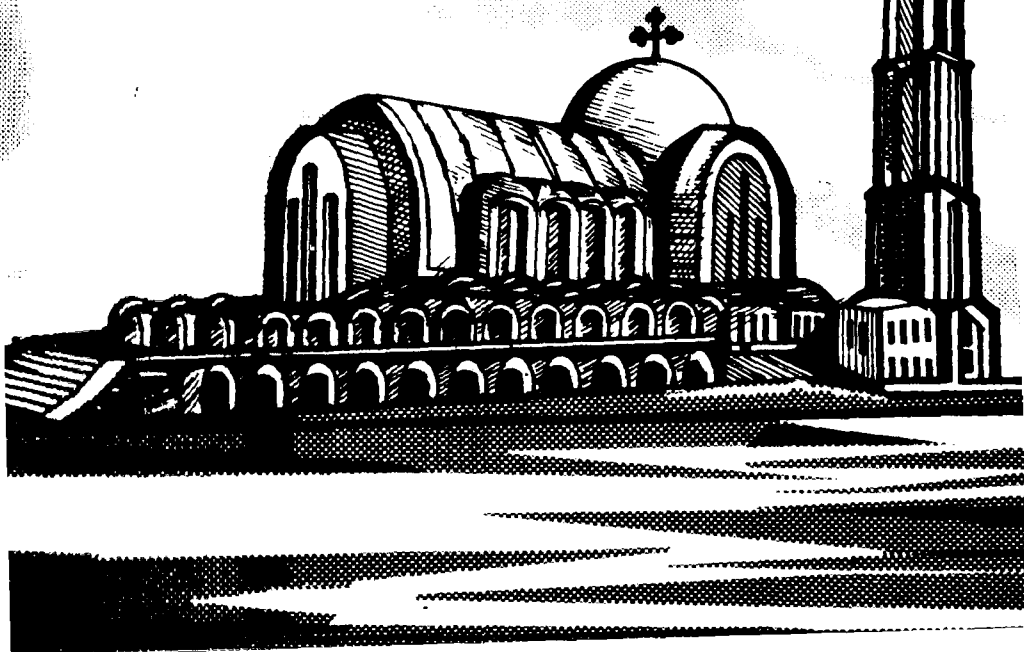


Comparative Theology
(5)

MAN'S DEIFICATION !!
PART ONE

H. H. Pope Shenouda III



**COPTIC ORTHODOX
PATRIARCHATE**



See f St. Mark

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**MAN'S DEIFICATION !!
PART ONE**

By
H. H. Pope Shenouda III

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*H. H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark*

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things.”

(Jas 3: 1, 2)

Blot out guilt through teaching

(Didascalia)

- Deification is the first sin in which an angel fell.
- With the same lust of deification Satan tempted the first man.
- God, therefore, commanded man, saying, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Ex 20: 3)
- The tragic end of King Herod is an evidence of the danger of such a thought.
- Deification means having the divine attributes, so, it is impossible to ascribe to any of the church fathers the call for deification.
- Never has any Father said that the divine nature is united with the human nature!
- Never have the Fathers said that the goal of the Divine Incarnation has been fulfilled, or reached its utmost, on the Day of Pentecost!
- Never have they said that the Church is a human nature united with a divine nature!
- Never have they said that the church is the extension of the Divine Incarnation!
- Never have they said that the apostles, though of mankind, were hypostatically united with the Holy Spirit!

- Those who call for deification support their view with the words, “*I said: You are gods,*” and the words, “*The glory You gave Me I have given them.*”
- They speak about the coming down of the Holy Spirit ... and ... of the Lord Christ!
- Is God not other with respect to man?!
- Are we clothed with the divinity from inside and outside?!
- Do we eat and drink the divinity in the Eucharist?!
- Does the Holy Spirit shape us in the nature of the Son of God?!
- What dignity does man have in Christ?
- Is Bethlehem the birthplace of all mankind?!
- What is the meaning of the apostle’s words, “We shall be like Him”?
- What is the meaning of the words: “He took what belongs to us, and gave us what belongs to Himself”?
- What is the meaning of the phrase, “*partakers of the divine nature*”?

Introduction:

Had the deification of man –with its details- been a mere slip of the pen or thought, I would not have given it such a great concern. But this view is extending and spreading in many books of the same author, and his disciples defend it desperately.

