

THE RETRIEVAL OF DEIFICATION: HOW A ONCE-DESPISED ARCHAISM BECAME AN ECUMENICAL DESIDERATUM

PAUL L. GAVRILYUK

In the beginning of the twentieth century the notion of deification (*theōsis*, *theopoiōsis*) stood for everything that was generally considered exotic and misguided about Eastern Orthodox theology. In his magnum opus *History of Dogma*, Adolf von Harnack, a leading Protestant historian of the time, lamented the wrong turn that Christian theology took in the second century: “[W]hen the Christian religion was represented as the belief in the incarnation of God and as the sure hope of the deification of man, a speculation that had originally never got beyond the fringe of religious knowledge was made the central point of the system and the simple content of the Gospel was obscured.”¹ For Harnack, the idea of deification was a symptom of a more severe malaise, namely, Hellenization, which brought about the distortion and obfuscation of the simple biblical message of “the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men” by Greek metaphysics. The German historian’s conclusion was typical for his time.²

On the other end of the Protestant theological spectrum, Karl Barth was equally unimpressed. To accept divinization, Barth maintained, was to encourage very abstract talk about Christ’s human nature, and to shift the “christological center” of soteriology to the nebulous sphere of “high-pitched anthropology.”³ The primary targets of Barth’s meandering critique are the *apotheosis* projects of Hegel and Feuerbach,⁴ and what Barth saw as “the threat, in Lutheranism, of a divinization of a human nature of Jesus Christ and a parallel de-divinization of his divinity.”⁵ The general impression is that

Paul L. Gavrilyuk
Department of Theology, University of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105 USA
PLGAVRILYUK@stthomas.edu

Barth is all too willing to make *theosis* guilty by association, especially when he lists “the deification of the creature” among “the characteristics of ebionite Christology”⁶ (a veritable pirouette of historical imagination) and counts the (deplorable) Catholic devotion to the heart of Jesus as an instance of deification.⁷ Apparently, polemical resourcefulness at times frees theologians from the unrewarding responsibility to check the historical evidence.

Partly in reaction to this sort of critique, it has become common for Eastern Orthodox theologians to insist that the doctrine of deification represents a characteristically “Eastern” approach to the mystery of salvation and to contrast this doctrine with (in their opinion, deficient) redemption theories that were developed by Western theologians of the second millennium.⁸ It is little recognized that at least the *initial* impetus for retrieving the doctrine of deification in modern Orthodox theology did not come from the study of the Church Fathers, but from another corner: the idea of divine humanity (Sophia) developed by the nineteenth-century Russian philosopher, theologian, and poet Vladimir Soloviev (1853–1900). It is precisely sophiology, with its admittedly far-fetched assumption that deified humanity is an eternal aspect of God’s being, which gave the first impulse to the recovery of deification. Whatever the merits or demerits of the Russian sophiology, the twentieth-century Eastern Orthodox theologians, in a still-sounding crescendo of voices, came to regard deification as a sort of meta-doctrine, underlying and unifying nearly all the articles of faith, including the doctrine of God, creation, providence, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology.⁹ It is remarkable that despite its exalted status, the concept of deification is not mentioned explicitly in the dogmatic definitions of the first Seven Ecumenical Councils. The dearth of dogmatic precision has contributed to the concept’s considerable fluidity.

The late twentieth century has witnessed a dramatic change in the attitude of Western theologians towards the concept of deification. The notion that struck most Western observers as foreign, through the joint efforts of numerous scholars of the last generation, is gradually being drawn into the fold of the Western theological tradition. A growing number of Western theologians—Augustine, Anselm of Canterbury,¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas,¹¹ John of the Cross,¹² Martin Luther,¹³ John Calvin,¹⁴ Lancelot Andrewes,¹⁵ John and Charles Wesley,¹⁶ Jonathan Edwards,¹⁷ even the Radical Reformers, and so on—have now been claimed to have taught a version of deification. This is a formidable reversal of fortune, especially in light of the charges of obfuscation, idolatry, and heresy leveled against deification in less ecumenical times. While it would be premature to speak of universal acceptance—it is unlikely that some staunch opponents will ever be convinced¹⁸—it bears repeating that a growing number of Western theological minds find the doctrine deeply appealing. This article will discuss some representative examples of this trend and the factors that account for the doctrine’s growing popularity.

