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Deification Through Sacramental Living in LDS and Eastern Orthodox Worship Practices:

A Comparative Analysis

Jess P. Jones

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of

Master of Arts

Mauro Properzi, Chair
Robert L. Millet
Andrew C. Skinner

Department of Religious Education

Brigham Young University

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ABSTRACT

Deification Through Sacramental Living in LDS and Eastern Orthodox Worship Practices: A Comparative Analysis

Jess P. Jones
Department of Religious Education, BYU
Master of Arts

This thesis is a comparative analysis of the doctrine of deification in sacramental worship as taught (and practiced) by the Eastern Orthodox and Latter-day Saint (Mormon) churches. The doctrine that man may become like God—known as deification, divinization, or theosis—is a central teaching in the Orthodox and Mormon traditions. Both faiths believe that man may become like God. However, because of doctrinal presuppositions and disagreements regarding the natures of God and man, Orthodox and Mormon teachings of deification do not mean the same thing. This thesis will outline several key distinctions between their respective doctrines. And yet, despite doctrinal disagreements, this thesis will also illustrate how Orthodoxy and Mormonism share several notable similarities regarding the function of sacramental worship in the process of theosis.

Mormonism and Orthodoxy both believe that men and women may achieve theosis only as they interact with God. Through the combined initiatives of the Father, his son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, humankind may receive the attributes of divinity and participate in the process of deification. The means whereby humanity may interact with God are through sacramental participation. This thesis will illustrate how institutional rituals and personal worship practices foster man's divine interaction and ultimate deification.

Furthermore, Orthodox and Mormon rituals are deeply rooted in the doctrine of deification—each ritual contributing to man's divine transformation. As such, those rituals reflect numerous thematic variations and emphatic differences of their respective traditions. This should not discourage the reader from comparing Orthodox sacraments with Mormon sacraments; rather, as one studies the similarities and differences in the Orthodox and Mormon sacraments, he or she will begin to see how deification is so intricately woven into the worship practices of these two faiths.

Keywords: deification, divinization, Eastern Orthodox theology, God and man, Godhead, institutional sacraments, LDS theology, participatory theology, personal sacraments, sacramental living, sacramental theology, theosis, Trinity, worship

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Introduction

Deification, the doctrinal teaching that man¹ may become like God (known also as divinization or theosis), is an important doctrine to the Latter-day Saint and Eastern Orthodox faiths.² As Christian scholar Michael J. Christensen wrote, “the idea and history of theosis [is] a compelling vision of human wholeness and spiritual transformation, worthy of serious study and relevant for our contemporary culture.”³ For LDS and Orthodox Christians, theosis is a central purpose of mortality and Jesus Christ's atonement. Christian author Daniel Clendenin stated, “It is not too much to say that the divinization of humanity is the central theme, chief aim, basic purpose, or primary religious ideal of Orthodoxy. *Theosis is the ultimate goal towards which all people should strive.*”⁴ The Prophet and Latter-day Saint founder, Joseph Smith said, “Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God [John 17:3]; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, . . . by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting

1. Throughout this thesis, I will use the term “man” to refer to both men and women, occasionally substituting woman for man as the situation allows. Orthodoxy and Mormonism both espouse the belief that men and women may receive, equally, the blessings of theosis.

2. Latter-day Saints, known formally as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will be referred to by several titles: LDS, Latter-day Saints, and Mormons. The Eastern Orthodox Church and its members will be referred to as Eastern Orthodox or, more concisely, Orthodox Christians. This paper will refer to the Eastern Orthodox tradition and not any specific branch of Orthodoxy.

3. Michael J. Christensen, “Preface,” in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, eds. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffrey A. Wittung (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 9.

4. Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 120; emphasis added. See also “Becoming like God,” *LDS.org* (<https://www.lds.org/topics/becoming-like-god?lang=eng&old=true>, accessed Feb 27, 2017).

burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power.”⁵ All that God has done for man is to prepare man to become like Him—to extend to man the opportunity of theosis. LDS and Orthodox Christians view deification as a process beginning in mortality and finding its completion in the resurrection. Only *through* participating in the church can man hope to achieve his divine potential.

Throughout this thesis, several elements of theosis will be examined that have thus far received little examination. Much has been written regarding the place and nature of LDS deification in the larger Christian world.⁶ This discussion on LDS deification has focused on contextualizing Mormon teachings within the biblical and patristic traditions. One non-LDS scholar noted, “It is my conviction that, despite differences in faith or testimony, people of good will have much to learn from one another; and . . . I firmly maintain that the Latter-day Saints are owed a debt of gratitude by other Christians because the Saints remind us all of our divine potential.”⁷ Although other studies have already juxtaposed Orthodox and Mormon doctrines of theosis, little has been written comparing *how* deification is achieved through the respective rituals and worship practices of either faith.

Mormonism and Orthodoxy both believe that the process of theosis is achieved through the worship practices of their respective faiths. Orthodox scholar Norman Russell wrote,

5. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2011), 221.

6. See Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson. *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon & an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 77-110; Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, UT: Aspen Books, 1992), 75; Robert L. Millet and Noel B. Reynolds’ *Latter-day Christianity: 10 Basic Issues* (Brigham Young University: FARMS, 1998), 25–26; Stephen E. Robinson, “*Are Mormons Christians?*” (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991), 65.

7. Jordan Vajda, “*Partakers of the Divine Nature*”: *A Comparative Analysis of Patristic and Mormon Doctrine of Divinization* (Provo, UT: Farms Occasional Papers, 2002), ii.

“Theosis is not . . . an independent spiritual doctrine—one teaching among many—but is the crowning point of the divine economy [God’s plan of salvation].”⁸ Eastern Orthodoxy and Latter-day Saints celebrate similar rituals known as mysteries (Orthodox) or ordinances (LDS). The promise of theosis must come through one’s sacramental involvement—participating in the worship practices and rituals of the faith. Through his sacramental involvement, man begins to see how vital the sacraments are in his spiritual transformation. LDS Apostle David A. Bednar further explains this concept saying, “The ordinances of salvation and exaltation administered in the Lord’s restored Church are far more than rituals or symbolic performances. Rather, they constitute authorized channels through which the blessings and powers of heaven can flow into our individual lives.”⁹ It is through these rituals that man associates with God—and it is through this association with God that man becomes like Him. Therefore, as the Orthodox writer, Timothy Ware, observed, “Deification presupposes life in the Church, life in the sacraments.”¹⁰

However, because of their distinct beliefs regarding the natures of God and man, LDS and Orthodox rituals reflect the process of theosis differently. Orthodoxy believes that the Holy Trinity consists of three consubstantial (of one nature) beings—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, Latter-day Saints view the Godhead as three distinct personages. God and His Son, Jesus Christ, are separate beings. They and the Holy Ghost, a personage of spirit, comprise the Godhead. Orthodoxy views God as “wholly other,” which means that man, as a creature, will never fully become like God the Creator. Man may participate in God’s divine

8. Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2009), 47.

9. David A. Bednar, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 60.

10. Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity* (Baltimore: Penguin, 2015), 231.

energies (perceivable powers)¹¹ and yet he will never fully become like God. Mormonism teaches that God the Father is the literal “Father of [our] spirits” (Hebrews 12:9). Per LDS theology, God is as an embodied, exalted, and deified man (see D&C 130:22).¹² Man, as the spiritual offspring of God, can grow to become like God through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Latter-day Saints reject the traditional Christian doctrine of creation ex nihilo (created from nothing); rather, LDS Christians believe that matter—including part of man’s spirit—is eternal. Therefore, Mormonism does not share the same belief in an “unbridgeable chasm” between Creator and creature as does Orthodoxy. Therefore, while in the Orthodox tradition, man must be physically and spiritually transformed to perceive and participate in God’s divine energies— Latter-day Saints believe that man must be transformed to participate in God’s divine energies, not to preserve a creator/creature gap but to prepare him to become physically and spiritually like his Heavenly Father.

11. See Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 240. Lossky defines divine energies as, “These processions of a deity outside the essence are the energies: The mode of existence proper to God in so far as he pours the fullness of his deity upon all those who are capable of receiving it by means of the Holy Spirit.” See also Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 1980), 28. Ware further explains the Orthodoxy understanding of divine energies, saying, “When a man knows or participates in the divine energies, he truly knows or participates in God himself, so far as this is possible for the created being. But God is God, and we are men; and so, while he possesses us, we cannot, in the same way, possess him.” In other words, divine energies allow man to experience divine manifestations of God without breaching the creature/Creator gulf. As Orthodoxy teaches, affirming the creator/Creature gap, man’s participation with and contemplation of God, therefore, is possible only through His divine energies.

12. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 217–26. Smith said, “God . . . is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make Himself visible—I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see Him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man.”

Because of these doctrinal differences regarding divine ontology (God’s nature of being) and anthropology (the origin of man), LDS and Orthodox teachings of theosis cannot mean the same thing. Man, in the Orthodox estimation, will always be a creature and God the Creator. Man will never be fully God because of his created nature. For Latter-day Saints, God and man are of the same species, varying only in glory and spiritual perfection. Man’s potential is to grow in capacity and glory to become a being like God—always subordinate to the Father and Christ, yet equal in capacity. Man will never grow to be independent of God; rather, he will operate under the presidency and by the grace of God and Christ.¹³ In a recent essay on deification, the LDS church stated that “God’s children will always worship Him. Our progression will never change His identity as our Father and our God.”¹⁴ Because of these basic disagreements regarding being and creation, LDS and Orthodox teachings of deification are ultimately different. Nevertheless, as LDS scholar J.B. Haws wrote, “While Orthodox Christians and Latter-day Saints do not agree on the nature of *God*, they do agree that humans can become *gods*.”¹⁵ Mormons and Orthodox would do well not to dismiss one another out of hand.

The *processes* of Latter-day Saint and Orthodox Christian theosis share many similarities. For both faiths, divinization is believed to be a gradual transformation. Man, in his fallen nature,

13. See Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology: Designed as an Introduction to the First Principles of Spiritual Philosophy; Religion; Law and Government; as Delivered by the Ancients, and as Restored in this Age, for the Final Development of Universal Peace, Truth and Knowledge* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 22. Concerning those who are heirs to God’s glory and recipients of deification, Pratt wrote, “All these are gods, or sons of God—they are kings, princes, priests, and nobles of eternity. But over them all there is a Presidency or Grand Head, who is the Father of all. And next to him is Jesus Christ . . .”

14. “Becoming Like God,” *lds.org*.

15. J.B. Haws, “*What is Man, That Thou Art Mindful of Him?*”: *Human Deification in Eastern Orthodox and Latter-day Saint Theology*, Master’s Thesis (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2003). See also Andrew C. Skinner, *To Become Like God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016), 187.

is still capable of perceiving and responding to God’s divine offer of theosis. Because he is created in the image of God, Mormon and Orthodox Christians believe that man has the potential to grow to become like God. They also believe that each member of the Godhead (LDS) or Trinity (Orthodox)—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—engages in the process of theosis. As man interacts with deity, he slowly receives the necessary qualities to receive Godliness. The Church, therefore, is the vehicle whereby man may interact with God and be transformed to receive the gift of theosis. In short, Orthodoxy and Mormonism share many similarities in seeking to achieve theosis.

To realize the promised theosis, Mormon and Orthodox Christians engage in what is called *sacramental living*. The term sacrament represents a large array of institutional practices (rituals administered by the Church) as well as personal devotional practices (like prayer, fasting, scripture study, etc.) that connect man with God. This thesis contends that institutional sacraments and personal sacraments are both necessary to achieve theosis. Both traditions rely on what one might call *participatory theology* or *experiential enlightenment*—meaning that one must participate in the tradition to fully understand its teachings. The fullness of the religion cannot be deduced through reason or philosophy; rather, it is in the personal engagement with deity through the sacraments—or “mysteries”—that one truly comes to grasp the fullness of the faith. As Christian writer James K. A. Smith would suggest, the study of worship should be “formative rather than just . . . informative.”¹⁶ Humanity is called to engage in the sacramental life—a life of ecclesial participation and personal discipleship—if it expects to realize the promise of theosis.

16. James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 18.

One fascinating observation of this study is that, as one juxtaposes Mormon worship practices with those of Eastern Orthodoxy, the doctrinal differences highlight thematic variations. Although they are often referred to by similar terms, Mormon and Orthodox sacraments reflect the doctrinal affirmations of their respective faiths.¹⁷ Consider the words of Orthodox writer Panayiotis Nellas, “Deification must not remain a general spiritual category but must acquire a specific anthropological content [physical manifestation].”¹⁸ Per Nellas’ observation, this thesis assumes that deification extends beyond a doctrinal teaching into the realm of practical theology. As one examines the sacramental life of Mormonism and Orthodoxy, he or she will see how intertwined discipleship and deification are. Nellas continues, “Understood this way, the goal of man and the means of realizing that goal—faith, keeping the commandments, . . . the sacraments, the whole ecclesiastical and spiritual life—are illuminated internally and discover their organic connections with themselves, with the world and with Christ, the beginning and the end of all things.”¹⁹ Examining the connection between theosis and sacramental living breathes new life into one’s determination to participate. Therefore, this thesis examines how the doctrine of theosis is reflected in the sacramental life of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints compared to the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

This thesis will proceed as follows. In chapter 1, LDS and Orthodox Christian beliefs will be analyzed to show how man must interact with God to achieve theosis. In chapter 2, the role of

17. See Robert L. Millet, *A Different Jesus?: The Christ of the Latter-day Saints* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 172. Millet observed that “so often people of different religious persuasions simply talk past one another when they converse on matters religious. They may even use the same words, but they bring a different mindset and an entirely different perspective to the encounter.”

18. Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1987), 40–41.

19. *Ibid.*

the sacraments in the process of deification will be addressed in detail. Chapter 3 will illustrate how Orthodox and Mormon sacraments reflect their doctrinal differences through emphatic variations. The author will then offer several concluding remarks. The following assertions and connections in this thesis, though they are drawn from reputable LDS and Orthodox source material, may not reflect official church doctrine. Therefore, the author assumes full responsibility for the assertions, connections, and conclusions made hereafter.

Chapter One

God and Man

Man must interact with God to achieve theosis. Latter-day Saint and Eastern Orthodox Christians disagree regarding God's ontology (nature of being). However, this disagreement does not overshadow the common belief that man can be deified only as he responds to and interacts with deity. Latter-day Saints and Eastern Orthodox agree that each member of the Godhead is fully at work in the process of theosis. Cyril of Alexandria wrote, "When we partake in the divine nature we achieve a relationship *with* the Father *through* the Spirit *in* the Son."²⁰ The "full and perfect participation in the Life in Christ," Christopher Veniamin wrote, "is at one and the same time the life of the Most Holy Trinity."²¹ Latter-day Saints would agree that each member of the Godhead plays an integral role in the deification of man. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, "each [member of the Godhead] has his own severable work to perform, and humanity has a defined and known and specific relationship to each one of them."²² If man is to participate in God's "divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), man can do so solely through the work of all three members of the Godhead. Knowing that this opinion is shared by both Orthodoxy and Mormonism, it is necessary to discuss *how* man interacts with each member of the Godhead. This chapter will include a discussion of how man interacts with the divine, highlighting doctrinal differences and similarities where necessary.

20. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*. 27; emphasis added. See also Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 34. "The final end of the spiritual Way," Ware writes, "is that we humans should also become part of this Trinitarian coinherence or perichoresis, being wholly taken up into the circle of love that exists within God" (emphasis in original).

21. Christopher Veniamin, *The Orthodox Understanding of Salvation: "Theosis" in Scripture and Tradition* (Dalton, PA: Mount Thabor Publishing, 2014), 24.

22. Bruce R. McConkie, *Our Relationship with the Lord* (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 2, 1982), 2.

Doctrinal Divergence *and* Convergence

LDS and Orthodox beliefs of Deity are the foundations for their distinct faith traditions. As Daniel Clendenin wrote, “Every theology begins with presuppositions or principles that are accepted rather than proven. These presuppositions, which in the best theologies are clearly enunciated, help guide and frame the task of theology.”²³ It is through these differences that Latter-day Saint and Orthodox teachings begin to vary from one another.

The doctrinal divergence between Latter-day Saints and Orthodox Christians rests on two primary premises: the ontology of the Godhead and the creation of man. In matters of divine ontology, Orthodox Christians side with the traditional Christian view of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit sharing the same *ousia* or essence. Eastern Orthodoxy affirms that “the nature of God is invisible and unparticiple, and this preserves the integrity of the Holy Trinity.”²⁴ In other words, “Orthodoxy consistently rejects the idea that humans participate in the essence or nature of God.”²⁵ The members of the Godhead have “separate existential identit[ies],”²⁶ but also share a unique essence that is exclusive to their union. Timothy Ware writes, “God is one and God is three: the Holy Trinity is a mystery of unity. Father, Son, and Spirit are ‘one in essence (*homousious*),’ yet each is distinguished from the other two by personal characteristics. ‘The divine is indivisible in its divisions,’ for the persons are ‘united yet not confused, distinct yet not divided;’ ‘both the distinction and the union alike are paradoxical.’”²⁷

23. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, 47.

24. Veniamin, *The Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 174.

25. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, 130.

26. Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 21.

27. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 204.

Latter-day Saints view divine ontology from outside the lens of creedal affirmations; however, this does not diminish the LDS emphasis on the unity of the Godhead. The LDS Church has officially stated, “Latter-day Saints also believe strongly in the fundamental unity of the divine. They believe that God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, though distinct beings, are unified in purpose and doctrine.”²⁸ Orthodoxy emphasizes Trinity’s unity through substance while LDS emphasizes the Godhead’s unity of omnipotence and purpose. LDS Apostle James E. Talmage wrote, “the mind of any one member . . . is the mind of the others; seeing as each of them does with the eye of perfection, they see and understand alike.”²⁹ Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland stated that “we believe these three divine persons constituting a single Godhead are united in purpose, in manner, in testimony, in mission. We believe them to be filled with the same godly sense of mercy and love, justice and grace, patience, forgiveness, and redemption. I think it is accurate to say we believe They are one in every significant and eternal aspect imaginable except believing Them to be three persons combined in one substance, a Trinitarian notion never set forth in the scriptures because it is not true.”³⁰ For these reasons, Latter-day Saints struggle to agree with Orthodox notions of God’s “divine otherness” or the ideas of a “wholly other” deity.

