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ST. SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN -
A STUDY OF HIS EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING CONCERNING
SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD.

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

ABSTRACT OF THESIS submitted by **H.J.M. TURNER**
 for the Degree of **Ph.D.** and entitled **ST. SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN -**
A STUDY OF HIS EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING CONCERNING SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD.

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In the first part of the Introduction, the scope of the thesis is defined and reasons given for studying this aspect of St. Symeon. Work done by others is reviewed, and the method to be followed is described. The sources for our knowledge of Symeon are investigated in the second part of the Introduction.

Part One Chapter I deals with Symeon's life, particular attention being paid to those features which are important for this thesis, while chapter II comprises an examination of his intellectual and spiritual background: his education, the influence exerted on him by the Bible, by Christian writings, by monasticism, by spiritual fatherhood as he knew it and particularly by his own spiritual father, and the possibility of his having been affected by ideas current among heretics.

Part Two is devoted to considering Symeon's developing experience of spiritual fatherhood and his teaching on matters connected with it. Chapter I demonstrates that while his original object had been to secure a spiritual father as a way of making certain that in the next life he would inherit salvation, he later came to discover that he was receiving other benefits, more immediate and in a sense more extensive. At the same time, as is made clear, he recognised that everything depended on the choice of the right man as one's father.

In chapter II the qualifications of a good spiritual father are examined, the model of apprenticeship being used to describe the way in which such qualifications might be acquired. Symeon is shown to have emphasised the need for a variety of skills, but above all to have insisted on the necessity of a personal experience of God. Chapter III discusses the actual work of the spiritual father, and many details are provided of the different features of the training which a disciple might have to undergo - here (as indeed throughout the thesis), Symeon's own practice is whenever possible compared with the teaching given by earlier writers, especially St. John Climacus, and with that of his own father, Symeon the Studite. The goal of all the training is found to be the disciple's entering, through his father's help, into a deep and conscious relationship with God, which in fact really is salvation.

In chapter IV the focus of our attention becomes the disciple's duty vis a vis his spiritual father, and the basis of all the submission, obedience and reverence demanded of him is shown to be the regarding of his father as an 'icon'. Mention is made of how Symeon envisaged spiritual children being tempted to fail in their obligations to their fathers.

Chapter V presents a picture of the difficulties, which confronted Symeon in his actual work as a spiritual father: to some extent these could be ascribed to his own personality, but some of them arose because of the type of men who formed a significant proportion of his monks, and because, in accordance with common practice, he was both hegumen and spiritual father. When dealing with spiritual children not in the monastery but in the world, he faced different, but no less troublesome, perplexities. The consequence of all this is to be seen in Symeon's reluctance to be a spiritual father, even though with many disciples, both monastic and secular, he undoubtedly achieved great success.

The concluding chapter presents some reflections on Symeon and on matters discussed in the thesis, considering them in the light of the needs and opportunities of the Christian Churches in Britain to-day.

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of the University of Manchester or of any other university or institution of learning.

There are many to whom I am very grateful for help in connection with this thesis, but I should like here to thank in particular my supervisor, Dr. Rosemary Morris for her encouragement and wise guidance, Archbishop Basil Krivocheine for his kind loan of photocopies of manuscripts and a transcript, and the Warden of St. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, for the facilities for research which I have enjoyed during my time as Sub-Warden.

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lent by B. Krivocheine.

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292 made by B. Krivocheine and lent by
him.

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The Life of Symeon

Nicetas Stethatos

Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ἁγίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν
Συμεῶν τοῦ νέου θεολόγου, πρεσβυτέρου καὶ
ἡγουμένου μονῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Μάρκου τῆς Ἐρυθρῆς.

Life of our holy father Symeon the New
Theologian, priest and hegumen of
St. Mark of Xeroceras

Edited by I. Hausherr, with a French
translation of the text made in
collaboration with G. Horn, and
published under the title :-

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Cat I etc followed by Arabic figures

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Ch I, 1 etc. followed by Arabic figures

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(Although L. Neyrand co-operated in this 2nd edit. no specific items are designated as his.)

Citations of Chs grouped in 'centuries' I, II and III, with line(s) indicated as needed.

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J. Koder's notes relating to matters in text.

ABBREVIATIONS etc.

<u>Hym</u> <u>SC</u> 174	<u>Hymnes</u> , Vol. II (<u>SC</u> 174). <u>Hym</u> XVI - XL.
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<u>Hym</u> <u>SC</u> 196	<u>Hymnes</u> , Vol. III (<u>SC</u> 196). <u>Hym</u> XLII - LVIII.
Paramelle/Neyrand, <u>Hym</u> ... <u>SC</u> 196 p.... n....	J. Paramelle's / L. Neyrand's notes relating to matters in text.
<u>Hym</u> I etc followed by Arabic figures	Citations of <u>Hym</u> with line(s) indicated as needed.
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<u>Tr</u> <u>Th</u> (or <u>Eth</u>) I etc followed by Arabic figures	Citations of <u>Trs</u> with line(s) indicated as needed.
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<u>Ep</u> 1 p....	Citations of <u>Ep</u> 1, giving page number in Holl, with next figure indicating line(s) as needed.
<u>Ep</u> 2, 206 r etc	Citations of <u>Epistle</u> 2, indicating page in the manuscript <u>Vaticanus Graecus</u> 1792.
<u>Ep</u> 3, 208 r etc	Citations of <u>Epistle</u> 3, indicating page in the manuscript <u>Vaticanus Graecus</u> 1792.
<u>Ep</u> 4, ...	Citations of <u>Epistle</u> 4, with line(s) in Krivochéine's hand-written transcript from <u>Coislin</u> 292 indicated as needed.

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ABBREVIATIONS etc.Nicetas, Life, 1 etc,Nicetas' Life of Symeon (ed. Hausherr),
first figure(s) indicating chapter(s),
then line(s) as needed.Hausherr, Life p.I etcI. Hausherr's introduction to the
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J.R.S.

Krivochéine, LumièreLampe, LexiconLemerle, Premier HumanismeLuibheid and Russell, ClimacusMango, Byzantium

N.E.B.

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INTRODUCTION

I General

"He is the greatest of Byzantine mystical writers" - such is the verdict on Symeon in the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, and there is no doubt that it is because of his importance in the history of mysticism that he has mostly been studied. There is, however, no reason why interest in Symeon should be limited to that aspect of his life and writings, an aspect which for the purpose of this thesis is, so far as possible, being deliberately left to one side. Instead, attention is here to be concentrated on Symeon from the point of view of spiritual fatherhood, a subject which in itself is too vast to be examined comprehensively, but which will be discussed to the extent that is necessary in order to illuminate Symeon's experience and his writings.(1)

Such an approach might be thought unduly restricted, but in fact there is more than ample material available for examination. Moreover it is worthwhile to attempt a study of this nature, in which Symeon's experience of spiritual fatherhood will be examined in conjunction with his teaching about it, because through him Christians in Britain to-day can get important insights into the theory and practice of this ministry. That there is nowadays a growing interest in the ways in which the more mature among the faithful can help the less mature is shown by the establishing in 1984 of a course for training spiritual directors at the Institute of Spirituality, Heythrop College, London, and by the recent publication of several books. Thus in, Soul Friend, for example, in which Symeon is referred to, Leech states that he has attempted

"to provide some nourishment for this important ministry by drawing on the teachings of the great spiritual guides",

(1) F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Oxford, 2nd edition 1974, p. 1275.

and his work demonstrates the significant place which spiritual fatherhood holds in the Christian tradition. Thornton's Spiritual Direction, where Symeon's only appearance is in a diagram, is intended as a professional course of study for those embarking on "this much needed form of pastoral ministry .. who are prepared to work at it seriously and continuously".

It is interesting, in view of what we shall discover in studying Symeon, that Thornton specifically mentions as one aspect of the director's work that he is

"to guide prayer, to deepen the relationship between God and man in Christ".

At a time when all these matters are increasingly being discussed, it is far from irrelevant to investigate Symeon's experience and teaching.(2)

From autobiographical passages in Symeon's works, supplemented by, and interpreted in connection with, his Life written by Nicetas Stethatos, we can learn a good deal about the training given him by his spiritual father, Symeon the Studite. (The latter, in order to avoid confusion, will normally hereafter be referred to as 'the Studite'). For the period when Symeon in his turn himself became a spiritual father, it is possible to discover, partly from Nicetas, but mostly from investigating his own writings, a great many details about the way in which he sought to fulfil the duties belonging to this role and also about the teaching he delivered on the subject.

We shall also be able to trace, to a considerable extent,

(2) K. Leech, Soul Friend, London, 1977, p.1; M. Thornton, Spiritual Direction, London, 1984, pp.x, 85; other works recently published and dealing with the same or similar subjects include: M.T. Kelsey, Companions on the Inner Way: The Art of Spiritual Guidance, New York, 1983; W. Barry and W. Connolly, The Practice of Spiritual Direction, London, 1984; T.C. Oden, Care of Souls in the Classic Tradition, Philadelphia, 1984.

In the last century, F.W. Faber, one of Newman's collaborators and like him a convert to Roman Catholicism, wrote an interesting chapter on 'The Office of Spiritual Director' in his * Growth in Holiness; Faber referred to various Fathers, including St. Dorotheus of Gaza and St. John Climacus, but did not know Symeon's works.

* Where a work is included in the Bibliography, publication details will not usually be given in the footnotes.

the way in which Symeon's personal experience interacted both with his original ideas about spiritual fatherhood, and with what he received from the traditional wisdom of the past as he became familiar with it. All this will provide insights and suggestions arising from the experience and teaching of a great figure of the past, but not irrelevant to the presentday concerns of the Churches in Britain.

Much scholarly work on or connected with Symeon has been undertaken, particularly in recent years, as is evidenced by the titles listed in the bibliography, but as already stated, it is as a mystic that he has attracted most attention. While there have been, as we shall see, many references to his experience as the Studite's disciple and to his work as a spiritual father in the form of articles or single chapters of books, there has apparently as yet been only one full-length attempt to study Symeon primarily from this angle. A brief review of a selection of works will thus illustrate how the theme of spiritual fatherhood has hitherto not been accorded more than a relatively minor place in studies of Symeon.

Hausherr's important edition of the Life of Symeon by Nicetas will be discussed in the next section dealing with sources. For the moment it is sufficient simply to call attention to the introduction in which Hausherr dealt with the chronology of the lives of Symeon and of the Studite, with Symeon's character and the conflicts in which he was engaged, as well as giving a convincing description of Nicetas' purpose in writing and of his methods. Something will also have to be said in the same place about Holl's Enthusiasmus und Bussgewalt, inasmuch as it contains the text of one of Symeon's letters, De Confessione, classified as Ep 1. But the very title of Holl's book might seem to suggest that, contrary to what was said above, at least one aspect of the work of a spiritual father was studied in connection with Symeon

in a major piece of scholarship published as long ago as 1898. However, while Holl did a great deal to rescue Symeon from the general ignorance about him which prevailed in Western Europe and America, he did not examine in detail the actual ways in which as a spiritual father he set about guiding others in accordance with his ideals. Holl was concerned rather to set forth an interpretation of the history of monasticism and of the penitential system in the Eastern Church, and, in line with Symeon's contention that monks who are truly spiritual, even though they may be unordained, have divine authority to hear confessions and grant absolution, he sought to emphasise the significance in the monastic tradition of holiness and charismatic gifts as of supreme importance amongst the qualifications for spiritual fatherhood. This led Holl to attempt to exhibit the monks as "enthusiasts", ever likely to come into conflict with the ecclesiastical hierarchy which naturally stresses the importance of submission to duly constituted authority. Holl's was, of course, a pioneer work of great value, not least for the subsequent interest in Symeon which it excited, but it scarcely entered upon the area relating to the actual conduct of a spiritual father towards his children or disciples (and vice versa), which is to be examined in this thesis.(3)

The concentration of interest upon Symeon as a mystic is shown in the titles of the two books next to be mentioned: Volker's Praxis und Theoria bei Symeon dem Neuen Theologen: Ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Mystik, containing only one chapter which specifically treats of Symeon in the role of spiritual father, but important as demonstrating his many affinities with John Climacus; Maloney's The Mystic of Fire and Light:

(3) For Hausherr's work, published in 1928, v. Introduction II, pp.14-16; for Holl's, v. ibid pp.27f. It may be noted that Barringer, Penance, criticises Holl's work as "premature from the very beginning" (p. 7) and states that "the hagiographical sources do not substantiate Holl's view that penance was the focal point for a hostile struggle between Charisma and Amit throughout the history of the Byzantine church". (p.201).

St. Symeon the New Theologian is of interest as being apparently the first full-length book on Symeon to be written in English, but by the first words of its title shows the field in which the author is mainly interested. It may be added that this impression of where Maloney's sympathies lie is confirmed by a reading of the introduction contributed by him to a later work, the translation of Symeon's Catecheses into English. Here not only is there no mention whatever of spiritual fatherhood in all that is said about Symeon, but even when discussing his exile Maloney never mentions that the cause of this was, in part at least, the controverted question of the sanctity or lack of sanctity which was manifested in the life of his father the Studite.(4)

Krivochéine's full-scale study of Symeon, entitled Dans la lumière du Christ is, as its sub-title indicates, concerned with his life, his spirituality and his teaching, and it has no more than one chapter dealing explicitly with spiritual direction and spiritual fatherhood, though of course many comments relating to these topics can be found in other parts of the book.(5)

A work in modern Greek which, like this thesis, treats of Symeon as a spiritual father, was published in 1977 by Venizelos C. Christophorides as a doctoral dissertation for the Theological School

(4) Völker's Praxis was published in 1974; earlier he had written Scala Paradisi: Eine Studie zu Johannes Climacus und zugleich eine Vorstudie zu Symeon dem Neuen Theologen. (Wiesbaden, 1968); Maloney's The Mystic of Fire and Light appeared in 1975, and he next published his translation of the Hymns of Divine Love by St. Symeon the New Theologian (Denville, 1976), and subsequently wrote the introduction to Symeon the New Theologian - The Discourses, C.J. de Catanzaro's translation of the Catecheses (London, 1980). Another translation may be mentioned here: Symeon the New Theologian: The Practical and Theological Chapters and the Three Theological Discourses (tr. P. McGuckin, Kalamazoo, 1982). A great deal of Symeon's work is thus now available in English.

(5) Krivochéine's Lumière, published 1980, is sub-titled Saint Symeon le Nouveau Théologien, 949 - 1022: Vie- Spiritualité - Doctrine.

of the University of Thessalonica. It is entitled ^ἡ
 πνευματικὴ πατρὶς κατὰ Συμεὼν τὸν Νεὺν Θεολόγον
 (Spiritual Fatherhood according to Symeon the New Theologian), and
 inevitably covers some of the same topics as I shall be considering.
 However, as a contemporary member of the Orthodox Church in Greece,
 Christophorides naturally writes from a standpoint different from my
 own, feeling obliged, for example, to devote a whole chapter to
 discussing, on the basis of ecclesiastical authority, whether a
 spiritual father ought of necessity to be a priest and a hegumen.
 As his title suggests, Christophorides starts from spiritual fatherhood
 as an institution, whereas my concern will be seen to be primarily with
 Symeon himself. The result is that in this thesis Symeon's background,
 his experience and his writings, particularly those which relate to
 training, are considered in a good deal more detail than in
 Christophorides' work. It is encouraging, nevertheless, that we both
 agree in concluding that for our Churches to-day spiritual fatherhood
 is a matter of great importance and one concerning which valuable
 guidance can be gained from Symeon.