The early critics commonly construed the patristic notion of deification as making only a negligible improvement upon the pagan *apotheosis*, according to the manner of the ancient Greek heroes and Roman emperors. On this reading, there is not much difference between the remark of the emperor Vespasian, prematurely dying of excessive diarrhea—"Woe is me, I think I am becoming a god"¹⁹—and the early exchange formula, which appears in Irenaeus of Lyons: the Son of God "became what we are in order to make us what he is himself" (*Adv. Haer.* 5. Praef.). To their credit, most present-day critics of deification recognize that pagan *apotheosis* and Christian *theosis* are not quite the same thing.

In a ground-breaking study, *La divinization du chrétien d'après les pères grecs* (1938, English translation published in 2002), Jules Gross argued that in developing the doctrine of deification the Greek Fathers both drew upon the philosophical and religious resources of Hellenism and transcended their pagan context. The notion that human happiness consists in attaining likeness to God (*homoiosis theō*) was widely shared in late antiquity. But Christian theology transformed this common expectation by placing it in the context of Trinitarian metaphysics, by making the incarnation foundational for attaining divine likeness, and by insisting that, whatever else is meant by deification, the notion does not imply that a created being can become uncreated.

Responding to Harnack and others, Gross contended that far from being an instance of intellectual capitulation to pagan Hellenism, deification was a legitimate development of the biblical ideas of divine filiation and incorporation into Christ. Deification is "partaking in divine nature" (2 Pet. 1: 4), understood as conformity with divine perfections, particularly incorruptibility and immortality, and becoming by grace what God is by nature. Gross concluded that "from the fourth century the doctrine of divinization is fundamental for the majority of the Greek fathers. It forms a kind of center of their soteriology."²⁰

Norman Russell's *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (2004) builds upon Gross's study, surpassing it in scope and methodological precision. Russell offers a careful textual analysis of the deification vocabulary and contextualizes the contributions of individual patristic authors by considering wider theological problems that they have had to confront. He distinguishes between nominal (deification as a title of honor), analogical (humans become by grace what the Son of God is by nature), ethical (imitation of the moral attributes of God), and realistic (emphasizing transformation and participation in God) uses of the language of deification in various sources, showing how towards the fourth century these uses are integrated in a mature vision.²¹ With Gross, Russell sees the fourth century as a time during which the notion of deification became a central theme in patristic soteriology. Unlike Gross, who concludes his treatment with John of Damascus, Russell proposes that the theology of Maximus the Confessor is a climactic point in the development of the doctrine of deification. The British scholar

also provides a brief treatment of later Byzantine authors, such as Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas. Being largely expository, Russell's important work does not explicitly address the critique of deification in modern non-Orthodox theology. This task is undertaken in a number of historical studies to which we now turn.

In *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (1999), Anna Williams compares two thinkers, whose theological projects have come to symbolize the parting of the ways between West and East. More specifically, Aquinas's scholastic theological method is commonly contrasted with Palamas's greater reliance on religious experience; Palamas's insistence that divine energies are uncreated seems to contradict the assumption that grace is created; finally Aquinas's optimism that the beatified intellect can "see" the essence of God is unlikely to have been shared by Palamas, who insists that the divine essence, unlike the uncreated energies, remains unknowable even in the eschaton.

Williams argues that the theological systems of Aquinas and Palamas are not so far apart as has been previously held, and that the "ground of union" between them lies precisely in the doctrine of deification. While Williams admits that Aquinas rarely mentioned deification by name, she nevertheless finds the idea of deification implicit not only in Aquinas's teaching on virtues and habits, and on sanctification, but also in the overall *exitus-reditus* structure of the *Summa Theologiae*.²² According to Williams, the projects of Aquinas and Palamas converge in a common attempt to uphold the two poles of the doctrine of deification: God's uncompromised transcendence and creaturely participation in God. Williams maintains that the differences between Aquinas and Palamas stem from the fact that in the process of working out their respective views one theologian leans too much on the one pole, while neglecting the other.²³ In most cases, as she argues, the differences amount to matters of emphasis and semantics, rather than to substantial disagreement.

Introducing her study, Williams acknowledges that her historical approach is driven by an ecumenical concern to reverse the tendency of pitting Aquinas against Palamas.²⁴ Williams' project looks more like a systematic theologian's attempt to improve on the theologies of both Aquinas and Palamas by creating a higher domain in which their differences could be reconciled. This domain, as Williams argues convincingly, is participatory metaphysics. It is difficult to see, however, how substantive differences in Aquinas's and Palamas's projects could thereby be reduced to matters of semantics.

