresses the question: Why did the Word become flesh? In response, the Catechism uses the quotes from Irenaeus and Athanasius above, as well as this from Saint Thomas Aquinas:

"The word became flesh to make us 'partakers of the divine nature' (2Peter 1:4). 'For this is why the Word became man , and the Son of God became the son of man; so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship might become a son of God' (Irenaeus Adv. haeres. 3,19, 1 PG 7/1,939) 'For the Son of God became man so that we might become God' (Athanasius, De Inc 54, 3:PG 25, 1923. The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods."

Although it seems to say little about divinisation these days, and its own members do not seem to be taught much about it, nevertheless it lurks there deep within its theology.

To the Eastern Orthodox theologians, salvation and redemption, baptism and the life of Christ were not events brought about by God as a result of a need to save man as such. Rather, salvation and associated concepts were subject to God's plan to incorporate man into the Godhead! While in contrast, the Western (Roman and Protestant) view is that salvation is involved with the remission of sins and heaven as the reward of the saved. The evangelicals

in particular, are heavily into the idea of salvation is God saving man from a fallen state and being reconciled to God via loving Jesus. But the Eastern Church radically differs with the belief that the Gospel is not focused solely upon man's sins being expunged, but rather that Christ's mission was to grant us divine life or theosis. The Orthodox view is that the gospel is not primarily the solution to man's problem with personal sin. It is God's provision of divine life in Christ, the beginning of theosis, because God's Spirit mingles with humans. The remission of sins - salvation - is residual to the true plan for man: man was created to be made divine (Clendenin, "The Deification of Humanity: Theosis," 120). Remission of sins is to purify man to make him like his Creator. The following is written by John Meyendorff:

"Communion in the risen body of Christ; participation in divine life; sanctification through the energy of God, which penetrates the humanity and restores it to its "natural" state, rather than justification, or remission of inherited guilt--these are at the center of Byzantine understanding of the Christian Gospel." (Meyendorff, "Man," 145-146.)

This doctrine is called theosis, deification or divinisation: it is shrouded in mystery and their theologians are very cautious about entering into great examination or analysis of the true depth of this teaching. Perhaps they are a little embarrassed by the teaching as human destiny is far greater than ending up in a heaven somewhere. But observers state that the teaching simply means to become very much like God - participating in God's nature whilst remaining distinct.

And their version of the Fall of man is quite different from the West: Adam and Eve's sin brought universal mortality to mankind, not guilt, because each and every one of us are responsible for our own sins. We make the choice whether to sin or not; our sin is not the direct result of Adam's choice (Clendenin, "The Deification of Humanity: Theosis," 132-133., 120-123).

It should be explained here that their idea of man being divinised is not associated with the 'universal bliss' idea found amongst so much of eastern Asian religious thought and New Age thought. In such socialistic thinking, you would lose your identity and individuality and become part of the universal love - some say you will be conscious and others say unconscious forever. They may explain it like this: when a drop of water falls into a pool, the drop becomes part of the water, absorbed into it and part of it, yet remaining conscious - so it will be with humans. Their immortal souls supposedly become absorbed into god which is the universal consciousness. Such a perversion of the truth!

That is why it is so dangerous to speak of God not having shape or form. If He does not, then if we become part of the God Family, we would also not have shape or form. Instead we are promised a new body and to look just like Him, literal mirror images. Nor is He the universal consciousness; He instead has universal consciousness via His Spirit which fills the universe and beyond. You can see why there are so many variants to God's truth: Romanism, evangelicalism, New Age, Buddhism and so on. Even the Eastern Orthodox variant, whilst much closer to the truth than the others, is not willing to discuss it much and certainly does not have the sharp focus and depth of understanding that HWA and the old WCG had. Nor does it specifically state that God is a Family which we can be born into at the resurrection. Rather, Satan has cleverly shrouded the truth in a dark cloud of mystical terminology and paganistic rituals and twisted doctrines.

In addition, the Eastern tradition appears to have represented in its understanding of the nature of God and Christology, a small residue of its original unitarian or binitarian belief because, unlike the Roman Catholic definition of the Trinity which emphasises God's oneness, the Eastern tradition speaks of the Son as being eternally generated by the Father and the Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father - here we seem to have a faint glimpse of their ancient unitarian or binitarian doctrine. In this teaching the distinctness of the personalities within the unity of the Godhead are emphasised as opposed to the mystical unity of God which is emphasised by Rome. In turn, the Protestants even further define the personages of the trinitarian Godhead as separate entities.

