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THE BODY OF CHRIST:
SAINT SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN
ON SPIRITUAL LIFE
AND THE HIERARCHICAL CHURCH

I. Introduction

For many of his critics, both ancient and modern, the relationship between the inner, spiritual life of the believer and the outward structures of the institutional church appears to have been tenuous at best in the writings of St. Symeon the New Theologian. One scholar, for example, who is very well disposed toward him still thinks that St. Symeon «can certainly be criticized in that he stressed the individual and subjective element of Christian life one-sidedly», while seeming «to forget the objective structure of the Church».¹ One key to the problem, and a theme I shall be coming back to in what follows, seems to me to lie in the meaning of the phrase, «objective structure». For now, allow me to state that, while it is true that the great thrust of Symeon’s thought lies on the charismatic and — for want of a better word — subjective side of Christian experience, the objectively constituted Church, both as eschatological reality and as historically existing in the institutional forms it received from the Apostles, is never far from his mind and heart, nor do I find any indication in his works that he ever dreamed of contesting it.

In what follows, I shall begin by summarizing St. Symeon on the Church, in particular in its relation to Christ, the Eucharist, and to the individual Christian’s appropriation of Christ. Along the way, I intend to pay particular attention to the different, and yet related, notions of the phrase, «the body of

Christ». Second, I will turn very briefly to St. Symeon’s background in Scripture and Tradition, with an eye particularly to the notion, «objective structure», specifically the belief in a divinely revealed structure of worship, and to the importance which that particular datum of the faith was held to have for the spiritual life from very early on Christian history. Third, I will take up an unusual pairing, Symeon the New Theologian and Dionysius the Areopagite, in order to argue that the latter’s idea of «hierarchy» is not in fact so very far away from the former’s. Both the eleventh century «mystical anarchist» and the apparent advocate par excellence of clerical authority will emerge as speaking out of a common tradition, rooted in the revelation accorded Israel, summed up in Christ, and continuing especially in the literature of the monastic movement.

II. A Summary of St. Symeon on the Church, the Body of Christ, and our Deification

A. The Body of the Risen Jesus: the Flesh of Adam and First-Fruits of the New Creation

For Symeon, the Church is more than an objective structure. It is reality with an upper-case «R». It is more real or objective a truth than the phenomenal world, the universe embraced by the five senses and darkened by the Fall. Like the Platonism of late antiquity, he holds that the unseen, intelligible world is the more truly existing one. Unlike the pagan philosophers, however, and together with the Fathers, his view is also firmly rooted in the scriptures. The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus has ushered in a new condition of existence, that new and different mode of being which is «the body of Christ». The Lord’s risen body, animated by the Holy Spirit, has become the first-fruits of a new creation: «for in Him dwells the fullness of the divinity bodily» (Col 2:9), and «from this fullness have we all received» (Jn 1:16) — scriptural phrases that Symeon quotes, for example, at the conclusion of the second of his two long discourses on the Church which open the Ethical Discourses, and from which I shall be drawing primarily for my summary of his ecclesiology. Again in the second Discourse, he traces God’s saving economy in terms of the «portion» God took from Adam to fashion Eve. The history of salvation is the story of this «portion»: from Eve through Noah, to the election of Israel in Abraham and the Covenant with Moses on Sinai, to David the King, and finally to the Virgin Mother:

God took from the Virgin flesh endowed with a mind and soul... Having taken this same from her, He gave it His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and enlarged it with what it had not had before: life everlasting... in order for Him to re-create the nature of Adam... so that the children who would be born of God might receive regeneration through the Holy Spirit, and then
that all who believe in Him might become, in the Spirit, God’s own kin and so comprise [with Him] one single body.\(^2\)

Because Christ has become «our kinsman» in the flesh, He has also made «us co-participants in His divinity», and, since the latter «cannot be broken down into parts... all of us [therefore] who partake of it in truth must necessarily be one body with Christ in the one Spirit».\(^3\)

The flesh of Christ establishes His abiding link with humanity. It is Adam’s own flesh, taken from him to form the woman, Eve. But, beginning with our Lord’s conception in the new Eve, Mary, this same flesh is filled with the glory of the Word: «For Your spotless and divine body flashes wholly with the fire of Your divinity, [with which] it is entwined and mingled ineffably».\(^4\)

This is the glorified flesh mingled with divinity which is imparted to the Christian in Baptism and Eucharist through the action of the Spirit. «When we receive the Spirit of our Master and God», Symeon writes,

we become participants of His divinity and essence, and when we eat of His all-pure flesh — I mean in the [sacrament of] holy communion — we become truly His kin, of one body with Him.\(^5\)

This new condition, he exclaims, is

[the] beginning of a new portion and a new world... Up to this point all were shadows and types... but this, this is the truth. This is both the renovation and renewal of the whole world... He Who is Son of God does... not beget children in a fleshly way, but He re-fashions us instead spiritually.\(^6\)

At present the mystery of the new world remains largely hidden, but it continues on occasion to manifest itself «even to the present day» in the bodies of the saints, and Symeon points to the incorruption of the latter’s relics as proof.\(^7\) In another place, his fifteenth Hymn, he is shockingly insistent on


\(^3\) Ethical Discourse I.6, 80–82.

\(^4\) Hymns 2, 7–9.

\(^5\) Ethical Discourses I.3, 83–86.

\(^6\) Ibid. II.7, 1–5 and 27–30.

\(^7\) Ibid. I.3, 79–83.
the presence of Christ in his own body, even in those parts of it which are not usually associated with higher things, and repeats in Hymn 16 that his own face and members are «bearers of [divine] light», photophora. Incorporated into Christ’s body in Baptism, feeding on that same body in the Eucharist, the bodies of the saints become themselves light-filled, transfigured. They become, in short, particular expressions of the «body of Christ», the body of God. «They completely possess God, Who has taken on the form of man», as Symeon writes in Hymn 15, to which I would add that, as a result of this possession, and in their turn, they may be said to take on «the form of God». The full manifestation of this miraculous formation awaits the general resurrection and world to come, when, as our author puts it in Ethical Discourse 1.5, «the whole earthly creation, this visible and perceptible world, will be changed and united with the heavenly».