Different doctrines of Creation distinguish Mormonism from Orthodoxy even more. Avowing the Traditional Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, Orthodox Christians view God as the original source of all things.³¹ In the opinion of Athanasius, creation *ex nihilo* is a sign of

28. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Becoming like God,” *LDS.org*.

29. James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 37.

30. Jeffrey R. Holland “The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent,” *Ensign* November 2007, 40.

31. See Andrew Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic Press, 2013), 35.

God's greatness. To assume that God is not the cause of matter "impute limitation to him, just as it is undoubtedly a limitation on the part of the carpenter that he can make nothing unless he has the wood. . . . If he only worked up existing matter and did not Himself bring matter into being, He would be not the Creator but only a craftsman."³² Mormon doctrine teaches that "the elements are eternal" (D&C 93:29, 33). Creation, therefore, is "an organizing, ordering, and arranging of pre-existing realities."³³ As LDS theologian Andrew Skinner observed, "Thus, the spirits of all human beings are not only co-eternal with God in a real sense but they are of the same species as God."³⁴

The implications of these doctrinal disagreements are significant in our discussion of theosis. The Orthodox idea of *theosis*, "never means that humans can actually cross the divine-creature divide."³⁵ In other words, "Orthodoxy consistently rejects the idea that humans participate in the essence or nature of God."³⁶ To quote Orthodox Bishop Timothy Ware, "Man becomes god by grace, but not God in essence. The distinction between Creator and creature still continues; it is bridged by mutual love but not abolished. God however near he draws to man, still remains the 'Wholly Other.'"³⁷ On the other hand, Latter-day Saints claim something strikingly different regarding man's potential for deification. LDS President John Taylor said, "[Man] is not only the son of man, but he is the son of God also. He is a God in embryo."³⁸ A

32. Athanasius, *St. Athanasius: On the Incarnation*, translated by Penelope Lawson (New York: McMillan, 1946), 5.

33. Andrew C. Skinner, *To Become like God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016), 13.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 189.

36. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, 130.

37. Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 168.

38. John Taylor, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001), 2.

1909 statement by the First Presidency of the Church read, “Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so the undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages and eons, of evolving into a God.”³⁹ Church President Lorenzo Snow was famously known for his saying, “As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be.”⁴⁰ He continues saying, “This is the high destiny of the sons of God, they who overcome, who are obedient to His commandments, who purify themselves even as He is pure. They are to become like Him; they will see Him as He is; they will behold His face and reign with Him in His glory, becoming like unto Him in every particular.”⁴¹ Clearly, Orthodox and Mormon doctrines of deification do not agree; and yet, the similarities in *how* Mormonism and Orthodoxy pursue deification warrant further analysis.

The following section will include an analysis of how man participates with deity. Each member of the Godhead or Trinity functions in some capacity to transform man into deified man. The nature of man’s transformation depends on the doctrinal presuppositions of the respective tradition. Therefore, how one interacts with God will differ, depending on whether he or she approaches God from an Orthodox or LDS perspective. However, what is explicitly clear in both traditions is that man acquires divine attributes as he interacts with God. These acquired

39. The First Presidency of the Church, “The Origin of Man,” *Improvement Era*, November 1909, 75–81.

40. Lorenzo Snow, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2011), 83. See also Stephen E. Robinson, “God the Father, Overview,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (New York: MacMillan, 1992), 2:549. Robinson writes, “Nothing has been revealed to the Church about conditions before the ‘beginning’ as mortals know it.” As such, no official interpretations have been given regarding the significance of God’s title as an “exalted man” with respect to any past mortality.

41. Lorenzo Snow, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 86.

attributes and man's interaction with Deity will be the subject of discussion for the remainder of this chapter.

God and Man

The Divine Image. God interacts with man by having created man in His divine image. "Humans," Timothy Ware wrote, "were made for fellowship with God: this is the first and primary affirmation in the Christian doctrine of the Human Person."⁴² Both Latter-day Saints and Eastern Orthodox Christians view man as being made in God's image (Gen. 1:26–27). "In what does human greatness lie?" Gregory of Nyssa asks. He responds, "Not in his likeness to the created world, but in the fact that he is made in the image of the nature of the Creator." The idea of the divine image heralds the intended outcome of man's creation. Nellas adds, "the greatness of man lies in his destiny, in his appointed end."⁴³ Humanity was created to achieve deification. In other words, as Norman Russell put it, "The divine image is thus a God-given potentiality for sharing the divine life."⁴⁴ Joseph Smith similarly taught that "God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect."⁴⁵ Because he possesses the divine image, man may grow to receive the promise of deification.

42. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 212.

43. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Creation of Man*; quoted in Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987), 30. Compare with Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "You Matter to Him," *Ensign*, November 2011, 19. Uchtdorf said, "This is a paradox of man: compared to God, man is nothing, yet we are everything to God. While against the backdrop of infinite creation we may appear to be nothing, we have a spark of eternal fire burning within our breast. We have the incomprehensible promise of exaltation—worlds without end—within our grasp. And it is God's great desire to help us reach it."

44. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 74.

45. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 210.

Orthodoxy teaches that the divine image is one of man's most fundamental strengths. As Nellas observes, the Divine Image guides man toward union with God—toward theosis.⁴⁶ The imprint of the divine image can be seen throughout man's physical and spiritual nature. Man's supremacy in creation,⁴⁷ rationality,⁴⁸ proclivity for good,⁴⁹ desire to be loved, and quest to reach beyond themselves for communion with God⁵⁰ all evidence the divine image in man's natural creation. Lossky said it best,

Sometimes the image of God is sought in the sovereign dignity of man, In his Lordship over the terrestrial world; sometimes it is sought in his spiritual nature, in the soul, or in the principle, ruling the part of his being, in the mind, and the higher faculties such as the intellect, the faculty of inner determination, by virtue of which man is the true author of his actions. Sometimes the image of God is identified with a particular quality of the soul, its simplicity or its immortality, Or else it is described as the ability to know God, of living in communion with him, with the possibility of sharing the divine being or with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul.⁵¹

Mormons have echoed similar sentiments regarding the divine image of God in man.

Lorenzo Snow was among the most vocal concerning man's potential. He said, "We were born in the image of God our Father; he begat us like unto himself. There is the nature of deity in the composition of our spiritual organization; in our spiritual birth our Father transmitted to us the capabilities, powers, and faculties which he himself possessed."⁵² From an LDS perspective, theosis is possible for man because of the latent, god-like, capacities that are a part of the divine image.

46. See Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 31.

47. See Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 26.

48. See Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 25.

49. See Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 15.

50. See Tikhon Zadonsky; quoted in Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 127. Zadonsky said, "the human soul is a spirit created by God, and only in God, who has created it in his own image and likeness, can it find contentment and rest, peace, consolation, and joy."

51. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 115.

52. Lorenzo Snow, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 84.

Both LDS and Orthodox Christians believe that the divine image prompts man to live according to his divine potential. Nellas wrote, “Having been made in the image of God, man has a theological structure. And to be a true man he must at every moment exist and live theocentrically. When he denies God he denies himself and destroys himself. When he lives theocentrically he realizes himself by reaching out into infinity; he attains his true fulfillment by extending into eternity.”⁵³ Eastern Orthodoxy and Mormonism espouse the need to live life in the light of man’s divine potential. Elder M. Russell Ballard remarked, “As literal spirit children of our loving Heavenly Father, we have unlimited, divine potential. But if we are not careful . . . We can drift away from the true doctrine and gospel of Christ and become spiritually undernourished and wilted, having removed ourselves from the divine light and living waters of [God’s] eternal love.”⁵⁴ Further affirming the possibilities of man’s deification, LDS scholar Truman Madsen, wrote, “The question is not one of being, but of becoming.”⁵⁵ For both Latter-day Saints and Eastern Orthodox Christians, the divine image is evidence of man’s divine potential, compelling each individual to live a “theocentric lifestyle”—a sacramental life. Once man has gained this new orientation—placed God at the center of his concerns and aspiration—he strives to receive divine guidance as he progresses on the path of theosis.

Divine Guidance. Man may interact with God as he seeks divine guidance—direction from God. Doctrinal knowledge of God should not satiate man’s appetite for communion—simply knowing *about* God should not satisfy man’s need to *know* him. Orthodoxy and Mormonism similarly agree that men and women should be constantly striving to deepen his or her relationship with God. The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob declares, “Behold, great and

53. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 42.

54. M. Russell Ballard, “This is My Work and Glory,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 18.

55. Truman G. Madsen, *Eternal Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 18.

marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore brethren, despise not the revelations of God” (Jacob 4:8; see also Romans 11:33).

Too often some Christians, including Latter-day Saints, seek to reduce God, bringing him to their level of understanding and familiarity, to the point of breaching what Gregory of Palamas calls “the bounds of right devotion”⁵⁶—assuming that everything humans can know about God is known. To know that God is the Father, the creator, the architect of the plan of salvation, is an admirable amount of knowledge, But for LDS and Eastern Christians alike, God’s grandeur extends beyond man’s capacity to philosophize or theorize. For Mormons and Orthodox Christians alike, no amount of emphatic, earthly declarations could summarize the glory of God. As Paul wrote, “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” (1 Cor. 2:9). As such, Orthodoxy and Mormonism both stress man’s need to continually pursue a personal knowledge of God.

To encourage man’s quest to commune with God, Orthodox Christianity has adopted the doctrine of “apophatic theology” (known also as “negative theology”). This theological approach emphasizes what God is not. It seeks to strip the mind of any created preconceptions of Deity. Because man is created, he has not the power to describe that which is uncreated. However, this is not meant to alienate man from God. As Ware wrote, “Apophatic theology, in its true and full meaning, leads not to an absence but to a presence, not to agnosticism but to a union of love. Thus apophatic theology is much more than a purely verbal exercise, whereby balance positive

56. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 70.

statements with negations. Its aim is to bring us to a direct meeting with a *personal God*, who infinitely surpasses everything that we can say of him, whether negative or positive.”⁵⁷

Because of man’s fallen nature and created essence, traditional Christians, including Eastern Orthodoxy, believe that man cannot, on his own, begin to approach any understanding of any kind regarding the glory, essence, being, power, or image of God. Lossky notes, “Negative theology . . . is an expression of that fundamental attitude which transforms the whole of theology into a contemplation of the mysteries of revelation. . . . Apophaticism teaches us to see above all the negative meaning in the dogmas of the Church: it forbids us to follow natural ways of thought and to form concepts which would usurp the place of spiritual realities.”⁵⁸

Apophaticism becomes a clarion call for the disciple to seek God beyond this world—for if anything is to be known about God, it can only be made known by God. Vladimir Lossky contends that apophaticism acknowledges “the breakdown of human thought before the radical transcendence of God. . . . The apophaticism of Orthodox theology is . . . a prostration before the living God, radially ungraspable, un-objectifiable and unknowable, because He is personal, because He is free plenitude of personal existence. Apophasis is the inscription in human language, in theological language, of the mystery of faith.”⁵⁹ Apophaticism, therefore, invites the individual to divest himself or herself of any material preconception of God. From embodiment to anthropomorphic imagery, the Eastern Christian is admonished to abandon all such pursuits to understand God. This quest of Apophaticism allows God to reveal himself to the individual rather than be depicted in simplistic, reductionist, mundane terms.⁶⁰

57. Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 167.

58. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 42.

59. Vladimir Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1978), 24–25.

60. See Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 25, 42.

Eastern Orthodox Christians and Latter-day Saints agree upon the necessity of God's self-revelation. Despite bold claims regarding the embodiment of God and man's familial relationship with Him, Latter-day Saints still admit, to some extent, to God's incomprehensibility (see Mosiah 4:9). Joseph Smith described that God's "brightness and glory defy all description" (Joseph Smith History 1:17). Sixth President of the LDS Church, Joseph F. Smith concurred, saying, "Man, by searching, cannot find out God. . . . The Lord must reveal Himself or remain unrevealed."⁶¹ Like Eastern Orthodoxy, it is through the self-revelation of God that Latter-day Saints discover the meaning, the depths, and the ways of God.⁶² As Joseph Fielding Smith noted, "We know that God is known only by revelation, that he stands revealed or remains forever unknown."⁶³

61. First Presidency of the Church, "Origin of Man," 75.

62. The significance of personal revelation strikes at the heart of everything that undergirds what it means to be a Latter-day Saint. Revelation is the nexus for true gnosis of God. From the very inception of Mormonism, the theme of personal revelation has been at its heart. Joseph Smith, a 14-year-old boy at the crossroads of discipleship, sought to know which church to join of the myriad that surrounded him in upstate New York. Taking courage from that passage in, "If any of you lack wisdom, Let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5, KJV). Interpreting this as a literal invitation to ask God for direction, Joseph resorted to a grove now considered sacred by Latter-day Saints, to inquire of God directly. What follows has become one of the foundational elements of Mormonism known as the "First Vision."

In subsequent years, Joseph would continue to receive revelation, instruction, including the record that he translated to become The Book of Mormon. The ongoing invitation that has been echoed to all Latter-day Saints and would-be catechumens (known in the LDS church as "investigators") is for each person, "to ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true" (Moroni 10:4) For Latter-day Saints, the centrality of personal revelation in the experience of a Latter-day Saint is paramount to maintain a vibrant personal witness of God.

63. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013) 36. See also note 27. The sentiments here expressed may answer any questions regarding how Latter-day Saints justify their assertions of God being an embodied being. Mormons affirm that those declarations of God's embodiment (found in D&C 130:21–22) are products of revelation. Historical records suggest that Joseph Smith's understanding of such doctrine grew over time.

For Latter-day Saints, the quest for personal revelation is a perpetual process of progressive discipleship. The Doctrine and Covenants teaches, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (D&C 42:61). Mormons view their spiritual quest of knowledge and unity with deity as ongoing. As Joseph Smith said, “Having a knowledge of God, we begin to know how to approach Him, and how to ask so as to receive an answer. When we understand the character of God, and know how to come to Him, He begins to unfold the heavens to us and to tell us all about it. When we are ready to come to Him, He is ready to come to us.”⁶⁴ For Latter-day Saints, God’s self-revelation to man has a deifying effect. John Taylor said, “when the saint of God considers, and the visions of eternity are open to his view and the unalterable purposes of God are developed to his mind—when he contemplates his true position before God, angels, and men, then he soars above the things of time and sense and bursts the cords that bind him to earthly objects. He contemplates God and his own destiny in the economy of heaven and rejoices in a blooming hope of an immortal glory.”⁶⁵ Therefore, like Orthodox Christians, Latter-day Saints feel compelled to seek personal interaction with God to become like him. This quest for a personal relationship with God opens man to experience God’s divine love.

Divine Love. One of the greatest ways that man interacts with God in the process of theosis is by experiencing his divine love. Orthodox Father John Climacus asks, “Do you imagine plain words can precisely or truly or appropriately describe the love of the Lord?”⁶⁶ Orthodoxy views God the Father as, “A God who created the world and loves it, whose love is

64. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 40–41.

65. John Taylor, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 1–2.

66. John Climacus; quoted in Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, 55.

expressed in his identifying himself with his creation, and especially the human creation, made in his image.”⁶⁷ As John wrote, “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). Participating (*koinōnos*) in the divine nature must ultimately culminate in the attainment of charity (see 2 Peter 1:8), for, as Nicolas Kavalas observed, the truly spiritual life is one of love.⁶⁸ The promise of deification is evidence of God’s divine love towards all. For St. Maximus the Confessor, love is also primary. He wrote the following:

This love is a mystery. It expresses both a natural yearning of the soul for the union with God and a reciprocal condescension of God to the soul that has made itself receptive. Through love, the human and the divine converge. God and humanity are drawn together in a single embrace. Theosis is thus a sharing in the divine attribute of eternity. It is not an excellence attainable only by a spiritual elite. It is the goal for which humanity was created.⁶⁹

Echoing Orthodox sentiments, Latter-day Saints view the very outcome of deification as man’s participation in divine love. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said, “The first great *commandment* of all eternity is to love God with all of *our* heart, might, mind, and strength . . . But the first great *truth* of all eternity is that God loves *us* with all of *His* heart, might, mind, and strength. That love is the foundation stone of eternity, and it should be the foundation stone of our daily life.”⁷⁰ The Book of Mormon teaches that divine love is a gift from God, “bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become sons of God” (Moroni 7:48). As one non-LDS scholar observed, “Godhood [for Mormons] is . . . the progression and infinite multiplication of love.”⁷¹ Andrew Skinner writes, “God’s love is both corporate . . . and individual. . . . His love reaches out to the individual. Not only that, but I am convinced God’s

67. Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, xx.

68. See Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 139.

69. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 118–119.

70. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 124.

71. M. David Litwa, *Becoming Divine: An Introduction to Deification in Western Culture* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), 203–204; emphasis added.

love is proactive. He reaches out to his children even at times when they least expect it or seem to be least worthy of it.”⁷²

Mormonism and Orthodoxy agree that experiencing God’s divine love compels man to respond in loving obedience—to keep God’s commandments and participate in the process of theosis (see John 14:15). Both faith traditions reject the idea that all humanity will receive “all that [the] Father hath” (D&C 84:38) without any requirement of obedience. Man must participate with God to experience the fullness of God’s love. To paraphrase Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, if man experiences the love of God, and in turn loves God, then that divine exchange should be nothing short of transformative.⁷³ As Maximus the Confessor wrote, “Love, the divine gift, perfects human nature until it makes it appear in unity and identity by grace with the divine nature.”⁷⁴ Divine love is transformative and demands a response by the individual to fulfill its desired goal of man’s theosis. Orthodoxy and Mormonism agree that, in order for a person to receive the full companionship of the Spirit, he or she must abandon all worldly allegiances and sinful lifestyles.⁷⁵ Latter-day Saints have learned that the appropriate response, when filled with God’s love, is to “give away all [their] sins” (Alma 22:18).

In summary, man’s transformation through experiencing God’s divine love is not solely a divinely-willed process—it requires more of the individual. As Russell notes, “We have to respond to the divine initiative with faith, goodness, understanding, self-control, patience, true

72. See Skinner, *To Become Like God*, 21.

73. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “The First Great Commandment,” *Ensign*, November 2012, 84–85.