Passing from full-length studies to articles and similar material,
 we notice first that Biedermann in 1952 wrote briefly about Symeon's
 method of training novices, a matter closely connected with the work
 of a hegumen as his monks' spiritual father. Biedermann drew in
 particular on Cat XXVI, though unfortunately at the date of writing he
 did not have access to the Greek original, but only to Pontanus' Latin
 version printed by Migne as Oratio XXV (PG 120, 440D - 447B). The
 brevity of the article, as well as the fact that it concentrates upon
 novices, means that although interesting it is only of limited value as
 a contribution to the understanding of Symeon and spiritual fatherhood.(6)

(6) H.M. Biedermann, 'Novizenunterweisung in Byzanz um die Jahrtausendwende';
 Ostkirchliche Studien I, (1952), pp. 16 - 31; Biedermann had previously
 written 'Das Menschenbild bei Symeon dem Jungeren, dem Theologen (949 - 1022)
 in Das Östliche Christentum, New Series 9, Würzburg, 1949.

An even shorter article, 'The Spiritual Director in the Thought of Symeon the New Theologian', was written in 1970 by Graef. She touched on the relationship of Symeon with the Studite, on the question of the latter's sanctity, on the

"identification of the spiritual director with Christ" in Cat XX, and on other topics including the qualifications which Symeon demands of spiritual fathers in Cat XXVIII. In a brief space, however, it was impossible to do justice to all the points she mentions, and, as we shall notice later, her failure to recognise a topos led the writer into an error of judgement.(7)

Van Rossum is the author of another and more recent article, the title of which might seem to bear on our subject, but actually 'Priesthood and Confession in St. Symeon the New Theologian' does so only marginally: in fact, van Rossum discusses the contention, found in the De Confessione and also in Cat XXVIII, that ordination to the priesthood is not necessary for the hearing of confessions and granting absolution, but that what is indispensable is to have truly and consciously received the Spirit. His conclusion is that probably

"St. Symeon does not distinguish clearly between 'sacramental' and 'non-sacramental' confession",

but of course by treating his subject exclusively from this point of view van Rossum does not enter upon most of the matters to be investigated in the present thesis.(8)

(7) H. Graef, "The Spiritual Director in the Thought of Symeon the New Theologian".

(8) J. van Rossum, 'Priesthood and Confession in St. Symeon the New Theologian'.

Two articles by Rosenthal-Kamarinea call for mention because, dealing with the Studite, they have some bearing on our subject. In 'Symeon der Neue Theologe und Symeon Studites' she examined the relationship between the spiritual father and his devoted disciple, on the basis chiefly of the Life and of passages in some of the Hymns. Krivochéine found a considerable amount to criticise in her excessively sentimental portrayal of the New Theologian, which has little relationship with the facts. Her article, 'Symeon Studites, ein heiliger Narr', is only five pages in length, but is an important contribution to our understanding of the Studite, for she produces strong reasons for holding that he ought to be regarded as a "holy fool", in spite of the fact that he is never explicitly so styled.(9)

The interest in Symeon as a mystic, referred to earlier, is exemplified by Gouillard's article in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, which concentrated on this aspect of him, and devoted only a few sentences to his experience of spiritual fatherhood and his teaching about it. Somewhat similarly Hussey in "Church and Learning in the Byzantine Empire, 867 - 1185", while referring many times to Symeon, especially in connection with monastic life, included an entire chapter dealing with him as a mystic. Krivochéine's article, 'The Brother-Loving Poor Man', after a short account of the earlier part of Symeon's life, also dealt almost entirely with his mystical experiences, albeit emphasising his desire that the spiritual treasures he had discovered should be shared by his monks. In a subsequent study, entitled 'The Most Enthusiastic Zealot', the same author studied Symeon's activities as hegumen of the monastery of

(9) Krivochéine's comments on Rosenthal-Kamarinea are to be found in his article, 'The Most Enthusiastic Zealot', referred to in the next paragraph.

St. Mamas and the way in which

"he endeavoured to accomplish his 'apostolate of mysticism'."

In the course of this article he made valuable comments about the tensions which arose between Symeon and the less spiritually-minded among his monks, but Krivocheine was of course not attempting to describe the full extent of his work as a spiritual father.(10)

Turning to material not specifically or exclusively dealing with Symeon, we must mention three works written by Hausherr: 'Les grands courants de la spiritualité orientale' speaks of him as one mystic among many others; 'Penthos: La doctrine de la componction dans l'Orient chrétien' has various references to Symeon, which is not surprising in view of the importance he attached to tears in his teaching on repentance; finally, 'Direction spirituelle en Orient autrefois' is an obvious source of much extremely important information relating generally to our theme. In it Hausherr of course refers to Symeon, though naturally without describing his activity in the detailed manner possible in this thesis.(11)

Lastly, Barringer's unpublished thesis, Ecclesiastical Penance in the Church of Constantinople: A Study of the Hagiographical Evidence to 983 A.D., must be referred to briefly. Barringer has occasion to mention Symeon at various points, but his main concern is to show that the general position adopted by Holl in his historical sections was not firmly based on sufficient evidence, and that indeed the evidence was at times actually misinterpreted in the interests of the overall theory.

(10) D.T.C. XIV, 2 containing Gouillard's article appeared in 1941.

(11) I. Hausherr, 'Les grands courants de la spiritualité orientale', O.C.P., 1, (1935), pp. 114 - 138; 'Penthos: La doctrine de la componction dans l'Orient chrétien', O.C.A., 132, (1944).

This short survey of items written about Symeon in the course of the last ninety years confirms Krivochéine's statement that

"in (him) it is clear that what most interests us is his immediate mystical experience".

It reveals also that his contribution to our understanding of spiritual fatherhood has been comparatively little studied, and in particular has not attracted a great deal of attention amongst scholars writing in English.(12)

It must not, of course, be supposed that Symeon is the only patristic writer whom it would be profitable to study for this purpose. Much could be learned, for instance, if the letters written by St. Barsanuphius and St. John the Prophet to St. Dorotheus of Gaza, their spiritual child, were examined in conjunction with Dorotheus' own writings. But although the latter contain various autobiographical touches, there is nothing in them comparable with the many passages in Symeon which reveal so clearly what he felt about his relationship with the Studite and his consciousness of the immense debt that he owed him. There is therefore good reason for trying in the following pages to exhibit, from the records of Symeon's experience and from the direct teaching which he gave, a large amount of material which is of the utmost value for increasing our understanding of spiritual fatherhood and what it involves both in theory and practice.(13)

This then is why St. Symeon the New Theologian and spiritual fatherhood has been chosen as a subject, and it is necessary now

(12) Krivochéine, Lumière, p. 422

(13) L.Regnault, P. Lemaire and B. Outtier, Barsanuphe et Jean de Gaza: Correspondance, Solesmes, 1972; but cf. M.B. Pennington, O Holy Mountain, London, 1979, p. 100, "In regard to the role of the Spiritual Father, Father Aimilianos recommended my reading Saint Symeon the New Theologian and the chapter to pastors at the end of St. John Climacus' Ladder".

to say a little about the method of proceeding. The thesis consists of two parts, and in the first, which is much the shorter of the two, the necessary background material will be presented, in order to provide a general frame of reference: we shall begin with an outline account of Symeon's life, and this will be followed by an examination of his inheritance from the past and of the chief influences which can be seen to have affected him. This will all be undertaken not from the point of view of a total study of Symeon, but with the intention of highlighting matters which will need to be considered in connection with his experience of spiritual fatherhood and the teaching he gave concerning it.

In the second part, the subject will be approached from a variety of angles. Traditional ideas will be delineated in order to provide a standard with which to compare Symeon as the various aspects of the theme are investigated in turn. St. John Climacus will be shown to have greatly influenced Symeon, and he will therefore be utilised as a principal, though not as the only, representative of the traditional teaching about spiritual direction. Anecdotes found in Climacus, in the Desert Fathers and elsewhere are cited because much teaching was given by their means. Since Symeon and his contemporaries had no difficulty in accepting accounts of miracles and similar happenings, there is no point in launching into an investigation of their factual reliability; traditional material will be used for the purpose of providing a criterion by which Symeon's debt to the past, and therefore also his originality, can be estimated.(14)

(14) "miracles", cf. also Hausheer's remark about the Fathers: "Qu'ils aient cru aux miracles, c'est l'évidence même. Mais ils n'ont pas attribué à un miracle toutes les merveilles qu'ils opéraient ou voyaient opérer". (Direction spirituelle. p. 47).

In order to illustrate Symeon's experience and his teaching, it will be necessary to include many quotations, mainly from his works, but also to some extent from those of others. The various quotations will be presented along with the necessary explanations and comments, so that they may take their proper place in an ordered exposition of the themes of the different chapters. These themes are, of course, interconnected, and consequently the division into chapters or sections is bound to appear somewhat artificial, being adopted simply in the interest of coherent treatment. However, in the five chapters of the second part of the thesis the aim will be to consider Symeon's teaching about spiritual fatherhood in all its different aspects, assessing it in the light of his experience, and giving examples of his actual practice and its results.(15)

It will be found that a great deal of what is quoted relates to the life of monks, for there is abundance of material to do with monasticism, while not much evidence is available to show how spiritual fathers dealt with those of their disciples who were living in the world. However, some valuable information can be gathered from Symeon's Epistles, and this has been utilised as far as possible in order to counterbalance the monastic character of so much that falls to be discussed.(16)

After my investigation of what can be gathered from Symeon, and in order to round off the thesis, I shall add a concluding chapter

(15) Quotations in the text have almost always been given in translation, and the renderings from whatever language are, unless otherwise stated, my own, although I have often found assistance in the French translations of Symeon's writings provided in the Sources Chrétiennes series. In the quotations, nouns substituted for pronouns, or words added to clarify the meaning, have been enclosed in brackets.

(16) Hausherr comments on the paucity of material available to illustrate the spiritual direction of the laity (Direction spirituelle, pp. 294 ff).

containing some reflections on what has come to light, especially with regard to its relevance to contemporary Christianity in Britain. In this way it is hoped to demonstrate that while Symeon does not, of course, furnish us with a blue-print, a study of his experience and teaching does nevertheless provide illuminating ideas, of great value for the practice of spiritual fatherhood to-day.

INTRODUCTION

II. Sources

Symeon's own writings of course provide firsthand information of the greatest importance for any study of his experience and his teaching, but before discussing them, we shall first examine other sources of knowledge about him. These, apart from the Life written by his disciple Nicetas, are quite meagre: in the fourteenth century, for example, David Dishypatos mentions him as a mystic and as one who had suffered persecution, setting him beside St. Maximus the Confessor, and Völker has observed that St. Gregory of Sinai in the same century recommends him as worthy to be read along with Climacus and others.⁽¹⁾

Nicetas.

Nicetas' Life naturally belongs to a totally different category from such brief references. Although known to Holl, who cited it and established Nicetas as its author, it was not published and edited until 1928, when this was done by Hausherr who, assisted by Horn, provided a French translation. Hausherr pointed out that whereas Symeon's own works can be found in numerous manuscripts, he could not discover more than two containing the Life. These are Coislin 292 and Parisinus 1610, both of which also include some works by Symeon. Hausherr agreed with Holl that these two manuscripts are derived from a single witness to the text, in spite of the fact that there are several omissions in Parisinus 1610. Hausherr accounted for these omissions as manifestations of a wish to abridge the narrative. He assigned both manuscripts to the fourteenth century, but while this is not disputed in the case of Parisinus 1610, a much earlier date has been suggested for Coislin 292,

(1) Dishypatos, Poem on Akindynos, 231 - 241 (ed. R. Browning, Byzantion, XXV - XXVII, (1955 - 57), pp. 713 - 745); Völker, Praxis, p. 489, cf. Gregory, PG 150, 1324D τὸ τοῦ Νικητῆς βίβλος.

and since this manuscript is of some importance for various works of Symeon himself, the question must be briefly examined, although neither the earlier nor the later date would call in question the general reliability of the text as Hausherr has presented it.(2)

Devreesse dated Coislin 292 to the eleventh/twelfth century, and Krivochéine followed him in this. Darrouzès, however, remarked that on the basis of Irigoin's new criterion for dating paper, the manuscript could not be earlier than the second half of the thirteenth century. Darrouzès added that although the archaizing appearance of the script is deceptive, examination reveals that it is really different from that of manuscripts of the eleventh/twelfth century. In any case Gouillard was mistaken when he cited Irigoin as authority for dating it to the second half of the twelfth century. In spite of some uncertainty, the balance of the argument must be held to lie in favour of Darrouzès, who assigned it to the thirteenth/fourteenth century.(3)

It is impossible to say anything very definite about the date of the Life. Hausherr observed that it could not have been written earlier than 1052, since it refers to the translation of Symeon's relics, which

(2) Holl, Enthusiasmus, pp. 3 - 5 (Hausherr, Life, pp. XVI. concurs with Holl); ibid., pp. XII. regarding the dates of the manuscripts; Krivochéine, Cats SC 96 intr. pp. 69 - 106, mentions among the manuscripts which he describes four others, unknown to Hausherr at the time when he edited Nicetas' Life, but which include it: Yatopedi 667 (14th century); Chalki Theologicos 45 (14th century); an almost identical copy of this, Xiropotamou 141 (15th/16th century); Dionysiou 220 (17th century).

(3) R. Devreesse, Le fonds Coislin: Catalogue des manuscrits grecs, Paris, 1945, II, 274, cited by Krivochéine (Cats SC 96 intr. p. 78, n. 4), who accepts Devreesse's dating; Darrouzès, Trs SC 122 intr. p. 40 (incl. n.1), citing J. Irigoin, Scriptorium, 4, 1950, pp. 194 - 204; J. Gouillard, 'Constantin Chrysomallus sous le masque de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien', Travaux et Mémoires, 5, (1973) pp. 313 - 327; Darrouzès, Trs SC 122 intr. pp. 40f., and cf. "as to date, the 14th century is the most likely", Darrouzès and Neyrand, Chs SC 51 intr. p. 19, this (second) edition being dated 1980, whereas the date of SC 122 is 1966.

took place in that year. This statement, however, occurs in a passage omitted by Parisinus 1610, and Hausherr acknowledged the possibility, which is, as he said, impossible to prove, that the Life had first been written before 1052, with an account of Symeon's death different from that now found in Coislin 292. This account might later have been suppressed by Nicetas - hence its absence from Parisinus 1610, and replaced by what we have in Coislin 292, which includes a miracle said to have occurred at the time of the translation of the relics. But as Hausherr remarks, this is all mere speculation, and it is much more likely that Nicetas did not write the Life until after 1052, Hausherr believing that he probably did not do so until well after 1054. At whatever date he wrote, Nicetas, who in his youth had been one of Symeon's disciples and acted as his secretary, came later to possess, as he says, "all his writings". Besides this, Nicetas was able, as his narrative makes clear, to draw material from various people who had known Symeon. However, in spite of all these advantages, we shall see later that he is not always to be relied on, for his purpose in writing is more to be edifying than to be exact, or in other words he is less a biographer than a hagiographer. (4)

Symeon: Catecheses.