B. Personal and Ecclesial in Balance and Mutual Reflection

Implied in my summary so far, as it is explicit so often elsewhere in his writings, is St. Symeon’s emphasis on the personal encounter with God incarnate, whether in terms of the vision of glory, the conscious perception of the Presence in the sacraments, the conversation of the soul alone with God alone, or, for that matter, in his related and stubborn resistance to the ecclesiastical authorities’ demand that he conform to canonical «due process» in his veneration of the elder who had brought him to Christ. This personal emphasis emerges in, or perhaps better, underlies his use of nuptial imagery regarding the Church in Ethical Discourse I where, very typically (though with ample backing in the tradition), the «marriage» of Christ and the Church is mirrored in each of the saints. Mary Theotokos is the original and paradigm of this marriage, but, says our saint, «for each one of the faithful and sons of light this same marriage is performed in like and scarcely diverging manner». Chapter ten of the Discourse is devoted in particular to the modalities of the marriage. Symeon is first of all careful to underline that the case of the Virgin is unique, «since it was once and for all that the Word of God became flesh [from her]... and was born, bodily... and since it is not possible that He should take flesh a second time». The, as it were, objective conditions of personal communion with the Word are established once and once only, hence Mary Theotokos’ altogether irreplaceable and exalted role. Hence, secondly, the objective nature of the Body of Christ, the Church, that Reality which is

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8 Hymns 15, esp. 192–204.
9 Ibid. 16, 33.
10 Ibid. 15, 225–231.
11 Ethical Discourses I.5, 116–119.
12 Ibid. I.9, 76–78.
more true and real than the visible world, and which is communicated to the believer in the sacraments, as with Symeon’s reference in the following to the Eucharist:

...the same undefiled flesh which He accepted from the pure loins of Mary... and with which He was given birth in the body, He gives to us as food. And when we eat of it... each one of us receives within himself the entirety of God made flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ... present in the body bodilessly, mingled with our essence and nature, and deifying us who share His body, who are become flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone.14

It is this union which he calls «the second mode of birth» 15 of God the Word, and it occurs «through the divine Spirit... which is ever working in our hearts the mystery of the renewal of human souls» 16. By communicating in the deified flesh of Christ, the saints are elevated «to the ranks of His mother... His brothers... and His kinsmen». Here, he concludes, «is the mystery of the marriages which the Father arranged for His only-begotten Son».17

In the New Theologian’s account of the mystical marriage there is clearly an interweaving of the ecclesial and the mystical. Rather, indeed, there is a real identity. The Church is truly the «Temple of the King», but so equally is the Christian the «temple of the Holy Spirit» and «tabernacle» of Christ.18 The Church is the new world re-created in the Word incarnate, the universe of the age to come, but so, as Symeon argues especially in Discourse VI, is «each one of us... created by God as a second world, a great world in this small and visible one», and all are commanded to possess «the sun of righteousness shining within us», and «to provide our neighbor with the example of the immaterial day, the new earth and new heaven».19 This parallelism, or

14 Ethical Discourses I.10, 55–72.
15 Ibid. 92–94.
16 Ibid. 111–114.
17 Ibid. 185–186.
18 For the Church as the «temple of the King, His city and world», see Ethical Discourses I.10, 44–45. For the use of temple language in the New Testament with regard both to the Church and to the individual Christian, see, for example, I Cor 3:16–17; 6:19; II Cor 5:1–5 and 6:16–18; Eph 2:13–22; and I Pet 2:4; Rev 21:21; together with the same in reference to Christ: Lk 1:35 (cf. Ex. 40:34); Jn 1:14 and 2:19–21; and cf. my discussion and the texts cited in section III B below.
19 Ethical Discourses IV, 794–801 and 826–34. The phrase, «great world in the small», as a description of the human being in the image of God doubtless derives from Gregory Nazianzus, Or. 38.11 // PG 36. 324A. See also the use to which Symeon’s disciple, Nicetas Stethatos, puts this phrase in his treatise, On the Soul 27 // Nicétas Stéthatos: opuscules et letters / Ed. J. DARROUVÈS (Paris, 1961) (SC, 81)88; and also his Contemplation of Paradise 8.53 (Opuscules 176), where the expression is linked to the idea of the Christian as «palace» and «temple» of God. For comment on these and similar expressions in Nicetas, see A. GOLITZIN, «Earthly Angels and
better, this identity runs throughout his thought. In *Discourse* III, for example, he concludes a meditation on the Eucharist, the sacrament of the Church, by drawing a parallel between the *Cherubikon* of the Byzantine offertory, with its echoes of the temple vision of Isaiah and, especially, of Ezekiel’s cherubim throne, on the one hand, and, on the other, the individual Christian as divine throne, carrying the Presence as the seraphim and cherubim of the prophetic theophanies bear aloft the God of Israel. At different points in his *Hymns*, he is awestruck while standing before the throne of the Church’s altar when serving as priest «of the divine mysteries», and trembles before the same mystery revealed in his heart. The Church as God’s body in *Ethical Discourses* I.6, is paralleled in *Discourse* VI by the «body of virtues» which is the mature man in Christ, with both passages (especially the second) turning around, interestingly enough, an exegesis of «the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ» of Ephesians 4:13. In *Discourse* I, as we saw, it is the Church which is the world to come while, in *Discourse* X, the Day of the Lord shines in the hearts of the saints even while the latter are still in this present life. Again in *Discourse* X, the two poles of ecclesial and mystical mirror one another and are specifically tied together in the Eucharist:

His holy flesh is not flesh alone, but flesh and Godhead inseparably yet without confusion: visible in the flesh, i.e., in the bread for physical eyes, while invisible in its divinity for those same eyes, yet seen by the eyes of the soul.

Church and believer, altar and heart, confirm and reflect one another, and both turn around and partake of the one mystery, Christ. Each is, as it were, the icon or sacramental image of the other through which the presence of the Word enfleshed is communicated. Without that deifying and vivifying pow-

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21 See, for example, *Hymns* 19, 33–103.


23 *Ethical Discourses* IV, 364–620.


er, both are equally idols, mere flesh or naked institution, just as the Eucharist itself is, without the perception of the «eyes of the soul», merely bread, and the Lord Jesus not God, but a failed prophet. It is faith which reveals the wandering preacher from Nazareth as true God in the form of a man, the Eucharist as the bread from heaven, and the Church and believer — the great world and the small, or better, the one, unique great world — as complementary expressions of the Eighth Day and age to come. All of this features in what I take to be St. Symeon’s understanding of the biblical phrase, the «body of Christ», with which I chose to preface my assigned title. That body is, first, the actual flesh of the Lord Jesus, transmuted through the Resurrection in the Holy Spirit; into which flesh, second, we are incorporated as the Church, the «Israel of God», which is realized, made present, in the liturgical assembly; where, third, we receive again the same Body of Christ as Eucharist; in order thus, fourth, for each of us to become a particular manifestation of the body of God, or, put another and doubtless more recognizable way, the realization of the divine image and likeness. Regarding my fourth point, we surely also glimpse a basis for St. Symeon’s understanding of the spiritual father, the «man of God», who embodies the divine presence — specifically, the presence of Christ — for his disciple. In what remains of this paper, it is especially the relation between the second and fourth of those meanings, the Church, particularly as the liturgical assembly, and the individual believer as the «form of God», or, as I put it above, the coordination between the ecclesial and the mystical, which shall occupy our attention.