74. Maximus the Confessor; quoted in Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 214.

75. See Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 21.

devotion, kindness to follow our fellow human beings, and love. Our admission to the eternal kingdom depends on the moral effort we make.”⁷⁶

Man interacts with God on a variety of levels as he undergoes the process of deification. Even though Orthodoxy and Mormonism disagree regarding God’s nature and man’s relationship to him, they share similar ideas of how man interacts with God in the process of theosis. Both traditions believe that man is created in the divine image. This enables man to grow towards deification, seek divine guidance, and experience God’s divine love. For Latter-day Saint and Orthodox Christians, these interactions are vital to their becoming like God.

Any discussion of God’s knowledge, guidance, and love would be incomplete without including a discussion of Jesus Christ. God’s love, for Mormons and Orthodox alike, is embodied in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (see John 3:16). Commenting on a facet of Christ’s earthly mission, Mormon Apostle David A. Bednar said, “The greatest manifestation of God’s love for His children is the mortal ministry, atoning, sacrifice, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁷⁷ The early Church Father, Clement of Alexandria, wrote, “God in His very self is love, and for love’s sake, He became visible to us.”⁷⁸ Jesus Christ becomes the key witness to humanity of God’s love. The following section will present an examination of how Christ enables man to grow to become like God—emphasizing the attributes and qualities man must acquire to realize the goal of theosis.

76. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 65.

77. David A. Bednar, “Come and See,” *Ensign*, November 2014, 107; see also Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Grandeur of God,” *Ensign*, November 2003, 70. Holland said, “It is the grand truth that in all that Jesus came to say and do . . . He was showing us who and what God our Eternal Father is like. . . . In word and in deed Jesus was trying to reveal and make personal to us the true nature of His Father, our Father in Heaven.”

78. Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives salvetur* 37; cited in Andrew Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 31.

Christ and Man

For LDS and Orthodox Christians alike, Christ is central to theosis. His birth, ministry, passion, death, and resurrection comprise the divine economy (God’s Plan of Salvation), making possible the salvation and sanctification of humanity. Panayiotis Nellas wrote, “The real anthropological meaning of deification is Christification.”⁷⁹ This idea of “Christification” lies at the heart of LDS and Orthodox theologies. According to Christopher Veniamin, “Christ is the measure of all things, both divine and human.”⁸⁰ Just as Christ reveals God to man—helping man perceive His works and understand His love for humanity—Christ also reveals to man the possibilities of theosis. Like Orthodox Christians, Latter-day Saints view that becoming like Christ is the “ultimate quest” of mortality.⁸¹ In the Book of Mormon, Jesus Christ asks the people, “What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27). President Howard W. Hunter said that “the first task Christ did as a perfect, sinless Son was to redeem all humanity from the Fall. . . . The second great thing he did was to set a perfect example of right living . . . in order that all of the rest of humanity might know how to live, know how to improve, and know how to become more godlike.”⁸² This section will enumerate attributes that man receives as he interacts with Christ in the process of theosis.

Divine Image and Likeness. Theosis, in its basic form, is man’s acquisition of God’s likeness. Man is created in God’s image but he must acquire Christ’s likeness. As one becomes like Christ, he or she becomes like God. The necessity of this becoming, for LDS and Orthodox

79. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 39.

80. Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 14.

81. D. Todd Christofferson, “Let us Be Men,” *Ensign* November 2006, 46.

82. Howard W. Hunter, “What Manner of Men Ought Ye to Be?” *Ensign*, May 1994, 64.

Christians, is a result of the Fall of Adam. As man understands his fallen condition, he will begin to see why he must follow Christ and participate in the sacramental life.

Orthodoxy and Mormonism share similar views regarding the effects of the Fall of Man and its implication for the divine image and likeness. The Fall of Adam separated man from God. Andrew Louth describes Orthodox views on the Fall saying, “[Adam] sinned, he was disobedient, he turned away from God. The consequences were disastrous: the world of harmony that God had intended in creating the cosmos with the human central to it was destroyed.”⁸³ Where Orthodoxy would insist that Adam’s fall was an act of sin, Latter-day Saints view his actions as a transgression giving rise to a “fortunate fall,”⁸⁴ a necessary choice that would forward man’s progress. Had Adam not fallen, humanity would not have progressed as God intended (see Moses 5:11; 2 Nephi 2:22–25). Love for and loyalty to God and humanity could only be learned in an environment of moral friction—that is, a world of opposition.

Despite doctrinal differences regarding the Fall, Latter-day Saints and Eastern Christians concur that although the Fall affected man’s divine likeness, it did not affect his divine image. Orthodoxy teaches that “Adam had not forfeited the divine image through the fall.”⁸⁵ In Orthodox theology, the recovery of the likeness of Christ is vital in the process of deification. Humanity is to enter into a relationship with God but this can only be achieved as man personally emulates the example of Christ, who has already achieved such a divine relationship.⁸⁶ In LDS doctrine, Joseph Smith taught, “when man fell he did not lose his image,

83. Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 69.

84. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 104. See also Daniel K. Judd, *The Fortunate Fall: Understanding the Blessings and Burdens of Adversity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011).

85. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 75.

86. This statement recognizes that the relationship between Christ and God reflects a relationship which is defined differently in Mormonism than it is in Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy views

but his character still retained the image of his Maker. Christ, who is the image of man, is also the express image of his Father's person [see Hebrews 1:3]. . . . Through the atonement of Christ and the resurrection, and obedience to the gospel, we shall again be conformed to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ [see Romans 8:29]; then we shall have attained to the image, glory, and character of God.”⁸⁷ Latter-day Saints and Orthodox Christians believe that only after the resurrection, will man's true potential be revealed. As Lossky asserted, “the resurrection itself will reveal the inner condition of beings, as bodies will allow the secrets of the soul to shine through.”⁸⁸ This reflects the LDS teachings that connect righteousness and one's resurrected glory: “They who are of a celestial spirit shall receive the same body which was a natural body; even ye shall receive your bodies, and your glory shall be the glory by which your bodies are quickened” (D&C 88:28). For Latter-day Saints, their resurrected condition will be determined by their faithfulness in acquiring the divine likeness through righteous adherence to the commandments and sacraments of Christ. “Therefore,” as Cyril of Alexandria writes, “the mode [or vital element] of the relationship rests on likeness.”⁸⁹ Regaining the likeness of Christ through sacramental living becomes the central focus of Christian worship for Latter-day Saints and Eastern Orthodox Christians. This emulation of Christ leads man into a relationship of adoption—another relation with deity necessary for theosis.

Divine Adoption. Orthodoxy and Mormonism both teach that man must be adopted into the family of God through Christ. “By assuming our humanity, Christ who is the Son of God by

the Father and Son as one in nature—a relationship where man cannot completely enter nor endure; conversely, the Latter-day Saint views God and Christ as bound by covenant and in perfect unity and humanity is called to enter a similar relationship.

87. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church*, 52.

88. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 234.

89. Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Nestorius 11.8*; quoted in Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 68.

nature has made us sons of God by grace. In him we are ‘adopted’ by God the Father, becoming sons-in-the-Son.”⁹⁰ As Paul teaches, man can become “joint-heirs with Christ” through the “Spirit of adoption” (Romans 8:15, 17). Both Eastern Orthodox and Mormonism view “Jesus Christ as the only natural heir of the Father because he is the only One born of God the Father in mortality. Thus our joint-heirship with the Son of God comes through adoption by his grace.”⁹¹ As Millet and McConkie wrote, “Because people are not born into mortality into the family of God because on earth man is estranged by the fall from holiness, he must be adopted into that family—must comply with the laws of adoption, must meet the lawful requirements.”⁹²

In Mormonism and Orthodoxy, one must participate in the requisite rituals in order to be adopted into God’s family. It is through what Norman Russell calls, “incorporation into Christ,” that man is “adopted as sons or daughters of God [and] . . . reunited with the source of life. [Becoming] ‘gods.’”⁹³ According to Justin the Martyr, because man was made in the image of God, he is “deemed deserving of the name of His [God’s] sons.”⁹⁴ However, this worthiness to be able to be divinely adopted does not preclude the need for personal effort.⁹⁵ Joseph Smith wrote that man must “subscribe the articles of adoption” to be born again and enter into Heaven.⁹⁶ These articles of adoption are what the Latter-day Saints call the “first principles and

90. Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 98.

91. Skinner, *To Become Like God*, 81.

92. Robert L. Millet and Joseph Fielding McConkie, *In His Holy Name* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 18; see also Orson Pratt, *The Essential Orson Pratt* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1991), 239–330.

93. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 25.

94. Quoted in Skinner, *To become Like God*, 72.

95. See D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church,” *Ensign*, November 2015, 108.

96. Joseph Smith, “History, 1838–1856, volume E-1 [1 July 1843–30 April 1844],” *JosephSmithPapers.org*, (<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1838-1856-volume-e-1-1-july-1843-30-april-1844?p=127&highlight=articles%20of%20adoption>, accessed August 31, 2016); see also Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 364. McConkie writes, “Adopted children take upon themselves the name of their

ordinances of the Gospel” (Articles of Faith 1:4)—faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Although these “articles of adoption” vary between faith traditions in name, they are nevertheless required for man to pursue the path of theosis.⁹⁷ In the words of Andrew C. Skinner, “As we accept the fulness of Christ’s power when it is offered to each of us, we may become the sons and daughters of God, divine offspring, just as though we had been born natural physical offspring of God the Father.”⁹⁸ Because of his fallen nature, man must be restored through Christ’s atonement to a state of grace—a state of adoption. Christ, as the only sinless and rightful heir to God’s throne, offers a joint-inheritance to those who accept the articles of adoption mentioned above—restoring man to a special relationship with God (see Galatians 4:7; Romans 8:14–17; Titus 3:7).⁹⁹ It is because of this relationship and special standing with God that man can develop Christlike attributes necessary for deification—including the “mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

The Mind of Christ. LDS and Orthodox Christians believe that man may develop the mind of Christ. As Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). Robert L. Millet describes the LDS understanding of possessing the mind of Christ. “To have the mind of Christ,” Millet writes, “. . . is to enjoy the promptings and guidance of the Spirit, to live in such a manner that our feelings, our desires, and our thoughts are receptive to divine direction.”¹⁰⁰ Panayiotis Nellias states that Paul “is not advocating an external

newfound parents and become in all respects as though they had been born in the family. And so it is that the children of Christ, those who are born-again, those were spiritually begotten by their new father, take upon themselves the name of Christ. By it they are known; in it, they are called; it identifies and sets them apart from all the others. They are now family members, Christians and the real and true sense of the word.”

97. See Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 27.

98. Skinner, *To Become Like God*, 48.

99. See Millet and McConkie, *In His Holy Name*, 8–9.

100. Robert L. Millet, *Life in Christ* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 103.

imitation or a simple ethical improvement but a real Christification.”¹⁰¹ As man seeks to emulate Christ, he begins to think and feel like Christ. A man who possesses the mind of Christ, willingly submits his own will to God’s, seeks the welfare of others, and strives to see life through God’s divine perspective.

The Body of Christ. Latter-day Saints believe that a primary purpose of Christ’s mortal ministry was the establishment of his Church—commonly referred to as “the Body of Christ.” Latter-day Saints and Orthodox Christian both view their respective churches as the institution set forth by Christ himself—the one by a modern restoration of authority from Heaven (LDS)¹⁰² and the other by its maintenance of traditions that stem from early Christian practices (Orthodoxy). As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12). The Orthodox sentiment is well expressed by Greek theologian Christos Androustos, saying, “[The Church is] the centre [sic] and organ of Christ’s redeeming work . . . it is nothing else than the continuation and extension of His prophetic, priestly, and kingly power . . . The Church and its Founder are inextricably bound together . . . the Church is Christ with us.”¹⁰³ Man’s potential to achieve deification requires the receipt of sacraments and a church to administer those sacraments. As St. Cyprian wrote, “A person cannot have God as his Father if he does not have the Church as his Mother.”¹⁰⁴

Interaction with Christ is paramount in man’s progress towards theosis. Man required a Savior to redeem him from his fallen condition. Through His atonement, Christ offered to man

101. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 39.

102. See note 60.

103. Quoted in Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 234.

104. Quoted in Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 140.

the opportunity to be cleansed from sin and become like God. It is man's purpose on earth to acquire the divine likeness of Christ. Man's striving to regain the divine likeness will lead him to seek adoption into the family of God. The Body of Christ extends this adoption and offers the sacramental means whereby man may receive theosis.

Furthermore, Christ's interactions with man extend the comfort and inspiration of the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Both Eastern Orthodoxy and Mormonism view the mission of Christ as inextricably linked with the role of the Holy Ghost in the deification of man. The following section will further detail common views of and modes of interaction with the Holy Spirit in the process of theosis.

The Holy Spirit and Man

Although less is known about the Holy Spirit than the other two members of the Godhead, both Mormons and Orthodox agree that the Holy Spirit is indispensable in the process of deification. Both traditions agree that the Holy Spirit is sent from the Father to communicate with and bless humanity. Skinner writes, "Deification for humans comes through the operation of the Holy Spirit in us and will only be fully realized after we have passed beyond the veil."¹⁰⁵ Summarizing Origen, Norman Russell wrote, "The Holy Ghost makes us holy and spiritual so that the divine Son can make us sons and gods."¹⁰⁶ It is through the joint effort of the Holy Ghost and the first and second members of the Godhead, coupled with the dedicated discipleship man, that man can progress toward deification. The following are several ways that man may interact with the Holy Spirit in the process of theosis.

105. Skinner, *To Become God*, 81.

106. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 66.

Spiritual Indwelling. Because Latter-day Saint and Orthodox Christians believe that God made man in his image, man is therefore capable of experiencing the “divine indwelling” of the Holy Spirit. Both traditions consider man to be capable of recognizing and receiving the communication of God through the Holy Spirit. Man’s efforts to seek after and receive the Holy Spirit are key indicators of his progress towards theosis. For as Paul writes, “As many are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:16–17).

Orthodoxy teaches that through divine indwelling, the Holy Spirit enhances man’s divine image. It is through God’s divine image and the spiritual indwelling of the Holy Ghost that Orthodox Christians become deified. Lossky writes, “[the Holy Spirit] becomes the source of personal deification, of the uncreated treasure in each person. He brings to each person its ultimate perfection, but he does not become the person of the church. . . . [He] gives himself separately to each person.”¹⁰⁷ The Spirit enhances the divine image in each individual according to their needs—blessing every physical and spiritual faculty with God’s divine energy.

Latter-day Saints believe that a natural effect of receiving the divine indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the reception and development of spiritual gifts. In the Articles of Faith, Joseph Smith taught, “We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth” (Article of Faith 1:7). Elsewhere, he said, “We believe that the Holy Ghost is imparted by the laying on of hands of those in authority, and that the gift of tongues, and also the gift of prophecy are gifts of the Spirit, and are obtained through that medium.”¹⁰⁸

107. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 193.

108. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 119.

Latter-day Saints believe that, as man seeks spiritual indwelling, the Holy Ghost continues to develop man's divine image on the path to deification. Parley P. Pratt wrote, "The gift of the Holy Ghost adapts itself to all these organs or attributes. It quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands, and purifies all the natural passions and affections, and adapts them, by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates, and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings, and affections of our nature."¹⁰⁹ The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that these gifts are used for the benefit of men and are given for the time needed (see D&C 46:8–12). This suggests that spiritual gifts are the latent attributes of deity in man's divine image—waiting to be activated by the Spirit. In other words, the Holy Ghost awakens those attributes of godliness already sown in the soul of mankind to enable the individual to do whatever God requires of him or her. As is taught in the (book of) Doctrine and Covenants, Latter-day Saints believe that the "Comforter is the promise which I [God] give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom [the highest heaven]" (D&C 88:4).

Ultimate Transformation. For the Orthodox and Mormon alike, deification and glorification will not be fully realized through the Holy Spirit until after the resurrection. Russell writes, "The unfolding of the divine economy thus extends into eternity when the Holy Spirit is manifested in the deified people of God as a final phase of revelation."¹¹⁰ Skinner agrees, saying that, "Being joined to the Godhead through the Holy Spirit is 'a process' and the goal of every Christian. Such deification is not 'earned by merit' but rather 'is the joint work of the path that the Savior has opened up.' But 'it is fully attained only in the eschaton [end times], when death

109. Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 61.

110. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 50.

and corruption are finally destroyed in the resurrection”¹¹¹ Although humanity still possesses an imperfect nature in mortality, the Holy Ghost is capable of reaching out and transforming the willing individual. Basil the Great wrote, “[The Holy Spirit,] being God by nature . . . deifies by grace those who still belong to a nature subject to change.”¹¹² This means that a primary function of the Holy Ghost in this life is to prepare man spiritually to become like God—a process that will only be completed in the resurrection. Therefore, what is left for man to choose is what kind of transformation he will ultimately undergo, whether it is deification or not.

The Holy Spirit works in conjunction with both the Father and the Son to provide direction for the striving church members. Man’s divine image is enhanced as he receives the Holy Spirit, cultivating gifts and powers inherent in man’s spiritual creation. Through continued emulation of a Christlike lifestyle, and sacramental participation, the individual may enjoy an ever-increasing relationship with the Holy Spirit. Latter-day Saints believe that the deifying energies that can be experienced through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are innumerable. Through the companionship of the Holy Ghost, the individual has greater access to direction from God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit places man in a special relationship with God, empowering man to go on to receive the promise of theosis.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and compared Mormon and Orthodox understandings of the interaction between man and God in the process of deification. These two churches theologically disagree on fundamental issues of divine ontology (nature of being) in relationship to human

111. Skinner, *To Become Like God*, 81.

112. Basil the Great, *Against Eunomius* book 1, Chapter 5; quoted in Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, 128; quoted also in Skinner, *To Become like God*, 84.

anthropology (nature of man). Despite these doctrinal differences, Eastern Orthodox and LDS Christians share much in common regarding how each member of the Godhead interacts with man in the process of deification.

Man, because he is created in God's image, can grow to become like God. He must strive to know, love, and obey God. This striving fosters the developmental process that leads to theosis. Christ enables this development through his atoning sacrifice. Man must actively seek forgiveness of his sins, strive to emulate the character of Christ—participating in the sacramental practices of Christ's church—so that he may receive the Holy Spirit. Through this divine indwelling of the Holy Spirit, man gradually changes to reflect the likeness of Christ—preparatory to receiving the gift of theosis in the resurrection.