We proceed to consider Symeon's own writings and begin with the Catecheses. The manuscripts of these, as of his other works, are numerous and Krivochéine in his introduction presents the results of his careful study of them and of their interrelationships. He includes the two Eucharistiae (Thanksgivings), which strictly speaking

(4) Hausherr, Life, p. XVII, Nicetas, Life, 129, 15 - 25; "speculation", Hausherr, Life, p. XIX, n. 3; "well after 1054", ibid., pp. XIX - XXI; Nicetas, Life, 131, 11 - 13, 140, 7f.; "hagiographer", v. Part One, Chapter I, p. 33 and passim.

are not Catecheses, although the first does at one point seem to become an address to "brethren", though later on this is as it were corrected and the work clearly revealed as not having ever been a spoken discourse by the words, "we have then written these things, fathers and brethren". A Catechesis ought, of course, strictly to be a spoken discourse, but there are some of Symeon's which appear from the first to have been letters, and hence it is not surprising that this Euch 1 should sometimes be designated Cat XXXV. Euch 2, as Krivochéine states, has much in common with Euch 1, although it does not turn into a written address to Symeon's "brethren" at any point. However, as Krivochéine also says, it seems appropriate to publish both Eucharistiae with the Catecheses, Euch 2 then being numbered Cat XXXVI. (5)

Krivochéine's learning and labours have been of the highest importance for establishing the text of the Catecheses on a reliable basis. It is impossible here to review all his investigations, neither is it necessary from the point of view of the present thesis. The reason for this is that although he argues persuasively for the existence of two distinct types of text, each represented by different manuscripts, and one probably going back to an edition put forth in Symeon's life-time, with the other representing a revision by Nicetas after Symeon's death, in fact the differences between the two are of no significance when one is considering the subject of spiritual fatherhood. Nicetas' edition, in Krivochéine's opinion, is marked partly by an increased number of ungrammatical and demotic forms of expression (explicable because he was, as he admits, less educated than his master), and partly by a concern to tone down some of Symeon's

(5) Catecheses: for details of Krivochéine's edition in three volumes, v. Select Bibliography: "manuscripts", Krivochéine Cats SC 96 intr. pp. 63 - 190, with stemma at end of volume; "we have then written ..", Cat XXXV, 196, 238; "letters", cf. Cat XX, 14 and Part Two, chapter I (e), p. 132; Krivochéine, Cats SC 96 intr. p. 68.

expressions, particularly those referring to mystical experience, which might give grounds for an accusation of leanings towards heresy (Messalianism). Krivochéine notes that Nicetas was also enabled, from the materials he possessed, to fill in some lacunae, and it is interesting to note also that in manuscripts which are witnesses to the same recension that Symeon is styled not *Nícs Oulóyos* but *Nícs καὶ Oulóyos*, which, says Krivochéine, "could not shock anybody". The date of manuscripts actually existing is, of course, a question independent of the possible editions or recensions of which they are witnesses, and it is to be remarked in this connection that Parisinus graecus 895, the oldest manuscript of the Catecheses, assigned to the eleventh century, is one of the group which Krivochéine ascribes to Nicetas' editing, whereas Coislin 292 is one of the other group, but there is, as we have seen, reason for doubting whether it in fact belongs, as Krivochéine thinks, to the eleventh/twelfth century. (6)

There is naturally no means of dating individual Catecheses other than by internal evidence. They do, of course, as Krivochéine has observed, all or almost all belong to the period of Symeon's hegumenate, when he, like St. Theodore the Studite, instructed his monks by this means. Krivochéine provides evidence from six Catecheses which gives some indication of their respective dates, and it may be added that Cat XVIII, the last third of which is addressed to a hegumen, could well, so far as this part of it goes, have actually been addressed by Symeon to his disciple and successor Arsenius, in favour of whom he resigned the hegumenate in 1005. Cats XI, XII and XIII, although they cannot

(6) "two distinct types of text", Krivochéine Cats SC 96 intr. pp. 166-172; "Nicetas' edition", ibid., pp. 150 - 163; "*Nícs Oulóyos*", ibid., p. 169 (cf. also Part One, chapter I, p. 34n3); Parisinus graecus 895, ibid., pp. 70f.; Coislin 292, ibid., p. 124, and cf. pp. 14f. above.

be assigned to a particular year, nevertheless plainly reveal Symeon speaking during Lent in the case of the first two, and delivering the third at Easter. (7)

From the point of view of a study of Symeon and spiritual fatherhood, the Catecheses, with the two Eucharistiae, are extremely important: in the latter, particularly, but also scattered at many points throughout the former, we can learn much about his relationship with the Studite, while because of the fact that in the Catecheses we can, as it were, listen to him instructing his monastic spiritual children, we are enabled from them to gain considerable insight into what he was attempting as a father. (8)

What direct information about Symeon's life can we gain from the Catecheses? In the two Eucharistiae, which are, like the Confessions of St. Augustine, primarily addressed to God, he provides some valuable material which supplements or corrects what is told us by Nicetas. Apart from these, which are written in the first person, and apart too from incidental glimpses provided at various points in the other Catecheses, some lines in Cat VI and most of Cats XVI and XXII, though

(7) Krivochéine, Cats SC 96 intr. pp. 165f.; "St. Theodore", v. Part One, chapter II, pp. 92f. - the Doctrinae of St. Dorotheus of Gaza (PG 88 and SC 92) are works of the same kind; "dates", Krivochéine, ibid.: Cat I - Symeon's inaugural address as hegumen (c.980); Cats IV and X - after the Studite's death, which occurred in 986 or 987, Cat X (v.36f.) having been spoken on a "feast" of the Studite; Cat XVII - towards the end of Symeon's life, "a letter or spiritual testament rather than a Catechesis actually spoken"; Cat XXI - in the Studite's life-time; for Cat XXXIV, apparently delivered shortly before the revolt of some monks v. Krivochéine, Cat XXXIV SC 113 p. 270, n.1, where this is dated c. 995 - 998, cf. Part One, chapter I, p. 54; Cat XVIII begins, "Brother, if you have been appointed hegumen ..", but then has a description of the intrigues which may precede an election before continuing as a charge - Nicetas uses much of the last part in the charge which he puts into Symeon's mouth at the installation of Arsenius (Nicetas, Life, 60 - 67).

(8) Krivochéine's introduction contains a chapter on Symeon as hegumen and spiritual director. In this he naturally concentrates on what is to be found in the Catecheses, mentioning many points that will be examined in more detail in this thesis.

ostensibly referring to persons other than himself, all have very good claims to be regarded as in fact autobiographical. The Studite had taught that, when speaking about one's own experiences for the benefit of others, one should do so with great humility and present them as though they had happened to someone else. It would not therefore be surprising to find Symeon following this rule when speaking to his monks for their edification. (9)

In Cat VI Symeon's disguise "is a very thin one," for he begins the passage in question with the words "I know a man ...", a clear reflection of the language of St. Paul who, at II Corinthians 12, 2, writes "I know a man in Christ ..." and continues with what is almost openly a description of his own mystical experience. Cat XXII includes a narrative which, according to Symeon, was told him by a young man named George, who subsequently became a monk, while the account in Cat XVI is stated to have come from an unnamed young man, apparently a novice in a monastery. (10)

Krivochéine remarks that the brief passage in Cat VI "resembles (and most probably is to be classed as a doublet of) the narrative concerning the vision of light vouchsafed to a young man, George, in circumstances which are similar but described in much fuller detail in Cat XXII". Krivochéine observes that in both cases mention is made of the fact that, because of a falling away from grace, the vision was soon almost forgotten, and that this theme of reverting to earlier evil ways is found again in Cat XXXVI, the second of the Eucharistiae, where of course the first person is employed. A scholiast indicated in the manuscript Mosquensis 417 that in Cat XXII one should understand

(9) Studite, Ch 143, 680 CD.

(10) Cat VI, 121 - 131 ; Cat XXII, 22 - 128, 270 - 320; Cat XVI, 8 - 144.

that Symeon was speaking of himself but concealing his identity, and Nicetas treated most of the events related by George as incidents in Symeon's life. There is thus every reason to regard both Cat VI and Cat XXII as sources of autobiographical material, and if in the latter as well as in the former Symeon was deliberately adopting a transparent "disguise", it would seem that his name in ^{the} world was George. This, however, cannot be more than a speculation. (11)

Cat XVI also was used by Nicetas in the same way as Cat XXII, and here it is stated by scholiasts in two manuscripts (Mosquensis 417 and Chalki Theologicus 45) that Symeon is concealing himself by putting his experiences into the mouth of the novice by whom he claims to have been told about them. Thus, as Krivochéine states, the account which appears completely authentic has always been accepted as autobiographical. But Krivochéine adds that there is a difficulty to be faced: towards the end of Cat XXII George, said by this time to have been a monk for "three or four years", is represented as saying that he has never again had any vision comparable with the one he was allowed to see while still in the world, but that he has only been

"judged worthy to behold in some obscure fashion a poor little ray of that most sweet and divine light"

In Cat XVI, on the other hand, the novice describes a wonderful vision granted him in the early stages of his monastic life. In spite of this discrepancy, however, Krivochéine maintains that the usual acceptance of Cat XVI as in fact autobiography need not be invalidated.

(11) Krivochéine. Cat VI, SC 104pp. 24f., n.3; "falling away", Cat XXXVI, 39 - 46, cf. Hym XI 81 - 87; "scholiast", at Cat XXII, 22; Nicetas, Life, 4 and 5; "George", cf. Krivochéine Cats SC 96 intr. p. 18, n. 1.

"It is a mistake", he writes,

"to look for overmuch precision in these descriptions of mystical phenomena belonging to the past", remarking also that "light visions may be stronger or weaker without its being easy always to form an exact judgment regarding them".

He adds that Cat XXXVI (the second of the Eucharistiae) provides evidence for the reality of the second vision. (12)

A further argument against allowing the chronological statement in Cat XXII to weigh too heavily, when Cat XVI is being considered, is as follows: George in Cat XXII admitted that far from responding to his vision in the way he ought to have done, he relapsed into worldliness, and Symeon, desirous of not giving his monks the impression that this was a venial or unimportant fault, might well have desired to indicate that its consequences were not soon at an end, and therefore to that extent have decided deliberately to falsify the actual facts. In spite of some difficulty, then, it is justifiable to continue to make use of Cat XVI as a source of first-hand information. (13)

Symeon: Theological and Ethical Treatises.

Of the prose works of Symeon, the Theological and Ethical Treatises come next after the Catecheses from the point of view of size - in the Sources Chrétiennes edition, two volumes as against three. The editor of these, Darrouzès, gives in his introduction a detailed study of the manuscripts, which are again numerous, and include two of the eleventh century which do not contain any of the Catecheses. These are Vaticanus Reginensis 25 and Vatopedinus 666, and Darrouzès' investigation leads him to the conclusion that they are "direct witnesses of Nicetas' edition" of the Treatises. The manuscripts of the other family

(12) Nicetas, Life, 18 and 19; "scholiasts", at Cat XVI, 5 and 9; Krivochéine Cat XVI SC 104 pp. 236-239, n.2, cf. ibid., p. 249, n.1; Cat XXII, 270f., 316 - 318; Cat XVI, 147 - 151, Cat XXXVI, 126ff.

(13) "admitted", Cat XXII, 275 - 298.

identified by Darrouzes are, in his opinion, dependent mainly on a now lost intermediary, less perfectly representing the archetype, which is more faithfully reproduced by the manuscripts named above. Again, the different readings are in effect of no real significance for the purpose of this present study. (14)

These Treatises, written works from the beginning, are addressed to a wider public than the monks of Symeon's monastery, and in many of them there is a distinctly controversial tone. Darrouzes has little difficulty in showing how they relate to issues raised in the conflict between Symeon and the syncellus Stephen of Nicomedia. They are, on the whole, much less lively than the Catecheses, and in general of less importance for this thesis, although at various points they do furnish material that is useful for our purpose. It is, again, only on internal evidence that any attempt can be made to date them, but in view of their content Darrouzes has good reason for assigning them in general to the early years of the eleventh century, when Symeon was having to defend himself against attacks from the syncellus. (15)

(14) Treatises: for details of Darrouzes' edition in two volumes, v. Select Bibliography; "manuscripts", Darrouzes, Trs SC 122 intr. pp. 38 - 70, with stemma on p. 70, the quotation and summarised conclusion from pp. 68f.

(15) "wider public", Darrouzes Trs SC 122 intr. p. 13, n.1 gives Tr Eth 11, 2, 5 as an example ("monks and lay-folk") - it is, however, possible that some of the Trs may have originated, in part at least, as Cats, cf. Tr. Eth VII, 22f, ("we shall be speaking here of those who have renounced the world ...") ibid., 195 - 241 (rhetorical questions, concluding with ἡμεῖς οὐδὲν σκετῶμεν ἑαυτοὺς, οὐδὲν ἡμεῖς) and Tr Eth X 606, 612, οὐδὲν ἡμεῖς; "syncellus", Darrouzes Trs SC 122 intr. pp. 8 - 13, cf. Part One, chapter I, pp. 55f.

Symeon: Chapters.

The first of the works of Symeon to appear in the Sources Chrétiennes series was the single volume of Chapters. A second, revised edition of this has since been published. The Chapters fall into three sections: the first is entitled "One hundred practical and theological chapters" (κεφάλαια πρακτικὰ καὶ θεωλογικὰ); the second, "Twenty-five other gnostic and theological chapters" (κεφάλαια γνωστικὰ τε καὶ θεωλογικὰ); and the third, "One hundred other theological and practical chapters" (θεωλογικὰ καὶ πρακτικὰ). The literary form of "chapters", brief paragraphs or even single sentences, is of course common amongst ascetic writers, and the epithets attached to these collections of Symeon's are not unusual. Those which are "practical" are so called because they relate to the practising of the different virtues, the "gnostic" to the acquiring of that knowledge which leads from natural enlightenment to the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and the "theological" to the contemplation of God, which for Symeon, as for many of his predecessors, is what "theology" really signifies. (16)

There are many manuscripts containing the Chapters in whole or in part, and a few, amongst them Codex 292, include with them forty other Chapters written not by Symeon, but by his father, the Studite, thirty-three of which appear in Migne's Patrologia Graeca. Darrouzès has shown that the manuscripts can be grouped into two families which "through unknown intermediaries go back to two archetypes".

(16) Chapters: for details of Darrouzès' edition v. Select Bibliography: "not unusual", cf. the κεφάλαια γνωστικὰ of Diadochus of Photice, SC 5, 2nd edition 1955; for the meaning of "practical" etc. v. Darrouzès Chs SC 51 intr. pp. 40 f., n.l.

These, he adds, might represent Symeon's edition and that of Nicetas, but this hypothesis it is impossible to verify. The differences between the readings of the two families, as exhibited by Darrouzès, do not appear to have any importance from the point of view of doctrine, but to be simply matters of phraseology, grammar or orthography. (17)

Darrouzès has observed some resemblances between certain of the Chapters and Cat XXVIII, and less striking ones between others and Trs Eth IV and X. There is, however, no means of deciding which is dependent upon which, and there are no internal indications that would help to date the Chapters. Apart from the general way in which they provide information about Symeon's ascetical teaching, the Chapters have a good deal to say about spiritual fatherhood, particularly in two groups occurring in the first section, I, 24 - 30 and 58 - 62. The perspective from which Symeon writes is definitely monastic and the Chapters are intended for those who are "fleeing from the world". (18) Symeon: Hymns.