For example, Palamas's remarks concerning the nature of theological knowledge come nowhere near the speculative rigor of Aquinas's Aristotelian *scientia*. It is equally unconvincing that Palamas's essence/energies distinction is purely notional and not real: after all, deified persons, even in the eschaton, participate in the reality of divine energies, but not in the reality of divine essence. It might be entirely legitimate to interpret Aquinas's account

of virtues and habits as analogies of divine perfection in light of deification—but Aquinas himself does not make this connection. Reading Aquinas, Williams deploys the broadest definition of deification possible—participation in God—and then finds various instances of this idea in Thomas’s theology. As the reader will see, such a stretching of the concept of deification is characteristic not only of Williams’s study, but also of other works seeking to discover the points of contact between the Eastern Fathers and the Western theologians of the second millennium.

Is such a conceptual stretching legitimate, or should deification be defined more restrictively? How much of the context of concrete beliefs and practices associated with deification in the Greek Fathers should be retained? Most early patristic authors leave us only with scattered hints regarding the meaning of deification. Only towards the beginning of the sixth century, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite gives what appears to be the earliest explicit definition in *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 1. 3: “deification is the attaining of likeness to God and union with him so far as is possible.”²⁵ Here the author of *Corpus Dionysiacum* identifies deification with the height of the divine ascent, mystical union. But other authors (and Pseudo-Dionysius elsewhere) treat deification more expansively, and include not only the mystical union, but all stages of the process leading to such a union as a part of *theosis*.

It would appear to be relatively uncontroversial that the ontological concepts of participation, divine likeness, and union with God are constitutive of the notion of deification. A minimalist definition, assumed by Williams and others, holds that deification is participation in God.²⁶ One corollary of this definition, on the assumption of participatory metaphysics, is that all things are deified to unspecified degree: by participating in being, all existing things participate in God. As central as the notion of participation is for understanding deification, greater precision in using the term is in order.

My discussion of a workable definition of deification has thus far lacked an explicit Christological reference. It is generally agreed that the exchange formula “God became human so that humans could become god” (and its numerous versions) grounds deification in the incarnation. It should be noted that the meaning of the exchange formula, whatever its rhetorical merits, is far from being self-evident. In the context of the Arian controversy, the exchange formula was intended to express a belief that in the incarnation the Son of God, remaining fully God, assumed human nature; consequently, this divine act has enabled humans, remaining created beings, to become like God by grace. There is also a cluster of notions and practices that shed light upon various dimensions of deification. The list of such notions includes filial adoption, deliverance, spiritual battle, liberation from the power of the demonic, purification, forgiveness, justification, reconciliation, illumination, perfection, healing, sanctification, transfiguration, glorification, regeneration, imitation of Christ, incorporation into Christ, communion, second creation, election, eschatological consummation,

recapitulation, deformity, appropriation, sophianization, mystical union, and so on. In some contexts deification functions as an umbrella term covering most of these notions, while in other contexts deification is placed side by side with these notions as something altogether distinct from them. Yet it is common for contemporary non-Orthodox theologians to simply collapse deification into one of these categories. In a recent article Roger Olson questions this move: “[I]t is confusing to find ‘deification’ being used of something that has for a very long time been called ‘sanctification,’ or ‘union with Christ,’ or ‘communion with God,’ or even ‘being filled with God.’ Why now adopt the terminology of deification if one is unwilling to take on the older meaning of elevation above humanity into created goodness through divine energies?”²⁷ Olson follows Vladimir Lossky and Georgios Mantzaridis in the assumption that a proper doctrine of deification must include the Palamite essence/energies distinction as its constitutive element.²⁸

To complicate things further, the broader patristic context of *theosis* also presupposes certain anthropological assumptions and practices conducive to deification. Patristic authors commonly assume that ascetic struggle and participation in the sacramental life of the Church are prerequisites of deification. Such an assumption in turn depends upon the synergistic understanding of the operation of grace and free will, as well as a “high” view of the sacraments. In most discussions of deification in the Western authors these anthropological and sacramental assumptions are conveniently ignored.