If deification comes through participation with the Godhead by means of Christ's church, much more is required than mere theological postulation. Deification must be reflected as practical theology. That means if Mormonism and Orthodoxy believe that theosis is the goal of humanity, then their respective rituals and worship practices would indicate this belief. If deification means to interact with and be transformed by the Godhead, it must follow that such transformative interactions can be identified and studied to some degree. The next chapter will present a discussion on how Mormon and Orthodox sacraments facilitate man's interactions with God.

Chapter Two

Sacramentalism and Divine Interaction

This chapter describes how LDS and Orthodox worship practices reflect deification by facilitating man's interaction with God. The doctrine of deification is found throughout the sacraments and liturgy of both the LDS and Orthodox Churches. "Theosis," Lossky writes, "is our restoration as persons to integrity and wholeness by participation in Christ through the Holy Spirit, in a process which is initiated in this world through our life of ecclesial communion [church participation] and moral striving and finds ultimate fulfillment in our union with the Father—all within the broad context of the divine economy."¹¹³ Sacramental worship—or "sacramentalism"—fosters the necessary divine attributes and interactions that help man achieve theosis. Sacramentalism in its most basic function helps man interact with God.¹¹⁴ The Church and its accompanying sacramental life are the means whereby man realizes this achievement. LDS Apostle M. Russell Ballard concurs saying, "[Deification] is the goal of this mortal journey, and no one gets there without the means of the gospel of Jesus Christ: His Atonement, the ordinances [LDS sacraments], and the guiding doctrines and principles that are found in the Church. It is the Church wherein we learn the works of God and accept the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that saves us."¹¹⁵ Therefore, this chapter will include a discuss of how sacraments help man interact with God.

113. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 21.

114. The term God will be used to denote every member of the Godhead unless specifically stated. Both LDS and Orthodoxy claim that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in purpose. Although they will disagree regarding the physical nature of that union, neither of these faith traditions would feel uncomfortable acknowledging that interacting with one member of the Godhead implies one's concurrent interaction with its other two members.

115. M. Russell Ballard, "God is at the Helm," *Ensign* November 2015, 24; paragraphing changed.

Definition of Sacraments

Sacramentalism extends far beyond the rituals of the Mormon and Orthodox Churches. Indeed, Mormon and Orthodox rituals—including baptism, confirmation, priesthood ordination, participation in the Lord’s Supper, marriage, and others—connect man with God but so do other, more personal devotional practices. Bartholomew, Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, once wrote that “[Orthodox Christians] have been accustomed to seeing the sacraments narrowly as community rituals or spiritual requirements.”¹¹⁶ The number of sacraments extends far beyond the confines of a few institutional rituals. Robert L. Millet contends that “all ordinances [LDS rituals] are sacraments, but not all sacraments are ordinances.”¹¹⁷ Latter-day Saints and Orthodox Christians would, therefore, agree that those practices which foster the deification of mankind include much more than ordinances [LDS] and mysteries [Orthodox rituals].

A sacrament is more than a handful of rituals. Stemming from the Latin word, *sacramentum* (“a consecrating”), sacraments could include any number of “consecrated” gestures.¹¹⁸ Jeffrey R. Holland stated that “a sacrament could be any one of a number of gestures or acts or ordinances that unite us with God and His limitless powers.”¹¹⁹ Consequently, the term “sacraments” can be extended to any gestures that connect man to God. Although they are not officially administered by the ecclesial institution, prayer, fasting, and scripture study open man to personally interact with Christ. They reveal God to the individual, tailoring the deifying

116. Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, *Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 85.

117. Robert L. Millet, “Sacramental Living: Reflections on Latter-day Saint Ritual,” in Daniel L. Belnap, ed., *By our Rites of Worship: Latter-day Saint Views on Ritual in Scripture, History, and Practice* (Salt Lake City, UT: 2013), 404; italics in original.

118. See “Sacrament,” *Online Etymology Dictionary* (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=sacrament>, accessed February 25, 2017).

119. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), 27.

process to man's specific needs. These sacraments transform as they transmit the Holy Spirit into the life of the participant. Furthermore, through personal sacraments like prayer and scripture study, men and women can learn more concerning ritualistic sacraments. These simple acts of devotion, like prayer and scripture study, create space in a fallen world for man to be transformed by God. In short, the road to deification is incomplete without engaging personal devotion *and* ritualistic worship. Only through such efforts can one truly respond to the offer of theosis.

Institutional and Personal Sacraments. Therefore, this analysis of sacramentalism and deification will briefly include the influences of both rituals and devotional practices. As one examines the variety of sacramental practices, two categories emerge: (1) *institutional* and (2) *personal* sacraments. Institutional sacraments are those rituals and practices administered by the Church under priesthood supervision. In the Orthodox tradition, institutional sacraments would include baptism, chrismation (known also as confirmation), the Eucharist, priesthood ordination, anointing the sick, penance (repentance and confession), and Marriage. In the Latter-day Saint tradition, institutional sacraments include baptism, confirmation, priesthood ordination, the temple endowment, and marriage. Personal sacraments that will be included in this discussion are those basic practices observed by LDS and Orthodox Christians alike: prayer, fasting, and scripture study.

The remainder of this chapter will help illustrate how man interacts with God through Mormon and Orthodox sacraments—*institutional and personal*—and how these sacraments foster in man the divine attributes necessary for theosis. Rather than enumerating each Orthodox sacrament and its Mormon equivalent (if such an equivalent exists), the discussion will focus on several divine attributes and sacraments that help man to develop those divine qualities leading

to theosis. Chapter 1 demonstrated how man interacts with each member of the Godhead to achieve theosis—chapter 2 illustrates how that sacramentalism fosters those attributes. To simply pair man off with one member of the Godhead would overlook the intrinsic unity that each personage of the Godhead shares with the others. When one participates with one member of the Godhead, they participate with all its members. Therefore, instead of selecting which sacraments intersect man with specific members of the Godhead, this chapter will address how the attributes common to divinity are acquired by man through sacramentalism.

Regarding the methodology used to categorize which sacraments best corresponded to each divine attribute, the selection process was somewhat arbitrary. To be sure, one could argue that any of the sacraments can foster any (or all) of the divine attributes to some degree. As the author studied Orthodox and Mormon teachings regarding each sacrament, he found that some sacraments were attributed more often than others, to the development of certain divine attributes. The following pairings of attributes with sacraments reflect those findings.

Divine Likeness and Adoption

Orthodoxy and Mormonism would agree that any number of sacramental performances contribute to man's acquisition of the divine likeness. To lift a phrase from Jeffrey R. Holland, sacraments “always deal with the central issue between perfect immortal God and imperfect, mortal man—why they are separated and how they can again unite.”¹²⁰ Sacraments bridge the gap in man's character by filling it with Christ's divinity—thereby strengthening man's connection with God. The choices one makes each day can help strengthen his or her relationship with God—turning life itself into a sacrament. Furthermore, as has been mentioned elsewhere,

120. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 8.

any sacrament—institutional or personal—could arguably be included here as an illustration. However, for present purposes, only three sacraments (two institutional and one personal) and their role in theosis will be discussed: baptism, priesthood ordination, and fasting. The selection of these three sacraments was an arbitrary choice intended to give a sampling of how sacraments foster the divine likeness in man.

Baptism. Orthodoxy and Mormonism teach that as man participates in the sacramental life of his respective faith, he must acquire the divine likeness of Christ and be adopted into the family of God. One sacrament whereby man accomplishes this is through baptism. Christ taught that “unless a man be born of the water and the spirit, He can in no wise enter the Kingdom of God” (John 3:5). As Irenaeus taught, Christians have become “gods” through baptism.¹²¹ Although deification is not fully realized in baptism, the act of baptism is seen first and foremost as the rite of initiation that leads to theosis. Paraphrasing Clement of Alexandria, Norman Russell wrote, “It is only through baptism in combination with the pursuit of the moral life that likeness to God can be attained.”¹²²

Only through baptism can man be adopted into the family of God. In the Orthodox tradition, this adoption signifies an ontological change (change of being) in man’s created state—elevating him to a higher level of “creature-hood” (greater detail will be given in the following chapter). Furthermore, Orthodoxy’s view of adoption includes man’s initiation into the Body of Christ—the church. This membership is highly significant. Orthodox Father Meleitos Webber explained, “[Membership] means to be a disciple, and the way to become a disciple is to be baptized. . . . To be a disciple means to have a relationship with God that will never be taken

121. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.6.1; quoted in Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 61.

122. Clement of Alexandria; quoted in Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 63.

away. This is not merely a relationship of creature and Creator. That relationship is already fixed at physical birth, and no human agent can do anything about it for good or ill. The relationship begun at baptism refers to the relationship in which the individual meets God on a personal level.”¹²³ Baptism is a transformative experience, completely reorienting the Orthodox Christian toward His intended goal of theosis.

In Latter-day Saint theology, Joseph Smith wrote that man must “subscribe the articles of adoption” to be born again and enter into Heaven.¹²⁴ These articles of adoption are what the Latter-day Saints call the “first principles and ordinances of the Gospel” (Articles of Faith 1:4)—faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. These preliminary steps prepare man for baptism—it is through baptism that man becomes like Christ and is adopted into God’s family. Baptism strengthens the relationship between the participants and God. Baptism is the ritual that reorients the individual to focus on returning to the Father to participate in His divine nature. As Robert L. Millet said, “Through baptism we are born into the family of Christ, and there we covenant to take and honor his name. As we do so we come to know his love and have extended to us the blessing of heirship. All of this our Eternal Father has promised us—even the power to create others as we have been created.”¹²⁵ Or to quote Andrew Skinner, “As we accept the fulness of Christ’s power when it is offered to each of us, we may become the sons and daughters of God, divine offspring, just as though we had been born natural physical offspring of God the Father.”¹²⁶

123. Archimandrite Meletios Webber, *Bread & Water, Wine & Oil* (Chesterton, IN: Conciliar Press, 2007), 116.

124. Joseph Smith, “History, 1838–1856, volume E-1 [1 July 1843–30 April 1844],” *JosephSmithPapers.org*.

125. Millet, Robert L., and Joseph Fielding McConkie, *In His Holy Name* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 15.

126. Skinner, *To Become Like God*, 48.

Priesthood Ordination. Another sacrament that fosters man's likeness to Christ is priesthood ordination. When a man is ordained, he is authorized to act in tandem with the Holy Spirit to accomplish the will of God. Vladimir Lossky writes that "the sacraments and sacred rights which are carried out within the church thus admit of two wills and two operations taking place simultaneously."¹²⁷ The priest must seek to conform his will with God's—an implicit emulation of Christ's likeness. The priest seeks to say what Christ would say and minister on his behalf. Similarly, Mormonism teaches that priesthood holders [ordained LDS males] must be like Christ (see 3 Nephi 27:27) if they are to use their priesthood effectively. LDS scholar Alonzo Gaskill wrote that "The ordained has received some of God's authority or power to act in His name here upon the earth. Elsewhere we are told that, symbolically, ordination implies, 'attachment to the deity.' The ordained does not simply operate under God's authority, but actually in concert with God."¹²⁸ This cooperation with God in performing priesthood service requires men to live worthily to be open to the instruction of the Holy Ghost. If he strives to maintain a spiritual connection with God, the priesthood man will have the power to do Christ's work while in mortality (see D&C 121:36). The sacrament of ordination represents man's opportunity to not only bear God's authority *and* to exercise it on God's behalf in subsequent priesthood duties. It is a meeting place of man and God's will.

Fasting. The personal practice of fasting fosters a form of asceticism and submission—a reflection of Christ's divine likeness. Fasting is a personal sacrament in which man demonstrates to God his willingness to trade worldliness for divinity. Fasting essentially reflects theosis—man's self-emptying to receive God's deifying grace. To paraphrase Archimandrite Webber,

127. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 187.

128. Alonzo Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols: Finding Meaning in Rites, Rituals, & Ordinances* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 76.

fasting is a demonstration of man's ultimate dependence on God. Like an athlete who exercises in preparation for an event, so too is fasting like an exercise, preparing man to commune with God or confront some difficult task.¹²⁹ Fasting emulates the example of Christ who fasted in preparation for both his mortal mission and to resist temptation (See Matt 4:1–11). The *Didache*, an early Christian text, teaches Christians to “pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you.”¹³⁰ Fasting reminds the individual that, although he or she is indeed a unique person, that he or she cannot stand independent of God's blessings and guidance. Like a need for food and water, man needs God every day to become and do what God intended. As Webber writes, “[Fasting] is a therapeutic tool by which we are brought closer to where we need to be, both physically and spiritually.”¹³¹ Furthermore, fasting fashions man more in the divine likeness as he engages in almsgiving.¹³² Both the Orthodox and LDS traditions encourage members to donate to the poor as part of their fast, a further self-separation from worldly dependence, turning the individual back to God. To quote Athanasius, “the fast is the life of the angels.”¹³³ Fasting, in the words of John of Kronstadt, leads “to peace of heart, to union with God; [it fills] us with devotion and Sonship and [gives] us boldness before God.”¹³⁴

Although many other sacraments foster the divine likeness in man as he strives for theosis, baptism, priesthood ordination, and fasting are essential in that process. Christ's life was epitomized by His willingness to be baptized, serve as humanity's “High Priest,” and live a life

129. See Webber, *Bread & Water*, 72. Concerning fasting's ascetic nature, Webber continues, saying, “Askesis is not, and cannot be, an attempt to please God with our pain, or even with our effort. If we do that we reduce God to the role of manipulative overseer.”

130. *Didache* 1.3; quoted in Tomáš Špidlík, *Prayer: The Spirituality of the Christian East*, trans. Anthony P Gythiel (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005), 2:286.

131. Webber, *Bread & Water*, 73.

132. See Špidlík, *Prayer*, 286.

133. Athanasius, *De virginitate* 7; quoted in Špidlík, *Prayer*, 287.

134. John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*, 3; Quoted in Špidlík, *Prayer*, 288.

of submission to God. If one desires to achieve the divine likeness, he must engage in all three sacraments.¹³⁵

Spiritual Indwelling and the Mind of Christ

Mormonism and Orthodoxy both stress the necessity of man's spiritual engagement in worship. One may physically participate in worship practices (attending liturgy, reading scripture, praying, etc.), but if he or she refuses to open himself or herself to the influence of the Holy Spirit, no amount of sacramental participation will compensate for a lack of spiritual indwelling. This spiritual transformation fosters other needed changes as well. To achieve theosis, one must be cognitively transformed by acquiring the mind of Christ. Man must actively strive to understand his mortal experience and condition from the divine perspective. He must submit his will to the Father as Christ did. The following sacraments are a sampling of means whereby man may receive the spiritual indwelling and mind of Christ needed to experience theosis.

Confirmation. Confirmation is essential to foster the Holy Spirit's indwelling in man. This ritual, in Orthodoxy and Mormonism, is the companion ritual to baptism. Confirmation is the culmination of man's introduction in the Church of Christ. One is made an authorized recipient of the Holy Spirit. The receipt of the Spirit depends on man's willingness to receive it. Orthodoxy and Mormonism maintain that spiritual indwelling comes through the sacrament of confirmation. Although man, by virtue of being created in the divine image, is capable of feeling

135. The orthodox idea of engaging in ordination does not necessarily mean that every male should seek ordination; rather, it means that he should seek the blessings that are administered by the hands of the priest. In Mormonism, seeking ordination does mean that males should seek ordination. The doctrinal foundations and implications of these distinct traditions will be discussed in the following chapter.

the Holy Spirit—the fullness of spiritual indwelling is only available after he is confirmed. But even then, women and men who are confirmed must be willing to receive the Holy Spirit and his divine influence in order to be deified. Therefore, confirmation is a call to commune more deeply with God and receive his Spirit.

In Orthodoxy, confirmation (known also as “chrismation”) implies numerous blessings. According to Orthodox writer Panayiotis Nellas, “The Spirit activates and vivifies the new functions which the baptized have acquired in Christ.”¹³⁶ As Orthodox writer Nicholas E. Denysenko wrote, “The chrism [holy oil used in the confirmation and anointing process after baptism] introduces participants to intimate communion with the Holy Trinity, a variant of sacramental *theosis* . . . It is to seal the Christian life in the royal priesthood shared by all the neophytes [newly baptized Orthodox Christians].”¹³⁷ Other such blessings include the gift of inclusion. Meletios Webber continues, saying, “Everyone, from the patriarch to the youngest baptized person is ‘in communion’ and thus ‘in Christ’ . . . The gift of the Holy Spirit, the dynamic spiritual movement, gives the person a sense of belonging that the world is unable to eradicate.”¹³⁸ This spiritual indwelling through confirmation allows the participant to identify, not with the world, but with the family of God. Confirmation produces a sense of spiritual belonging, an invitation to commune with God at all times. Where at first, woman felt drawn towards God because she was created in God’s image, now, through confirmation, woman can participate in God’s spirit. The same can be said of men and their relationship with God. Man perceives God’s intentions and derives from life the lessons that God wishes to teach him—

136. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 125.

137. Nicholas E. Denysenko, *Chrismation: A Primer for Catholics* (Collegeville, MN; Liturgical Press, 2014), 14.

138. Webber, *Bread & Water*, 132–133; paragraphing changed.

thereby developing the mind of Christ. Because this development of perspective is so personal, the confirmation becomes an individualized experience. It introduces man into a personal relationship with the Trinity—which, for Orthodoxy, is the essence of spiritual indwelling.