III. Some Background to St. Symeon’s Language: the «Pattern» of Heaven

A. Microcosm and Macrocosm

Before turning to what I take to be St. Symeon’s definitive discussion of this mutual reflection or, indeed, of mutual formation, I should like to offer a brief word on its sources. In part, it is the ancient idea of the microcosm (man) reflecting the macrocosm (universe) which enjoys a long and distinguished history in the Greek philosophers. Plato deploys it in the Republic in order to portray the ideal state as the rational man writ large, and it is central to the Stoics, perhaps especially to their ethics, who saw the universe reflect-26 See Ethical Discourses X, 738–714, and also esp. III, 410–554, for discussion of the Eucharist in terms of perception and non-perception of the presence of Christ’s divinity borrowed from, and referring continually to, John 6:32–57, where the Jews of this passage truly see Christ, but do not perceive Him correctly. His divinity is hidden from them. See as well the analysis of this passage in A. Golitzin, St. Symeon the New Theologian on the Mystical Life: the Ethical Discourses. Vol. III: Life, Times, Theology (Crestwood, NY, 1997) 111–116.
ed in the individual.\footnote{On the notion of man as microcosm through early Neoplatonism, see A. MEYER, Wesen und Geschichte der Theorie von Mikro- und Makrocosmos (Bern, 1900) 1–46.} Plotinus fuses Plato and the Stoa in order to produce the doctrine that each person is a *kosmos* *noētos*, spanning the chasm from matter to the One itself.\footnote{On the Plotinus’ fusion of Plato and Stoicism, see A. H. ARMSTRONG, An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy (London, 1963) 175–186.} His successors, the later Neoplatonists, carry on to elaborate a vision of reality that is at once an analysis in detail of the «the great chain of being», and a dissection of the human psyche as reflecting both the structures of the sensory world and the intelligible universe of eternal forms.\footnote{For the simultaneity of macrocosm and microcosm in later Neoplatonism, see S. GERSH, From Iamblichus to Eriugena: Studies in the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition (Leiden, 1973) 27–120.} Certain among these successors, in particular Iamblichus of Chalcis and Proclus Diadochus, add the caveat, against Plotinus’ teaching of a potentially immediate access to the divine, that the soul of itself is incapable of making the ascent to divinity, but that it requires the assistance of sacred rites and the gods’ gracious condescension in order to bridge the gap between its own world and the heavens.\footnote{See J. R. RIST, Pseudo-Dionysius, Neoplatonism, and the Weakness of the Soul // From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought / Ed. H. J. WESTRA (Leiden—New York, 1992) 135–161; and G. SHAW, Theurgy and the Soul: the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus (Penn State, 1995) Esp. 237 ff.} Later Christian writers, notably the anonymous Syrian who wrote under the name of Dionysius Areopagites, would see in this last school of pagan philosophy and its theurgy a point of convergence with long-established, Christian teaching that bore on the relationship between public worship and the personal opening up to God’s presence in the soul.\footnote{On Dionysius’ use of prior, predominantly Syrian-Christian, ascetical ideas regarding the co-ordination of liturgical worship and the «inner man», see my discussion in part 4A below, together with A. GOLITZIN, *Et introibo ad altare dei*: The Mystagogy of Dionysius Areopagita with Special Reference to its Eastern Christian Predecessors (Θεσσαλονίκη, 1994) (‘Ἀνάλεκτα Βλατάτων, 59) Esp. 349–392; and, for a summary account of the same, idem, Liturgy and Mysticism: The Experience of God in Eastern Orthodox Christianity // *Pro Ecclesia* 8.2 (1999) 159–186, esp. 173–185.} It is very unlikely, I think, that St. Symeon had much of any direct exposure to the philosophers, but I think it a certainty that he did know his Dionysius, as well, to be sure, as other Church Fathers who both preceded and succeeded the *Corpus areopagiticum*\footnote{For argument that St. Symeon did know Dionysius, and appreciate him, see A. GOLITZIN, Anarchy versus Hierarchy? Dionysius Areopagites, Symeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos, and Their Common Roots in Ascetical Tradition // *SVTQ* 38.2 (1994) 131–179; and idem, Symeon the New Theologian on the Mystical Life… 156–173, of which last the present essay is at some points a repetition, at others a kind of summation, and at still others an updating.}

First, however, let me touch — if very sketchily — on the chain of development which leads to Dionysius, and thence to the New Theologian, and indeed beyond them both to the end of the Byzantine era, and on to the present day. We find its beginnings embedded in the foundational revelation accorded Israel. Following the definitive manifestation of God to Israel on Sinai and the subsequent gift of the covenant, Moses ascends the mountain again at the end of Exodus 24. What follows is arguably the climax of the Sinai theophany, the revelation of the tabernacle. «Have them make Me a sanctuary so that I may dwell among them», God tells Moses, and then adds: «In accordance with all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and of its furniture, so you shall make it» (Ex 25:8–9). From long before Christ, this «pattern» revealed to the Lawgiver was assumed to be the heavenly original, God’s own temple or palace on high. This is arguably the background of Isaiah’s vision in the Jerusalem temple, or of Ezekiel’s visionary restoration of city and temple in Ezk 40–48, and it is quite explicit by the time we arrive at the apocalyptic literature of the two centuries immediately before Christ.33 The tabernacle, and then the Temple at Jerusalem, comprise the locus of God’s dwelling among His people, the place of the Shekinah, to use the word favored by the rabbis for the divine presence. Even with the Second Temple’s destruction in A.D. 70, it is still the temple and its accompanying cultus which in a sense govern the rabbis’ reconstruction of Jewish life in the Mishnah and Talmud. Both popular and esoteric Jewish piety would continue to build on biblical precedents linking the Temple with creation, with visionary experience, and with the age to come.34

The idea of the temple is quite as important for Christianity. With an eye both to my assigned topic, and to what we have seen Symeon say so far, I would venture to state that the idea of the temple is nothing less than central