Consider, for example, the sensational reinterpretation of Luther’s doctrine of justification in light of deification proposed by a group of Finnish scholars headed by Tuomo Mannermaa.²⁹ It is telling that this line of interpretation first emerged as a result of Mannermaa’s participation in the ecumenical dialogue between the representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church.³⁰ According to Mannermaa, *theosis* “as an expression of a foundational structure in the theology of Martin Luther” was “improbable even as a line of questioning” a generation ago, and “is indeed an extreme sort of formulation.”³¹ It should be observed that Mannermaa somewhat exaggerates the revolutionary character of his discovery, since, as the reader might recall, the presence of the notion in the vocabulary of Lutheran theology caused Karl Barth’s ire earlier in the century.

The Finnish scholars—most notably, Mannermaa, Risto Saarinen, and Simo Peura—argue that Luther advocated a version of participatory metaphysics and that justification for him involved an ontological transformation of the believer as a result of the union with Christ in faith. It is relatively uncontested that, especially in his early writings, Luther had recourse to the concept of deification. However, later Lutheran confessions found very little place for this notion. It is still a subject of debate in Luther scholarship just how essential these notions are for Luther’s account of justification and whether Luther’s philosophical stance was consistently realist.

It is beyond the scope of this article to argue either for or against the Finnish interpretation. Instead, I would like to return to the methodological question of how the meaning of deification is both stretched and shifted in this discussion. Consistent with patristic sources, two ideas are taken to be constitutive of *theosis*: participation in God and the indwelling of Christ.³² The extension of the notion of deification leads to two problems.

First, deification is subsumed under a more general concept of justification—a move that is not made by any of the patristic authors. In fact, in most patristic treatments of *theosis* justification plays next to no role at all. In light of the definition of *theosis* as the participation in God, the second point appears to be a puzzling category mistake: all things participate in God, but only rational beings can be justified. It seems, therefore, that the notion of justification cannot encompass deification (as defined earlier).

Second, “deification by grace alone through faith alone” has very little purchase in Eastern Orthodoxy. Most patristic authors simply refused to construe “works” as engaged in causal competition with grace. The soteriological primacy and necessity of grace are not undermined by the fact that human acceptance of divine help involves much struggle and ascetic effort. But Luther’s insistence on the passive acceptance of grace does not leave much space for the patristic paradox of human passivity and active cooperation of the free will with grace—a point at which Greek patristic and Lutheran anthropologies sharply part ways. Similarly, the emphasis on faith, while present in some patristic treatments of deification, is never meant to exclude the importance of other virtues. For the Greek Fathers, deification involves a life-long spiritual battle, the overcoming of vices and the climbing of the ladder of virtues (commonly cast in the language allowing both an Augustinian and a Pelagian reading). The anthropological assumptions and practices associated with deification in Luther are in a category of their own. As ecumenically fruitful as the discussion of *theosis* in Luther’s version of participatory metaphysics might be, the profound shift in the meaning of deification should not be ignored.

In *Calvin, Participation and the Gift* (2007), Todd Billings explores the possibility that Calvin’s theology may also contain a theme of deification. Billings’ central move is similar to that of Williams and Mannermaa, since he also focuses on Calvin’s understanding of human participation in God. However, unlike Williams and Mannermaa, Billings argues that there could be a distinct, yet legitimate way of speaking about deification in the West, which does not follow the Byzantine East in details.³³ Billings correctly cautions that the presence of the themes of union, participation and adoption in a given Reformation author is not enough to attribute to the author a doctrine of *theosis* similar to that found among the Greek Fathers.³⁴ Billings recognizes that Calvin’s rejection of the synergism of grace and free will, as well as Calvin’s insistence on the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer, makes the Reformer’s account of deification quite distinct from that

of the Greek Fathers. I would also add that Calvin's sacramental theology, for all of its complexities and ambiguities, lacks the distinctive emphasis of patristic theology upon the Eucharist as the main vehicle of deification.

An important collection of essays, co-edited by Michael Christensen and Jeffrey Wittung under the title *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Tradition* (2007) is based on the papers delivered at a conference held at Drew University in May 2004.³⁵ This historically-structured volume, jointly authored by eighteen contributors, covers select biblical sources (Pauline and Petrine epistles), patristic material (including Ephrem the Syrian and Coptic-Arabic author Bulus al Bushi), as well as Anselm, Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, Sergius Bulgakov, and Karl Rahner. Although various periods receive uneven coverage—for example, the discussion of the Western medieval theologians is limited mostly to Anselm—the volume surpasses all previously published works on deification in historical scope. The contributors to the volume build on the studies discussed earlier and also venture into previously unexplored fields.