An edition of Symeon's Hymns in three volumes has appeared in the Sources Chrétiennes series, the introduction and text being the work of Koder, with Paramelle and Neyrand being responsible for the French translation and some of the notes. Many manuscripts which contain the prose works of Symeon do not include the Hymns, but amongst those that do so partially or wholly are Patmiacus 427, assigned by Koder to the beginning of the fourteenth century, and Vaticanus graecus 1782, a copy of the former made in 1584, which where it can be compared is in general extremely faithful, and which supplies the text of Hymns XXXVI - LVIII, now missing from the older manuscript.

(17) Migne, v. Part One, chapter II, p.100, n.40; Darrouzès, Chs SC 51 intr. pp. 24f.

(18) Darrouzès Chs SC 51 intr. pp. 38f.; "fleeing from the world", Ch I, 15 (opening words).

We shall refer again to Vaticanus graecus 1782 when dealing with Symeon's letters. Koder has succeeded in grouping the manuscripts which include all or some of the Hymns into three families, which "all go back to a single collection". This he says, contained -

"some sixteen passages of some importance, metrically incorrect, incomplete or for various copyists difficult to understand. These were either left by the scribes in their original condition or else corrected in different ways".

Some time between 1035 and 1090 Nicetas was responsible for the edition which was the ancestor of the three families, but Koder has argued that the first eighty-four lines of Hym XXI, as preserved in Vaticanus graecus 504, (the date of which is 1105), go back to an archetype published earlier than Nicetas' edition, and part of the polemic against Stephen of Nicomedia. This, of course, although of great interest since it may point to the publication of Hym XXI in Symeon's life-time, does not affect our consideration of spiritual fatherhood. (19)

Only a few years after the last of the above volumes was published, there appeared another edition of the Hymns, prepared by Kambylis. In a review of this, Darrouzès, while paying tribute to Kambylis' learned work on the manuscripts, notes that the actual text which he presents differs very little from that of Koder. There is thus no reason for preferring Kambylis to Koder when it is necessary to quote from this section of Symeon's writings. (20)

(19) Hymns: for details of Koder's edition, v. Select Bibliography: Vaticanus graecus 1782, Koder, Hymn SC 196 intr. p. 26; "three families", ibid., pp. 35 - 46; Hym XXI, ibid., pp. 47 - 50, cf. also Kambylis, pp. CCCIVf., especially n. 91a - I have also been informed by Father Paramelle in conversation that he has seen one manuscript containing part of Hym XXI, headed simply Τὸ Κὶς. Συμεὼν τὸ Γαλιτῶναι, that is, lacking the usual honorific titles, and therefore a copy of an original dating from Symeon's life-time and thus proving that at least some of his writings were published while he was still living.

(20) A. Kambylis, Symeon Neos Theologos, Hymnen: Prolegomena, kritischer Text, Indices. Berlin-New York, 1976; Darrouzès, R.E.B., 36, (1978), pp. 273f.

The Hymns are not liturgical compositions, but are in the main personal records of Symeon's religious experiences. They therefore provide us with much information about his inner life, and because this was bound up with his experience of spiritual fatherhood, both as a disciple and as a father himself, we shall discover in them a great deal that is relevant to our theme.

Symeon: Epistles.

The letters of Symeon, four in number, have not so far been published in the Sources Chrétiennes series, but an edition of them prepared by Paramelle will, it is hoped, appear before too long. However, Ep 1 (De Confessione) was edited in 1898 by Holl, and published as a significant part of his "Enthusiasmus und Bussgewalt beim griechischen Mönchtum". On the basis chiefly of Coislin 292 and Coislin 291 (another fourteenth century manuscript), in both of which it is included among other works of Symeon and definitely ascribed to him, Holl made out his case for Symeon's authorship. Lequien had given St. John of Damascus as the author, because he found this in the title of the only manuscript of it available to him, one which once belonged to Thomas Gale, dean of York (ob.1702), and which was later given by Gale's son to Trinity College, Cambridge. Holl's demonstration that the letter is indeed a work of Symeon's has won general acceptance. The attempt to father it on John of Damascus was no doubt inspired by a wish to claim an author of unimpeachable orthodoxy for a work that both challenged a commonly accepted view-point and also attacked the conduct of many who belonged to the hierarchy.

In spite of rejecting the title, Holl made some use of readings to be found in Gale's manuscript for the purpose of establishing the text as satisfactorily as possible. The contents of the letter are, of course, of great importance for our subject of spiritual fatherhood, and use will therefore be made of it, but it is to be noted that expressions not at all dissimilar are to be found in the Catecheses and Hymns, so that in fact, even though there is no reasonable doubt as to its authenticity, it is not being exclusively relied on. (21)

The remaining three letters are still only available in manuscript, although Holl included in a foot-note some lines from Ep 2, and Krivochéine has presented in translation several extracts from all three. I have been able to make use of his photocopies of Coislin 292 and Vaticanus graecus 1782 for Epp 2 and 3, and of his transcript from Coislin 292 for Ep 4. There are for our present purpose no significant differences between the two manuscripts, which I have in several cases checked one against the other, and I have for Epp. 2 and 3 relied mainly on Vaticanus. It will be found that these three letters contain between them much material relevant to topics discussed in this thesis. (22)

(21) Holl, cf. Introduction I, pp. 3f.; Holl, Enthusiasmus, pp. 1f., 30-36, 106 - 109, and cf. Krivochéine, Lumière, p. 147. "to give (the letter) more authority and to defend it against critics, it was put under the protection of one whose orthodoxy was unimpeachable"; "use of Gale's manuscript", v. Holl, Enthusiasmus, pp. 110 - 127 and apparatus criticus, passim; Catecheses, e.g. Cate XXVIII, 291 - 293, XXXIII, 80 - 93; Hymns, e.g. Hym LVIII, 224 - 248.

(22) Holl, Enthusiasmus, p. 318, n.1; Krivochéine, Lumière, passim, but especially in chapter VI; "no significant differences", a fact of which I was assured by Father Paramelle in conversation; Christophorides, op. cit., p. 19, states that he was allowed to make use of Paramelle's unpublished manuscript.

Symeon: other works rightly or wrongly ascribed.

For the sake of completeness, another work which there seems good reason to believe to be by Symeon had better be mentioned here, although it is irrelevant as far as this thesis is concerned; it is a short dialogue, called by Darrouzès "Dialogue with the Scholastic", and published by des Places at the end of his edition of the works of Diadochus of Photice. Some manuscripts attribute it to Diadochus, but by far the greater number to Symeon. While this, then, may be accepted as authentic, the "Method of holy prayer and attentiveness", or "Concerning the three ways of prayer", though ascribed to Symeon in some manuscripts, is almost certainly not by him. The arguments against authenticity are conveniently presented by Krivochéine, and this work need therefore detain us no longer. (23)

Finally, though no material from them will be used, mention must be made of the Orations and Alphabetical Orations, the former of which appear in Migne in Pontanus' Latin translation. Both collections are based on the Catecheses, but with frequent alterations, omissions and additions to the original texts. The procedure apparently involved has been described by Krivochéine, who considers that Nicetas, after preparing his edition of the Catecheses, took the further step of adapting them in this way for

"a larger circle of readers and one less concerned with matters monastic".

(23) Darrouzès Chs SC 51 intr. p. 11, E. des Places, Diadoque de Photice: Oeuvres spirituelles, SC 5 (2nd edition, 1955), pp. 28f., 80f., 180 - 183; Krivochéine, Lumière, p. 81, n.2, cf. Darrouzès, Chs SC 51 intr. p. 11, and also pp. 193 - 196.

The material added, in Krivochéine's opinion, will either have been composed by Nicetas himself or else taken by him from the "rough drafts", written by Symeon, which came into his possession.

Krivochéine notes that in the manuscripts the Orations and Alphabetical Orations are not described as the actual works of Symeon, but as extracts from his writings. (24)

An important discovery made by Gouillard has provided evidence that Nicetas was not solely responsible for the additions described in the last paragraph. He found that there were clear resemblances between passages in the Orations and matter taken from the writings of Constantine Chrysomallos, which were condemned by the Synod shortly after the latter's death in 1140. Various theories might be propounded to account for the situation thus brought to light, but what must here be stressed is that no doubt is thereby cast on the Catecheses, since the Chrysomallos material is only found in Orations, or parts of an Oration, which do not correspond with any Catechesis. It is, however, interesting that, as Gouillard justifiably argues in his article, some of Chrysomallos' disciples were so sure that he was a true spiritual descendant of Symeon that, by some means or other, they sought to disseminate their master's teaching as if it emanated from the New Theologian and was thus guaranteed by his authority. (25)

(24) Krivochéine, Cats SC 96 intr. pp. 65 (including n.5), 172 - 174; for Nicetas' editing of the Catecheses v.pp.17f.above; Nicetas, Life, 131, 11 - 13, 140, 7f.

(25) J. Gouillard, 'Constantin Chrysomallos sous le masque de Symeon le Nouveau Théologien', Travaux et Mémoires, 5, (1973), pp. 313 - 317; the writings were condemned as a mixture of enthusiasm, Messalianism and Bogomilism, cf. V. Grumel, Les Registres des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople, Vol. I, Fasc. III, no. 1007; "do not correspond", cf. Gouillard's citations with the tables given by Krivochéine Cats SC 96 intr. pp. 194 - 199; cf. p.21n.21 above for the obvious and ironical parallel with what someone did regarding Symeon's Ep 1.

From all the foregoing it will be readily appreciated how abundant are the materials available for any study of Symeon. Even when one is concentrating on a particular aspect of his experience and teaching, in this case that which has to do with spiritual fatherhood, it is necessary to be selective in choosing passages for quotation. Before, however, entering upon the detailed study of what is related to this theme, I shall first, in order to set it properly in context, consider some features of Symeon's life, together with the background of his thought.

Part One: SYMEON.

I Biography.

Before entering upon our consideration of Symeon in connection with spiritual fatherhood, it is desirable to give an outline account of his life and career, with some attempt to set these in the context of the history of the time. This is being undertaken to provide a background for the subject which is to be studied in this thesis, and many details will therefore be omitted from this chapter as not being relevant to our purpose.

Holl calculated that Symeon was born between 963 and 969 and died in 1041 or 1042. Hausherr, however, found that Holl had for various reasons been mistaken, and argued that 949 was the real date of his birth and 1022 of his death. These dates in fact accord with all the evidence, apart from one sentence in Nicetas which gives 48 years as the length of time that Symeon was a priest, whereas on Hausherr's reckoning the figure ought to be 42. However Hausherr is able to point out that a confusion between $\mu\eta'$ (48) and $\mu\beta'$ (42) could very easily have occurred at a time when numbers were written in this way in manuscripts, and that 42 fits exactly with the remainder of his calculations. These calculations were indeed questioned by a fairly recent editor of Nicetas' mystical writings, Chrestou, but his objections were convincingly answered by Grumel, and 949 - 1022 seem now to be generally accepted as Symeon's dates.(1)

(1) Holl, Enthusiasmus, pp. 23 - 26; Hausherr, Life, pp. LXXX-XCI; Nicetas, Life, 30, 18; Hausherr, ibid., p. XCI; P.K. Chrestou, Νίκητα Ἐκθέρου ἡσυχαστῆς συγγραμματα, Thessalonica, 1957, pp. 9-11; V. Grumel, 'Nicolas II Chrysoberges et la chronologie de la vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien' R.E.B., 22, (1964), pp. 253f.; 949 - 1022: accepted as Symeon's dates by all the editors in the Sources Chrétiennes series.

For information about Symeon, other than what can be inferred from his writings, we have seen that we are really almost totally dependent on Nicetas. But of him Hausherr writes, as a result of his critical study:

"We shall accept the material facts which he gives us; but we shall mistrust the way in which he presents them, because this may well conceal some trick; and we shall challenge his explanations, since he is capable of omitting needful pieces of information, while at times supply what does not really agree with his conclusions".

Still, in general it may be said that despite some problems and uncertainties, and although on various matters we should like to have fuller information about Symeon, it is yet by no means impossible to attempt a reasonable portrayal of his character and of the main events of his life.(2)

Symeon himself gives no direct description of his childhood and education, though he does just mention his family, and it is possible from his writings to discover something about his attitude towards book-learning. Nicetas, too, supplies only a minimum of information about his hero's early life with his family and about his education, a mere three chapters out of one hundred and fifty-two. He does, however, inform us that Symeon was the son of Basil and Theophano, who bore the surname Galaton, derived from their native town Galate in Paphlagonia. He adds that they were well-born and wealthy people, something of a topos in hagiography, but as we shall see in the present case probably an accurate description. Nicetas never gives any indication that Symeon, before becoming a monk, had been called by any other name, neither does he state that for Symeon an exception was made to the usual custom that when a monk was tonsured he received a new name with the same initial as the old one. It would seem most likely, in view of the intense loyalty and deep

(2) Hausherr, ibid. p. LXVII.

veneration which was such a feature of his relationship with the Studite, that he took Symeon as his name on becoming a monk, but, if so, there is no means of telling what he had previously been called. The most that can be said is that it is possible to conjecture that George was the name by which he had been known in the world, in which case he must have deliberately set aside the usual custom in order to adopt the name of his spiritual father. In this there would be nothing surprising, given a man of Symeon's temperament.(3)

To assist in the understanding of his early life, it is useful to compare what we know of him with a similar account which provides interesting parallels, the Life of St. Nicephorus. This man was an older contemporary of Symeon, became a monk of Latmos, and eventually bishop of Miletus. Lamerle observes that his Life was written soon after his death by one who had known him personally. The hagiographer informs us that Nicephorus was born into a well-to-do family at Basileion in Galatia, and that his parents were ambitious for him and therefore made him a eunuch at a tender age. We are given to understand that this was done with a view to his having a career in the Church, but as Lamerle points out

"it was a better preparation for other careers ... and Nicephorus' precocious ecclesiastical vocation may well be only a hagiographical topos".

Anyhow, at the age of seven Nicephorus was sent to Constantinople to be educated, and was later joined there by his mother. In accordance with

(3) Mention of family in Hym II, 40-44; his attitude to education and book-learning will be discussed in the next chapter; Nicetas, Life, 2, 3-6; the meaning of the description ὁ ἁγίος; applied to Symeon has provoked much discussion which it is unnecessary to attempt to summarise here: v. Haussherr, Life, p. LXXIX, Krivochéine, Cata SC 96 intr. p. 53 n.1 and pp. 155 - 157, and 'The Writings of St. Symeon the New Theologian', O.C.P., 20, (1954), pp. 323 - 326, Darrouzes Cn I, 85, SC 51, pp. 92f. n.1, and P. Wirth, ὁ ἁγίος ὁ ὀρίων, Oriens Christianus, 45, (1961), pp. 127f.; for custom of new name at tonsuring, v. N.F. Robinson, Monasticism in the Orthodox Churches, London, 1916, p. 58, but exceptions to the taking of a new name with same initial as old do occur, and Nicetas, Life, 116, 2-5, tells of the adoption of the name Symeon by a certain Nicephorus, one of the saint's disciples; "George" Cat. XXII, 22 v. Introduction II p. 21 and cf. Krivochéine, Lumière, p. 13, n.4, Cata SC 96 intr. p. 18 n.1, and L. Bouyer, A History of Christian Spirituality, London, 1968, II, 560.

convention it is said that his education was to be confined to instruction in the Scriptures, and this is elaborated in a way which might suggest that he went to a school which gave only a 'religious' education. But Lemerle argues that no such schools existed and that this is simply another topos:

"from his early childhood a saint has attended solely to what is sacred".