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for New Testament christology, ecclesiology, and soteriology. The Lord Jesus replaces tabernacle and temple as the primary «place» of the divine presence. In the Fourth Gospel, He is Himself the Glory or Shekinah Who has «tabernacled among us». He is the Immanuel in Matthew, and His conception in Mary Theotokos, as described in Luke 1:35, deliberately echoes the overshadowing of the tabernacle by the divine Glory in the Septuagint wording of Exod 40:34. Again in the Gospel of John — but also implied by the false witnesses’ accusations against him in the Synoptic Gospels — it is His body which is specifically identified with the temple building. Likewise, the assembly of the believers, the Church, is also temple, as in Eph. 2:20–22 and I Peter 2:4–9, the place of the Risen One’s presence and, with Him, of the heavenly Zion, as in Heb. 12:18–24, where the faithful are invited to partake of the «bread from heaven», the food of the angels. Third, the believer him- or herself is called by the Apostle Paul «temple of God» and «temple of the Holy Spirit», is summoned by the same to transfiguration «from glory to glory», and, in the words of Christ in the Fourth Gospel, is spoken to as having already received the same glory as the Son received from the Father «before the world was». Elsewhere, in John 7:37–39, the reader is invited to become a fount of the living water of the Spirit for others. This image is taken directly from the lore of the Temple as the source of the eschatological river of life, first appearing in Ezk 47:1 ff. and repeated, inter alia, in the Revelation’s portrait of the heavenly city. I do not think it too much to say that the famous — or infamous — Eastern Christian soteriology of deification draws ultimately on these traditions of tabernacle and temple, and the scriptural loci I have cited in support of them are merely a selection.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to trace the continuities of this theme in subsequent Christian literature. Suffice it to say here that the notion of temple, whether in reference in Christ, to the Church, or to the believer, features prominently and arguably even centrally in the patristic witness. It is a key, for example, to the theology of the martyr as we find the latter in the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, or in the account of St. Polycarp of Smyrna’s martyrdom a couple of generations later. Similarly, the sainted ascetic

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36 Thus see Ignatius, Romans 2, 4, and 8 on himself as a «libation», «God’s wheat», and hearkening to the «living water», together with the Letter of the Smyrneans 14–15 on Polycarp’s martyrdom, describing the latter in terms of Eucharist and incense offering. For the Greek text of both, see Ignace d’Antioche: Lettres. Martyre de Polycarpe / Ed. P. Camelot (Paris, 1969) (SC, 10) 108, 110–112, 116, and 226–228. On the theology of the Christian martyr as drawing on the traditions and language of the Temple, see the recent and very important essay by R. D. Young, In Procession be-
as «temple», as site of theophany, appears in a popular mode in the second and third-century, apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, and, in a more philosophically sophisticated vein, in the early Alexandrians, Clement and Origen. The indwelling of the divine glory of Christ in the Spirit, the light of the

to sample from the Apocryphal Acts in roughly chronological order, see for example Thekla’s clothing with fire, i.e., the martyr-ascetic as theophanic, in the Acta Pauli et Theclae 34 // Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha / Ed. M. Bonnet (Hildesheim, 1959) II.1, 261:2–4; together with the fragrance of perfumes all around her in 35 (261:6–7), and the twice-repeated epithet awarded her by her persecutors: hierosylos, «desecrator of temples», in 28 (255:9) and 32 (258:8). The name is clearly ironic, since in fact Thekla is revealed in chapters 34–35 as, in effect, herself a true temple, in opposition to the false temples of the pagans. Second, there are the Acta Thomae, chapters 12 (Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha... II.2, 117:1), 94 (207:16–18), and 144 (251:18–19), especially 94, where the ascetics as «holy temples» are even accorded «the authority to forgive sins». In a third example, we find the remarkable description of the body of the ascetic, Mariamne, stripped in preparation for martyrdom, as taking on the likeness of a «glass ark [kibōtos], filled up with light» and surrounded «by a cloud of fire», in the fourth-century Acta Phillipi 126 (Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha... II.2, 55, 11 and 26), where the description of the ascetic’s body is obviously intended to evoke the Ark of the Covenant as the resting place of the divine Glory, such as we find it described in Ex 40:34, or in I K 8, 10–11, together with the «devouring fire» of the Glory descending on Sinai in Ex 24:16–17, and of course the New Testament narratives of Christ’s Transfiguration. In each of these, particularly in the first and third, we find the ascetic saint instantiating — to borrow a term from Professor Young above, n. 36 — the «form of God». Recall thus Symeon on his own transformed limbs in Hymns 15 and 16, touched on above in section IIA and nn. 8–10. Here is the saint, in short, as conformed to «the body of His [Christ’s] glory» (Phil. 3:21). On this theme, the transition in Eastern Christian literature from the outward vision of the divine Glory such as we find the latter described in Second Temple era apocalypses and in later, rabbinic mysticism, to the Christian him- or herself as, in Christ, becoming the «body of the Glory», see A. Orlov, A. Golitzin, «Many Lamps are Lightened from the One»: Paradigms of the Transformational Vision in the Macarian Homilies // VC 55 (2001) 281–299, esp. 292 ff.

For Clement of Alexandria’s Christian gnostic as «temple», see Stromateis V.6 (GCS 40, 1) and VII.13 (GCS 58, 25–59:5); and for Origen on the Christian saint as God’s city, kingdom, and paradise, as place of the «throne» of the Father and Son (and therefore temple), see his De Oratone 25.1 and 3 (Koëteschau, Origenes Werke... II. 359–360). Cf. also Origen’s description of the Christian virgin serving as priest within the temple of her body in C. Jenkins, Fragments on 1 Corinthians // JTS 9 (1907/8) 29, cited by P. Brown, The Body and Society (New York—Oxford, 1988) 175.
world to come, are reflected in the faces and bodies of the saints, from the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 6:15 to the purported account of Motovilov’s conversation with Seraphim Sarovsky, and on to the present day.

When we come to the fourth century and the remarkable prominence of the ascetic holy man, we also find that ascetic circles in both Roman and Sassanid Mesopotamia are making a concerted and deliberate effort to clarify and coordinate these different senses of temple. Ephrem Syrus features this coordination, especially in his remarkable *Hymns on Paradise*, as do, in an atmosphere charged with a certain background of conflict and tension, the Syriac *Liber Graduum* and the anonymous, Greek collection of homilies attributed traditionally to Macarius the Great. All three, the latter two quite emphatically in a couple of places each, insist on the worship of the Church, the liturgical assembly, as the necessary «pattern» — *hypodeigma* in «Macarius’» words — for «what is at work in the soul by grace». This is no more than a kind of restatement, as it were, of the «pattern» revealed to Moses on Sinai, though now, in the new dispensation, as the *Liber Graduum* expressly insists, this «pattern» includes a threefold association and mutual reflection: of the exalted Lord and the heavenly liturgy, of the visible Church, and of the soul.