Had the issue been mere defence by the disciples in favor of their master, I would have given them excuse that they do it out of their love to him. But the matter goes far beyond, as they attempt to prove that this issue of “deification” is the same thought of the church Fathers and the heritage of the saints!! They allege that they are just reiterating the views of the church Fathers. It is therefore necessary to explain the whole matter:

1 - Deification is the first sin of an angel :

The lust of deification is the first slip of the rational will-free beings.

Satan was an angel of the rank of the Cherubim (Ezek 28: 14, 16).

The Lord God said about him, “*You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty;*” “*You were the anointed Cherub who covers;*” “*You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.*” (Ezek 28: 12, 14, 15)

How then did that covering Cherub fall? How was iniquity found in him? This is explained in the Book of Isaiah: “*For you*

have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ... 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to sheol to the lowest depths of the pit." (Is 14: 13-15)

2 – With the same lust of deification Satan tempted the first man:

Satan said to Eve, “*you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*” (Gen 3: 5) But when man desired the glory of divinity even though in one aspect- he lost the glory of humanity which he had.

This lust of divinity led to polytheism, to paganism, and to the worship of kings and pharaohs.

3 – You shall have no other gods before Me (Ex 20: 3):

This command is the first of the Ten Commandments which God gave man as a warning against such a fall. If it is hard to have other gods before God, it will –no doubt- be even harder that man himself be a god!!

4 – The seriousness of deification is evident in the calamity of king Herod:

King Herod did not say he was a god, nor did he desire it. But when he gave an oration to the people, while arrayed in the royal apparel, and the people kept shouting: The voice of a god and not of a man, Herod did not rebuke them. It seemed that he consented to their words. So, “*Immediately an angel of the*

Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.” (Acts 12: 22, 23) To such an extent is the sin of man’s deification dangerous!

5 – Man’s deification means that man acquires the divine attributes:

That man becomes a god means that he becomes unlimited, filling heaven and earth, testing the hearts and thoughts, knowing the sins, omnipresent, and working miracles by his own power ..!!

That man becomes a god means that he becomes holy and infallible. That man becomes a god means that he is not created and is not subject to death; for God is eternal, without a beginning, and is immortal!

Who then dare ascribe these attributes to man?!

6 – It is impossible that any of the Fathers has ever advocated deification of man:

If any author makes such an allegation, it will be because either he has not understood well what that holy Father said, or he has misinterpreted the Greek words of that Father; for those brothers pride themselves in being learned in Greek language!

It may also be an attempt on the part of those authors to hide themselves behind the Fathers, ascribing to them false sayings which they had not uttered nor meant. It is another fault of those authors ..

I get struck with amazement when I read in the works of those authors, who advocate man’s deification, words such as: “the Fathers say,” “the teachings of the Fathers can be summed

up in ...,” “the Fathers’ interpretation of this point is” I would ask them: Have you read all the sayings and commentaries of the Fathers?! It is well known that it is not sufficient –in order to understand the views of a certain holy person- to take one phrase said by that saint or ascribed to him on a certain occasion. Rather, a study ought to be conducted of the views of that saint as represented in all his works.

Usually a theologian specializes in the sayings of one Father only, and a student for Ph.D. studies one book only of a certain Father. How then dare anyone say, “all the Fathers say,” or “the commentary of the Fathers,” or “summary of the Fathers’ teaching” ...?!

Whoever pursues accuracy, especially in theological issues, should evade such boldness.

However, those advocates of man’s deification consider anybody who rejects this doctrine: “is governed by the biological birth”, i.e. bodily birth, not birth from above, and is refraining from adopting such a doctrine out of mean-spiritedness, or – if of good intention, feeling that the grace of Christ is too much for him !![⊕] .

Many Wrong Doctrines

The word “Deification” and its derivatives are not the only words used by those authors; for there are other terms giving the same meaning, such as the following:

[⊕] “Orthodox Patristic Principles” Part 2. p. 6

**7 – They advocate a unity between a divine nature
and a human nature:**

This view, as stated in the author's book entitled "Pentecost", is unacceptable, because it is theologically well known that the Lord Christ –glory be to Him- is the only One in whom the divine nature was united with the human nature in His Incarnation. Did the same happen to the apostles, on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them?! Concerning the Day of Pentecost the author says:

[We are then, symbolically, before a bush burning with fire, or before a divine nature united with a human nature according to the interpretation of the symbol, or before the image of the prophecy of the birth of Christ from the Virgin as we have received through the noble tradition.]