In fact it appears that Nicephorus was taught at an ordinary school in the city.(4)

Nicetas is much less informative than Nicephorus' biographer about Symeon's early days, and never directly states that he was made a eunuch. This may be because eunuchs, although there were many of them in high position in the Byzantine world, did not enjoy an entirely good reputation, and were in fact banned from some monasteries, including those on Mount Athos. But Nicetas does say that as a young man Symeon received the title of 'spatharocubicularius', which was restricted to eunuchs, and describes how after his death he was seen in a vision by a certain Philotheos, appearing as a "white-haired, handsome and venerable eunuch". Moreover the Life significantly contains no mention of any attempt to arrange a marriage for Symeon, in spite of the fact that one of the topoi of hagiography is a description of how, when his parents tried to do this, they met with resistance on the part of the future saint.

(4) For Nicephorus, v. Lemerle, Premier humanisme, pp. 243 - 246, based on Analecta Bollandiana, 14 (1895), pp. 129 - 160.

If then, as Nicetas informs us, it was hoped that Symeon would have a career in the imperial service, one may reasonably assume that, like Nicephorus, he was castrated in childhood by ambitious parents. (5)

A difficulty nevertheless arises concerning this supposition, because Symeon was possibly an only child, and it is hard to imagine parents, however ambitious, intentionally depriving themselves of all hope of direct descendants. Yet, according to Nicetas, when Symeon was about to enter the Studios monastery, his father, trying to dissuade him, said amongst other things:

"You know that I have no one but you to be a staff for me in my old age and a consolation to my soul".

As well as this, from the negative angle, Nicetas never mentions any brothers or sisters. However, we have already seen that Symeon himself speaks of these, and it is easy to assume either that they had in fact all died by the time that he had finally decided to become a monk, or that Nicetas is merely using the kind of conventional language which he considers proper on such an occasion.

(5) St. Basil the Younger accuses Samonas of secretly being involved in sodomy, and the biographer explains *ἡ γὰρ φύσις, ἡ φύσις καὶ ἀπαρτὶς τῆς φύσεως*, Acta Sanctorum, March III, Paris, 1865, p. 21, cf. Cat XXII, 24 - 26, where also *ἡ φύσις* occurs, and Nicetas, Life, 3, 1f.; tragedy, i.e. τυπικόν of John Tzimiskēs, Archives de l'Athos VII, Acthos VII, Actes du Protaton, ed. D. Papachryssanthou, Paris, 1975, p. 212, XVI; for Symeon becoming spatharocubicularius, v. Nicetas, Life, 3, 9f, and for this position being held only by eunuchs cf. W. Ensslin, 'The Government and Administration of the Byzantine Empire', Cambridge Medieval History, 1967, IV, ii, 20f.; Symeon seen in a vision as a eunuch, Nicetas, Life, 147, 6f.; for the topos of attempts to arrange a future saint's marriage, v. Mango, Byzantium, pp. 247f.; Nicetas, Life, 2, 8f. and 3, 5 - 8, refers to the family's connection with the court and what was intended for Symeon. Hausherr does not describe Symeon as a eunuch, and Krivochéine in conversation remarked that in his opinion he was not castrated, since there is no explicit mention by Nicetas of this having been done. He is, however, stated to have been a eunuch by R. Morris, 'The Political Saint', The Byzantine Saint, London, 1981, p. 44, n.9. It might be objected that in Cat XXXIV, 141 - 146 he speaks of himself as narrowly escaping nocturnal pollution (*πᾶσις ῥύσις*) on one occasion when adult, but a medical authority states that castration can be performed in such a way as not to render an occurrence of this kind impossible.

The latter in fact would seem to be the more probable, if one has regard to Symeon's actual words.(6)

Like Nicephorus, Symeon is said to have been sent to Constantinople at "a tender age" in order to be educated. This was doubtless because only there could a boy, whose parents intended him to have a distinguished career, obtain the appropriate kind of education. As Lemerle says with reference to Nicephorus,

"at that time one could receive a formation of that kind only in the capital".

An important part of this training consisted in being taught to write classical Greek, the spoken language of the ordinary folk having by then become something very different. But, in Baldwin's words,

"both church and state required officials proficient in Attic or Atticist prose",

and in consequence the gaining of this proficiency held an important place in the schooling of boys whose parents destined them for such careers.

"Access to the ancient language", writes Mango,

"was conditional on a rhetorical education, which after the disaster of the seventh century, was limited to a small group of prospective civil servants and clergymen".

Indeed, as Magdalino puts it, "education was commonly a means of social advancement", and he notes how Michael Choniates remarked that he was regarded as eccentric because he enjoyed learning for its own sake.

It is against this background that the conventional statements of hagiographers need to be looked at: we may doubt whether it was really intended that Nicephorus should "be educated in nothing but Holy Scripture", and although Nicetas does not say anything quite as sweeping about his hero's education, we may similarly suspect that it is not quite true that

(6) Nicetas, *Life*, 8, 10-12, and that this is not a mere hagiographical convention is evidenced by *Ch* I, 15f., where Symeon feels it needful to warn a person "fleeing from the world", against a spurious pity for his family; Symeon speaks of "father, brothers, mother" in *Hym* II, 41, of *Hym* XVIII, 126 and *Hym* XX, 98f.

Symeon

"having learnt what is called grammar, would have nothing to do with the rest, one might say with the whole, of non-Christian education".

At this point there is no need to examine further the content of Symeon's education, something which will be attempted in the next chapter, but his education has been touched on here because without it his parents' ambitions for him could have had no chance of being realised, and because to obtain it he had to be sent to Constantinople.(7)

In the case of Nicephorus, leaving home perhaps meant a temporary separation from his family, for he was lodged in the house of a magistros, who is not stated to have been a relation. Some time later, however, his mother joined him in the capital. Symeon, on the contrary, had close relatives with whom to stay, his grand-parents, who Nicetas says at that time held high rank at court. After a single mention no more is said of them, but we next hear of a paternal uncle, who was persona grata with Basil II and Constantine VIII, a chamberlain (καμάρηγος), and therefore presumably himself a eunuch also. Symeon's family was therefore one which moved in the highest circles, and Darrouzes has remarked that in his writings there are not infrequent references to life in a royal household. The 10th and 11th centuries were times when, according to Herman,

(7) "At a tender age", Nicetas, Life, 2, 6f.; P. Lemerle, Premier humanisme pp. 243f.; significantly Lemerle also observes that this type of education was designed for "a restricted social class", with "a role to play in the state", and "defined by its ambitions or its ideal", ibid., p.260.; B. Baldwin, 'Photius and Poetry', Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 4, (1978), p.9; Mango, Byzantium, p. 236; as will be seen later, although Symeon learnt "the ancient language", his education was not "rhetorical"; P. Magdalino, 'The Byzantine Holy Man in the 12th Century', The Byzantine Saint, London, 1981, p. 57, n.32 referring to Michael Choniates; for hagiographers' conventions, cf. Mango, Byzantium pp. 247f.; Nicephorus, cited by P. Lemerle, Premier humanisme, p. 244; Symeon's education demands a fuller treatment; the quotation is from Nicetas, Life, 2, 24 - 26 and "grammar" was a constituent of the ἐκτεταμένη or secondary education (v. P. Lemerle, Premier humanisme, pp. 100f.)

"the great landed proprietors were using all possible means to enlarge their possessions at the expense of small properties.... As long as the Macedonian dynasty reigned, the basileis, who were for the most part strong and clever men, succeeded in slowing down the victory of the great lords"

It seems, then, a reasonable supposition that to further its own interests a well-to-do provincial family, such as that into which Symeon was born, would take steps to see that, if possible, at least one of its members occupied an influential position in the imperial service. The intention may well have been that at the proper time Symeon should succeed his uncle in this position, and this in part may lie behind Nicetas' statement that this uncle

"considered presenting him to the monarch and promoting his close acquaintance with him". (8)

Hausherr, however, has something else to contribute to a sketch of this early part of Symeon's life, and what he has to add provides a reasonable explanation for Nicetas' next sentence:

"(Symeon) with tears rejected his uncle's plan, being unwilling to be on terms of friendship with those then in power".

Hausherr's explanation is that the monarch in question was Romanus II (959-963), notorious for his sexual immorality. Thus

"one can understand why a young man, even one not specially virtuous, would have been horrified at the idea of becoming closely acquainted with such a monarch".

(8) For Nicephorus, v. P. Lemerle, Premier humanisme, p. 244, inc. n. 6 and p. 245, n.10; for Symeon, Nicetas, Life, 2, 8f. and 3, 1 - 5; on κατασκευαίς, cf. R. Morris, op. cit. p. 44, n.9; "Symeon's family", Nicetas also mentions as a γὰρ ἀρχὴ of Symeon a certain John ὁ Σιγρεῦν, that is the holder of an important office, responsible for studying petitions addressed to the emperor, Nicetas Life, 113, 25f.; Darrouzès, Ch. II, 8, SC 51, pp. 106f.; n.l., Paramelle, Cat V, 80-82, SC 96, p. 381 n.l, notes Symeon's liking for imaginary scenes which place a monarch in a ludicrous or humiliating position, other refs. being Cat II, 112 (where Krivochéine has a somewhat similar note), Cat IV, 470 - 472 and Cat V, 573 - 606; this all indicates, one must add, that Symeon was far from being conditioned by his social background, cf. Krivochéine, Cat V, 604, SC 96, pp. 428f. n.l v. also Part Two, chapter IV (pp. 293-294); E. Herman, 'Ricerche sulle istituzioni monastiche bizantine: Typika ktetorika, caristicari e monasteri liberi', O.C.P. 6, (1940), p. 372; Nicetas, Life, 3, 5f.

If then we combine this explanation with what was said in the last paragraph, we reach the not improbable conclusion that Symeon felt that he was being asked to sacrifice his self-respect for the sake of promoting the interests of his family, and refused to do so. This also fits well with Symeon's own words in Cat XXXVI, where he thanks God that

"by thine ineffable judgements thou didst deliver me from kings and rulers who desired to use me as a dishonoured vessel in the service of their own wills". (9)

According to Nicetas, Symeon's uncle "was suddenly ushered out of this present life by no ordinary death", and Hausherr surmises that this is a veiled reference to the events of 963,

"the troubles by which the capital was agitated after the fall of Joseph Bringas".

(Hausherr also speculates as to the possibility that the unnamed uncle may in fact have been no other than Bringas himself, but adds that this is really not a question of great importance).

"Symeon", says Nicetas, "seized this opportunity, and immediately fled from the world and the things of the world, abandoning everything and making haste towards God".

There follows, after some pious reflections, the statement that Symeon betook himself to the Studios monastery, sought out the Studite who had been his spiritual father "since his early childhood" (*ἐκ νεότητος*) and demanded to become a monk immediately. The Studite refused to permit this, on the ground of Symeon's youth, since he was not yet fourteen. Nicetas is here being inconsistent, for he says later of himself that he was no more

(9) Nicetas, Life, 3, 6 - 8; Hausherr, Life, p. LXXXVIII, and in support one might cite Leo Diaconus, Historiae I, 2, (C.S.H.B. XI, Bonn, 1828, p.6):
 ἐπὶ τοῖς μέσσοις δὲ νεωτέρων καὶ ὑποπαθόντων καὶ παιδίων τοὺς δὲ ἐπεθίζοντας
 πρὸς ταῦτα κατὰ τὴν παλαιὰν ἐξέτασιν, ὡς οὐκ ἔδεικεν ἡλικίαν...
 "a young man", in fact, as Hausherr demonstrates on p. XC, he was not more than fourteen; Cat XXXVI, 32 - 35, using language reminiscent of Romans 9, 21 and II Timothy 2, 20 - cf. in the same sense Hym XX, 156 - 164.

than fourteen when he renounced the world and ceased to pursue his studies. His concern, though, as hagiographer, is to give to his hero all the credit for piety he can, by recounting a visit to the monastery at this time, while admitting in the interests of truth that it was not until some years later that Symeon actually became a novice there. Similarly, he wishes to tell the story in such a way as to minimise the significance of the time which Symeon spent in the world, a period during which, as the latter himself tells us, he did not consistently pursue the path of sanctity. It is interesting that in the scholia to the Hymns, which Koder has shown may with good reason be ascribed to Nicetas' hand, an even more emphatic statement of Symeon's precocious sanctity is to be found:

"He was fourteen when thanks to Symeon the Studite his holy spiritual father, he was set apart from all these things (i.e. from the world)".
(10)

On the basis of Cat XXII as providing a guide to the interpretation of Nicetas' narrative, Hausherr surmises that the actual course of events, after the death of Symeon's uncle, was more or less as follows: Symeon

"took refuge in the Studios monastery, but neither could nor wished to stay there. He went to live in the house of another patrician .. When a little over twenty, he had his first vision, and then attempted to join the monastery, but was prevented by some unknown obstacle. He thus remained in the world and even found it so attractive that he completely forgot the good advice of his spiritual father. It was .. then doubtless that he became a senator and spatharocubicularius .. He actually entered Studios when he was about twenty-seven, six years after the vision .."(11)

(10) Nicetas, Life, 3, 16f.; Hausherr, Life, pp. LXXXVIII f, tentatively identifying Symeon's unnamed uncle with Joseph Bringas. It is interesting in this connection that Skylitzes states that Joseph was first banished to Paphlagonia, before being sent to a monastery where he died. (Skylitzes, ed. J. Thurn, Corpus Pontium Historiae Byzantinae, V, 260, 68 - 71, Berlin/New York, 1973). Paphlagonia, of course, was Symeon's place of origin; Nicetas, Life, 3, 17-19 and 4, 1-12; for his inconsistency, cf. ibid., 135, 23-25 - Hausherr remarks on this, Life, p. LXII; Symeon's deviation from the path of sanctity will be considered in Part Two, chapter II(d); Koder, Hymns SC 156 intr. pp. 46 and 68-70; the quotation is from the scholium at Hym XVIII 130.

(11) Hausherr, Life, pp. LXXXIX f.; instead of Hausherr's "senator", we should probably say "member of the senatorial order", v. R. Guillard, Byzantion, XXIV, (1954), p. 573.

Generally speaking, this makes good sense, for a study of Cat XXII reveals facts which Nicetas, writing hagiography, would naturally wish to gloss over, even though by so doing he was led into inconsistency or absurdity. Thus he says nothing about where Symeon lived after his visit to the monastery at just under fourteen, but having mentioned the Studite proceeds to give an instance of his spiritual direction of his disciple, not specifying the date, but implying that it was while Symeon was still in his uncle's house. It is true that when Symeon mentions the same matter, he simply refers to living in Constantinople, and when, like Nicetas, he speaks a little later of the first vision, he says that at the time this was vouchsafed him, he

"was superintending the household of a certain patrician, and going daily to the palace".