IV. Dionysius and Symeon: «Our Hierarchy», Heaven, and the Soul

A. The Dionysian Hierarchy

These Syrian writers comprise the relatively immediate, Christian background of the mysterious author who wrote under the pseudonym of Dionysi-
us Areopagites, and who was also the apparent inventor of one of the key-words in my assigned title, «hierarchy». Far from comprising a straightforward advocacy of what we might call today the ecclesiastical «chain of command», or even, in modern Roman Catholic terms, the *magisterium*, Dionysius’ notion of hierarchy includes at once our true world, the foretaste of the world to come, the reflection of the heavenly liturgy, the milieu of our encounter with Christ (or indeed — as I shall have occasion to note below — the body of Christ), and the shaping image or icon of the redeemed human being. Allow me to elaborate just a little on these points through the citation and brief discussion of three texts from his treatise, *The Celestial Hierarchy*. We find his definition of hierarchy in *Celestial Hierarchy* 3.1:

Hierarchy is, in my opinion, a sacred order, knowledge, and activity which, so far as possible, is in process of being likened to the form of God, [and] which leads up in due proportion to illuminations given it by God for [the purpose of] the imitation of God.

There are a couple of things I should like to note here. The first is the notion of process. Hierarchy, for the inventor of the word, is not a finished thing, not static, but a movement, a becoming. Second, this movement has as its goal «the form of God», *to theoeides*, which answers in Dionysian vocabulary to the biblical phrase, «the image of God», just as «the imitation of God», *to theomimēton*, answers to the divine «likeness». The two terms, in short, are intended to recall the *eikōn* and *homoioōsis* of Genesis 1:26. As a whole or collective entity, hierarchy is thus the process of conformity to the image and likeness.

In the following paragraph, Dionysius moves to the divinely-intended effect of a hierarchy on each of its members:

The purpose [*skopos*] thus of a hierarchy is the likening to, and union with God, [the] shaping... [and] perfecting of its members [lit., «celebrants»] as divine images [lit., «statues», *agalmatai*], as most transparent and unspotted mirrors, recipients of the primordial light and divine ray who, once filled in sacred manner with the radiance imparted [to them], reflect it in turn and without envy to those who come after... [in order thus for each] to become, as the scriptures say, «a co-worker with God» [*theou synergon genesthai*], and to show the divine activity shining forth in himself so far

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40 For hierarchy as the Dionysian world, see R. ROQUES, L’univers dionysien (Paris, 1954) 36–134; and in relation to both the larger universe and the soul, GOLITZIN, *Et introibo...* 119–140 and 182–229, respectively.

41 *Celestial Hierarchy* 3.1 // *PG* 3. 164D; critical text in G. HEIL, A. RITTER, *Corpus Dionysiaco*um (Berlin—New York, 1991) 17, lines 3–5. In subsequent citations from Dionysius, I shall be including the Migne column number and, in parenthesis, reference to the page and line numbers of the critical edition.

42 For texts and discussion, see GOLITZIN, *Et introibo...* 110–111.
as possible [deixai tçn theian energeian en heautôi kata to dynaton anaphainomençn].

Here I would like to underline five points. First, there is the formative effect of a hierarchy on its members. It «shapes» or «impresses» (apotypoō) and «perfects» them. Second, that shaping is itself related to the notion of the image. If hierarchy as a whole, as a collective, is a movement toward conformity with the «form of God», then its purpose is likewise to «impress» on each of its members the divine image, to make them all and each the perfected reflection of God’s form and activity. Third, we note throughout this passage the language of light with which the divine form is obviously connected and, even, identified. This is the «primordial light», archiphōs, and «hearchic ray», thearchikē aktis, which is to shine in the transformed members of a hierarchy, and thence, from them, to others. Hierarchy is in the form of God as light, and is itself a communication of light, a leaping of light from one light-filled being to another, a cascade of light.

My fourth point concerns the identity of this light and ray. From the very beginnings of his labors, which is to say from the first chapters and lines of the Celestial Hierarchy, which has been reckoned from antiquity — and I think rightly — to be the first in his sequence of treatises, Dionysius identifies the light which comes to us from «the Father of lights» with the Second Person of the Trinity, the «radiance of the Father», Christ. It is Jesus, he tells us at a number of points, who is the origin (archē) and being (ousia) of both the angels’ hierarchy and of our own. That light which comes leaping down the serried ranks, the «form of God» to which a hierarchy’s members are conformed, which they and their hierarchy are called individually and collectively to embody, is Christ. Put another way, that which Dionysius is seeking to express in his to us rather odd and difficult vocabulary, is the scriptural understanding of the Church as «the body of Christ».

This brings me to my fifth point: whether Dionysius has in mind the so-to-speak Church of the angels, the «heavenly hierarchy», or the Church on earth, which he calls «our hierarchy», he always means worship, the liturgy. In Celestial Hierarchy I.3, arguably the most important passage in his entire corpus in as much as it supplies the great frame for what is to follow, he explains how Christ provides us with «access» (prosagōgē) to the Father and fellowship with the heavenly liturgy of the angels:

It would not be possible for the human intellect to be ordered with that immaterial imitation of the heavenly minds unless it were to use the material guide that is proper to it, reckoning the visible beauties as reflections

44 Ibid. 1.1–2, 120B–121A (7:3–11).
45 See, e.g., Ecclesiastical Hierarchy 1.1, 372A (64:1–2), for Jesus as the «origin [archē], being [ousia] and most divine power [dynamis] of every hierarchy».
of the invisible splendor, the perceptible fragrances as impressions of the intelligible distributions, the material lights an image of the immaterial gift of light, the sacred and extensive teachings [of the scriptures] [as an image] of the intellect’s intelligible fulfillment, the exterior ranks [of clergy and laity] [as an image] of the harmonious and ordered state [hexis] [of the intellect] which is set in order for divine things, and [our partaking] of the most divine Eucharist [an image] of participation in Jesus.46

The physical elements of the Church’s worship — here the beauty of the sanctuary, candles, lamps, incense, scripture readings, etc. — all convey spiritual reality. The very ordering of clergy and laity in, presumably, the sanctuary and nave comprises a suggestion of the well-ordered, that is, virtuous soul. All is icon or symbol of a pervasive, unseen reality, the joining of heaven, earth and the soul, which is summed up at the end of the passage with the references to the Eucharist and to Christ.