Nay. We have not received from the noble tradition that a unity has happened between a divine nature and a human nature when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on the Day of Pentecost.

The Divinity of Christ is fought by one of two means:

Either by lowering the Lord Christ to the level of a human being –as the Arians did; or by lifting mankind up to the level of Christ- as the advocates of deification do, or as said about the unity between a divine nature and a human nature on the Day of Pentecost! In this way there will be no difference between man and Christ, and the Divine Incarnation will not be the miracle that belongs solely to the Lord Christ; for the apostles, and thereupon the whole church, will have resembled Him in that.

In the same book “Pentecost” the author says:

8 – The goal of the Divine Incarnation was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost:

The author then explains, saying:

[That which had begun in Bethlehem took place and was completed in the Upper Room.]

By “that which had begun in Bethlehem”, the author means –with respect to the Divine Incarnation- the unity between the divine nature and the human nature in the Person of Christ. This same unity was completed in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost. Thus the goal of the Divine Incarnation was fulfilled! On another page of the same book they introduced a certain expression that gained their admiration and pleasure, but which they quoted wrongly, that is “We have become Christ”!

9 – The Church –as the same author says in the same book- is a human nature united with a divine nature!

He says: [Christ has united with the church, therefore the church acquired all that which belongs to Christ.]

The phrase “all that which belongs to Christ” implies an evident theological error ..

- Christ has a Godhead: this the church has not acquired.
- Christ has a peculiar relationship with the Father, which He describes, saying, “*I and My Father are One*” (Jn 10: 30) This relationship the church has not acquired.
- Christ is Unlimited with respect to time, place, and power; this attribute the church has not acquired.

How serious is the word “all” when used with theological terms! It should be used very carefully and strictly ..

Although I had warned, a long time ago, against the error contained in the book entitled “Pentecost”, it was reprinted a second time in 1981, and a third time in 2002. Moreover, the same errors were repeated in another book entitled “The Divine Incarnation” –on the last page of that book- in the years 1978 and 1988. Recently, that author’s disciples published a book in his defence, and gave it the title: “The Church, the Bride of Christ: a human nature united with a divine nature”!

In this book they confirm and persist in the same wrong views. Maybe they want to lead the readers to something like the heresy of “Pantheism”! For they say that all are one being: a divine nature united with a human nature!! We shall refute – God willing- this view as well as other views related to the same subject and introduced in other books by the same author.

In his book “The Divine Incarnation” the author insists on the same views; for, concerning the church and the Divine Incarnation, he says:

10 – The church is an extension of the Divine Incarnation:

The author says: [The church is an extension of the mystery of the Divine Incarnation, that is the mystery of Christ;] [The church becomes an extension of the Indescribable Hypostatic Unity established by Christ between His divine nature and His human nature deep within His Person since the conception;] [The reality of the church, that is His divine body,

as the entity of the church springs mainly from the entity of the body of Christ.] This expression the author took from the French father (scholar) De Manoire.

The author continues, saying: [Therefore the church is considered an extension of the far-reaching divine body which fills heaven and earth. And the mystery of the church is considered an extension of the Indescribable Mystery of the Divine Incarnation; that is the mystery of the unity between the divine nature and the human nature in Christ.]

The author here mixes the church as congregation, as the bride or body of Christ, and the body of Christ born from the Virgin and united with the divine nature in the Virgin's womb.

The author further says that through the Holy Spirit who the disciples had received on the Day of Pentecost: [Everybody, in this new fullness, has become partaker of the divine nature!] [Therefore, the church appears as mainly established on this partaking of the divine nature through the Holy Spirit. It appears in its depth as a unity between the divine nature and the human nature through the Holy Spirit; as an extension of the hypostatic unity that took place in Christ]!! (The author's book "The Divine Incarnation" p. 41, 42).

Who can theologically accept such words, or consent to publish them to people?!