Unfortunately, considerations of space permit me to discuss only two contributions to this important volume. Reflecting on the place of deification in Orthodox theology, Andrew Louth proposes that for the Orthodox *theosis* is not an isolated theologoumenon (i.e. authoritative theological opinion), but a theme of structural significance, a thread running through the doctrines of incarnation, cosmology, eschatology, anthropology, and soteriology. In light of deification as the *telos* of creation, incarnation becomes more than a divine rescue operation aimed at reversing the consequences of the Fall. Deification provides the context for recovering the cosmic significance of the incarnation: the union of divine and human natures in Christ becomes the foundation of the eschatological union of all created beings in God.³⁶

Surveying the state of current research on deification in the Western authors, Gösta Hallonsten offers a long-overdue note of caution. The author notes that there is a lack of clear definition of *theosis* in Williams' work on Aquinas. Deification is variously identified with participation in God, union with God, and sanctification. Yet, as Hallonsten rightly notes, the presence of the doctrine of sanctification in Aquinas, even if compatible with some aspects of the Eastern doctrine of *theosis*, does not entail that Aquinas has a doctrine of deification.³⁷ Hallonsten expresses similar reservations in the case of Luther's understanding of incorporation into Christ. Hallonsten proposes a helpful distinction between a theme and a doctrine of *theosis*. Deification as a theme may involve such notions as participation in divine nature, filial adoption, union with God and so on. The doctrine of *theosis*, Hallonsten insists, needs to be defined more precisely. The doctrine proper must include certain anthropological assumptions and a comprehensive soteriological vision.³⁸ Hallonsten's valuable distinction between a theme and a doctrine has been adopted by Billings in his work on Calvin.

The retrieval of deification in Western authors undertaken by contemporary scholars proceeds along two lines: some emphasize that the meaning of deification in a given Western author is fundamentally identical or continuous with the patristic use of the concept (Williams, Mannermaa); while others more cautiously speak of a distinctive Western re-interpretation of the theme of deification (Hallonsten, Billings, Olson). The second interpretation is more plausible historically, although perhaps less ecumenically appealing.

To Hallonsten's distinction between the theme and the doctrine of deification one should also add Norman Russell's helpful typology of nominal, analogical, ethical, and realistic uses of deification language. The broadest definition of deification includes such ideas as participation in God, likeness of God, and union with Christ, along with the exchange formula. A considerably more developed understanding of deification includes synergistic anthropology, sacramental realism, and essence/energies distinction.

According to the historical scholarship surveyed earlier, the consensus on deification between Palamas, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin, amounts to the proposition that each theologian espoused a version of participatory metaphysics.³⁹ Thus the consensus obtains only for the broadest possible definition of deification, not for the more developed one. Sometimes these four theologians draw upon the same biblical images in their respective soteriologies. It should be emphasized, however, that the differences in their anthropological assumptions, in their understandings of the operation of grace, and in their sacramental theologies cannot be reduced to semantics.

The present retrieval of the deification theme in an impressive number of Western theological authorities cannot be attributed simply to diligent historical excavation work. It is probably more accurate to describe the retrieval of deification as a *theological achievement* thinly disguised as historical theology. For example, Mannermaa's insistence that *theosis* is a "foundational structure" in Luther's theology, whatever the historical merits of such a claim, has had the impact of casting in a very different light, perhaps even rendering incoherent, the Lutheran doctrine of forensic justification. Therefore, the uncovering of *theosis* in Luther should not be misread as a benign ecumenical exercise. It is a courageous attempt to revise the doctrine "upon which the church stands or falls." Two things happen in the process: the standard account of Luther's soteriology undergoes an alteration and the meaning of deification shifts considerably. Justification is no longer a "legal fiction;" *theosis* is now a species of justification. Such moves involve a constant going back and forth between the historical exposition of Luther's writings and constructive theology. Although the consequences of talking of *theosis* in Aquinas, or in some Anglican theologians and in the Wesleys, are less seismic, the amount of conceptual stretching that such a move requires places the recent studies in a mixed category of historical-expositions-turned-ecumenical-overtures.

A question arises: what would account for such a trans-confessional appeal of the idea of deification today? My answers to this question will be admittedly partial and tentative. Obviously, there is now more systematic interest among Western theologians in the heritage of the Christian East. Facile dismissals of the distinctive theological claims of the Eastern Orthodox tradition, so common in Harnack's time, are rare today. The rhetorical charges that the doctrine of deification is a heresy or poetic nonsense are absent from contemporary discussions.