Does the conjunction of Eucharist and «symbol» mean that Dionysius holds a doctrine of the eucharistic presence which reads the latter as less than «real»? The point has been debated by others, and one recent book has sharply contrasted Dionysius’ language of symbol with St. Symeon’s sacramental realism, but I am less convinced that the latter is so very different from the Areopagite.47 To be sure, Symeon never calls the Eucharist a «symbol», but this is only to say that he is obedient to one of the results of the Iconoclast controversy, over two and half centuries after Dionysius, which was to forbid the application of the words «symbol» or «icon» to the consecrated gifts.48 In substance, however, the two appear to me to be very similar. The bread for both is only «bread» unless its unseen reality is perceived, just as divinity is concealed in the Virgin’s son. Likewise, in the coordination between the liturgy in heaven, on earth, and in the soul, Dionysius follows the lead at once of the late Neoplatonists, in that the human microcosm finds access to God only through the forms of traditional worship, and of those Syrian ascetics a century before him who had insisted on the necessary linkage between what

48 On the clear distinction between icon (and symbol), on the one hand, and the Eucharist, on the other, drawn by the later iconodules, see J. MEYENDORFF, Byzantine Theology (Oxford, 1975) 203–204. Prior to the Iconoclast Controversy, however, «symbol» appears relatively often with reference to the Eucharist. For examples, see G. W. H. LAMPE, A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford, 1972) 1282.
one of them, the author of the Liber Graduum, called the «three churches». Half a millenium later, St. Symeon is part of the same trajectory.

B. Echoes of Dionysius in St. Symeon’s Fourteenth Ethical Discourse

That he was a conscious part of this continuum, and moreover that he knew and admired the very passage from the Celestial Hierarchy which I just quoted at length, is clear from what I take to be his most important discussion of my assigned topic, his fourteenth Ethical Discourse, «On the Feasts and their Celebration». The setting he appears to have in mind is the solemn, liturgical celebration of one of the decisive moments in the history of salvation — the Nativity, the Ascension, or the Descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, etc. — or else, perhaps, the commemoration in vigil and liturgy of one of the great saints, or indeed his own instituted veneration of Symeon the Pious. His overall purpose is to remind his readers of the intent and meaning of liturgical worship. That purpose is nothing earthly. He begins by questioning ecclesiastical solemnities. «How», he asks, can the man who has «seen the Master» and who knows himself as «naked and poor»

...take pride in beauty, or exalt himself... or pay great attention to the multitude of candles and lamps, or fragrances and perfumes, or an assembly of people, or a rich... table, or boast in the... presence of men who are glorious upon the earth?49

These things are all earthly, «here today», he says, «and tomorrow gone». The one who is wise therefore looks to what is not visible, «the future [i.e., eschatological] events which are present in the rites being celebrated», and, doing so, such a person will celebrate the feast «in the Holy Spirit... with those who celebrate... in heaven».50 No reckoning of feasts or splendor in decoration suffices if one does not realize that the latter do not comprise «the true feast, but are rather symbols of the feast». Without that realization, he concludes, there is neither «gain nor joy».51

St. Symeon certainly does not discourage liturgical solemnities: «God forbid!», he exclaims, and goes on to insist, «On the contrary, I indeed both advise and encourage you to do these things, and to do so lavishly!» He does, though, want to point how to celebrate properly, and to explain what the things done «in types and symbols really mean».52 In the course of this explanation, he displays his debt to the Areopagite. The function, he says, of the lamps in the church is «to show you the intelligible gift of light» (recall Dionysius’ «immaterial gift of light»), and of the fragrances or incense used to reveal «the intelligible myrrh», the anointing of the Spirit which «wells up

49 Ethical Discourses XIV, 26–35.
50 Ibid. 35–44.
51 Ibid. 54–78.
52 Ibid. 87–89.
from within», and «rises like sweet-smelling smoke» \(^53\) (so Dionyius’ «spiritual distributions»). In Symeon’s further remarks here on the mingled perfumes and incense as reflecting the graced human being, «composed and combined», he says, «with the spiritual perfume... the gifts... of the Holy Spirit», we might call to mind Dionysius description of the myron in Ecclesiastical Hierarchy IV, where the perfumed oil signals Jesus, «the superessential fragrance», Who pervades our being by virtue of the Incarnation.\(^54\)

Stressing that our celebrations here-below are only «a type and shadow and symbol» of the heavenly feast, to which latter we can neither add nor subtract,\(^55\) Symeon shows nonetheless how we may participate in the celestial liturgy. As we briefly noted above in reference to the fourth-century Syrians, and at length with reference to Dionysius on hierarchy, the New Theologian holds that each Christian is called to reflect the worship of heaven. Again, for him as for the others we discussed, the Church at worship is an icon at once of heaven and of the new man transfigured in Christ. His series of comparisons follows the sequence quoted above from Celestial Hierarchy I.3 fairly closely, and, like the latter, concludes with the Eucharist. The lamps signify «that light by which the whole world of the virtues is complete», the perfumes and incense «the intelligible perfume of the Holy Spirit», the crowds of laity «the ranks of the holy angels», friends and dignitaries «all the saints», and the groaning board of refreshments «the living bread alone — not that which is perceptible and visible, but He Who comes to you in and through what is perceptible», and the wine «not... this visible wine, but that which appears as wine, yet is perceived by the intellect as the blood of God, light inexpressible».\(^56\) The order is a little different from Dionysius, whose lights precede the perfumes, while Symeon’s crowds and dignaries representing angels and saints do not quite match up to the orders of clergy signifying the inner order of the virtuous soul, but the New Theologian overall does seem clearly to be echoing the Areopagite. The thinking behind both is surely very close as well: the Church’s liturgy connects us with the angels and with Christ

\(^53\) Ethical Discourses XIV, 93–121.

\(^54\) Thus compare Ethical Discourses XIV, 121–139, with Dionysius’ Ecclesiastical Hierarchy 4.3.4, 477C–480A (98:23–99:14) on the myron as symbol of the incarnate Christ. Relatedly, see also 4.3.1, 476A (96:23–97:1), where Dionysius declares that holy people themselves «are divine images [agalma] of the most divine fragrance», and recall the use of agalma above in Celestial Hierarchy 3.2, together with my fourth sense of the phrase, «body of Christ», and its meaning for Symeon discussed in II B above, and as reflecting the traditions of temple and vision touched on in III B above, together with nn. 36 and 37. Here we might recall the prominence Dionysius assigns the Transfiguration as foretaste of the eschatological transformation in Divine Names I.4, cited below, section IV B, and n. 60.

\(^55\) Ethical Discourses XIV, 176–178.