Who can accept such a view: that the church, the congregation, be considered as an extension of the hypostatic unity between the divine nature and the human nature? Is it true that the church is united with the Godhead as an extension of the Divine Incarnation? Does the author advocate deification of the church?!

This reminds us of another phrase in the book “Pentecost”:

11 – The apostles (though human beings) have united with the PERSON of the Holy Spirit!

The author repeats the same words in his book “The Divine Incarnation” p. 45.

Since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, hypostatic unity with Him will be a form of deification, or a Divine Incarnation! It is a famous heresy!

If man is hypostatically united with God’s Spirit, man will never sin, nor can be accused of “grieving the Spirit” (Eph 3: 30) or “quenching the Spirit” (1 Thess 5: 15). Man also will not be subject to the apostle’s warning, “*If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him.*” (1 Cor 3: 17) How could he defile the temple of God while united with the Holy Spirit – hypostatically?! Such hypostatic dwelling of the Spirit will certainly make man infallible ...

The dwelling of the Holy Spirit is an act of grace, not hypostatic.

Therefore, in the Third Hour Prayer of the Agbeya, we say to the Lord:

[We give You thanks for raising us up for prayer at this holy hour, at which You poured richly **the grace** of Your Holy Spirit on Your blessed and honored disciples in the form of tongues of fire ... May You bestow on us **the grace** of Your Holy Spirit and purify us from the impurity of the body and soul ..] Notice how we always use the word “grace”, and never use the words “the Person of the Holy Spirit” ...

However, the grace of the Holy Spirit which we can receive does not make us lose the gift of freedom.

We have the full choice to accept the work of the Holy Spirit within us, and to take part with Him in action, and thereby to come into communion with Him. We also are free to resist the Spirit, to grieve the Spirit, or to quench the Spirit. We should say to the Lord about Him: [Do not take this away from us, O Good Lord, but renew within us ..] And to the Holy Spirit we should say: [We ask You to graciously come and dwell within us.]

Notice that all the time we speak about the descending and the dwelling of the Spirit, not the unity with us. Likewise, St. Paul the Apostle in (1 Cor) speaks about the dwelling of the Spirit, not the unity.

Having advocated a hypostatic dwelling of the Holy Spirit in man, those advocates of man's deification went even further to speak about the dwelling of Christ within us!!

In his book "May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith" the author holds the view that:

12 – Christ dwells hypostatically in man!!

In p. 27 of the aforementioned book, the author, speaking about the Lord Christ, says:

[With the same divine fullness we live in Him, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; for when Christ dwells, the divine fullness dwells.]

How strange and daring are these words: "that we live with the same divine fullness"!!

Actually, the dwelling of Christ within us is not hypostatic, not with the same divine fullness, but it is dwelling through faith, according to the verse which the author quotes as a title for his book: "*Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*" (Eph 3: 17)

However, the author insists that Christ dwells with the fullness of His divinity in man! In p. 5, 6 of the aforementioned book, he says:

[It is true that the birthplace of Christ –according to history- is a manger of clay, but spiritually it is impossible that Christ dwells, with the fullness of His divinity – except in man. It is His mission for which He came down from heaven ..]

"Christ .. with the fullness of His divinity .. in man"!!
What a terrifying thought !!

And see what he says: "It is impossible that Christ dwells, with the fullness of His divinity, except in man"!! How strange indeed!! Christ dwells, with the fullness of His divinity everywhere: in heaven, and on earth .. What is the meaning of the word "impossible" here then?!

This talk about the dwelling of Christ with the fullness of His divinity leads us to the Eucharist Sacrament.

What is their view concerning this Sacrament?

13 – Do we eat and drink the Godhead in the Eucharist Sacrament?

Their view in this regard is clear in their book "Orthodox Patristic Principles" – part 2, p. 34, where they say:

[How amazing! Here we drink the Godhead – mystically of course. We drink the life-giving blood, according to the grace, not according to a bodily measure ..]

But we would say to them:

- The Lord Christ says, “*Who eats My flesh and drinks My blood ..*” (Jn 6: 56). He did not say: who eats and drinks My Godhead ...
- God is Spirit (Jn 4: 24), and the Spirit cannot be eaten or drunk ...
- If a person –supposedly- eats the divine nature, and this nature abides in him, he will become –through the communion- a god, and those in the church will have to bow down before him!!
- There is also a problem here: What about those who partake of Sacrament undeservedly? Do they also eat and drink the Godhead? And do they also eat and drink judgment to themselves, at the same time (1 Cor 11: 29)??