There are strong indications that we are living through a new wave of *ressourcement*. Unlike the first wave, which produced *la nouvelle théologie* in Roman Catholicism, this new wave is trans-confessional, involving Roman Catholic, Evangelical, main-line Protestant and Anglican scholars. The result is a reshaping of the field of systematic theology, informed by a deeper engagement with patristic resources and greater ecumenical sensitivity. In this regard, Daniel Keating's *Deification and Grace* (2007) published as a part of the series "Introductions to Catholic Doctrine" is a well-informed and lucid exposition of the riches of patristic notion of deification, which, as Keating argues, should be fully owned by the West.⁴⁰ In Roman Catholic theology, Keating's predecessors who also sought to recover the notion of deification include Teilhard de Chardin, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Catherine Mowry LaCugna. Among the Lutherans, the controversial results of the Finnish research have been embraced by Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson. In other Christian communions the interest in our theme is equally strong.⁴¹

Deification offers a vision of redemption that moves the discussion beyond the traditional opposites of, say, penal substitution and moral influence theories of atonement. Certainly, the emphasis upon the transforming character of the gifts of grace, characteristic of the charismatic movement, can be best captured in therapeutic categories akin to deification, rather than in juridical categories. In addition, deification language tends to promote the use of more comprehensive ontological categories in soteriology, rather than solely juridical and moral categories. When the notion of creaturely participation in God is placed at the heart of theology—whether as a presupposition, or as a goal, or both—the relationship between the natural and supernatural orders, natural and revealed theology, freedom and grace, secular and sacred spheres, is reconceived.

As one example of such a re-conceptualization, consider the following theological manifesto: "The central theological framework of radical orthodoxy is 'participation' as developed by Plato and reworked in Christianity, because any alternative configuration perforce reserves a territory independent of God. The latter can lead only to nihilism (though in different guises). Participation, however, refuses any reserve of created territory, while allowing finite things their own integrity."⁴² While it is dubious whether participatory metaphysics is the only ontology that avoids the pitfalls of nihilism, it

cannot be doubted that this ontology is incompatible with the modern presupposition of the self-enclosed, self-explanatory, and self-perpetuating sphere of the secular.

The renaissance of the *theosis* theme in contemporary systematic theology is a measure of the Western theologians' willingness to engage constructively with a typically "Eastern" idea. Clearly, the notion of *theosis* is no longer "owned" by the Christian East, if such one-sided ownership was ever a historical possibility. As I have emphasized in this review article, in the ecumenical discussions the meaning of deification is often stretched indefinitely. If I may venture a conditional forecast, deification, provided that its full implications are realized, will work like a time-bomb in due course producing a "creative destruction" of the soteriological visions developed by the Churches of the Reformation. Whether the idea will have the power to move these churches closer to the Christian East in other respects, say by developing a sacramental understanding of the world or synergistic anthropology, time will show.

NOTES

- 1 Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1901), Vol. 2, p. 318. As Fergus Kerr notes, "One need only track the references to deification in the index to Harnack's great work to see how angry the theme makes him." See Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 155.
- 2 See Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov, eds. *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006), p. 8 n. 20, 21.
- 3 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV. 2. *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, edited by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), §64, pp. 81–82. Hereafter cited as CD.
- 4 Karl Barth, CD, I. 2. §22, p. 759.
- 5 Karl Barth, CD, IV. 2. §64, p. 68; IV. 1. §59, 181.
- 6 Karl Barth, CD, I. 2. §1, p. 19.
- 7 Karl Barth, CD, I. 2. §15, p. 138.
- 8 See Vladimir Lossky, "Redemption and Deification," in *In the Image and Likeness of God*, edited by John H. Erickson and Thomas E. Bird, (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974/2001), p. 99, where deification is sharply contrasted with Anselm's satisfaction theory. More recently, see Robert G. Stephanopoulos, "The Doctrine of *Theosis*," in *The New Man: an Orthodox and Reformed Dialogue* (New Brunswick, NJ: Agora Books, 1973), pp. 149–161; Daniel B. Clendenin, "Partakers of Divinity: The Orthodox Doctrine of *Theosis*," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37/3 (September, 1994), pp. 365–379; at p. 365.
- 9 See, e.g., Emil Bartos, *Deification in Eastern Orthodox Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999); Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984).
- 10 N. R. Kerr, "St Anselm: *Theoria* and the Doctrinal Logic of Perfection," in M. J. Christensen and Jeffrey A. Wittung, eds., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).
- 11 A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- 12 David B. Hart, "The Bright Morning of the Soul: John of the Cross on *Theosis*," *Pro Ecclesia* 12/3 (Summer, 2003), pp. 324–344.
- 13 Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).
- 14 J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