For Latter-day Saints, confirmation is also essential in the process of deification.¹³⁹ Often referred to as the “baptism of fire,” the spiritual indwelling of the Holy Ghost acts as the cleansing agent that purges the sins of the individual. According to LDS theologian, Orson Pratt, this baptism of fire consumes the “unholy affections of those who are made partakers of it.”¹⁴⁰ Confirmation facilitates the rebirth of man’s spiritual life, initiating man’s recovery of the divine likeness and reconstituting the man or woman as a son or daughter of God. Man begins to develop the perspective of the Christ through the Holy Ghost. Pratt continues:

Not only [will man be] like him in body, but also in mind. . . . For then he [God] “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” . . . Then shall knowledge in part be done away, and we shall know in full: then there will be no knowledge, or truth, or wisdom in the heights above or in the depths beneath, or in the Heavens, or in the Heaven of Heavens, or in the immensity of space, or in the eternal ages of duration, but what we shall comprehend and know[.] . . . Then we shall be Gods, because all the fulness [sic] of God will dwell within us.¹⁴¹

LDS confirmation opens man to the opportunity of theosis through spiritual indwelling. This indwelling fosters the mind of Christ, helping man to become a joint-heir with Christ in the Father’s kingdom. Through the Spirit, man grows to share the omniscience of God. Because the Holy Ghost helps unite man’s spirit with God’s, man receives, as part of his inheritance, a growing portion of God’s omniscience. Man begins to see with a godlike perspective, reasoning,

139. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 95. Joseph Smith said, “You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Savior says, ‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God’ [John 3:5.]”

140. Orson Pratt, *The Essential Orson Pratt*, ed. David H. Whittaker (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 209.

141. Pratt, *The Essential Orson Pratt*, 293.

and acting like his Heavenly Father. In other words, through confirmation, man enjoys the indwelling of the Spirit and begins to acquire the mind of Christ.

For LDS and Orthodox Saints, confirmation is crucial for man to experience the spiritual indwelling necessary to achieve theosis. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost fosters the purification process that helps man identify with Christ. Man develops the mind of Christ. Confirmation helps man see his potential grow in this life and experience the companionship of deity as he moves towards theosis. Through confirmation, God bears witness to man's capacity to receive Him in this life. Man must, therefore, receive that confirmation and strive to maintain this spiritual communion. As he honors his confirmation, man's capacity to receive the Spirit increases and prepares him to receive God in full. The sacrament of confirmation is an initiatory ritual that helps man experience theosis—now and in the resurrection.

Anointing the Sick. Anointing the sick is a ritual that is practiced in both the Orthodox and LDS faiths. Sickness itself is a humbling ordeal that can humble man and draw him to seek God's help. The ritual of anointing is a sacramental way for the sick to seek divine blessings. As detailed by the writings in Mark 6:13 and James 5:14–15, Orthodox and LDS Christians seek blessings from duly ordained priesthood holders. Through the sacrament of anointing, even sickness and trial can be transformed to become a sacramental experience. The following are teachings regarding how suffering and priesthood blessings facilitate the process of man's deification.

Whether by persecution or by the injustice of a fallen world, LDS and Orthodox Christians believe that suffering can draw the disciple closer to Christ. Concerning his own trials, Joseph Smith once learned, "all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7). It is through what Paul called "thorn[s] in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7) that man

can experience the deifying grace of God. As Orthodox writer John A. McGuckin said, “In the pain of the human condition, the Christian is revealed as one who does not stand up to rail against God, but one who humbly confesses weakness, and asks for the compassion of the Supremely Compassionate One.”¹⁴² Man must confess his dependence on Christ. He seeks Christ’s strength and perspective to weather his current tribulation. As he does, man grows into godliness—receiving both the mind and spirit of God. For this purpose, Mormonism and Orthodoxy encourage their congregants to participate in the sacrament of anointing the sick.

For Orthodoxy and Mormonism, the receipt of a priesthood blessing connotes the submission of one’s will. The anointing connects the sufferer to Christ, consecrating them to receive whatever God wills. Whether man is healed, remains sick, or dies, the sacrament of anointing invites man to align his will with God’s. Consider McGuckin’s description of the effect that anointing has on the individual. He writes, “If the mystery of the unction [anointing] does not result in the healing of a very sick person it is accepted as a sign that God has other plans, and this sacrament becomes a very important stage in the adaptation of the sick person to their sufferings or (perhaps) to the death that ultimately waits upon each one of us. . . . Having become so blessed, and sanctified, may not necessarily make the pain any less bitter, but can empower the sufferer to see it in a different light. . . . This sacrament . . . begins to form ‘the mind of Christ’ in those who participate in it.”¹⁴³

It is through this process of anointing that men and women subjugate their wills to the will of God, dedicating their condition to his divine will. This alignment of spirits—man’s spirit with God—reflects man’s receipt of the mind of Christ. As LDS Apostle Dallin H. Oaks taught,

142. John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Malden, MA: 2008), 307.

143. McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 307.

“From all of this we learn that even the servants of the Lord . . . cannot give a priesthood blessing that will cause a person to be healed if that healing is not the will of the Lord. As children of God, knowing of His great love and His ultimate knowledge of what is best for our eternal welfare, we trust in Him.”¹⁴⁴ After the anointing, man’s recovery—or continued affliction—has new purpose. Man sees his condition from a divine vantage point. He no longer views his suffering as a detriment but a benefit in gaining the mind of Christ.

Not only does the afflicted interact with God through the anointing but so too does the priest. The process of administering a blessing allows the priesthood holder to interact with God’s will. Through an indwelling of the spirit, the priesthood holder’s words are ratified according to God’s will. In the LDS tradition, after the recipient of the blessing is anointed in a brief ceremony, they receive a subsequent blessing to “seal” the anointing. As part of this second blessing, the words of the prayer are spoken extemporaneously. The one performing the blessing is instructed to pronounce blessings as the Spirit dictates. Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught that “it is a very sacred responsibility for a Melchizedek Priesthood holder [LDS elder] to speak for the Lord in giving a priesthood blessing.”¹⁴⁵ In the Orthodox tradition, a similar interaction occurs between God and the priest. The priest, accompanied by as many as six other priests, reads prescribed sections of the Gospels, invoking the blessings of God through wrote prayers that have been handed down through the Orthodox tradition. Vladimir Lossky notes that “the sacraments and sacred rights which are carried out within the church [including anointing] thus admit of two wills and two operations taking place simultaneously.”¹⁴⁶ The priest, by pronouncing the blessings of the anointing ceremony, speaks on God’s behalf and, through the

144. Dallin H. Oaks, “Healing the Sick,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 50.

145. Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 36.

146. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 187.

healing or spiritual ratification, God bestows the needed blessings. Through anointing and blessing the sick, Orthodoxy and Mormonism clearly demonstrate the common belief that God does indeed interact with man—not only with the ailing recipient but also with the ministering priest.

In both the LDS and Orthodox traditions, the priest, the afflicted, and those who suffer alongside the afflicted are invited through the sacrament of anointing to acquire the mind of Christ, submit their wills to his, and allow the Spirit to dwell in their hearts. The result is a deeper relationship with God leading to their divinization. The spiritual indwelling that comes from the anointing provides guidance, strength, and perspective that will aid man in his struggle through a fallen world. As a result, through the sacrament of anointing, any suffering can, in its own way, become sacramental.

Scripture Study. Scripture Study is considered one of the most fundamental personal sacraments in both Orthodoxy and Mormonism—opening man to both spiritual indwelling and acquiring the mind of Christ. Christian writer, Stephan Thomas said that “to read the Bible, then, is not only to gain guidance about how to be deified: it is actually *part of the process* of our deification.”¹⁴⁷ As Robert L. Millet observed, “The more we immerse ourselves in the word of God, the more clearly we begin to uncover and discern the character and personality and virtue of our Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ. . . . Scripture becomes a catalyst to divine guidance, a means to spiritual transformation and sanctification. As a channel for divine power, a channel for virtue, scriptures become a sacrament.”¹⁴⁸ Scripture study invites man to receive

147. Stephan Thomas; quoted in Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 86. Thomas suggests that “if we read Christologically, with Christ as the key, and pneumatically, with the Holy Spirit’s energy in our hearts and minds, ‘anagogically’: It leads us up to God the Father.”

148. Millet, “Sacramental Living,” 413.

personal guidance from the Holy Spirit through careful and reverential reflection on the inspired text. As St. Gregory of Palamas noted, “when contemplated in the spirit, [scripture] becomes bright and clear. Only then is the gospel understood in the divine way as befits God.”¹⁴⁹ Scripture study, when accompanied by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, illuminates man—propelling him towards theosis.

Mormonism and Orthodoxy both teach that the scriptures help man to see how God’s plan of salvation has unfolded across human history. Andrew Skinner wrote, “The scriptures repeatedly point us to the ultimate destiny God has in mind for his children—namely, deification through Jesus Christ.”¹⁵⁰ Through the scriptures, man begins to understand his relationship with God. Per Norman Russell, man—as he studies scriptures—can discern God’s interactions with humanity throughout history. Through this discernment, Russell writes, “We can begin to appropriate the divine life. This is not a matter of acquiring information from the Bible; it is actively engaging with the God who is revealed in it.”¹⁵¹ In other words, man learns through the sacrament of scripture study how he may act so that he becomes deified.

What occurs inside an individual’s heart is as important as what they do to achieve theosis. The indwelling of the Spirit brings about man’s inner transformation—a change only possible through the sacramental life. Orthodoxy and Mormonism agree that confirmation, anointing the sick, and scripture study assist man in this transformative process. To receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost, man must first be authorized through confirmation. Participation in the sacrament of anointing develops man’s ability to submit to God’s will and receive the mind of Christ in the process. Through scripture study, the Holy Spirit elevates man’s

149. Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 178.

150. Skinner, *To Become Like God*, 141.

151. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 70.

perspective to view God’s plan. Man sees what God is trying to do with him. However, comprehending God’s plan may not result in motivation to be changed. Only through experiencing and responding to divine love can man find the impulse to change. The next section will include a discussion on how man interacts through sacramentalism to experience God’s divine love.

Divine Love

For both LDS and Orthodox Christians, one of the greatest outcomes of deification is the development of divine love. Joseph Smith taught that “love is one of the chief characteristics of Deity, and ought to be manifested by those who aspire to be the sons of God.”¹⁵² Divine love compels man to change, to respond in faith to God’s divine offer of theosis. Orthodoxy and Mormonism both teach that God, through the sacramental life, offers man the chance to feel His divine love. In turn, man mirrors this divine love to others—developing the attribute of divine love within himself. The following are examples of several sacraments through which man may experience God’s divine love and reflect that love toward others.

The Lord’s Supper. The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is a central means whereby God invites man to partake of His divine love. Known as the Eucharist in the Orthodox tradition and simply “The Sacrament” in the LDS tradition, the Lord’s Supper is the central component to ongoing discipleship. According to Orthodox writer John Zizioulas, “There is no theosis outside of the Eucharist.”¹⁵³ LDS Sacrament services and Orthodox Eucharistic liturgy draw participants into communion with God. As Archimandrite Bartholomew wrote, “The sacrament of the *Eucharist* is pregnant with endless possibilities and opportunities for deepening our awareness of

152. Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 330.

153. John Zizioulas; quoted in Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 141.

communion.”¹⁵⁴ As man participates in receiving the emblems of the bread and wine (or water in the LDS tradition), he is called to contemplate Christ’s loving sacrifice. As Jeffrey Holland put it, this reflection during the Lord’s Supper is an opportunity for man to “‘feel and see’ in a spiritual way . . . those reminders that Christ lived and died . . . for others.”¹⁵⁵ In the Lord’s Supper, man encounters the emblematic representation of Christ—the ultimate manifestation of God’s divine love. One may experience God’s love elsewhere in creation but as the Orthodox writer, Andrew Louth wrote, “It is in the Church . . . that we discover in its fullness the love of god, that heals and perfects and draws us into the unity of Christ.”¹⁵⁶

As man experiences the divine love that comes from witnessing and participating in the Lord’s Supper, Orthodoxy and Mormonism both teach that he will begin to reflect that divine love toward God and others. In the LDS Sacrament, Latter-day Saints promise to love God, promising that they will “always remember [God] and keep his commandments which he has given them” (D&C 20:77). Orthodox Christians are reminded that not only are they to commune with God but also with their neighbors. Christopher Veniamin wrote that “our life and the church and our life in Christ, therefore, is based on communion: Communion with Christ, and the first instance, but simultaneously, through Christ, communion with one another.”¹⁵⁷ God through his interaction with man in the Lord’s Supper, invites man to consider those that he [man] might serve. As Joseph Smith taught, “A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race.”¹⁵⁸

154. Bartholomew, *Encountering the Mystery*, 87; italics in original.

155. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 273.

156. Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 100.

157. Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 84.

158. Smith, *Presidents of the Church*, 330–331.

Therefore, participating in the Lord’s Supper, for LDS and Orthodox Christians, is a fulfillment of the Lord’s command to love the Lord *and* thy neighbor (see Matt 22:37, 39).

Marriage. Marriage, in the Orthodox and LDS traditions, is a sacrament through which husband and wife may experience and develop divine love. Both LDS and Orthodox marriage ceremonies occur around altars—reminding a married couple of Christ’s role in their marriage. His sacrifice gives meaning to their marriage. His example and teachings aid the couple to live in happiness. But moreover, the symbolism of the altar reminds the couple to sacrifice themselves for the good of their spouse. Men must love their wives as Christ loved the church (see Ephesians 5:21–33). The joining of their flesh into one reflects the union we are to gain with the Father—absolute yet unconfused; unselfish and unrelenting.¹⁵⁹ For Orthodox Christians, marriage is a path that helps husband and wife learn divine love—a quality that will find its perfection in the resurrection. John McGuckin wrote that “in our present earthly experience marital, and family, love tends to be exclusive, for its protection and nurture. Then [in the resurrection], it will have transcended exclusivity, without losing its own character and uniqueness. In short, in the [resurrection], all that is truest and finest about the love of disciples for one another on earth will be brought to a more glorious perfection.”¹⁶⁰ Latter-day Saints believe that marriage is a vital way for humankind to learn the attribute of divine love. Parley P. Pratt explained that he learned from Joseph Smith that “the refined sympathies” of love that one experiences in marriage are of divine origin and that through marriage, husband and wife may “cultivate these affections; and grow and increase in the same to all eternity.”¹⁶¹ Marriage,

159. See McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 315.

160. McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 315.

161. Parley P. Pratt; quoted in Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 481.

therefore, becomes the divine institution through which men and women can learn to foster God's love for each other and help one another grow towards theosis.

Marriage, in the Orthodox and LDS traditions, also encourages the fostering of families—yet another way man experiences and develops divine love. Fathers and mothers can experience to a degree the divine love that God has for his children. Truman G. Madsen observed, “A mother and father look down at their sleeping infant, in communing touch with what is sacred to both. Parental love, they see in this illumined moment, is not a shadow but a light of divine love in which splendor we became spirit children and by which we are enveloped.”¹⁶² As Christ said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). In summary, man, through marriage, learns to love as God loves.

Prayer. Man communes with deity by experiencing and reflecting divine love through prayer. Mormonism and Orthodoxy both teach that this prayerful communication of divine love must be bi-directional. As man prays, God communicates his love to man; yet as man prays, he must also emulate divine love back to God himself. In other words, man develops—through prayer—the capacity to show divine love. To quote Vladimir Lossky, “The greatest of the virtues, charity, that love of God in which the mystical union is accomplished, is itself of the fruits of prayer.”¹⁶³ This section is a summary of how man reflects the divine love, and is also an examination of how LDS and Orthodox practices of prayer help in this process.

Divine love—the love that was embodied by Jesus Christ—is the love that man is expected to reflect (see John 13:34; Matt. 5:14; 3 Nephi 18:16, 24). But what how is this love manifested? Christ was submissive (see Matt 26:39), humble (see Matt 20:27–28; Philippians

162. Madsen, *Eternal Man*, 27.

163. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 207.

2:5–9), and wholly dedicated to the Father’s will (see John 5:19). Christ pled for his disciples *and* his persecutors (see John 17:9; Luke 23:34). In all this, Christ manifested divine love. But how can man grow to demonstrate such love? It is through sacrament of prayer. Through prayer, man begins to emulate the divine love demonstrated by Christ—leading to theosis. Christopher Veniamin states that “[prayer] is the ambassador or agent of the blessed vision [of theosis].”¹⁶⁴ Man learns to view and respond to man with the love of God. Latter-day Saints are taught to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love . . . that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure” (Moroni 7:48). As man prays, he gradually becomes more Christlike, viewing himself and his neighbor through the lens of divine love.

Mormonism teaches that prayer is a unique way through which man aligns his will with God’s—thus reflecting divine love to God himself. Latter-day Saints teach that “prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other” (Bible Dictionary, “Prayer,” 707). This alignment of wills, this kind of submission, is only possible as man strives to pray with divine love. As Robert L. Millet taught, “Communion with the Infinite requires discipline[.] . . . We must put aside the things of the world, *even good things*, in order to engage the greatest good.”¹⁶⁵ As he does, man begins to rely on the Spirit for the very words which he should pray (see 3 Nephi 19:24–30).

164. Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 175. Veniamin connects the Savior’s actions on the Mount of Transfiguration to the necessity of prayer, saying, “This is why Christ himself prayed immediately before His transfiguration, even though (as consubstantial and undivided with the Father) He did not need to do so.”

165. Robert L. Millet, “Communion with the Infinite,” *Prayer* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 146.

Orthodoxy also teaches that man must divest himself of worldly cares in prayer so that he may properly commune with God. Lossky describes three stages of prayer in the Orthodox tradition. The first stage is the petition where the individual seeks relief from the preoccupations and fears of the world. Lossky states that “this is no more than a preparation for true [spiritual] prayer.”¹⁶⁶ Second is spiritual prayer, described as “a gradual ascent towards God in seeking and effort. Little by little the soul reintegrates itself, regains its unity, and particular petitions begin to disappear and seem superfluous, as God answers prayer by making manifest His all-embracing providence.”¹⁶⁷ The third is pure prayer. Lossky continues, saying, “There is an end of petition when the soul entrusts itself wholly to the will of God. . . . Nothing inconsistent with prayer can any longer gain access to the mind, nor turn aside the will which is now directed towards God, and united to the divine will.”¹⁶⁸

Theosis requires man’s experience and development of divine love through the sacramental life. To quote Paul, “And though I have all faith . . . and have not charity, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:2). The sacramental life offers man the opportunity to experience and emulate God’s love in a variety of ways. Only a few sacraments were discussed: the Lord’s Supper, marriage, and prayer. First, the Lord’s Supper was shown the occasion for man to witness the symbolic representation of Christ sacrifice—the ultimate manifestation of God’s love. As man partakes, he feels love from God but is also expected to reflect that love towards those around him. Second, the discussion of marriage illustrated how God encourages men and women to practice demonstrating divine love as they serve and sacrifice for one another. Through family life, man may feel God’s divine parental love. As parents, men and women learn

166. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 207.

167. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 207.

168. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 207.

the contours of divine love through teaching and nurturing their children. Finally, prayer was examined as a channel through which man may experience divine love. He may feel God's love in prayerful communion—renewing his relationship with God. Man may also reflect divine love towards his fellow man. He must pray for his neighbor. He must divorce his own will from the world and align it with God's. Man must seek to pray for the things of God and not simply temporal concerns. As he or she does, man or woman—through participation in the Lord's Supper, marriage, and prayer—develops the divine love for God and humankind that is requisite for theosis. Through the sacramental life, humankind slowly transforms to reflect the likeness of God—a likeness of love.

Conclusion

Man interacts with God through the sacramental life. Man must acquire several key divine attributes to receive theosis: the divine likeness, adoption into God's family, spiritual indwelling, the mind of Christ, and divine love. As one examines the sacramental theologies of the Latter-day Saint and Eastern Orthodoxy traditions, one begins to see how deeply rooted the quest for deification is. Any practice—whether it is administered institutionally or practiced personally—could be considered sacramental. This discussion has included only a handful of institutional and personal sacraments that contribute to man's interaction with deity and subsequent deification—warranting further analysis on a larger scale.

Orthodox and Mormon theologies are indeed participatory. As man engages in the sacramental life, life itself becomes what Veniamin called “the blessed vision [of theosis].”¹⁶⁹ One could examine any sacramental practice and argue that it contributes to man's acquisition of

169. Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 175.

any one of the divine attributes. Sacramentalism draws man outside himself and invites him to interact with God—an interaction that will require man’s full participation to bring about the desired goal of theosis. Men and women who frame their lives within the context of a sacramental life imbue their daily devotions with new meaning—each mundane task becoming an opportunity to connect with God in some way. The sacramental life becomes the means whereby man does not spend his days focusing on his mortal trappings—the sacramental life refocuses man on God. Only with such focus can the Holy Ghost, through the atonement of Christ, enable man to participate with God and become a partaker in the “divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

Chapter Three

Sacramentalism and Reflections of Theosis

This chapter will include an analysis of how Orthodox and LDS theologies, with their doctrinal differences, affect their respective sacraments. Thus far, this work has included a demonstration of man's need to participate in sacramentalism to achieve theosis. However, little has yet been said about how Orthodox and Mormon sacraments reflect their respective doctrines. As was discussed in chapter 1, Orthodoxy and Mormonism have very different views regarding God's being and man's created nature. This chapter is an examination of how those different views translate into practiced religion. As one compares these differences in the institutional sacraments, he or she will find several overarching themes. The following are several of these key thematic differences that emerged from this analysis: Orthodoxy emphasizes *physical transformation* whereas Latter-day Saints emphasize *spiritual preparation*; Orthodoxy accentuates *adoration* while LDS stress *emulation*; Orthodoxy draws man into the historical narrative of Christianity through *historical inclusion*, while Mormonism emphasizes the *narrative renewal* of God's covenantal relationship with each person.

The remainder of this chapter will include a deeper discussion of these thematic distinctions. It should be noted here that the discussion of these distinctions is not intended to accentuate how different Mormonism is from Orthodoxy; rather, this discussion should be considered evidence of the depth to which Mormon and Orthodox doctrines of theosis affect their respective worship practices.

Physical Transformation vs. Spiritual Preparation

The first major thematic difference between Mormonism and Orthodoxy is the emphasis of Man's physical transformation (Orthodox) versus spiritual preparation (LDS). Because Orthodoxy teaches that man is a creature, he must be physically changed in order to participate with uncreated divinity. Orthodox institutional sacraments raise man beyond the base level of created flesh to a higher order. Through the sacraments, man's flesh begins to resemble the sanctified flesh of Christ. Although both traditions agree that resurrection will reflect physical changes that allow man's communion with God, Orthodoxy also stresses that man must be transformed on earth before man may participate in Holy Communion. As man consistently communes with God through sacramental participation, he becomes more and more sanctified and his flesh resembles the flesh of Christ. This change only occurs as man maintains his sacramental communion with God.

Mormonism teaches that man is the spiritually underdeveloped offspring of God. God, in LDS doctrine, is a glorified man with a resurrected body of "flesh and bones" (D&C 130:22). Man's flesh is created from eternal elements (see D&C 93:33) but requires spiritual glorification to reflect the glory of God's flesh (D&C 88:28–29). Therefore, man must be spiritually prepared by the grace of God so that his flesh may be resurrected to reflect the spiritual transformation that he experienced beforehand. Mormon institutional sacraments reflect this belief. Rather than stressing the need for man to be physically changed to commune with God, LDS sacraments instruct man how to spiritually prepare so he may receive the fullness of theosis hereafter. LDS Sacraments initiate a developmental process that invites the Holy Spirit to enter into the life of the disciple. Indeed, man must commune with God, but the nature of that communion is not to enhance man's creaturehood—it is to instruct man on how to prepare for godhood.

This dichotomy of preparation versus transformation should not suggest that both themes are not taught in LDS *and* Orthodox doctrines. Indeed, both traditions admittedly profess themes of transformation *and* preparation within their own traditions. Latter-day Saint leaders have repeatedly taught that man, through the indwelling of the Spirit, must undergo a “mighty change” (Alma 5:45) and “have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). This spiritual change has been noted to produce physical effects reflected in the countenance of the disciple (see Alma 5:14; D&C 88:11).¹⁷⁰ At times, sacramental practices like prayer or baptism have been taught to have physically transformative effects (see 3 Nephi 19:25, 30 [13–35]; Moroni 7:48).¹⁷¹ However, this physical transformation is not the focus of Latter-day Saint rituals.

Indeed, Mormons hope to be transformed, physically and spiritually, to reflect the spiritual lifestyle that they have adopted; nevertheless, man’s transformation—the physical change that will ultimately occur in the resurrection (see 1 Cor. 15:35–42; D&C 88:21–29)—will only come by way of his spiritual preparation. To quote a former LDS Church president, Ezra Taft Benson, “The Lord works from the inside out.”¹⁷² Latter-day Saint rituals reflect this teaching. Rather than emphasizing the physical transformation to foster spiritual rehabilitation,

170. See James E. Faust, “The Light in Their Eyes,” *Ensign* November 2005, 25. LDS Apostle James E. Faust describes a scenario in which a non-LDS observer commented on the “light in [the] eyes,” of LDS students who would be attending classes in the area.

171. See also Joseph Smith, “Discourse, between circa 26 June and circa 2 July 1839, as Reported by Willard Richards, p. 19,” *JosephSmithPapers.org* (<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-between-circa-26-june-and-circa-2-july-1839-as-reported-by-willard-richards/5>, accessed January 30, 2017). Joseph Smith was noted to have said, “effect <of the Holy Ghost> [sic] upon a gentile is to purge out the old blood & make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost, in such a case there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body &[sic] visible to the eye than upon an Israelite.”

172. Ezra Taft Benson, “Born Again,” *Ensign*, November 1985, 5.

LDS sacramental doctrine encourages man to spiritually prepare himself through Christ to receive the corresponding physical transformation. As man seeks instruction through sacramental living, he is prepared by God's grace and divine instruction to do those things that will help him acquire the divine likeness. The acquisition of the divine likeness deepens man's daily communion with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, through his cooperation and interaction with God, man may grow to realize theosis—the goal for which man must prepare through living a sacramental life.

On the other hand, the Orthodox emphasis on transformation should not diminish the imperative need for man's spiritual preparation. As Christopher Veniamin observed, "The [Early Church] Fathers place a special emphasis on the importance of obedience, . . . to the laying aside—or sacrifice of one's own will in order to learn the will of God."¹⁷³ The Orthodox sacramental life prepares man to achieve union with Christ and God. As Orthodox theologian Nicholas Cabasilas wrote, "Union with Christ . . . belongs to those who have undergone all that the Saviour has undergone, and have experience and become all that He has."¹⁷⁴ The sacraments are, therefore, the means whereby man is prepared to receive all that Christ offers through His incarnation—deification being the chief gift.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the Orthodox theme of spiritual preparation is often overshadowed by the emphasis on man's physical transformation—changing him to become a new creature in Christ. As Cabasilas said, "In this present world, therefore, it is

173. Veniamin, *The Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 31.

174. Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ*, trans. Carmino J. deCatanzro (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 65.

175. *Ibid.*, 65–66. Cabasilas writes, "He who seeks to be united with [Christ] must therefore share with Him in His flesh, partake of deification, and share in His death and resurrection. So we are baptized in order that we may die that death and rise again in that resurrection. We are Chrismated [confirmed] in order that we may become partakers of the royal anointing of His deification. By feeding on the most sacred bread and drinking the most divine cup we share in the very Flesh and Blood which the Saviour assumed."

possible for saints not only to be disposed and prepared for that [divine] life, but also even now to live and act in accordance with it.”¹⁷⁶ In the Orthodox estimation, this present enjoyment of the divine life can only occur as one is changed to enjoy it. The following three sacraments illustrate these distinctions.

Baptism. Baptism is a prime example of how doctrinal differences are manifested in Mormon and Orthodox practices. Orthodoxy teaches that baptism initiates man into a higher created order. Only then is man capable of receiving and enjoying the deifying energies of God. Even though man is elevated to a new order of creature, he will remain a creature. John McGuckin wrote that “the adult or child is actually understood to be reborn, passing from the shared human nature that is our common physical inheritance into a new nature. Theologically, this is the passage from Old Humanity, Adamic nature, to the New Creaturehood which is given in Christ, through the consecration of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷⁷ Norman Russell summarizes Gregory of Nyssa, saying, “Baptism enables us to transcend our human nature by becoming sons and daughters of God. It prepares us for Christ’s mingling of himself with our bodies in the Eucharist, uniting our mortal flesh to what is immortal so that we might participate even corporeally in his incorruption.”¹⁷⁸ Although man, through baptism, may begin participating in God’s deifying energies—contemplating his glory and sharing his divine attributes—he will never completely leave behind his createdness. He must be physically transformed by mingling his flesh with Christ’s flesh, first through baptism and then through subsequent rituals like the Eucharist.

176. Cabasilas, *Life in Christ*, 45.

177. McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 283.

178. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 130.

Latter-day Saints theology teaches that baptism is a spiritual guidepost that prepares man to be spiritually changed. Ezra Taft Benson stated, “Besides the physical ordinance of baptism and the laying on of hands, one must be spiritually born again to gain exaltation and eternal life.”¹⁷⁹ Teachings regarding baptism and being born again often allude to engaging in Christlike ministry. Each person should be “agents unto themselves” (D&C 58:28). When he is baptized, man is expected to “bear one another’s burdens . . . To mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places . . . even until death” (Mosiah 18:8–9). As Ezra Taft Benson noted, one must be “consumed by Christ” He continues,

Their will is swallowed up in His will (See John 5:30). They do always those things that please the Lord (See John 8:29). Not only would they die for the Lord, but more important they want to live for Him. Enter their homes, and the pictures on their walls, the books on their shelves, the music in the air, their words and acts reveal them as Christians. They stand as witnesses of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places (See Mosiah 18:9). They have Christ on their minds, as they look unto Him in every thought (See D&C 6:36). They have Christ in their hearts as their affections are placed on Him forever (See Alma 37:36).¹⁸⁰

While some physical transformation occurs,¹⁸¹ the emphasis of baptism in the LDS tradition is for each man or woman to commit prepare to live as Christ did. Like Orthodoxy, Mormonism teaches that this commitment and preparation through baptism leads man to participate in confirmation and the Lord’s Supper.

Confirmation. Like baptism, the sacrament of confirmation (or “chrismation”) further highlights doctrinal differences expressed by Mormonism and Eastern Orthodoxy. In Orthodoxy, the chrismated (confirmed) individual is now alive in Christ and is a recipient of the spiritual gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost that will enable him to become more like Christ. The

179. Benson, “Born of God,” *Ensign*, 5.

180. *Ibid.*

181. See note 165.

qualities and traits inherited from man's created nature, combined with the divine image in their spiritual creation, are enhanced by the confirmation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost, according to Vladimir Lossky, "re-creates our nature by purifying it and uniting it to the body of Christ. He also bestows deity—the common energy of the holy trinity which is divine grace—upon human persons."¹⁸²

The LDS confirmation explicitly instructs the recipient to live so he may be prepared to be transformed by the Holy Ghost. This idea is simply portrayed during the confirmation ceremony itself when the priesthood holder commands the newly confirmed member to "receive the Holy Ghost." Elder David A. Bednar described the significance of this command, saying:

The simplicity of this ordinance may cause us to overlook its significance. These four words—"Receive the Holy Ghost"—are not a passive pronouncement; rather, they constitute a priesthood injunction—an authoritative admonition to act and not simply to be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26). The Holy Ghost does not become operative in our lives merely because hands are placed upon our heads and those four important words are spoken. As we receive this ordinance, each of us accepts a sacred and ongoing responsibility to desire, to seek, to work, and to so live that we indeed "receive the Holy Ghost" and its attendant spiritual gifts.¹⁸³

Through continued emulation of a Christ-like lifestyle, including personal devotion, public ministry, and sacramental participation, the individual may enjoy an ever-increasing relationship with the Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, Mormon and Orthodox doctrines impact the thematic emphases of their sacraments of confirmation. Orthodoxy again suggests that man's nature is re-created through

182. See Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 170. Lossky connects the bestowal of the Holy Ghost on the newly received member with the Day of Pentecost. He writes, "as he descended upon the disciples in tongues of fire, so the Holy Spirit descends invisibly upon the newly-baptized in the sacrament of the holy chrism. In the eastern rite confirmation follows immediately upon baptism. Holy Spirit is operative in both sacraments. He re-creates our nature by purifying it and uniting it to the body of Christ. He also bestows deity—the common energy of the holy trinity which is divine grace—upon human persons."

183. David A. Bednar, "Receive the Holy Ghost," *Ensign*, November 2010, 95.

the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Mormonism instructs man, through the confirmation, to receive the Holy Ghost—to be spiritually prepared to receive theosis. Like baptism, man’s renewal of the confirmation is also through his participation in the Lord’s Supper.

Lord’s Supper. The placement of the Lord’s Supper within the LDS and Orthodox worship services also illustrates the different themes of physical transformation and spiritual preparation. Mormonism likewise acknowledges the transforming power of participation in the Sacrament (the name for the LDS Lord’s Supper) but the greater theme is one of spiritual preparation. Consider the following evidence.

In Orthodoxy, the liturgical processes of preparing and distributing the Eucharist reminds the participant of the final transformation of created matter that will take place in the resurrection. In the Anaphora [the prayer said by the priest to bless the bread and wine], the Holy Spirit is invoked to transform the bread and wine *and* the congregation itself. Andrew Louth describes the transformation thus, “We pray that the Holy Spirit may change the gifts of bread and wine into the precious body and blood of Christ and that the Holy Spirit, coming on us, may work a change in us to receive them.”¹⁸⁴ The Spirit transforms the human body as man participates in the Eucharist.¹⁸⁵ Orthodox Father Sophrony says that Christ “gives us to partake of His blood and His flesh in order to pour into our veins His eternal life, that we may become

184. Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 111.

185. See Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 43. See also Lawrence R. Farley, *Let Us Attend: A Journey Through the Orthodox Divine Liturgy* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2007), 76. Farley writes, “God saves us by this Eucharistic eating. For (note carefully) the priest does not simply call down the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine, but first and also ‘upon us.’ We are also ‘targeted’ (as it were) for the descent of the Spirit, so that we may receive these transformed gifts fruitfully and be transformed ourselves . . . God sanctifies us by this saving contact with the divine; He transforms us by this contact with the Holy One.”

His children, flesh of His Flesh, bone of His Bone.”¹⁸⁶ Webber further explains this point, saying, “Our transformation is at once as symbolic and as real as is the transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and the Blood.”¹⁸⁷ As man partakes of the Eucharist, Orthodoxy believes that he is transformed in that instant to reflect the flesh of Christ. Orthodoxy teaches that as man regularly participates in this transformative sacrament, he will deepen his divine union with God—sharing in his “attribute of divinity, which is eternal life with the Father.”¹⁸⁸

The placement of the LDS Sacrament at the commencement of Sunday worship practices suggests a unique motif. From a doctrinal perspective, the lack of an ontological distinction between God and man diminishes the LDS need to dwell on the eventual transformation of man. Instead, the Sacrament is an opportunity for man to strengthen his spiritual connection with God. By partaking of the Sacrament, man renews his covenantal agreements made with God.¹⁸⁹ This frequent renewal is necessary for man to be spiritually born again.¹⁹⁰ This renewal is a promise for man to prepare himself at all times to be worthy of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the moment of partaking the Sacrament transforms the participant, bringing a renewed cleansing from sin; however, the sacrament emphasizes the transformation that can only occur through man’s subsequent preparation to receive the spirit throughout the week. Consider the following

186. Quoted in Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 25.

187. Webber, *Bread & Water*, 139.

188. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, 26.

189. *Gospel Principles* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009), 133.

190. See Alan P. Johnson, *The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 184. LDS theologian Alan P. Johnson wrote, “The baptismal promises are the three promises expressed . . . If man literally takes Christ’s name upon himself and remembers him in all things and keeps his commandments, enduring to the end, he will be granted the blessings of the atoning blood and will be exalted in the kingdom of heaven. The fulfilling of these covenant promises are the three things a person must do during the process of becoming spiritually reborn.”

statement by Elder David A. Bednar: “The act of partaking of the sacrament, in and of itself, does not remit sins. But as we prepare conscientiously and participate in this holy ordinance with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then the promise is that we may *always* have the Spirit of the Lord to be with us. And by the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost as our constant companion, we can *always* retain a remission of our sins.”¹⁹¹

If the Sacrament in itself does not remit sins, why must man participate weekly? Mormons would answer, “Because God commanded it” (see D&C 59:9). The Sacrament is a sacrament of preparation, guiding Latter-day Saints on a path of transformation that expands beyond one ceremony. LDS leaders teach that the Sacrament points man to additional rituals and ordinances necessary for deification—specifically those rituals practiced in LDS temples.¹⁹² Elder Bednar taught further saying, “We pledge to always remember the Savior and to keep His commandments as preparation to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple and receive the highest blessings available through the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁹³ Weekly participation in the Sacrament is both a completion of God’s commandments and a guidepost leading man to participate in higher ordinances found in the temple. The sacrament, therefore, becomes the means of preparation whereby man may be transformed through the larger array of divinely appointed sacraments.