"The Orthodox put the primary stress on the persons of the Godhead, and tend to regard the Father as the hypostatization of the divine essence. He is the unique fountainhead of Deity ..., which explains why the Orthodox cannot accept that the Holy Spirit derives his being from the Son as well as from the Father [as taught by Rome] ... The believer is called to a life of deification, which means transfiguration into the image and likeness of God ... Deification is based on the statement in Gn. 1:26, that man and woman are created in the image and likeness of God ..." but who after the fall lost this likeness. The holy spirit assists us in redemption by communicating to us "the energies of God himself, so that we may become partakers of the divine nature (2Pet. 1:4). The energies of God radiate from his essence and share its nature; but it must be understood that the

deified person retains his personal identity and is not absorbed into the essence of God" (*New Dictionary of Theology*, pages 217-218, 189).

" ... In Orthodox theology, the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father rests on the Son and becomes his energies. We who are called to the imitation of Christ are likewise called to manifest the energies of the Holy Spirit ... those redeemed by Christ will be like gods (*cf. e.g. Ps. 82:6*)" (page 189).

Residues of the view that the Bible expresses primarily the centrality of God the Father rather than the Son Who is in His image, may be seen forthrightly in the Orthodox doctrine.

Today, when evangelicals and protestants talk about being in the likeness of God or being made like God by taking on the divine nature, they do not mean anything remotely like the 'born into the God Family' as taught by HWA or the divinisation as taught by the Eastern Orthodox churches. They merely mean that one takes upon themselves divine characteristics in similitude to the angels, but that a human can never be part of the Godhead in the slightest sense. To them, that is utterly heretical. Instead they believe that the saved will be flesh for eternity, requiring replenishment by eating of the tree of life. Evangelicals in particular, so adept at infiltrating the Churches of God, find all of our teachings to be abominable, preferring to cohabit with Rome, as they do so snugly in North America.

POSTSCRIPT

I came across a paper at the finalisation of this study titled *Heresy Hunters* by Dennis De Jarnette. I would like to highlight some of the interesting items he raises, in point form, while maintaining his wording:

- The Greek Orthodox Church liturgy states: "In My Kingdom, says Christ, I shall be God with you as gods." (From the Canon for Matins of Holy Thursday, Ode 4, Troparion 3 as quoted in Ware, Timothy (Bishop) *The Orthodox Church* Penguin Books New York 1993 page 231).
- A whole group of Faith Preachers on Television's Trinity Broadcasting Company advocate the doctrine of Deification in a very liberal form. These TV preachers include Paul Crouch, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Robert Tilton, and Fred Price. Fred Price Comments:
- Man is the only creation of God that is in God's class ... I believe that through these scriptures we can very clearly see that God made man a god. (as quoted in Horton, Michael ed. *Agony of Deceit* Moody Press Chicago 1990 page 264)

This is almost identical to Herbert Armstrong's idea that Man is, or will be, of the God kind. Or Kenneth Hagin:

"Physically we are born of human parents and partake of their nature. Spiritually, we are born of God and partake of his nature. (Ibid. Why this troubled the editor of *Agony* is beyond me, this is a rewording of 2 Pet 1:14!)

- Or Earl Paulk: "Just as dogs have puppies and cats have kittens, so God has little gods". (Ibid.)
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- Maximus the Confessor:

"Mysterious self-abasement of the only begotten son with a view to the deification of our nature" (*Maximus the Confessor Classics* of Western Spirituality Ed John Farina Translated by George Berthold. Paulist Press New York 1985 page 102 Commentary on Our Father Prologue.)

" ... in the process of deification through virtue" (ie character development) (*Ibid.* page 197 *The Church's Mystagogy* Chapter 7)

I included Maximus because what he is saying here is similar to what the Church of God has always taught, that the purpose of life in the here and now is to build character. Or as Maximus puts it—deification through virtue.