\(^56\) Ibid. 144–223.
while, at the same time, it reflects the soul in union with God. Recalling my remarks above on the «form» of «our hierarchy», in Dionysius’ terms, it is also clear that the liturgy for Symeon, too, is more than simply a reflection. It enables union with God, accomplishes it. Properly understood, it shapes the soul. That proper understanding comes through «perception and knowledge», says Symeon, by means of the «intelligible eye of the soul». Likewise, for Dionysius in Ecclesiastical Hierarchy III and elsewhere, the spiritual senses are given through the sacraments. It is Baptism, he tells us, which formed him, and allowed him to discern rightly, just as the Eucharist is the «sacrament of sacraments», the gathering up — synaxis — of the collective and the individual into Christ. Similarly, Symeon remarks at the end of his discourse that, if one allows oneself so to be formed, and thus celebrates the feast and partakes worthily of the divine mysteries, all your life will be to you single feast. And not a feast, but the beginning of a feast and a single Passover [lit., pascha]: the passage and emigration from what is seen to what is sensed by the intellect, to that place where every shadow and type, and all the present symbols, come to an end... rejoicing eternally in the most pure sacrifice, in God the Father and the co-essential Spirit, always seeing Christ and being seen by Him, ever being with Christ... than Whom nothing is greater in the Kingdom of God... Amen.

I cannot resist adding that the New Theologian here recalls Dionysius on at least a couple of other occasions. The first occurs in Divine Names I.4, where the sequence «now... then... now» punctuates a discussion of the relationship obtaining between the life of the Christian in this world and in the eschaton, a sequence that notes the contrast while affirming an essential communion between the two moments that is mediated by the liturgy, and the Areopagite goes on to assert that, even in the present life, one may be caught

57 Ethical Discourses XIV, 223–247; and cf. Dionysius’ deployment of hyp’opsin in Ecclesiastical Hierarchy 3.3.10, 440B (90:10); 12, 444A (92:17–18); 13, 444C (93:14–16); and his use of «recognize», epigignoskô (in participial form, «recognizing), in 3.3.15, 445B (94:12–13), together with my argument for these passages as signifying a «real presence», in Golitzin, Et introibo... 199–202. See also my remarks on Symeon relative to «recognition» of the Presence above in section II B and notes 26, and 47–48, and below, n. 58.

58 For Baptism as allowing the author to see (spiritually), see Ecclesiastical Hierarchy 3.1, 425AB (80:1–4); for the formation of the organs of spiritual perception within the womb of the Church, see Ibid. 2.2.3, 400AB (74:15–75:9) and 3.3.6, 432D (85:11–21); and for the deployment of synaxis/synago as signifying both individual and collective «gathering» and reconciliation, see Ibid. 3.1, 424CD (97:9–12) and 3.3.8, 437A (88:13–18), respectively. On the Macarian Homilist’s similar use of synago and like terms derived from, or referring to the liturgy, see Golitzin, Et introibo... 380–385.

59 Ethical Discourses 14:280–293.
up into the reality of the world to come.\textsuperscript{60} The second occasion is a passage in \textit{Epistle} 9, seldom if ever noted in Dionysian scholarship, on the eschatological banquet of the saints, where, Dionysius says,

\begin{quote}
It is Jesus Himself Who gladdens them and leads them to the table, Who serves them, Who grants them everlasting rest, Who bestows and pours out on them the fullness of beauty.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

Over a century before Dionysius, and long before Symeon, the \textit{Liber Graduum} put the relationship perhaps most clearly of all. Christ gave us the visible order of the Church, writes the unknown author, so that

by starting from these visible things [i.e., the visible liturgy], and provided our bodies become temples and our hearts altars, we might find ourselves in their heavenly counterparts... \textit{migrating there and entering in while we are still in this visible church...}\textsuperscript{62}

Note here the «migration», so like Symeon’s «emigration» just above, and intimately related, I think, to the famous Dionysian «ecstasy», together with the emphasis all three writers place on this «passage» as both eschatological hope and — if only momentarily — present possibility.

\section*{V. Concluding Remarks: Tensions within a Shared Continuum}

St. Symeon claimed throughout his active life that he was doing no more that re-affirming the Tradition, «the teachings of the Master and the Apostles that some have perverted».\textsuperscript{63} With regard to the theme I was assigned for this conference, the relationship between the spiritual life and the hierarchical church, I think that his claim is just. On the theme of hierarchy, he is occasionally contrasted by modern scholars with that other writer who featured prominently in this paper, Dionysius Areopagites, though the same scholars are then very puzzled when obliged to confront the extraordinarily prominent Dionysian presence in Symeon’s passionately devoted disciple, biographer, editor, and all-round champion, Nicetas Stethatos.\textsuperscript{64} To be sure, we must allow that Nicetas was a thinker in his own right, but I believe — and hope that

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Divine Names} 1.4, 592BC (criticial text by B. R. Suchla, Corpus Dionysiacum I: De Divinibus Nominibus (Berlin, 1990) 114:7–115:5); and, for comment on this passage, A. Golitzin, On the Other Hand // \textit{SVTQ} 34.4 (1990) 305–323, esp. 310–316.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Epistle} 9.5, 1113A (Heil, Ritter, 206:5–7).

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Mimro} 12.2; \textit{PS} III 288:20–289:8. ET: Brock, 46–47 (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Catechetical Discourses} 34:248–263.

\textsuperscript{64} See most recently Alfeyev, Symeon the New Theologian... 275, n. 9. For Nicetas as, to the contrary, carrying on Symeon’s thought in most key respects, including an appreciation for the Areopagite, see Golitzin, «Anarchy versus Hierarchy…; and \textit{idem}, «Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men»…
I have shown, at least to some extent — that the gap between the «mystical anarchist», Symeon, and Dionysius, «the unilateral theoretician of hierarchy», is more apparent than real. For both the New Theologian and the inventor of the word, «hierarchy», the latter is first and foremost the revealed form of worship, whose literary history begins in the Torah of Israel and culminates in the Church’s Gospel. To that revealed form, or «pattern», to borrow from the language of Exodus 25:9, both writers are utterly loyal. They both understand it, moreover, as itself revelatory and formative, and thus of immediate and inescapable relevance to the inner, spiritual life. The «pattern» of heaven is manifested in it, and so also is the form of the soul transformed. It is, for both, the Incarnate Word’s communication of Himself. It is the expression of, and participation in, His risen body, the reality of the world to come. Both writers are also in this regard faithful witnesses to prior Tradition, in particular to the ascetical literature of the fourth century and even well before.