Because of Orthodoxy and Mormonism doctrinal disagreements, their respective sacraments reflect thematic variations. Orthodoxy emphasizes the physical transformation of

191. Bednar, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 61–62.

192. See David A. Bednar, *Act in Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), 52–53. Regarding the Baptismal covenant—the covenant renewed during the Sacrament—Elder Bednar said, “The baptismal covenant clearly contemplates a future event or events and looks forward to the temple. . . . As we partake of the sacrament, we look to the temple.”

193. *Ibid.*, 53.

man as he participates in the sacrament. The doctrine of created man requires that he is first physically transformed before he can commune with God. Mormonism believes that man must be spiritually prepared to become like God. God's deifying grace enables and is manifested by man's efforts to make and keep covenants with Him.

Orthodoxy teaches that man is wholly other from God. Mormonism teaches that man must learn to become like God. Only by understanding distinction may one also begin to understand the following dichotomy of adoration and emulation.

Adoration vs. Emulation

Stemming from the roots of ontology and anthropology, Mormon and Orthodox sacraments reflect another thematic contrast between adoration and emulation. Mormonism, because of the view that man is preparing for godhood, emphasizes that man must emulate the example of Christ in all things. Orthodoxy, recognizing that Christ alone could perform certain tasks in mortality, emphasizes man's need to adore Christ—to worship Christ as he performs his unfathomable work. This is not to say that Mormons do not adore Christ nor does it mean that Orthodox Christians fail to emulate Him. Both traditions adore *and* emulate. Nevertheless, Orthodox and Mormon presuppositions of God and man's relationship prescribe which of these two themes (adoration or emulation) takes precedence. The following section will illustrate how the sacraments of anointing, temple worship, and divine liturgy demonstrate the difference between adoration and emulation.

Anointing. As detailed by the writings in Mark 6:13 and James 5:14–15, Orthodox and LDS Christians seek blessings from duly ordained priesthood holders. In both churches, there is a requirement that at least one Elder or High Priest (in the LDS tradition), or a Priest (in the

Orthodox tradition), be present to perform the anointing. Through studying these requirements, one may begin to see the themes of adoration and emulation take shape.

The Orthodox practice of anointing the sick illustrates the theme of adoration. The anointing ritual prescribes the presence of seven priests to properly perform the ritual. McGuckin writes, “The ideal form of the celebration is that seven priests are called together, and each one reads one of the seven Gospels and performs one of the seven anointings, all the while praying for the recovery of the sick person.”¹⁹⁴ The presence of seven priests, though each bears the authority to act in Christ’s name, emphasizes that Christ—not man—provides the blessing. McGuckin continues, saying, “The prayers of the anointing ritual constantly stress the link between our sinful state and our sufferings. This is not to imply a simplistic link between our state of sinfulness and our state of health, but rather to admit our human need and our fallibility, of which physical and mental sickness are the clearest of all symbols.”¹⁹⁵ Because man—in his sinful state—cannot lift himself above his own suffering, he requires the strength of one who is sinless. Christ alone has the power to heal. The Orthodox sacrament of anointing, represented in the seven elders, demonstrates that it is Christ alone who heals and that man must adoringly acknowledge this reality.

Mormon practices of anointing and blessing the sick illustrate how every man is called to emulate Christ’s actions in order to receive theosis. The duty to anoint and bless the sick is illustrative of the larger injunction for priesthood holders to serve as Christ did. Most men in the Mormon tradition are ordained to the Melchizedek priesthood. This ordination authorizes man to

194. See John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Malden, MA: 2008), 306. As McGuckin acknowledges, it has been noted elsewhere that if there is no priest present, any righteous individual may do so in extreme circumstances.

195. McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 306–7.

give blessings on God's behalf. Rather than relying on one or two priests per congregation to provide blessings, Mormons are taught that each worthy male should be willing and able to give priesthood blessings.¹⁹⁶ LDS members are encouraged to call upon any man who holds priesthood to administer the blessing and not only upon those who are in leadership positions. To quote LDS Church President Thomas S. Monson, priesthood "is not the cloak of comfort but rather the robe of responsibility."¹⁹⁷ The role of priesthood service and leadership is the call for Latter-day Saint men to learn *how* to minister as Christ did. Henry B. Eyring offers what is expected as man engages in priesthood service: "Because you are called by Jesus Christ to His service, you may go forward with great confidence. . . . The Savior will let you feel the love He feels for those you serve. The call is an invitation to become like Him (see 3 Ne. 27:27)."¹⁹⁸

Divine Liturgy. Although it is not considered a proper sacrament in the Orthodox tradition, the Divine Liturgy—which encompasses the celebration of the Eucharist—dramatizes the doctrinal assertions of God and man's relationship with each other. Within the Divine Liturgy, congregants participate with the priest who represents Christ. The nature of this interaction between congregant and priest portray the theme of adoration. While the priest *emulates* the actions of Christ, standing as His representative, the congregation looks on in *adoration*—watching the priest as he prepares the Lord's Supper, responding to the Priestly salutations, and receiving the Eucharistic emblems.

To understand why the congregant must *adore*, one must first reemphasize Orthodoxy's interposition of Christ in man's relationship with God. Panayiotis Nellis stated that "Christ . . . is

196. It should be noted here Mormon priesthood authority to give blessings is reserved for those who have been ordained to the Melchizedek priesthood and not only the lesser Aaronic priesthood.

197. Thomas S. Monson, "Sugar Beets and the Worth of a Soul," *Ensign*, July 2009, 7.

198. Henry B. Eyring, "Watch Over and Strengthen," *Ensign*, May 2000, 66.

the incomprehensible, hypostatic [fully God and fully man], indivisible but at the same time unconfused union of the uncreated divinity and created contingency.”¹⁹⁹ Christ is the line of demarcation between created man and uncreated deity. Christ is both fully God and fully human. This allows Christ to interact with created man while preserving God’s otherness. Therefore, Christ’s actions—as portrayed in the Divine Liturgy—demonstrate that man, by grace, may become perfectly unified with Christ and yet remain totally unconfused with the divine being of God. Archimandrite Sophrony explains, “Christ manifested the perfection of the Divine image in man and the possibility of our nature assimilating the fullness of divinization to the very extent that, after His ascension, He placed our nature ‘on the right hand of the Father.’”²⁰⁰ Christ’s role is to bring man to God’s presence, allowing man to participate in God’s energies. Man’s role is to allow Christ to take him there—so that he, with Christ, may enjoy the energies which God has made available to created, deified humanity.

In short, the Divine Liturgy represents the recapitulation of man’s duty to adore and interact with Christ. Because Christ has opened the way for man to achieve the otherwise impossible gift of theosis, man—through the Divine Liturgy—must acknowledge his eternal dependence upon Christ. As Christopher Veniamin wrote, “The correct response to the giver of

199. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 26–27.

200. Archimandrite Sophrony, *We Shall See Him As He Is*, translated by Rosemary Edmonds (Tolleshunt, Essex: Patriarchal and Stravropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist, 1988), 193; quoted in Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 16; See also Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 37. Nellas connects the meaning of man’s creation in the image with the goal of deification that is attainable through Christ. Nellas writes, “The phrase ‘in the image’ implies a gift within man but at the same time a goal set before him, a possession but also a destiny, since it really does constitute man’s being, but only in potentiality. The ‘in the image’ is a real power, a pledge which should lead to marriage, that is, to hypostatic union, the unconfused but real and fulfilling mixture and commingling of the divine and human natures. Only then does the iconic or potential being of man become real authentic being. Man finds in the Archetype his true ontological meaning.”

life and maker of all things visible and invisible is prayer of thanksgiving, Eucharistic worship, in which we ‘commend ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.’”²⁰¹ The Divine Liturgy—through priestly processions, prayers, and admonitions—reminds man that Christ performed a work which man is incapable of completing for himself. Therefore, as the Orthodox Father Lawrence R. Farley wrote, man must make his “weekly journey to the Kingdom [of God, the Church].”²⁰² To summarize Vladimir Lossky, man becomes a witness of Christ’s work *through* the Holy Spirit.²⁰³ Communicants (those who participate in the Divine Liturgy) are to watch Christ (through the actions of the priest) perform his work. Man must then respond in loving affection by preparing for and participating in the Holy Eucharist. Indeed, Orthodoxy teaches that man must emulate Christ’s example. Farley taught this principle, saying, “We are saved to serve. In the Divine Liturgy, God glorifies us so that we may bring others to that experience of glory as well.”²⁰⁴ However, this call does not overshadow the resounding plea to adore. For Orthodoxy, the Divine Liturgy teaches that man’s place with God is both one of unity and otherness.

Temple Worship. The LDS temple worship is a peculiar practice that resembles the Orthodox Divine Liturgy; and yet, temple worship is also strikingly different. Like the Divine Liturgy, LDS temple worship is a conglomerate of other sacraments designed to prepare man to become like God. Former Church President David O. McKay described the temple ceremony, saying, “Seen for what it is, it is the step-by-step ascent into the Eternal Presence.”²⁰⁵ Latter-day

201. Veniamin, *Orthodox Understanding of Salvation*, 181.

202. Lawrence R. Farley, *Let Us Attend: A Journey Through the Orthodox Divine Liturgy* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2007), 7.

203. Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 190.

204. Farley, *Let Us Attend*, 95.

205. David O. McKay; quoted in Truman G. Madsen, *The Temple: Where Heaven Meets Earth* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 11.

Saints are taught that one must continue to bind himself or herself to God by entering into additional covenants beyond those received at baptism and confirmation. The LDS temple is revered as the conjunction of heaven and earth, the structural embodiment of Christ's mission to help man commune with God. It is here that man learns how to truly emulate Christ, spiritually and practically.

Temple worship provides a unique opportunity for Latter-day Saints to emulate the nature of Christ. Temple worship is the manifestation of God's grace, enabling men and women to (firstly) qualify to enter His house, and (secondly) to extend the blessings of Christ's atonement to all of His children. Only through Christ can man be saved and receive the ordinances of the gospel. LDS teachings emphasize, as part of Christ's gift of salvation, the opportunity for all of God's children from every age to receive the gift of theosis. The realization of this divine gift is possible only through vicarious ordinance work for the dead.²⁰⁶ Consequently, Latter-day Saints are instructed to seek out their kindred dead using genealogical research and then be baptized on their behalf in the temple. Indeed, Latter-day Saints adore Christ and his atoning gift to mankind. Only Christ could have performed the atonement. But it is through their temple participation that Latter-day Saints fully demonstrate that appreciation—by extending the sacraments of salvation to their kindred dead. Therefore, endowed members (those who have received temple covenants previously) are also commanded to participate in temple rituals vicariously for the dead (see D&C 128:22–24). This tradition reflects the very nature of Christ's atoning sacrifice. By repeating the endowment ceremony on behalf of another, the individual makes available the

206. See Andrew C. Skinner, *Temple Worship: 20 Truths That Will Bless Your Life* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007), 140. Skinner wrote that “the ordinances of salvation for the dead are indispensable, but they can only be performed on this earth by those possessing a mortal body.”

covenantal opportunity for a deceased individual. This repetition of participation renews the living individual's covenantal relationship with God—binding them together. Furthermore, the living participant must remain righteous so he or she may be qualified to contribute in this life-offering exercise. Like the atonement of Christ—the ultimate vicarious offering to the dead—temple work for the dead is a freely-offered gift.²⁰⁷ Joseph Smith even referred to those who performed vicarious temple work as “Saviors on Mount Zion.”²⁰⁸ Clearly, LDS temple work is a work of emulation—acting and becoming like Christ.

This section was a demonstration of how the Orthodox and Mormon doctrines of God's nature and man's interaction with Christ have highlighted either a theme of *adoration* (Orthodoxy) or one of *emulation* (Mormonism). God, in the Orthodox perspective, is wholly other from man. Only God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost share the common attributes of uncreatedness and omnipotence. Christ is the only one capable of performing specific works such as healing or exalting man. Orthodoxy teaches that man must stand in adoration of Christ's work and respond to that work through sacramental participation. God, in the Mormon perspective, is inviting man to become as he is—a divine embodied being. Man's progression to

207. See *Gospel Principles*, 234–236. If one is unfamiliar with the Mormon initiative to baptize their kindred dead, they should not feel too disconcerted. Orthodox theology does not account for—but does not discount—those who have died ignorant of the gospel, saying that they “remain a mystery of the divine mercy for us, on which we dare not count, but to which we cannot place any human bounds” (Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 235). Mormon theology, however, teaches that after this life, those who have either rejected or were unable to receive the gospel while in this life will be given the opportunity to be taught the gospel in the next life (see D&C 137:710; see also D&C 138). No person is forced to accept the Gospel against his or her will. This work is a reflection of the work mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:29, as well as the doctrine taught by Peter in 1 Peter 4:6. It is a vicarious offering of salvation to all who have not received the opportunity to participate in the sacraments that lead to deification.

208. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 469. In longer form, Joseph explained this title, “How are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances . . . in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead.”

such a divine status is contingent on his emulation of Christ's character. Sacraments—like anointing the sick, the Divine Liturgy, and LDS temple worship—demonstrate how deeply doctrines can affect one's practical worship. The following section will address a final thematic dichotomy of historical inclusion and narrative renewal.

Historical Inclusion vs. Narrative Renewal

Latter-day Saint and Orthodox worship practices are products of the larger religious context in which they occur. Both religions believe that their respective religious systems are the culmination of, or at least the reflection of, how God has interacted with man throughout human history (see Moses 5:58–59). Throughout their religious practices and rituals, Mormon and Orthodox Christians are reminded—symbolically and rhetorically—that they are part of a larger body of saints that have come before. By examining their sacramental symbolism and rhetoric, one will begin to see that Orthodoxy and Mormonism emphasize either historical inclusion or narrative renewal.

Orthodox rituals emphasize *historical inclusion*. The idea behind historical inclusion is that man, being a part of the human family, is one of many whom God intends to deify. God offers everyone the opportunity of communion and deification. Man must accept this divine offer through sacramental participation. If he does, man then becomes part of a larger historical framework—consisting of all his Christian predecessors who have received the offer of theosis. Man is included with those who will be saved by God in the last day.

On the other hand, Mormon rituals reflect the idea of *narrative renewal*. Like Orthodoxy, Mormonism often reminds its members of the examples of their predecessors mentioned in scripture. However, rather than merely including man in the cadre of saints destined for theosis, LDS sacramentalism invites man to the center of the story—placing him and God in a personal

relationship. This is not to say that other religions, like Orthodoxy, do not value the personal relationship with God—because they do! What the term *narrative renewal* means is that God renews his covenant personally with each man and woman as if they were the first and only persons to receive it. Alonzo Gaskill wrote, “Adam and Eve are our pattern. Their story is ours. Symbolically speaking, you and I are to consider ourselves as if we were Adam and Eve.”²⁰⁹ Latter-day Saints are invited to view themselves respectively as Adam or Eve, as Abraham or Sarah, receiving anew the covenants and promises that their forefathers received. Man’s choice to reject or accept God’s commandments become poignantly significant—both for his own salvation and the spiritual welfare of his family. Thus, as with Adam and Eve, each Latter-day Saint views themselves as the symbolic first man or first woman to have entered into covenant with God. The following sacraments will illustrate these themes of historical inclusion and narrative renewal.

Orthodox Baptism and Historical Inclusion. Orthodox baptism reflects the theme of historical inclusion. The Orthodox sacrament of baptism is typologically compared to the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, escaping the bondage of mortality—or rather, the Adamic condition.²¹⁰ Man’s baptismal transformation even connects him with the creation narrative in Genesis. As Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew noted, “the sacrament of baptism highlights the profound connection between the Spirit of God brooding over ‘the face of the world,’ as in the first moments of Genesis, and the entire universe.”²¹¹ The blessings that precede the baptism proper, such as the blessing of the baptismal water, illustrate this theme. Andrew Louth summarizes the significance of this prayer saying, “This long and beautiful prayer moves

209. Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols*, 109.

210. McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 283.

211. Bartholomew, *Encountering the Mystery*, 86.

from water as one of the four cosmic elements, through the historical waters of Jordan in which the Lord was baptized, to the water now being blessed for baptism.”²¹² Through this prayer, the priest includes the participant into the historical narrative by connecting their baptism with Christ’s baptism as well as with the creation.

LDS Marriage and Narrative Renewal. The Latter-day Saint sacrament of marriage is a rich example of narrative renewal. As a man and a woman are sealed (married in an LDS temple) together, they form a new family unit. This new family unit reflects the kind of family unit over which God now presides. Consider the following statement from the Doctrine and Covenants, “And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them . . . Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them” (D&C 132:19–20). This promise is renewed with every newly-sealed couple—each couple becoming the head of their own family group. Andrew Skinner described this renewal saying, “That which happens in temples today reflects the perfect pattern of heaven as well as that which happened from the beginning of time on this earth. As eternal marriage companions, sealed by God’s own power, with their posterity

212. Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 107–8. The Priest, speaking to God, prays, “You [God] established the earth on the waters . . . Give it the grace of redemption blessing of Jordan. Make it a source of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a deliverance from sins, a destruction of demons. Make it unapproachable by hostile powers and filled with angelic strength . . . Master of all things, declare this water to be water of redemption, water of sanctification, cleansing of flesh and spirit, untying of bonds, forgiveness of offenses, enlightenment of soul, washing of rebirth, renewal of spirit, gift of adoption, garment of incorruption, source of life . . . Manifest yourself, lord, in this water, and grant that the one being baptized in it may be transformed for the putting off of the old self that is corrupted after the desires of deception, and may put on the new that is renewed after the image of the One who created him/her. So that, planted in the likeness of your death through baptism, he/she may also become the likeness of our death through baptism, he/she may also become a partaker in your resurrection, and having guarded the gift of the Holy Spirit and increased in the deposit of grace, may receive the prize of his/her high calling and be numbered with the first born, whose names are inscribed in heaven, in you and your God and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

(you and me) sealed to them in an everlasting bond, Adam and Eve have taken their place at the head of the human family.”²¹³ Each couple in a sense becomes a new Abraham or new Sarah, promised the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.²¹⁴ The narrative of Abraham and Sarah is renewed through sealing, forming a new family that is capable of receiving all the blessings which their Fathers have received—even theosis.²¹⁵

Divine Liturgy (Historical Inclusion) vs. Temple Worship (Narrative Renewal). The comparison of the Orthodox Divine Liturgy and LDS temple worship provides a fascinating contrast between historical inclusion and narrative renewal. Both the Divine Liturgy and temple endowment (one of the rituals observed in LDS temples) are set in a historical context. Both experiences, the Orthodox Liturgy and the LDS endowment, are intended to separate man from the world—to remove him out of his worldly trappings. Meletios Webber writes, “At some spiritual level, it is true that if someone leaves behind the outside world and pushes open the door of the church building where the Church is gathered for the Divine Liturgy, that person is entering another time and space, or indeed (and perhaps more correctly) all time and all space.”²¹⁶ Latter-day Saints express similar views. Skinner writes, saying, “The temple is a place of peace, refuge, and focus, a place located on earth *but not part of the world*, a place free of

213. Skinner, *Temple Worship*, 104.

214. See Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols*, 264.

215. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56), 2:67–68. Smith wrote, “Every man stands at the head of his household, that is, his immediate family. Thus I, for instance will stand at the head of my family group by virtue of the sealing for time and eternity, and my children will belong to me. I will belong to my parents in their family group. My father likewise, with his brothers and sisters, will belong to his father’s unit in that family group, and his father to his father before him—all linked together generation to generation like a chain. So it will be of the righteous from the days of Adam down—Adam standing at the head.”