The advocates of man’s deification build their doctrine on a misunderstanding of Psalm: “*I said : You are gods, and all of you are children of Most High.*” (Ps 82: 6) So, let us analyze the words of the Psalm:

14– The meaning of the words “I said you are gods”:

By the word “gods” here is meant “lords” or “masters”, not the Godhead. This is evident from the words that followed: “*But you shall die like men and fall like one of the princes.*” (Ps 82: 7) Certainly those who die or fall are not gods, for God is

holy and immortal. So the proper meaning of “gods” in this phrase is “lords” or “masters”, and God is the Lord of lords and the Master of masters.

The term “god” is used with this meaning in many parts of the Holy Scripture, as in (Ex 7: 1), where the Lord says to Moses, “*See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh.*” It does not mean that Moses was the creator of Pharaoh, but merely a master.

Again when Moses asked to be excused from the mission under the pretext of being not eloquent, the Lord said to him, “*Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well ... I will be with your mouth and with his mouth ... he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.*” (Ex 4: 14-16)

By these words God meant that Moses suggests to Aaron what to say, not be a creator to him, because Aaron preceded Moses in birth ...

There was no need then for the advocates of man’s deification to use this verse in their book “Orthodox Patristic Principles” Part 2, p. 25

Regrettably, they quote the phrase: [We shall be like Him according to the richness of His goodness, and we shall become gods and children of God]!! Moreover, they ascribe this wrong concept to one of the church fathers!!

Now let us explain the meaning of the words "like Him":

15 – The meaning of the words of the apostle: "We shall be like Him":

St. John the Apostle was speaking about the Second Coming of Christ, and about us becoming like Him in the other world: with glorious bodies. St. Paul the Apostle said similar words in his Epistle to the Philippians about the Lord Christ: "*Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able ...*," (Phil 3: 21) and also in (1 Cor 15: 44).

See what St. John says, "*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself ...*" (1 Jn 3: 2, 3). St. John does not say we are like Him in the divine nature, but is speaking about our state on His Second Coming. However, he says: "*and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be.*"

Nevertheless, the advocates of man's deification stick to the word "like" and use it out of its proper place and meaning. In their book "Orthodox Patristic Principles" Part 2, p. 24, they say: [The Lord was born from the Virgin in Bethlehem for our sake, not for His own sake. He became as one of us that we may be like Him.]

And in p. 13, 14 of the same book, the author says: [To be like Christ is a firm hope based upon a definite text that needs no interpretation, but does not mean equality. For the word "like" in the New Testament, in particular, means partaking of the same nature, not equality.] Then the author gives some

examples from the Scripture that have nothing to do with man's deification ..! However, they speak about equality in various passages.

They continue the same subject in p. 14, saying:

[Behind this usage of the word lies the actuality of the creation of man in God's image and likeness (Gen 1: 26). Then Christ came to renew our corrupted dead image, and restore it to its sublime place. If this hope is lost, in what form or likeness we shall reveal ourselves? And what biological power on earth, or in heaven itself, can transform man into the glorious and triumphant image of Christ except partaking of the origin, that is God who created us after His likeness?]

When God created us in His own image, after His likeness, He did not create us in His own nature; otherwise man would have never fallen ..

He made us in His image in purity, in authority, in free will, in reasoning ... etc. However, the restoration of our original image does not mean our return to deification or our partaking of the origin, i.e. God, as they say!!

16 – What is the meaning of the words: “He took what belongs to us, and gave us what belongs to Himself”?

This phrase is quoted from the Hymn, and they repeat it more than once in their book “Orthodox Patristic Principles” Part 2, p. 33, 34, as if it were a reliable evidence of man's deification!

The fact is that God has not given us what belongs to Himself meaning the divine nature, at all.

He gave us righteousness, filiation, and the authority to loose and bind in priesthood (Mt 18: 18; Jn 20: 22, 23) He gave us –or rather to some of us- the power to work miracles (not by our nature, but in His name). St. Peter the Apostle made this clear when he healed the lame man at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful (Acts 3: 12, 16)

Certainly He has not given us the divine nature which belongs solely to Himself, otherwise we would not sin nor die, and would become unlimited!!