The one area where we do find a significant difference between Symeon and Dionysius lies in the latter’s persistent — if not perfectly consistent — effort to assimilate the figure of the ascetical holy man to that of the bishop. The spiritual father, the geron of early and later monastic literature, is — most of the time — identified with the «hierarch». Symeon, of course, betrays no such ambivalence, nor, to the best of my knowledge, do any of his monastic predecessors and successors. St. Maximus the Confessor’s Mystagogy simply ignores this attempted Dionysian equivalence, as do such later monastic admirers of Dionysius as Nicetas, Gregory Palamas, and Nicholas Cabasilas. The monks charitably and — so far as I can tell — uniformly ignore the Areopagite’s obvious sin against truth here. In contrast, and beginning with Dionysius’ earliest known commentator, the bishop John of Scythopolis, Eastern bishops have tended universally to applaud it, while simultaneously ignoring (as does John of Scythopolis himself) the inner reading of «hierarch» and «hierarchy», which is to say, the application — also fully intended by Dionysius — of these terms to the life of the soul. This bifurcated reception of the Corpus dionysiacum in the East is an amusing if little-noted fact, just one

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65 I am quoting J. Koder, in the latter’s Introduction // Syméon le nouveau théologien: Hymnes... 60–61, n. 2. 
66 See, for example, Ecclesiastical Hierarchy 1.3, 373C (66:4–6), on the hierarch as an «inspired and divine man». On the other hand, there is no stated equation with the bishop in Dionysius’ description of the «divine man» and «temple of the Holy Spirit» who acts as «physician» of others in 3.3.7, 433C (86:7–16), nor in his use of the imagery of spiritual fatherhood and sonship as illustrative of the Trinity in Divine Names 2.8, 645C (Suchla, 132:5–13).

67 On Scythopolis’ increased emphasis on the bishop’s role, see P. E. Rorem, J. Lamoreaux, John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus: Annotating the Areopagite (Oxford—New York, 1998) 62–64. For later examples of the tensions between «episcopal» and «monastic readings» of Dionysius, see Golitzin, Et introibo... 401–413.
more instance, if the reader will, of that long-standing tension between charismatic and institutional authority which I, following many others before me, read as an inescapable fact of the Church’s life in statu via.\textsuperscript{68}

I therefore have to admit that I have not completely solved the dichotomy implied in my assigned title, but then I believe that no one has, or can — at least, on this side of the eschaton. «Hierarchy» understood simply as «authority», the «chain of command», as I put it earlier, is indeed largely foreign to St. Symeon. But, if understood as «Church», as «liturgy», and if it includes the notion of the latter as essential, revealed, and a force which shapes the soul, then «hierarchy» has the New Theologian’s definite seal of approval. It is in his blood and breath, part of the very fabric of that new reality in Christ to which his entire life was given in witness, and which he understood as summed up in the person of the transfigured saint.

Of course, it was precisely his emphasis on the charismatically endowed elder which led to the New Theologian’s conflict with Stephen of Nicomedia and the patriarchal chancery, which is to say, with hierarchy in the modern, impoverished sense. Yet, in at least one passage, we find him speaking of the succession of holy elders in terms which recall, almost verbatim, Dionysius on hierarchy as a cascade of light:

The intelligible orders of the higher powers are illumined by God from the first order to the second, and from there to all the others in the same way, until the divine light passes through them all. The saints, too, are illumined in the same way by the divine angels, and, as they are bound up and joined together in the bond of the Spirit, they become their [the angels’] equals in honor and emulate them. These saints themselves come after the saints who preceded them, and from generation to generation they join [their predecessors] through the practice of God’s commandments. Like them, they are enlightened and receive this grace of God by participation. They become just like a golden chain, with each of them a link, bound to all the preceding saints in faith, love, and good works... one single chain in one God...\textsuperscript{69}

A few years ago Bishop Kallistos Ware cited these lines in order to illustrate the idea of a second kind of «apostolic succession», one which exists

\textsuperscript{68} MURRAY makes much the same point about the \textit{Liber Graduum} and \textit{Macarian Homilies} in his Symbols of Church and Kingdom... 275–276. See also on this tension in ecclesial life, J. MEYENDORFF’s essays, «The Holy Spirit as God», and «St. Basil, the Church, and Charismatic Leadership», in \textit{IDEM}, The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church (Crestwood, NY, 1982) 162–163 and 204–215, respectively.

alongside the «visible succession» of the bishops, and which consists of the «spiritual fathers and mothers in each generation of the Church». The bishop’s point is a very important one. In its acknowledgement of two successions, it directs us back at once to the broader sense of hierarchy which I have been trying to sketch, and to that tension which exists within it, of which tension we might further admit that SS. Symeon and Dionysius represent different poles. Still, and by way of a last word, I should like to underline a couple of points which I think do much to soften this apparent polarity. First, there is the commonality of expression which I think the New Theologian consciously shares with Dionysius. He at least, if not his students over the past century, understands that both he and the Areopagite are witnesses to, and in fact speaking out of, a common liturgical and ascetico-mystical tradition. Allow me to add just one more, little historical datum in support of this assertion. It is a fact that the description of a chain of divinely-inspired teaching, and therefore of successively graced individuals, in terms moreover which recall quite precisely both Dionysius a century later and Symeon much later still, shows up full-blown in Palladius of Heliopolis’ letter to Lausus the chamberlain, prefacing the former’s Lausiac History. The latter work comprises, of course, a signal testimony to the elders of early monasticism, and was written by no less than a disciple of arguably the most important theocentric of the spiritual life in the long tradition of the East, Evagrius Ponticus. Second, we have seen that this chain of saints, the succession of so-to-speak realized images of God in Christ, is not possible for St. Symeon without the other three senses of the phrase, «body of Christ»; and therefore that he requires, and assumes as a matter of course, the full and original sense of «hierarchy» as I have sought to outline the latter here.

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the analysis of Simeon the New Theologian's thoughts on the Church which was profoundly influenced by the ideas of Dionysius the Areopagite. The study concludes with a discussion of Symeon’s fourteenth Ethical Discourse where the impress of Dionysius’ treatises on the hierarchies is perhaps at its clearest.


71 «For the God of all alone is untaught... all others are taught, since they are made and created. The first order of beings have their learning from the most high Trinity; the second learns from the first, the third from the second. Those who are higher in knowledge teach the lower. Palladius of Heliopolis, The Lausiac History / Ed. C. BUTLER (Cambridge, 1903) Vol. II. 7. I am quoting the English translation by R. T. MEYER, The Lausiac History (New York, 1964) (Ancient Christian Writers, 34) 21.