216. See Webber, *Bread & Water*, 138–139.

distraction and preoccupation—all prerequisites for the clearest, most powerful revelatory experiences.”²¹⁷ Indeed, Orthodox Divine Liturgy and LDS temple worship seek to remove man from the world. Nevertheless, through their distinct uses of historical context, Orthodoxy and Mormonism continue to reinforce the themes of historical inclusion and narrative renewal. When man enters into the Divine Liturgy, he steps out of the world into a larger historical narrative. He is integrated into a larger family of saints, members of God’s family that have qualified for the blessings of theosis. Webber describes this saying, “When the Divine Liturgy begins, all the members of the family of God, of every age and of every place, are naturally present. The heavenly court is there, of course, and will take an active part in the service itself. All the saints and friends of God of every age are also present, participating in whatever way they may. . . . To attend and participate in the Divine Liturgy is to be present in the Presence in a way that is not normally possible for human beings.”²¹⁸

The strength of the Orthodox way is in the feeling of inclusion that one receives as one enters the Divine Liturgy. Being surrounded by the icons [holy paintings] of saints and martyrs, hearing the recitations of gospel homilies, and partaking of the Lord’s Supper all foster this feeling of inclusion. They draw man into spiritual communion, not only with those present, but with those who have gone before, and with God.

The LDS endowment ceremony is a recitation of the historical narrative that began with Adam and was later renewed with Abraham. Each man and woman participates as if they were in the position of Adam or Eve. LDS Apostle James E. Talmage described the temple endowment as follows:

217. Skinner, *Temple Worship*, 172.

218. See Webber, *Bread & Water*, 138–139.

The Temple Endowment, as administered in modern temples, comprises instruction in relation to the significance and sequence of past dispensations, and the importance of the present as the greatest and grandest era in human history. . . .

The ordinances of the endowment embody certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King,—the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the condition.²¹⁹

The temple endowment *and* sealing ceremonies treat man as if he were Adam *and* Abraham. The endowment, becomes an instruction ceremony for man to learn the path that Adam took to get back to God and receive the gift of theosis. As man participates in this temple ceremony and receives the corresponding covenants, he replicates the covenantal experiences of his forefathers. The temple sealing ceremony then transitions man from the symbolic Adam to a symbolic Abraham. Gaskill wrote,

We each begin our mortal and liturgical journey as the “family of Adam” [Mormon 3:20], but through covenants and obedience, we can become the “children of Abraham.” In marriage, Abraham’s posterity has pronounced upon them all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [see Deut. 1:8], with the command to be “fruitful” and to “multiply” and replenish the earth [Gen. 28:3]. This very command takes Abraham back to Eden. It ties him into the Edenic blessings pronounced upon the first couple (Adam and Eve), but fulfilled in the latter couple (Abraham and Sarah). Consequently, liturgically and symbolically speaking, from our creation, throughout our lives, and until we greet the Lord at the heavenly veil, we are to recognize ourselves as symbolized by Adam and Eve—we are fallen men and women. However, once we return to God we are as Abraham and Sarah—sealed to our spouse and presiding over our posterity for time and all eternity. Thus the story of the Fall represents our entrance into a world filled with sin and weakness. However, our marriages makes us Abrahams and Sarahs, and we are returned to Eden or paradise. We have pronounced upon us all the blessings of the patriarchs, each of which represent exaltation.²²⁰

To summarize, LDS temple worship renews the narratives of Salvation with each man or woman. They become new Adams or Eves, new Abrahams or Sarahs, following the path and

219. James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 84.

220. Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols*, 264–265.

receiving the blessings of exaltation as though they were the first. Andrew Skinner writes saying, “Our destiny becomes the destiny of Abraham as we participate in the ordinances of the temple. We are entitled to the same blessings of Abraham, who ‘hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne’ [D&C 132:29].”²²¹ He continues, “Truly, the temple gives to us a sense of our identity. The temple links *our* time with eternity, showing how and where we fit into both.”²²² In other words, God, through the temple endowment, reeducates man concerning the plan of salvation and offers each individual, as if they were the first to receive it, the covenants necessary to achieve theosis.

While both the Orthodox Divine Liturgy and LDS temple worship draw man out of the world by placing him in a different historical context, the nature of this placement reflects different themes. Orthodoxy ties man into the family of God. He is a member of the body of Christ which will participate in the blessings of theosis. His relationship with God is personal and special. Baptism connects man to the major events of creation and the baptism of Christ. Through the Divine Liturgy, man experiences the fellowship that awaits all those who join themselves and faithfully attend the Eastern Orthodox Church. LDS temple worship, including the endowment and sealing ceremonies, renews God’s narrative of salvation with each individual. God places man at the center of His plan and at the head of a new family unit. Man becomes, in a sense, a new Adam or Abraham—a new man who is perfectly capable of achieving theosis through Christ. The thematic differences exemplified in these traditions become powerful examples of how Orthodoxy and Mormonism seek to renew man’s perspective of himself, his purpose, and his mortal condition.

221. Skinner, *Temple Worship*, 192.

222. Skinner, *Temple Worship*, 196–197.

Conclusion

This chapter was an examination of how LDS and Orthodox institutional sacraments reflect thematic differences and similarities. These differences of transformation and preparation, adoration or emulation, and historical inclusion or narrative renewal all indicate how man interacts with God. The rituals that have been discussed are only a sampling of dichotomies and distinctions that could be drawn. Mormon and Orthodox sacraments demonstrate that these faith traditions seek to connect man to something larger than himself. It should not be the differences between Mormon and Orthodox sacraments that intrigue the reader: but the intricate length to which each tradition goes to deepen man's devotion. The sacramental common denominator is motivation. Whether by emphasizing a man's recreation or spiritual transformation; whether by stressing adoration versus emulation; or whether by including man into the historical narrative or renewing the narrative altogether—Orthodox and Mormon Christians both invite man to be changed by Christ and receive God's promise of theosis.

Conclusion

This thesis has analyzed the doctrine of deification as manifested in the sacramental worship practices of the LDS and Eastern Orthodox churches. Theosis represents a prominent part of Mormon and Orthodox theologies. Theosis is a well-established doctrine, with roots in both scripture and the patristic tradition. LDS and Orthodox Christians share an abiding desire to commune with God. They believe they can progress through Christ and the Holy Spirit to become gods. While they disagree on the nature of the trinity and man's relationship with deity, this disagreement need not nullify further conversation. Orthodoxy and Mormonism both celebrate strong traditions of ritualistic worship and personal devotion. Both traditions believe that man can become like God to some degree. Therefore, as one examines their traditions from the vantage point of deification, one begins to see why their traditions differ and how Orthodox and Mormon doctrines influence their respective sacraments.

Chapter 1 examined the doctrines of God and man in the process of deification. Orthodoxy and Mormonism both believe that if man is to become deified, he must interact with each member of the Godhead. Disagreements regarding the Trinity prevent Mormons and Orthodox Christians from ever speaking of deification in the same way. Orthodoxy espouses the creedal affirmations of a God who is "wholly other," unembodied, and ineffable. Orthodoxy believes that God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are all one being manifested in three persons. Christ is the only embodied member of the Trinity so he may reflect the divine energies of God to all of creation. Man may share in God's divine energies but he will never fully share in God's uncreated essence. Latter-day Saints claim that God has restored, through revelation, the knowledge that he is an embodied, exalted man. God the Father and Jesus Christ are embodied beings, physically separate, yet perfectly united in purpose, power, and omniscience. Jesus Christ

represents the Father to man, not as Creator to creature, but as Parent to child to lead man to become like Him. Orthodoxy rejects the idea that man shares in God's uncreated nature, insisting that only God is eternal and everything else (save Christ and the Holy Spirit) was created *ex nihilo*. Latter-day Saints believe man is the spiritual offspring of the Father. Because part of man is uncreated, there was never a time when man did not exist in some form. Mormon theology also insists that man is the underdeveloped offspring of God and that he possesses the capacity to become divinized. For these reasons, Orthodox and Mormon beliefs of deification will never mean the same thing. Nevertheless, these doctrinal disagreements need not discourage dialogue concerning deification.

Chapter 1 also explained how Orthodoxy and Mormonism agree that man must interact with deity to achieve theosis. Each member or personage of the Godhead cooperates with man in a unique way. God the Father, through the creation of man in His image, has endowed man with the capacity to discern God's efforts to bless and instruct him. God's image endows man with the capacity for progress, repentance, and communion. Man may receive revelation, perceive God's divine love, and respond to God's divine offer of theosis. Jesus Christ represents the Father to man. Because of Christ, man may return to God and become like him. To realize this opportunity, man must be cleansed of sin through Christ's atonement. He must continue to rely on Christ, following his example to regain the divine likeness that was lost in the Fall. It is only through the ecclesial life, a life in the Church established by Christ, that man may receive full access to Christ's atonement. As man emulates the example of Christ, engaging in Christ's ministry, and participating in Christ's sacraments, man becomes more like Christ. It is only through the Church that man may participate in the sacraments required for deification. As man enters the Church through baptism, he must interact with the Holy Ghost, allowing the spirit to

dwell in his heart. Through this indwelling, the Holy Ghost transforms man's spirit— progressively molding him to become like God. Only through the combined work of all three members of the Godhead can man become like God.

Chapter 2 discussed how sacraments facilitate man's deification. Because man's transformation depends on his interaction with God, it follows that God would establish the channels whereby man may fully experience God's divine outreach. As Timothy Ware puts it, "Deification presupposes life in the Church, life in the sacraments."²²³ Coming to know God, to receive "life eternal" (John 17:3), is a process demanding personal participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Every sacrament fosters man's interaction with God and therefore contributes to theosis. Sacramentalism includes two distinct forms of sacraments: institutional and personal. Institutional sacraments are those authorized channels whereby man experiences the deifying energies of God. Personal sacraments are those practices that man must perform on his own to deepen his communion with God. LDS and Orthodox Christianity affirm the necessity of man's participation. Through sacramental worship, man is initiated into the body of Christ and made joint-heirs with Christ. He enters a relationship with God that would otherwise be impossible to enter. Through each sacrament, be it personal or institutional, the Holy Spirit develops in the heart of man the divine likeness necessary for theosis. As he continues his sacramental participation, man begins to develop the mind of Christ, experience God's divine love, and submit his will to God's.

Rather than focusing on the procedural differences, this discussion emphasized similar ways in which Orthodox and Mormon sacraments succeed in fostering the divine likeness in man. "All the mysteries [or sacraments]," John McGuckin writes, "are forms of theosis and

223. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 231.

encapsulate, in different ways, the same experience of deification of the believer, which is assimilation to Christ. Each one, to that extent, is a synopsis of the Kingdom, and the path to it. Each one is a metamorphosis transfiguring the faithful into eschatological newness of vision, and being.”²²⁴ Man begins to discover, through participation and contemplation, the symbolic significance behind each sacrament and is subsequently invited to consider the spiritual depths of each sacrament, carrying him deeper and deeper into divine union.

Chapter 3 illustrated how Orthodox and Mormon sacraments reflect different themes in order to encourage man’s participation. Some of these thematic changes are doctrinally based. Orthodox institutional sacraments emphasize the ontological transformation (change of being) for man to participate with God. Mormon sacraments stress the need for spiritual preparation for man to realize his high calling of theosis. Orthodox and Mormon sacraments also differ regarding their emphasis on adoration (Orthodoxy) or emulation (Mormonism). It should be no surprise that, given the doctrinal differences regarding man’s nature in respect to God’s, Mormon and Orthodox sacraments would also reflect some of these same differences.

However, Orthodox and Mormon sacraments also share some thematic similarities. Both traditions deeply root themselves in the historical context, meaning that their traditions connect man with his predecessors from ages past. Both traditions seek to draw man out of his own time and place him in the larger context of God’s plan of salvation. Orthodoxy accomplishes this through *historical inclusion*—connecting man, through symbolism and rhetoric, with the saints, martyrs, and events of the past. The Orthodox man, in his worship practices, enters into fellowship with the entire family of God. On the other hand, Mormonism, through *narrative renewal*, emphasizes each individual’s importance in God’s larger plan of salvation. LDS

224. McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 278.

covenants represent God's renewed outreach to each individual son and daughter, offering them the divine inheritance of godhood. Like Adam or Eve, Abraham or Sarah, humanity has the chance to be a central part in God's redemptive plan of theosis—becoming, through Christ, like God.

Several key observations have emerged during this study. First, LDS and Eastern Orthodox beliefs of deification are interwoven throughout their practiced theology. Deification is anything but a doctrinal tangent—it reflects the highest of man's aspirations in returning to God. Every prayer, ritual performance, and point of contact with God is designed to deify man. Mormon and Orthodox preconceptions of deity obviously disagree. Nevertheless, these differences should not squelch the fascination of *how* their differences affect the practiced religion. LDS sacramental life places man at the center of the ecclesial life, emulating Christ's actions—covenantal submission and vicarious offering salvation to others—thereby receiving the spiritual transformation requisite for theosis. The Orthodox sacramental life places man in an intimate relationship with Christ, highlighting God's otherness but inviting man to respond to Christ's sacrifice through adoration and reception of the "life-giving" Eucharist—thereby fostering the physical transformation leading to theosis. Only then may man enter the state of divine union, experiencing the divine energies as he progresses back to the Father. This thesis has not sought to advocate which perspective—LDS or Orthodox—is correct; rather, the purpose of this study has been to show how deification influences the very way religion is practiced through its corresponding rituals.

Another key observation is the shared belief that man is capable of enlargement. Whether one believes in the idea of eternal man (as Mormons do) or created man (as Orthodoxy does), both faiths claim that man has the capacity to progress beyond his natural state. He is destined

for more. He can and must develop a deeper relationship with God. No one can force this change upon him; only man may determine if he will receive the offered blessings of God's divine economy. As Truman Madsen wrote, "One begins mortality with the veil drawn, but slowly he is moved to penetrate the veil within himself. He is, in time, led to seek the 'holy of holies' within the temple of his own being."²²⁵ Orthodox and LDS sacramental lives are lives of self-discovery—the gradual unveiling of man's true potential as he progresses towards theosis.

A final key observation is a common goal that Mormon and Orthodox Christianity share in the pursuit of the divine likeness. Indeed, man strives to become like God but it is *only through becoming like Christ* that he may ever hope to do so. Christ and his atonement are the central components of God's plan of salvation. Only through the sacrifice of Christ has man been afforded the opportunity to grow to be like God. Both religions admit to at least some level of apophaticism regarding man's eternal potential in a deified state; nevertheless, both religions emphatically teach that deification is essentially Christification. The sacramental life draws man out of a worldly context and into a divine relationship with Christ. Man's efforts to remain in that relationship allow Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to refine man in his progress toward theosis. The end goal, therefore, is total union with Christ.

On a personal note, as I have studied and written about sacramental living, the process has indeed proven transformational. Orthodoxy and Mormonism share so much in common. Both religions express a sense of honesty in their devotion that demands respect. Discipleship for them is not merely lip-service—it is a way of life. From the grandest liturgy to the humblest prayer, LDS and Orthodox Christians seek to commune with their Heavenly Father. Orthodox and Mormon Christians have been "well taught and trained how to worship." However, as Eric

225. Madsen, *Eternal Man*, 6.

Huntsman observes, “We may simply need to be more deliberate about how we worship, trying harder to keep God as its focus.”²²⁶ If anything, ecclesiastical leaders should continue to stress the connection between deification and the foundations of their practiced theologies.

To build on Andrew Skinner’s summary of theosis, “The whole of Latter-day Saint theology [and Orthodox theology] may be summed up in the phrase ‘faith in the prospect of deification.’”²²⁷ As one participates in the sacramental life, life itself becomes a sacrament. The entire human experience can become instrumental in man’s progression toward godhood. Put simply in the words of Timothy Ware, “If someone asks ‘How can I become god?’ the answer is very simple: go to church, receive the sacraments regularly, pray to God ‘in spirit and in truth,’ read the Gospels, follow the commandments.”²²⁸ Deification is the culmination of sacraments great and small. Even the most common religious practices—reading scriptures, prayer, or attending church—are integral aspects of theosis. Through sacramentalism, the entirety of the Christian life, when lived in accordance to the precepts taught in the church, becomes a deifying experience. Scholars and leaders from both Orthodoxy and Mormonism, have much to study and learn from each other as they seek to encourage their own members to engage in the sacramental life. But in the end, what is left for each Orthodox or LDS Christian to do is live the sacramental life—to realize the promise of theosis. To reiterate Joseph Smith, “Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God [John 17:3]; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, . . . by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation.”²²⁹

226. Huntsman, *Worship*, 133.

227. Skinner, *To Become Like God*, 142.

228. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 230.

229. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 221.

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