The same applies to His taking what belongs to us: He did not take everything, but He became like us in everything except sin ...

In theological issues we should be precise. We ought not take the general meaning of the words but rather understand every word within its context and concept ..

Now, in the same way, we shall tackle the significance of the Lord's words concerning His disciples:

**17 - The glory which You gave Me I have given them
(Jn 17: 22)**

The glory of the Lord Christ is unlimited, so it is understood that He did not give all His glory to His disciples.

He did not give them the glory of the Godhead. It is impossible and contradicts the Lord's words in the Book of Isaiah: "My glory I will not give to another." (Isa 42: 8)

They received many glories with respect to gifts and authority, but within the limits which their human nature could bear. All that which He gave them was human spiritual glory.

There was no need, therefore, for the author to quote this verse in his book “My Christ dwell in your hearts through faith” p. 28. There was no need also for his disciples to quote the same words in an attempt to assert man’s deification.

We would therefore repeat here what we had previously said, that we ought not take the general meaning of the words, nor use the word “all” in theology without careful examining.

Also, in his book “Pentecost” the author says (and repeats it at the end of his book “The Divine Incarnation”): [Christ has united with the church, so the church acquired all that belongs to Christ.]

Actually the church did not acquire all that belongs to Christ, neither His divine nature, nor His unity with the Father (Jn 10: 30).

Here another question arises:

18 – Does the Holy Spirit shape us in the nature of the Son of God?

The author says about baptism: [After the Holy Spirit gives birth to us in baptism and shapes us in the nature of the Son of God, he cannot but testify to our spirits that we are God’s children.]

The fact is that the nature of the Son of God is the Divine Nature united with the human nature. This we never receive in baptism. Therefore the Holy Spirit cannot shape us in the nature of the Son of God. In baptism we are born of water and

the Spirit, and we are called God's children in another sense. That is why the Lord Christ is called "the Only-begotten Son" (Jn 3: 16, 18; 1: 18)

The nature of the Son of God is of essence and divinity of the Godhead, Sonship from eternity. We, on the opposite, are children through faith (Jn 1: 12), or through love or adoption (Rom 8: 15, 22).

19 – Is God not other with respect to man?

In his book "Eucharist – the Lord's Supper"- p. 128 the author says:

[When man speaks, he introduces himself from afar off through words, or through some information or help that enables us to know him. Nevertheless, this person remains separate from us. He is still "other" with respect to us. But when God spoke, He spoke through words so that He might enter our life and become a being within a being ..]

Then he adds:

[God here, having spoken, did not become "other" to man, meaning: He became more closely connected to man than any other thing. He became the selfsame man. Under the same rule, God, throughout the Holy Scripture, has never spoken but to establish this fact, to deepen it, and to ensure its enforceability!]

If God is not "other" to man, can He be the selfsame man, or a being within a being as the author says?!

20 – Is Bethlehem the birthplace of all mankind?

On page 5 of his book “The Groom” the author says:

[The church is the bride of Christ and His body which He took from the Virgin. He was born united, in His divinity, with the church. In other words, the church was born united with Christ on the day of His birth. Consequently, each one of us was born in Bethlehem, which has become the birthplace of the redeemed human race.]

Strange indeed what the author says, that the church was born from the Virgin on Christ’s birthday, and that it was born united with His divinity!!

At this point the author leaves the reader lost in question and exclamation marks!!

- Was the church born from the Virgin on the day of Christ's birth? Or
- Was the church born of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? Or
- Was the church born from the baptistery, each individual on a certain day? Or
- Has nobody from the members of the church been born yet, up till now? For there are many who will be born and get baptized, and many who will accept faith in future and be admitted into the church membership ..
- And what is the meaning of the phrase : “The church was born united with the divinity”?
- Does it mean that the church also is equal to Christ, having two natures united together: a divine nature, and a human nature?!

Amazingly, that author's disciples defended his views stated in his book "The Groom", with all their power, in their book entitled "Orthodox Patristic Principles" part 2, ch 3, p. 26, sub-title "The Birthplace of the Redeemed Human Race"!