- 15 A. M. Allchin, *Participation in God: A Forgotten Strand in Anglican Tradition* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1984).
- 16 S. T. Kimbrough, "Theosis in the Writings of Charles Wesley", *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 52 (2008), pp. 199–212.
- 17 Richard B. Steele, "Transfiguring Light: The Moral Beauty of the Christian Life According to Gregory Palamas and Jonathan Edwards," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 52 (2008), pp. 403–439.
- 18 For example, Professor Bruce McCormack of Princeton Theological Seminary has called the idea of deification "idolatrous" in a public lecture given at Providence College as a part of "Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering" Symposium held on March 30–31, 2007.
- 19 Suetonius, *Life of Vespasian*, 23. 4.
- 20 Jules Gross, *The Divinization of the Christian According to the Greek Fathers*, trans. Paul A. Onica (Anaheim, CA: A & C Press, 2002), p. 271.
- 21 Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, p. 9.
- 22 Williams, *The Ground of Union*, pp. 158–159.
- 23 Williams, *The Ground of Union*, pp. 173–174.
- 24 Williams, *The Ground of Union*, pp. 8–27.
- 25 Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, p. 1.
- 26 Cf. Williams, *The Ground of Union*, p. 32: "First, we can safely say that where we find references to human participation in divine life, there we assuredly have a claim specifically of *theosis*."
- 27 Roger E. Olson, "Deification in Contemporary Theology," *Theology Today* 64/2 (July, 2007), pp. 186–200; at p. 193.
- 28 Vladimir Lossky, *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976/1998); Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man* (Crestwood, NY: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984); Olson, "Deification in Contemporary Theology," p. 199.
- 29 The results of this research, which has been carried out since 1970's, are conveniently summarized by the main contributors themselves in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union With Christ* (1998).
- 30 Tuomo Mannermaa, *The Christ Present in Faith: Justification and Deification; [a contribution to] the Ecumenical Dialog*, (Hannover, 1989) [English trans. *The Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*, trans. Thomas S. Obersat (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005.); "Why is Luther So Fascinating? Modern Finnish Luther Research," in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, p. 1.
- 31 Tuomo Mannermaa, "Theosis as a Subject of Finnish Luther Research," *Pro Ecclesia* 4/1 (Winter, 1994), pp. 37–47; at p. 37.
- 32 Tuomo Mannermaa, "Theosis as a Subject of Finnish Luther Research", p. 42.
- 33 J. Todd Billings, "John Calvin: United to God through Christ," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Tradition*, p. 201.
- 34 J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation and the Gift*, p. 55.
- 35 Two contributors to the volume, Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov, have concurrently co-edited their own collection: *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006). This collection, containing contributions from seven scholars, is more modest in scope and less even in quality than *Partakers of the Divine Nature*. The volume includes a well-documented introduction, one chapter dedicated to the Old Testament, one chapter on 2 Peter, the next six chapters on patristic authors, and the last two chapters dedicated to T. F. Torrance and Vladimir Soloviev.
- 36 Andrew Louth, "The Place of *Theosis* in Orthodox Theology," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, edited by Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), p. 43.
- 37 Gösta Hallonsten, "Theosis in Recent Research: a renewal of interest and a need for clarity," pp. 282–283.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 287.
- 39 My conclusion draws upon the valuable discussion in William T. Cavanaugh, "A Joint Declaration? Justification as Theosis in Aquinas and Luther," *The Heythrop Journal* 41/3 (July, 2000), pp. 265–280.

- 40 Daniel A. Keating, *Deification and Grace* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007).
- 41 See Olson, "Deification in Contemporary Theology," pp. 188–189. Olson's comprehensive lists also includes an Anglican theologian A. M. Allchin, Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann, and evangelical theologians such as Clark Pinnock, Stanley Grenz, Robert Rakestraw, Daniel Clendenin, and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen.
- 42 John Milbank, Graham Ward and Catherine Pickstock, "Introduction", in J. Milbank et al. (eds.) *Radical Orthodoxy* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 3.