Krivocheine (in a note) therefore identifies this patrician with the uncle mentioned by Nicetas, but admits the uncertainty of this, in view of the fact that the uncle has already been stated to have died. It seems that Hausherr's supposition of a different person is more probable, and that he is surely right when he assumes that it was at this time or later that Symeon was made a spatharocubicularius and "one of the Senate". Nicetas has spoken of the bestowal of these dignities immediately after telling of Symeon's refusal to become intimate with "those in power", thus implying, as Hausherr observes, the unlikely appointment to these positions of a boy of less than fourteen. The improbability, we may add, is all the greater in the light of the refusal just mentioned, whereas some time after the death of Romanus II there is nothing improbable in these titles being conferred on a young man who was "going daily to the palace" and who occupied a prominent position in a patrician's household. (12)

(12) Nicetas, Life, 4, 15-21; Symeon Cat XXII, 34-43 and ibid. 23, 70-72; Krivocheine Cat XXII SC 104 pp. 370f. n.1; "already died" according to Nicetas, Life, 3, 16f.; whereas this vision is recounted in 5, 1-31; "bestowal of dignities", ibid., 3, 7-11; Hausherr, Life, p. LXXXIX - if Nicetas' words ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ imply that Symeon actually was a senator, he, as a hagiographer wishing to enhance the glory of his hero, would be happy for his readers to take them in this sense.

Again, Nicetas is surely misleading his readers when he says that Symeon had had the Studite as spiritual father "since his early childhood", even though we cannot say precisely when or how he first "became acquainted with him". As we shall see later, Symeon while living in the world was concerned to find a saintly spiritual father merely in order to guarantee his ultimate salvation. According to Cat XXXV, where the first vision is described in not quite the same terms as in Cat XXII, it was the fact that in the course of it he saw the Studite looking just as he ordinarily appeared which convinced him that this was truly the man whom God had designated to be his director. Nicetas may be correct in the sense that Symeon had, while still quite young, on some occasions met his future spiritual father, since according to Cat XVI the Studite had numerous disciples living in the city whom he visited from time to time, and it is not impossible that in this way some superficial contact had been established between the two. But quite apart from any intrinsic improbability in the picture Nicetas paints of him as a precociously pious infant, Symeon's own words provide clear evidence that he was not sure that he ought to become a committed disciple of the Studite before he was convinced by the vision. We have already been told that Symeon had first asked to be tonsured when not yet fourteen, immediately after his uncle's death, and the fact that since then some time had elapsed is, in spite of Nicetas' apparent attempt to imply the contrary, actually confirmed by his now saying that after he had had this vision, Symeon

"was insistent in his requests to his (spiritual) father to tonsure him".

The Studite, however, refused, judging that the young man was not yet strong enough to support the rigours of asceticism. (13)

(13) Nicetas, Life, 4, 2f.; "acquainted" Cat XXII, 29; "to guarantee salvation" Part Two, chapter I (a); Cat XXXV, 100-113, Cat XXII, 88-104; Cat XVI, 31-34; "own words", v. Part Two, chapter I (d) p. 128, where these are quoted; Cat XXXV, 111-113; Nicetas, Life, 6, 2-6.

It has thus become clear that we must not rely on Nicetas if we would understand this phase of Symeon's life, but on the basis of Cats XXII and XXXIV, supplemented by XXXVI, Hausherr's summary may be expanded as follows. While, some time after his uncle's death, Symeon "was superintending the household of a certain patrician", he became concerned about his sins and sought for a living saint to be his spiritual father, in order that through the intercession of such a one, he might be assured of forgiveness and ultimate salvation. Somehow the Studite became "acquainted with him" - the first contact may perhaps have been made at an earlier date -, and it would seem at least a plausible speculation that the introduction was effected by means of one of the elder Symeon's existing spiritual children in the city. Symeon then received and followed the spiritual direction given him by the Studite, but though sincere, was not yet fully committed as a disciple, being not wholly convinced that he had found the saint he was seeking. His uncertainty, however, was ended by his first vision, in the course of which he saw the Studite. Nicetas' assertion that he then tried to become a monk but was not permitted to do so by his spiritual father, has in itself nothing improbable about it, but unfortunately is not corroborated by what Symeon actually says. What he tells us, and what Nicetas totally, but not surprisingly omits, is that the effect of the vision was by no means lasting, something which Symeon later felt to have been his own fault because he lacked sufficient resolution to take the decisive step of abandoning the world and joining a monastery. We must accept not Nicetas' version, but Symeon's confession which is perfectly plain and not at all improbable.

"I am convinced ...that it was solely for this purpose that (God) was pleased to appear to me, namely that, for all my unworthiness, he might draw me to himself and might set me apart from all the world. But since I had not the strength to act promptly, little by little I became oblivious of all I have just recounted and reached the point of being in total darkness, so that of the matters I have spoken about I recalled nothing, small or great, not even giving them a bare thought".

He ascribes this fall from grace to "constant temptations" and elsewhere to "slackness and negligence", and its results was that instead of accepting the Studite as a saint, he began to regard him "as a mere ordinary man" and ceased to "observe his injunctions". Symeon did however keep in touch with him. (14)

In language that is picturesque, but not specific, Symeon describes how God, by means of the Studite, rescued him from this condition, which he later came to feel was like being in a deep and muddy pit. From this "pit of perdition" God delivered him "by (the Studite's) prayers". In Cat XXXV Symeon utters his thanks in what is a fairly plain statement of the kind of existence from which he had been set free:

"By means of him, the saint (ἅγιος) thou didst convert me, and didst condescend to allow me to fall down at his holy (ἅγιος) feet, when by thy strong hand and thine exalted arm thou hadst led me forth from the deceitful world and the world's affairs and pleasures, and hadst set me apart from them all, as regards both body and soul .. and placed me in the ranks of those who serve thee". (15)

(14) Hausheer's summary, Life, pp. LXXXIXf.; "superintending a patrician's household", Cat XXII, 70f.; "concerned about sins", Cat XXXV, 73-80, cf. Part Two chapters I(a) and III(b) "living saint", v. Excursus at end of this chapter for a discussion of a point so important for Symeon; "existing spiritual child introducing another", cf. an example given by Nicetas (Life, 54 and 55, 1-8): a Western bishop, eager to do penance, came to Constantinople, conversed with Genesios, one of Symeon's spiritual children, and was introduced by him to Symeon; "received spiritual direction", Cat XXII 29-38; Symeon's "plain confession", Cat XXII, 281-288; "had not the strength", οὐκ ἰσχυρὰ, suggests some personal deficiency; "temptations", Cat XXII, 277f.; "slackness", Cat XXXV, 115, cf. Cat VI, 121-131, where the whole story is told very briefly; for his changed attitude to the Studite, v. Cat XXII, 293 and 304-308 - the episode is discussed from the point of view of spiritual fatherhood in Part Two, chapter II(d).

(15) Symeon's description of his condition and rescue by the Studite, Cat XXXVI, 28-76 (as he does not here mention the vision spoken of in Cats XXII and XXXV, he is describing his whole life in general up to his definitive conversion), cf. Hym XVIII, 124-130, Cat XXII, 296 (where "pit" is λυκκοί as against βοοί in Cat XXXVI), Cat XXII, 303f., Cat XXXV, 118-125.

The last part of this sentence refers obviously to his entering the monastery, and it is interesting to observe that just as Symeon emphasises the Studite's activity here - "by means of him" - so Nicetas, in spite of his unwillingness to say that his hero had to be rescued from a sinful life, still at this point represents the older man as taking the initiative:

"Lo, now is the time, my child, to change your dress and your mode of life, if you wish to do so".

We may also notice that, with regard to the occasion to which he ascribes these words, Nicetas similarly manages to use, but put a different complexion on, information derived from Symeon: the latter said that even after he had relapsed into worldliness, he still

"would frequently go to (the Studite's) cell, when (he) chanced to be in the city";

Nicetas tells us that when preparing to undertake a journey to his native Paphlagonia,

"he came to take leave of his holy father in the famous monastery of Studios".

There is no difficulty in believing that the Studite did say something not unlike the words ascribed to him, nor need we doubt either the occasion or what we are told a few lines later, that the journey was a duty to be undertaken in the imperial service, for Symeon's own words, "when I chanced to be in the city", suggest that he may on various occasions have been sent away on similar errands. But by giving due weight to Symeon's confessions, we understand the situation somewhat as follows: although his first vision assured Symeon that the Studite was the saint he had been seeking as a spiritual father, the very fact that his motives for undertaking the quest were inadequate made it easy for him to succumb after it to "slackness and negligence"; still, he was sufficiently attracted by the Studite to keep in touch with him, even though he did not remain a committed disciple,

and part of the Studite's skill as a spiritual father consisted, as we shall consider later, in his willingness to tolerate this kind of relationship, and to continue to pray for the wayward youth; he also knew the right moment at which to intervene effectively, both to bring about Symeon's real conversion and his entrance upon the monastic life. This took place when he was about twenty-seven, and thus in the year 976 or 977. (16)

Before proceeding further with an account of Symeon's life, so far as this can be sketched, we must give some consideration to the question of what sins weighed most heavily on Symeon's conscience, both in the period when he was first trying to find an authentic saint to have as a spiritual father in order to secure forgiveness, and also when later he came to look back on the time during which he was estimating the Studite "as a mere ordinary man". It is true that in various places he accuses himself of breaking every one of God's commandments, and for this - to modern minds - extravagant proceeding there may be two reasons suggested, either or both of which would lead to discounting the evidence of the actual words: one, which will receive further mention later, is that Symeon wished by such means to encourage others to reveal their thoughts to him, in the knowledge that they would find a sympathetic listener in a father who was willing to admit himself to be so sinful; the other possible reason is that, as Koder suggests, he was deliberately combating his own temptations to pride by behaving as a 'holy fool' (σάλης), at least in speech, if not in action. In support of his contention Koder cites the scholia to various places in the Hymns, and in illustration, part of that relating to Hym XVIII, 92 may here be quoted:

(16) Nicetas, Life, 6, 10f.; Symeon "going frequently to the Studite's cell", Cat XXII, 306f.; Nicetas, Life, 6, 8f. and 14-16; "inadequate motives" will be discussed in Part Two, chapter I(a) and (b), and the "skill" of the Studite in Part Two, chapter II(d); Symeon's age is calculated on the basis of Cat XXII 270 - 273.

"Wishing to have his soul ever illuminated by the Holy Spirit .. and fearing to fall through pride, he would call himself a perpetrator of vile deeds and swear to it, as he does in detail in Hym XXIV with what are really lies that proceed from his deep humility".

When, however, Symeon uses less wide-ranging language in his self-accusations, he appears mostly concerned about what used to be castigated as 'worldliness', the excessive preoccupation with wealth, status and the other merchandise displayed to tempt pilgrims as they pass through Vanity Fair. Thus both intrinsic probability, and the motives suggested above for Symeon's use of exaggerated language, lead us to discount a great deal of his self-accusations and to class him not as some notorious sinner but as a normally ambitious young man, presented with the opportunity of enjoying a successful secular career.(17)

While on this subject, we must mention the possibility that Symeon's conscience was disquieted by his having been somehow involved in homosexual practices. It was stated earlier that Symeon was a eunuch, that eunuchs had a bad reputation in this respect and that there are good reasons for supposing that it was for licentious purposes that his uncle intended

"presenting him to (Romanus II) and promoting his close acquaintance with him".

We saw that Symeon rejected this attempt and thanked God for deliverance.

(17) Symeon's "self-accusations", v. Hym XX, 67-70, Cat I, 33-35, Cat XXXV, 240 - 242 and for further consideration of his desiring to encourage confession by others, v. Part Two, chapter III (c), p. 197 ., where additional references are given in n.23 - it is also worth considering whether what appears morbid to us may not actually result from an intense consciousness of sin overcome by grace; Koder, Hym SC 156 intr. pp. 70f.; σάλοι receive further mention in the next chapter and in Part Two, chapter III (c) p. (236; scholium quoted from SC 174 p. 82; "worldliness", Cat XXXV, 121f. Cat XXXVI, 35 - 38, Hym XX, 120f., 131-133; Christophorides, op. cit. p. 73 ascribes Symeon's language to humility and to a desire to encourage his monks by minimising the difference between himself and them; v. also following footnote.

On the other hand he elsewhere gives the impression that, either then or perhaps later, he had not escaped totally unsullied. In Rym IX there are lines which are at least somewhat ambiguous:

"As for impure actions and indecent desires, thou, my God, didst wipe my heart clean of them and didst inspire my soul with hatred for them, even though I did by choice incline towards them".

Again, in Hym XXIV, in the middle of a long catalogue of self-accusation, there occur words which suggest something more than unfulfilled desires,

"Alas, I have also been in heart an adulterer and a sodomite in deed and by choice".

The evidence is thus somewhat contradictory, and whether we decide that Symeon was in reality guilty or innocent of homosexual activities, it is in either case necessary to interpret some of his words so as to make them fit the decision taken. Tentatively one might suggest that he was conscious of having at some time had homosexual inclinations, that he had been initiated into some mild form of homosexual behaviour, but that he could honestly claim that, in spite of everything, he had never engaged in it with full understanding and the full consent of his will. To sum up, then, one may say that Symeon, in spite of his vehement self-accusations, was far from being addicted to gross and flagrant sins, while at the same time he was clearly not the paragon of all the virtues depicted by Nicetas. What caused him at first to seek for a spiritual father was a general feeling that the kind of life he was leading was not one which would lead him in the end to salvation.(18)

(18) Hymns XX, 134 - 137, XXIV, 74f., ποῖός ἐστις ὁ ἀντίχριστος - of. St. Matthew 5, 28 - but ὁ ὁσίων ὁ ἰσχυρὸς καὶ ὁ παντοκράτωρ. Father Paramelle, in conversation expressed the opinion that Symeon probably had been seduced sexually, but that the comprehensiveness of his confessions is to be understood by analogy with the Jewish ritual for the Day of Atonement, when one confesses every conceivable sin for fear of omitting anything sinful that one has done.

About the year 977, therefore, Symeon, delivered as he believed by God from the deceits of the world, was admitted to the Studios monastery as a postulant. According to Nicetas, he did not technically become a monk there, for his tonsuring is recounted only later, when in circumstances soon to be described, he had been forced to move to another monastery, that of St. Mamas. Symeon obviously went to Studios because his spiritual father was a monk of that community and to begin with must have considered himself fortunate in that lack of other accommodation resulted in his being told to live and sleep in a confined space under the staircase of the Studite's cell. As we are not at this point concerned with the training Symeon received, we can pass at once to what led to his having to leave the monastery after a very brief sojourn. Nicetas says that his piety and rapid progress gave the demons the opportunity of enlisting jealousy ($\phi\theta\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$) in their struggle against him, and that they stirred up this feeling in the hearts of the less zealous monks, and even in that of Peter the hegumen. In this connection, an attempt was made to cause Symeon to lose confidence in the Studite. (19)

As regards this latter point, Nicetas is supported by some words of Symeon which will be cited in a subsequent chapter, but his ascribing everything simply to jealousy is open to some suspicion. What Symeon says suggests that there were some who in good faith held the Studite to be "a deceiver and charlatan", since as we shall see in the next chapter, his conduct did in fact lay itself open to misunderstanding.