It is an evidence of the danger of spreading a certain teaching of a master through his disciples!

The author even goes farther to say that on the Day of Pentecost an invisible unity happened to the apostles between the divine nature and the human nature .. Then his disciples publish a book entitled "The Church, the bride of Christ, a human nature united with a divine nature"!

The author says that Bethlehem is the birthplace of the redeemed human race, and his disciples defend the same view. They attempt to prove the same by quotations from hymns and praise songs, or from the writings of the church fathers, or through the idea of "a mystical unity" which they propagate by irrelevant quotations!

Probably we will return to this point and other errors in their abovementioned book in more detail afterwards.

21 – Are we clothed with the Godhead from inside and outside?

This expression is said about the holy Virgin during the holy conception, comparing her to the Ark of Testament overlaid inside and outside with gold, and containing the golden pot of manna – the symbol of the Lord Christ.

We therefore say, "You, O Mary, clothed inside and outside with the glory of the Godhead." It is because she contained the Word in her womb, and the Holy Spirit came

upon her to form an embryo within her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her (Lk 1: 35) ..

However, the advocates of man's deification, in their book "Orthodox Patristic Principles" – part 2, p. 31, say: [What is said about, and what came upon the Theotokos, applies to, and came also upon the believers]!!

They further say: [The Holy Spirit filled every part in you: your soul, and your body, O mother of God ... This same Spirit we, mankind, have received because of the Virgin]! Indeed, it is not strange that those who said "they acquired all that which belongs to Christ", say also they acquired all that which belongs to the Virgin!

With respect to their equality with the Virgin, we would ask them:

- * Are you clothed inside and outside with the Godhead?
- * Have You risen above the Cherubim and the Seraphim, and above the archangels, as the Doxologies say about the Virgin?
- * Do you stand at the right hand of the king as said about the holy Virgin, "*At Your right hand stands the queen.*" (Ps 45: 9)?
- * Did the Holy Spirit come upon you, and the power of the Highest overshadow you?
- * Do all generations call you blessed?
- * Or, probably, you are influenced by the Catholics in their exaggerated exaltation of the Virgin – as you say in the same book, p. 8!

* Or, probably, you are influenced by the Protestant Plymouths who say that the Virgin is their sister!

My children, do not be misled. Be humble. Repent, and reconsider what you write ..

In your aforementioned book (part 2, p. 19), you speak about:

22 – Man’s dignity in Christ:

About this dignity you say: [We ought to cry out cheerfully declaring it.] But you should be aware that the way to attain the highest dignity is meekness and humbleness, as the Lord Christ teaches us, saying, “*He who humbles himself will be exalted,*” “*Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.*” (Mt 23: 12; 11: 29)

Man’s dignity cannot be attained by deifying and exalting oneself!!

The last and most serious point, which there is no place to discuss here, is:

23 – The meaning of the words “Partakers of the Divine Nature”:

[They misinterpret the verse in (2 Pet 1: 4)]

St. Peter- the Apostle says, “*Partakers of the Divine Nature*”, but they change the preposition “of”, in Arabic, to “in”, which makes a big difference in the meaning. The apostle’s words mean that we take part with the Divine Nature

in work, in will, and in edification of God's Kingdom, not that we take the Divine nature as they translate it!

However, in their a/m book part 2, p. 45, they repeat the second expression twice in one page. Then they expound it further in the same page, saying: [The words "Eternal Life" is another expression referring to the same fact: that is; Partaking **in the Divine Nature.**] (which in Arabic means: take the same Nature).

Then on p. 58 of the same book they explain: [The Son came, incarnated, died, and arose, in order to give man the gift of abiding in immortality, because of Partaking in the Godhead.]

How dare any author speak in such a way, that man takes the Godhead?! Yet they attempt to evade blame by saying: It is through "likeness" not "equality" (p. 13, 14), as if the term "likeness" were simple and acceptable!! They forgot that Satan fell and perished because he used the word "like", when he said, "*I will be like the Most High*" (Isa 14: 14)!

To attain eternal life does not mean that we take the Divine Nature. God is eternal and everlasting, and He also is unlimited. So, if man takes the Divine Nature, man will also be unlimited, omnipotent, omnipresent, and testing the hearts and minds!