- Augustine more than anyone else fine-tuned Christian Theology. He is one of the most radical of those who believe in the deification of man. Augustine said "Let us rejoice and give thanks: we are not only made Christians, but made Christ." (Underhill *Op Cited* page 251 Hom Jn 21.8) This is very similar to the most

radical advocates of Deification today the “Faith Preachers” who were talked about earlier. Not only this, but we are to “eat” God, probably through communion. This “eating of God” has an interesting effect on people:

I heard thy voice from on high crying unto me, ‘I am Food of the full-grown: grow, and then thou shalt feed on me. Nor shalt thou change me into thy substance as thou changest the food of thy flesh, but thou shalt be changed into Mine.’ (Augustine *Confessions The Nicea and Post Nicea Fathers* Ed. Schaff, Philip T & T Clark vol. 1 1989 page 109 Confessions bk. vii cap x).

Augustine is referring to this life. The Christian is deified by God in this life. In an echo of Irenaeus and Athanasius:

"The Son of God was made a partaker of mortality, so that mortal man might partake of divinity" (Underhill *Op Cited* page 251 Hom on Ps 52:6 36:646)

- St. Thomas Aquinas:

"For Dionysius teaches that the height of understanding is for man to become conjoined to God as the wholly unknown. He agrees but limits it and qualifies it. Although he uses not the term energy, he says that he can't see God's essence." (Aquinas, Thomas *Summa Theologiae* Black Friars/ Mc Graw Hill Gilby, Thomas O.P. translator vol.16 page 83 from question 3 article 8 "What Happiness is.")

Thomas is agreeing with Deification as a concept, but limits it and qualifies it to such an extent that he does not really believe it. Thomas's position is precisely what Bowman said when I quoted him on page 4.

I have several secondary sources which state that Thomas believes in Deification. A good example is the O'Brien's article on “Deification” in the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Religion*. (O'Brien, T. C. O.P. “Deification” in the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Religion* Ed Meagher O.P.S., Kevin Paul et al Corpus Publication Washington, DC.1970). He lists Th Aq ST 1a 103.4 1a2ae 110 as a source for the Aquinas's belief in Deification. Aquinas says that “...all things become like absolute Good ... creatures are guided toward a likeness of God.” (Ibid. vol. 3 103.4 translator of this volume T. C. O'Brien!) Aquinas here is referring to this life. But while this approaches Deification, it does not arrive there fully. O'Brien is here overstating his case. What makes this overstatement so interesting is that O'Brien was the translator of this volume of *Summa Theologiae*! He is obviously a Thomist scholar. Thomas Aquinas does believe in Deification but in a very limited way.

- What is blasphemy? To Symeon the New Theologian it is to deny that the Holy Spirit can be experienced today and that the Holy Spirit can Deify believers. I would not go that far, but Symeon does have a point. Today we have cheap grace. The Holy Spirit, assuming these nominal Christians have it, seems to have no effect on their lives. I heard one of these “Easter Christians” suggest that all regular Church-goers stay home on Easter so he could get better parking! My church has it's share of what I call “Passover Christians” too! The Holy Spirit should be more powerful than that, Symeon comments:

"As it [the Holy Spirit] regenerates you, it changes you from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal, from sons of men into sons of God and gods by adoption and grace."

There are some differences such as Symeon's emphasis on deification in this life. But his concept of Deification is similar to what the Church of God teaches.

- If you had to pick one modern theologian who best expresses the Orthodox Church you would probably choose Vladimir Lossky. His *Orthodox Theology* is a short summation of Orthodox Theology. Is Deification, to the Greek Orthodox, the fact the Holy Spirit dwells in each Christian? Lossky comments:

" ... instead of becoming 'disindividualized' to become 'cosmic' and to merge thus in a divine impersonal ... God allows him to 'personalize' the world" (Lossky, Vladimir *Orthodox Theology* Translated By Kesarcodi-Watson, Ian and Ihita St. Vlaciimir's Seminary Press Crestwood, NY 1989 page 70-71)

- The premier theologian of the twentieth century was probably C. S. Lewis. This has always struck me as odd since his training was in English Literature. Surely C. S. Lewis did not believe in Deification, did he?
- "God looks at you as if you were a little Christ: Christ stands beside you to turn you into one. I daresay this idea of a divine make-believe sounds rather strange at first. But, is it so strange really? Is that not how the higher thing always raises the lower? Another teaches her baby to talk by talking to it as if it understood long before it really does. We treat our dogs as if they were 'almost human': that is why they really become 'almost human' in the end." (Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity* Macmillan Co. New York 1972 page 165-166)

Even C. S. Lewis believes in Deification!

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