(19) Nicetas, Life, 3 - 10 - as opposed to tonsuring, which is not referred to while Symeon was at Studios, we are told that he was clothed in the $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\kappa\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ $\tau\eta$ $\gamma\omicron\upsilon\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$, $\tau\omega$ $\sigma\pi\eta\tau\acute{\omega}$; "jealousy and attempt to shake his confidence in the Studite", ibid. 16, 3-5, 17-23.

Moreover, as will also be explained, Peter in seeking to regulate and control Symeon's choice of a spiritual father

"was only striving to secure the effective operation of a tradition which had become a customary law, if indeed it was not sanctioned by legislative texts. St. Theodore Studite .. would no doubt have given his approval".

It is along these lines that one must interpret Nicetas' statement in a later chapter that the hegumen

"now by promises and now by threats made every effort to detach (Symeon) from his teacher and to attach him to himself".

As Symeon proved inflexible, he was expelled from the monastery. (20)

How long had he actually been there? Hausherr concludes that

"his stay .. only lasted a very short time, a few weeks or a few months at most".

There is no reason to dispute this verdict, arrived at by careful examination of the texts, and additionally confirmed, it may be added, by the already mentioned fact that Symeon is not stated to have received the tonsure before being expelled. He must, however, have remained in the same monastery as his spiritual father, namely Studios, long enough to enable the events to have occurred which he relates in Cat XVI, concerning both training given him by the Studite and the receiving of another vision. Incidentally, if Nicetas is accurate in his statement that Symeon was at first lodged in his spiritual father's cell, Cat XVI (and Nicetas himself, by implication) makes it clear that this was indeed merely a temporary arrangement, for the vision is stated to have occurred

(20) "What Symeon says", Cat XXXVI, 102-116; v. Part Two, chapter I(c) p. 121; . "also explained", v. Part One, chapter II, p. 87 and footnotes, Part Two, chapter II (d) pp. 156 -158; Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, p. 120, cf. R. Janin, 'Le monachisme byzantin au moyen age', R.E.B., 22, (1964) pp. 24f. for details of the regulations according to the typika of a number of monasteries; Nicetas, Life, 21, 5-12.

after he had been dismissed to his own cell for the night. None of this need have occupied many weeks, nor - if they actually occurred - need the attempts which Nicetas, perhaps as a mere convention, records as having been made by people in the world, including Symeon's father, to make him give up his determination to be a monk. (21)

Such attempts, we are told, were renewed when the Studite had arranged for Symeon to be received in the "nearby monastery of St. Mamas", and it is interesting that on this occasion the father is stated to have been joined by "some who belonged to the Senate". This is another piece of evidence testifying to the social milieu to which Symeon belonged. His resolution remaining unshaken, and being fortified by the frequent visits paid him by the Studite, Symeon was tonsured and given "the tunic of gladness". Nicetas proceeds to give an account of the ascetic life he lived and the rapid progress he made in his new surroundings. St. Mamas was very different from the flourishing Studios monastery; it was in a ruinous condition, and contained only a few monks. That, no doubt, was the reason why the hegumen, Antony, did not hesitate to accept Symeon and did not object to his remaining under the Studite's spiritual tutelage. It was this latter, and not his physical surroundings, that for Symeon was all-important. (22)

(21) Hausherr, Life, p. LXXVII; Cat XVI, 8-144, cf. Nicetas, Life, 12, 18, 19; Cat XVI, 75, cf. Nicetas, Life, 19, 10-12; Nicetas, Life, 17, 2-6.

(22) "renewed attempts", ibid. 22, 7-10; on "the Senate", v. n.11 above; for St. Mamas, its history and its site, v. Janin, Eglises et monastères pp. 314 - 319; "tonsured", Nicetas, Life, 24, 1-4, cf. for the language Isaiah 61, 10 (LXX); "condition of St. Mamas", Nicetas, Life, 24, 2-5.

The decayed state of St. Mamas' monastery, and the fact that Symeon in spite of being a newcomer was clearly in many respects superior to most of his fellow monks, whom Nicetas characterizes as "uncultivated (αἰδύργητοι)" - all this renders it not surprising that on the death of Antony, when Symeon had only been a member of the community for between two and three years, he was chosen as the new hegumen

"by the vote of the Patriarch, Nicholas Chrysoberges, and of the monks of St. Mamas".

In accordance with what had in practice become a general rule, on succeeding to this office Symeon was ordained priest. (23)

As hegumen he set about vigorously on the work which needed to be done to restore the monastery. Nicetas says that he rebuilt the whole of it, apart from the church, which had come to be used as a burial-place. From this he removed the dead bodies and then covered the floor with marble, and adorned the building with icons and candelabra.

But Nicetas emphasises, as we should anyhow gather from Symeon's writings, that his main concern was with the spiritual reformation of the monks. We shall see later something of his methods, and of the difficulties he encountered. But at least for the first few years he had encouragement and support, since the Studite was available both to help him as his own spiritual father and to supervise him when he acted in this capacity towards his monks. This situation continued until the Studite's death, which as Hausherr has calculated took place in 986 or 987. The sense of loss which Symeon then felt he expresses in Hym XXXVII, describing himself as

"an utter orphan, utterly isolated, utterly without help from anybody, while yet - alas! - the head and shepherd (pastor) of a flock".

(23) Nicetas, Life, 34, 5; ibid 30, 3-6; for hegumens usually being priests, v. G. Da Costa-Louillet, 'Saints de Constantinople', Byzantion, XXIV, (1954), p. 234.

In Symeon's writings there are indications of tensions arising between him and his monks, and it is tempting to assign these difficulties to the period after his spiritual father's death, when he no longer had the benefit of wise advice and guidance. Since, however, there is no means of dating accurately and conclusively the various items comprised in Symeon's works, this can only be a speculation. (24)

Anyhow, at a date which Hausherr places between 995 and 998, Nicetas recounts a revolt on the part of some thirty of the monks on an occasion when Symeon was delivering one of his catecheses. Restrained from physically attacking him by "the grace which indwelt him", they ran off and complained to the patriarch (Sisinnios), who after hearing Symeon's version of the matter decided in his favour. Nicetas uses the occurrence to illustrate and praise Symeon's magnanimity towards those who had sought to injure him, but his narrative also testifies incidentally to two other matters: under Symeon, numbers at St. Mamas must have considerably increased, since the thirty disaffected monks did not constitute the whole of the community, those "who lived devout lives" remaining with their hegumen; on the other hand, a revolt on this scale is a clear indication that Symeon had either lost, or perhaps had never won, the whole-hearted support and confidence of many of those for whom, ex officio, he had to function as spiritual father. (25)

(24) Nicetas, Life, 34, 12-22; ibid., 35, 36, cf. Symeon passim, especially Cat I; "supervise", v. Part Two, chapter II (a), p. 138; Hausherr, Life, p. XL; Evangelium XXXVII, 48-50.

(25) Hausherr, ibid., p. XC; Nicetas, Life, 38, 7-19; 39, 4; 39, 9-22; "devout lives", ibid., 39, 8.

If, as suggested above, the death of the Studite may at least partly have contributed to Symeon's troubles within his monastery, it certainly cannot be divorced from the difficulties which around 1003 began to press on him from without. Not surprisingly, the disciple had treated his dead father as a saint and initiated a cult, composing hymns, getting an icon painted and celebrating an annual festival in his honour. This attracted the attention of Patriarch Sergius II, but, according to Nicetas, on reading what Symeon had written in praise of the Studite, he so far approved as to send candles and perfumes to enhance the splendour of the festival. Matters continued thus for some sixteen years. According to Nicetas' account, which for lack of other evidence cannot at this point be checked, no trouble would ever have arisen on this score, had not Symeon's reputation for wisdom and sanctity provoked the jealousy of the patriarch's syncellus, Stephen, who had formerly been metropolitan of Nicomedia, but had resigned his see. Stephen, in order to discredit him, attempted to trap Symeon into uttering heresy concerning the Trinity, and received in reply an explanation in verse, accompanied by many expressions designed to irritate a person like himself. This is, in fact, preserved among Symeon's writings as Hymn XXI. Unable to win a victory here, the syncellus first tried to unearth some matter for accusation in Symeon's personal life, and then as he did not succeed in this, launched an attack on his 'canonisation' of the Studite. Nicetas says that to begin with the patriarch and the other bishops rejected Stephen's accusations, but after two years, which Hausherr calculates brings us to 1005, he managed to get Symeon arraigned before the synod,

on the grounds of honouring as a saint one who in reality was far from being saintly. Having refused the patriarch's suggestion that he should compromise by keeping the Studite's festival as a private observance within the monastery, Symeon was in the end, in January 1009, condemned to go into exile. Nicetas, as one might expect, blackens Stephen in every possible way, accusing him not only of being motivated by jealousy, but also, on account of his treatment of the icons of the Studite, of thorough-going iconoclasm, after the pattern of Constantine V (Copronymus). Hausherr is able to depict him and his actions in a much more favourable light, but in any case his triumph was, as we shall see, very limited.(26)

By the time that his exile began, Symeon had for some four years ceased to be hegumen of St. Mamas, having resigned in 1005 in favour of his disciple Arsenius. Nicetas presents this as a voluntary act, undertaken in order that he might devote himself to contemplation; Hausherr very plausibly suspects that this was not the sole reason, but that in view of the troubles developing in regard to the cult of the Studite, the patriarch, whom Nicetas specifically mentions as concurring with Symeon's decision, may really have suggested his resignation in the hope

(26) "around 1003", Hausherr, *Life*, p. XC; "a cult", Nicetas, *Life*, 72, 24 - 26, 73, 74; for Stephen, v. Hausherr, *Life*, pp. LI - LVI, and to the information there given, add Leo Diaconus, *Historiae*, I, 6 (C.E.B.E., XI Bonn, 1828, pp. 168f.), testifying to his reputation as an interpreter of celestial portents, and for his resignation from the see of Nicomedia, v. J. Darrouzes, *Documents inédits d'ecclésiologie byzantine*, Paris, 1966, pp. 250 - 252 - what is probably a letter from him, as well as three, (with also probably a fourth) to him, are found in J. Darrouzes, *Epistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle*, Paris, 1960, pp. 192f., 219f., 221, 222, 244 - 247; "attempts to trap Symeon", Nicetas, *Life*, 75, 76, 77; *Eyn* XXI, cited by Hausherr, *Life*, pp. LXIII - LXV, on which v. Introduction II, p. 26; the remainder of Stephen's campaign, leading up to Symeon's condemnation and exile, is described by Nicetas, *Life*, 78 - 95, with the inclusion of Symeon's speech in defence of himself; "1009", Hausherr, *Life*, p. LXXXV, on basis of Nicetas, *Life*, 151, 4; *ibid.*, 92, 93 for Nicetas blackening Stephen; for Hausherr's interpretation, *Life*, LXXIXf., cf. Krivocheine, *Lumière*, pp. 45ff.

that this might avert further conflict. If this was in fact Sergius II's intention, his plan, as we have seen, did not meet with success, but in any case resignation will not have been unwelcome to Symeon, for he gives evidence of regarding as burdensome the temporal concerns which inevitably had to be attended to by a hegumen. His resignation, however, did not entail his abdicating from the position of spiritual father.(27)

It was thus no longer as hegumen that Symeon went into exile in 1009. Nicetas makes the most of his sufferings, but in reality he was able to establish himself at no great distance from Constantinople at a place called Palukiton in Asia Minor. There he found a ruined oratory, dedicated to St. Marina, on land which belonged to a highly-placed personage, Christopher Phagura. This man was one of Symeon's spiritual children, not a monk but a devout secular, for by this time Symeon, like the Studite before him, had become the director of various disciples living in the world. Christopher, on hearing of his father's exile, at once visited him and presented the oratory to him. Other influential disciples, including the patrician Genesisios, busied themselves on Symeon's behalf, making representations to the patriarch. The result was that the patriarch,

"fearing that the matter might come before the emperor", revoked the sentence of exile at a meeting of the Synod and announced his intention of re-establishing Symeon in St. Mamas, and then consecrating him as archbishop of one of the most important metropolitan sees.

(27) Nicetas, Life, 59, 4-15; Hausherr, Life, p. LXXIV; "burdensome temporal concerns", v. Part Two, chapter II(d), pp.156i. refs. in notes 7 and 8 there; "not abdicating as spiritual father", Nicetas, Life, 59, 20-23, cf. Part Two, chapter II(a), p.139.

In return he would only ask him to observe some degree of restraint for the time being in the celebration of the Studite's festival.

Characteristically, Symeon refused to compromise. and this, Nicetas says, caused the patriarch to exclaim

"You are genuinely a Studite and devoted to your father.."

He then gave him permission to live where he would, and celebrate the festival as he wished. (28)

Symeon decided to return to St. Marina, where he succeeded in restoring the ruins and in effect founding a small monastic community of like-minded disciples, which came to include Nicetas, his future biographer. Here he lived for some eleven or twelve years, until his death in 1022. Nicetas states that during this period he composed Hymns, although he has already remarked that some of these were written at an earlier period. Koder, basing himself on internal evidence, concludes that the majority were in fact produced during these closing years of Symeon's life. Nicetas testifies to other literary activity during this period, and remarks that he himself would copy out on parchment what Symeon had drafted, and then return his work for correction. One gets the impression from Nicetas, and there seems every reason for supposing that here he is not being misleading, that this final period was the happiest part of Symeon's life. (29)

(28) Nicetas, Life, 95, 6-24; ibid., 96, 1f., 100, 1-4, 24-26; ibid., 102, 7-16, 104, 4-6; "meeting of the synod", ibid., 102, 17, 103, 1-20; "refusal to compromise", ibid., 107, 15-27; "patriarch's exclamation", ibid., 108, 2- in spite of his expulsion, Symeon himself, according to Nicetas, claimed to follow the precepts of St. Theodore of Studios, ibid., 61, 20-23, 63, 15-17; in explanation of the patriarch's words, of. "that policy of uncompromising opposition which their master Theodore handed on to the Studites", H. Delehaye, 'Byzantine Monasticism', Byzantium, (edd. M.E. Baynes and H. St. L.B. Moss), Oxford, 1948, p. 162; "permission", Nicetas, Life, 108, 10-14.

(29) "Symeon at St. Marina until his death", Nicetas, Life, 109, 12-19, 110, 111, of. 37, 11f.; "1022", for Hausherr's calculation, v. Life, pp. LXXXIV. and of. p. 32, n.1; Koder, Hymn SC 156 intr.p. 77; Nicetas, Life, 111, 15-17, 131, 6-13.

As a voluntary exile, Symeon could be true to himself and yet avoid coming into conflict directly with the representatives of those aspects of the official Church with which, as can be seen, he was deeply at variance. As Krivochéine expresses it,

"The Byzantine Church at that time was developing in the direction of regulating its liturgical patterns so that they were both more outwardly splendid and less diverse. The same period saw the ecclesiastical festivals and the calendar settled by the Emperor Basil II's 'Menologion'. At that time also Symeon Metaphrastes expurgated and re-edited the Lives of the Saints, in order to render them more uniform by getting rid of irregularities in the language and eccentricities in the stories."

Krivochéine then mentions St. Theodore and his monastery, concluding significantly:

"One may say that Symeon's spirituality was a kind of reaction against the formal cenobitism which developed at Studios under Theodore's successors". (30)

This verdict on the era not only sheds light on the whole of Symeon's stormy career, but also on the fact of his being content to end his days in semi-seclusion at St. Marina.