One ought not take the word "eternity" as an evidence of taking the Divine Nature. Moreover, eternity is an innate attribute in God, but for us it is a reward and a gift ...

However, in their attempts to establish the idea of man's deification, they reiterate a strange expression: "**The deification of the Lord Jesus' human nature**" ..

This contradicts the unity between the Lord's divine nature and human nature. We hold that this unity is without co-mixing, mingling, or change. This means that neither the divine nature changed to a human nature, nor the human to a divine .. Otherwise, one of the two natures would have disappeared.

Nevertheless, they put the above expression as a title in p. 59 of the same book, then in p. 60, 62, and 63.

In p. 59, they say: [Accordingly, our partaking the Son Incarnate will not be partaking in the human nature only, but in the Divine as well.]

They allege that we take the Divine Nature!! This is probably what our Moslem brothers call "polytheism"!!

Strange indeed! But more strange still is their talk about "eternity". In p. 36 of their book, they say:

[All Fathers, with complete preciseness, assert that the eternal Son has transferred our beginning, or our origin, into His Divine Entity (His Godhead)!]

- Does our origin go back to the Godhead?
- Did *all* the Fathers say that?
- Have they read all the sayings of the Fathers, and found there such a view?
- Is it not an aggression upon Patrology?





ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF BOOKS BY HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III

Fram Among 115 books written by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III in Arabic Language 58 have been translated into English they are :

1. The Release of the Spirit.
2. Words of Spiritual Benefit. (Vol. 1).
3. Words of Spiritual Benefit. (Vol. 2).
4. Words of Spiritual Benefit. (Vol. 3).
5. Words of Spiritual Benefit. (Vol. 4).
6. Contemplations on the Ten Commandments (Vol. 1).
7. Contemplations on the Ten Commandments. (Vol. 2).
8. Contemplations on the Ten Commandments. (Vol. 3).
9. Contemplations on the Ten Commandments. (Vol. 4).
10. Contemplations on the Sermon on the Mount.
11. The Seven Words of Our Lord on the Cross.
12. Thine is the Power and the Glory.
13. Contemplations on Jonah the prophet.
14. Priesthood.
15. Salvation in the Orthodox Concept.
16. The Heresy of "Salvation in a moment".
17. Diabolic wars.
18. Spiritual warfares.
19. Lord, how ? .
20. Discipleship.
21. Holy Zeal.
22. Being with God.
23. Life of Faith .
24. The Creed.
25. Return to God .
26. So Many Years With the Problems of People. (Vol. 1).
27. So Many Years With the Problems of People. (Vol. 2).

28. So Many Years With the Problems of People. (Vol. 3).
29. So Many Years With the Problems of People. (Vol. 4).
30. The Spirituality of Fasting .
31. Calmness.
32. Characteristics of the Spiritual Path.
33. Experiences in life.
34. Divinity of Christ.
35. Comparative Theology .
36. The Nature of Christ .
37. Contemplations on the Resurrection.
38. The Holy Spirit and His Work in us.
39. Judge Not Others.
40. Ten Concepts.
41. Quizzes on The Holy Bible.
42. What is Man ?.
43. Matin Prayer.
44. Life of Hope.
45. Fear of God.
46. Inspirations from the Nativity.
47. Contemplations on the twelfth hour prayer .
48. God and Man .
49. Contemplations on the Ascension Day .
50. Life of Repentance & purity .
51. Jehovah Witnesses .
52. Moses & Pharaoh.
53. The Holy Christ & Galilawen .
54. So Many Years – Spiritual Questions .
55. The Fruit of the Spirit.
56. Man's Deification – Part 1 .
57. Spiritual Ministry & Spiritual Minister Part III .
58. Some Characters from the Holy Bible – Part I .





In This Book

In the Name of the
Father, the Son and the
Holy Spirit, One God.

Amen.

The term "man's
deification" is very
dangerous. We cannot
pass over it, nor let it
spread ... nor ... be
ascribed to our Coptic
monks!

In this book we have
treated 23 points, but
the subject is not yet
closed. Another part will
be published -God
willing- entitled
"Partakers of the Divine
Nature", in which such
views will be exposed
and refuted so that
nobody may be
influenced by them ...

Wait for the second
part that will soon be
published -God willing.

Pope Shenouda III