(30) Krivochéine, *Cats* 80 96 intr. pp. 40f., and almost identical words, *Lumière*, p. 32, cf. J. Guillard, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 14 (11), Paris, 1941, col. 2957.

Chapter I - Excursus: The Intercession of a Living Saint.

It is tempting to suggest that Symeon's insistence on discovering a living saint to intercede for his salvation owes something to knowledge about the treatment of petitions to the emperor, gained through his *γὰρ ὁ* John's *διδάσκων* (Nicetas, Life, 113, 25f., v. above p³⁹n. 8). This naturally, cannot be verified, and in any case as one who was going daily to "the palace" (*ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ*, Cat XXII, 71f.), Symeon must have had opportunity to observe the importance of securing a patron who stood well with the emperor. We have seen, moreover, that it is not improbable that his family found it advantageous to have a member representing their interests at the imperial court. It is easy to understand that, for someone with this kind of background, it would appear essential to secure an effective patron at the heavenly court, "a friend of God" (Ep 1, p. 115, 9), enjoying *παρρησία* (1) in his approach to the Deity, cf. Barringer, Penance, p. 47 and passim.

This, of course, is something of a topos, as is evidenced for example by the words of a certain Thomas to St. John the Eremopolite,

"I want only this from you, the obtaining of pardon for my sins through your hallowed prayers to God".

('Life of St. John the Eremopolite' ed. F. Halkin, Saints moines d'Orient, London, 1973, V, 19, 4). P. Brown (The Cult of the Saints, London, 1981, pp. 64f.) writes of the concept of a (dead) saint as patronus, and illustrates also the importance attached to the intercession of a living holy man, who might be a *πᾶσι πνευματικός* ('The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', J.R.S., pp. 97 - 99). By the 10th century in Constantinople it had come to

(1) *παρρησία* is used in this context in a good sense, meaning "confidence in intercession" (cf. Ch I, 101), whereas it suggests undue familiarity when the Studite employs it with regard to a monk or novice in his relationship with the hegumen (Ch 120, 668D).

be generally believed that there were no longer any living saints (cf. below, Part Two, chapter V (b) pp. 305-307), but Symeon's reluctance to rely on the help of any of those in the next world can be explained as the result of his anxiety to be certain that the one whom he adopted as his patron really would accept him and intercede for him.

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II Heritage and Influences.

Education

Symeon's education was glanced at in the context of the story of his life but it is now time to consider it in somewhat greater detail as an element in the basic theme of this chapter, in which we are concerned with what in French would be called his "formation".

There is no reason for doubting Nicetas' statement that on his arrival in Constantinople he was sent to a γραμματεῖς for προπαιδεία. When he grew older, he quickly proceeded to τελεωτέρως μαθήματα, and we are told soon learnt the skill of the ταχυγράφοι, and

"acquired the beautiful hand-writing of which the books written by him afford clear evidence".

After this, continues Nicetas,

"it remained for him to become perfectly at home in the classical language by familiarising himself with pagan culture and acquiring a mastery of rhetorical speech".

At this point, however, as we saw, Symeon refused to pursue his studies any further - or so Nicetas says, introducing a hagiographical topos and furnishing it with the comment, typical of hagiography, that his hero thereby

"escaped the harm which might have befallen him from his fellow-students" (1).

(1) Nicetas, Life, 2, 9 - 26; Lemerle, Premier humanisme, pp. 99 - 103 gives examples of the usage of educational terms, προπαιδεία commonly denoting 'elementary instruction', i.e. reading and writing, with γραμματεῖς often used for the teacher at this level, and the subjects being called γράμματα as against those belonging to the next stage which were μαθήματα; ibid., p. 50, n.15 and p.102, n.91 for ταχυγράφοι, 'stenographers', the latter reference providing an example of a clear distinction "between the tachygrapher (or 'oxygrapher') and the calligrapher", although Nicetas, by the construction of his sentence, seems to blur the distinction between the two when he is speaking of Symeon; there appear to be no known instances of manuscripts written by Symeon having survived, so that it is impossible to confirm Nicetas' statement about his hand writing; for the topos, v. preceding chapter p.37.

Without discussing this last statement, we must observe that there is no reason to doubt the basic accuracy of Nicetas' account. Buckler cites Psellus as evidence for there having been three stages in education: first, 'encyclios paideusis', entailing elementary instruction in language and in the outlines of grammatikē, which itself formed the second stage; lastly there came 'higher learning', that is to say rhetoric and philosophy.

The division between the stages is not perhaps very clear in what Nicetas says, and this can be explained by Mango's observation that

"from the seventh century onwards the distinction between secondary and higher education tended to disappear".

Lemerle similarly speaks in terms of two stages only, remarking that πρῶτη παιδεία was one of the titles by which the first was designated, and that the content of the second could be styled τελευτήρια μαθήματα. (2)

While it is tempting to dismiss as a piece of conventional hagiography the statement that Symeon refused to extend his studies into the realm of "non-Christian education (ἡ εἰς ἄθρησκον παιδεία)", by doing so we are probably being unjust to Nicetas. Symeon himself, though conversant with the principles of educational practice, insisted that his

"own speech (was) powerless and lacking in non-Christian learning".

Moreover, speaking of his Hymns, Browning significantly calls them early examples of

"a growing body of texts written in literary Koine - which by this time had to be learnt at school - without Atticizing pretensions".

(2) G. Buckler, 'Byzantine Education', Byzantium. (edd. N.H. Baynes and H. St. L. B. Moss), Oxford, 1948, pp. 205f., but she does not give details of the Psellus reference - she remarks that 'encyclios paideia' had sunk from its proper meaning and was used to represent the 'foundation' for study of any kind; Mango, Byzantium, p. 147; Lemerle, Premier humanisme, pp. 99 - 101, with an example of τελευτήρια μαθήματα used to describe the secondary stage of education in the Life of St. Gregory the Decapolitan, ob. 842.

In the same way, speaking of his prose style, Darrouzes states:

"Symeon owes very little to the rhetoric which was so highly esteemed by his contemporaries in Byzantium".

Hussey is right in saying that

"he wrote clearly, directly, simply, and his was not the prose, or the poetry, of an uneducated man".

But this description is in a sense at variance with her immediately proceeding remark that

"Symeon's writings belie his repudiation of secular learning", for had he not, whatever the reason, refused to be taught "rhetorical speech", his writings, so far from being clear, would no doubt have abounded with pretentious artificialities. As it is, however, his style is in itself a proof of the possibility in the 10th century of someone's getting enough education to be able to write "literary Koine", without being subjected to that kind of pedantic study of classical authors which resulted in mannerisms and affectations. Nicetas, in fact, depicts quite fairly the attitude of the mature Symeon, who though sufficiently educated to be at home in the use of a language "deliberately different from the speech in common use", still vehemently protested that the Holy Spirit was not sent

"to orators or philosophers or students of the writings of the Greeks", while

"those with (him) as their teacher have no need of the learning imparted by men".(3)

(3) Nicetas, Life, 2. 20f.; on ἡ ἰστορία (or ἡ ὁμιλία, which is rendered 'pagan' in the first paragraph of this chapter) v. S. Runciman, The Last Byzantine Renaissance. C.U.P., 1970, p. 28, where it is contrasted with "the inner Learning, which was Christian theology" - cf. also P. Lemerle, Premier humanisme, pp. 47f., n.11, remarking that St. Gregory of Nazianzus blamed Christians for despising ἡ ἰστορία; "educational practice", of. Ch III, 24; "his own speech", Hym LVIII, 3f., with probably a reminiscence of II Corinthians 10, 10; R. Browning, "The Language of Byzantine Literature", The 'Past' in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture, (ed. S. Vryonis, jr.) Malibu, 1978, p. 122; Darrouzes Trs SC 122 intr. p.72; J.M. Hussey, 'Ascetics and Humanists in 11th Century Byzantium', Friends of Dr. Williams's Library Lecture 13, 1960, p.11, cf. Krivocheine Cats SC 96 intr. p. 171; Symeon, however, was capable of using the peculiar ἡ ἰστορία with ellipse of ἡ for "but if not..", an idiom found in Attic prose and poetry, v. Cat XXXIV 378, Tr Eth VII, 403; "deliberately different", P. Lemerle, Premier humanisme, p. 260 (his italics); Symeon, Hym XXI, 55f., 102f., cf. Climacus' description of the true teacher in ad Pastorem, 1165 BC.

It would be inconsistent with this conclusion if Symeon could be shown to have been influenced by, or made use of, the writings of non-Christian authors, but references to such are noticeably absent from the lists of quotations or allusions compiled by the Sources Chrétiennes editors of his works. Kambylis, it is true, does give a number of what he regards as possible parallels, but on examination these prove to be either very remote or else so commonplace in their substance that there is no need to postulate any direct influence. Thus even if one feels it necessary to be hesitant about the statements of Nicetas and of Symeon himself, the actual evidence of the content of his writings supports the view that he was uninfluenced by pagan authors, his education having in no way taken him outside the bounds of " 'our', that is, Christian, learning".(4)

The Bible.

To what extent did Symeon enter into the inheritance of the Scriptures? He quotes a maxim of the Studite's, "Gain God, and you will have no need of a book", but this naturally was not intended to refer to the Bible, and in fact Symeon's works contain a vast number of Biblical quotations and instances of the use of language alluding

(4) The Indices in the Sources Chrétiennes volumes contain no names of secular writers other than Asiatic, for whom there is given one possible, but by no means certainly direct instance, of a reminiscence: De natura animalium, X, 13 at Tr Eth VIII, 73f., where Darrouzès comments that "Symeon had probably never read Asiatic; his explanation (of pearls) must have been current and used in preaching", SC 129, p.207, n.2; it is also possible that he may show himself to have been acquainted with some popular book or books on the interpretation of dreams in Ch III, 62f., but Darrouzès in a note there remarks that Evagrius Ponticus is more likely to be his source, SC 51 p. 159, n.1; Kambylis, e.g. refers to Homer, Iliad II, 488f., ἐλπίδ' ἔσται δ' αὖτις μὴ βροτῶν αὐδ' ἑσπεύου, αὐδ' εἰ μοι θεὰ μὲν γλῶσσα, θεὰ δὲ στόματι τίει in connection with Hym XX, 167f., εἰ γὰρ μοιραία γλῶσσα μοι δοῖται φωνή, καὶ χέρις, οὐδ' ἐν ἰσχύρι εἴς, περὶ δὲ περὶ πάσι καὶ ὑπὸ ψυγῆς and Aeschylus, Seven against Thebes, 593, βαλὼν τ' ἄλλα δὲ φωνῆς καυτοῦ δέου in connection with Hym XXI, 427, γλυκίαν ὠδὴν τέμνων τοῖς λόγοις, but in neither case is there a convincing parallel; "Christian learning", G. Buckler, 'Byzantine Education', Byzantium, (edd. N.H. Baynes and H. St. L.B. Moss), Oxford, 1948, p.202.

to, or reminiscent of, Scriptural texts. He can be shown to have drawn upon every book of the New Testament and upon forty of those which make up the Old Testament and Apocrypha. The amount of use that he makes of the individual books does, of course, vary very considerably: it ranges from 858 counted examples in the case of St. Matthew to 1 in that of III John.(5)

Without giving complete statistics, which would be an unnecessary elaboration, it may be helpful to present, in tabular form, some figures indicating the extent to which Symeon, in his Biblical references and allusions, drew upon a number of the books:-

<u>Old Testament and Apocrypha</u>		<u>New Testament</u>	
<u>Genesis</u>	184	<u>St. Matthew</u>	858
<u>Exodus</u>	63	<u>St. Mark</u>	138
<u>Psalms</u>	458	<u>St. Luke</u>	439
<u>Proverbs</u>	44	<u>St. John</u>	684
<u>Song of Songs</u>	12	<u>Acts</u>	120
<u>Isaiah</u>	89	<u>Romans</u>	298
<u>Jeremiah</u>	32	<u>I Corinthians</u>	340
<u>Ezekiel</u>	25	<u>II Corinthians</u>	221
<u>The 12 Minor Prophets</u>	52	<u>Galatians</u>	111
<u>Wisdom of Solomon</u>	45	<u>Ephesians</u>	199
<u>Ecclesiasticus</u>	32	<u>I Timothy</u>	117
		<u>Hebrews</u>	117
		<u>I John</u>	122

(5) Cat VI, 192 - cf. Part Two, chapter III (d) pp.248f. It is not to be expected that there will be complete agreement as to the exact number of reminiscences of Scripture in Symeon. Kambylis, for example, is more ready to see possible allusions than is Koder. Thus at Hym XXVII, 67, ἐκ τῆς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, both note a reference to St. Matthew 1, 20 τὸ γὰρ σὺ εἰπὼν γυναικὶ ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, but at Hym XIII, 6, ὁ ἐγγύς σου ἐστὶν Κύριος Kambylis alone finds an allusion to the ἐγγύς σου of this same verse in St. Matthew, adding ibid., 2, 9 (a mistake for 2, 19) and Acts 5, 19. This way of reckoning produces many more instances than Koder's. The figures in this and succeeding paragraphs are essentially based on those of Koder and the other SC editors, but a few additions have been made because extra examples have been noticed and considered worthy of being added to the totals arrived at on the basis of the SC indices. The statistics are thus intended to do no more than give a general indication of the extent to which Symeon can be seen to have known and used the different books of the Bible.

From the above it is clear that of the books of the Old Testament it was the Psalms which had the deepest influence on Symeon, since the total for quotations from or allusions to them is only exceeded in the whole Bible by those for the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John. The figure for the Psalms is not, of course, surprising when one remembers the important place which the recitation of the psalter holds in the daily monastic services, as a consequence of which its contents could not fail to be exceptionally well-known to Symeon. In the light of his great emphasis on repentance, a matter which is to be discussed in a later chapter, it is also not unexpected that of the 458 references to the whole book, no less than 27 are to Psalm 50(51), the classic appeal by a penitent sinner for forgiveness and a clean heart. Next to the Psalms Symeon's favourite Old Testament book is seen to be Genesis, and it is interesting that 72 of his references are to the creation narratives of chapters 1 and 2, with 46 to chapter 3, the account of the archetypal sin committed by Adam and Eve. In view of what has just been said about Symeon's stressing the need to repent, it is only to be expected that he would find frequent occasion to allude to chapters which tell of what man was intended to be and what he actually became. It is particularly noteworthy that at one place Symeon has a long passage in which, after hinting at his knowledge of a shorter, similar treatment of Genesis 3 by Dorotheus of Gaza, he re-tells the story in a lively manner and uses it to enforce the lesson of the vital necessity for repentance, the refusal of which until too late led for Adam and Eve to expulsion from the Garden of Eden.(6)

(6) Symeon and Genesis 3, v. Qat V, 173 - 466, where basing himself on verses 9 - 19 of this chapter, he extends the discussion to cover sin, repentance and redemption generally; for Dorotheus' treatment of the chapter, v. Doctrinae I, 9 and also Krivochéine's note on Qat V, 172 SC 96 pp. 390f.n.2.

As can be seen from the table, in the order of frequency of Symeon's references to Old Testament books, Isaiah comes next after Genesis, and it may be added that of the total of 89 citations or allusions, 53 are found in chapters 1 - 39 (commonly known as "first Isaiah"), and 36 in the remaining chapters, 40 - 66.

The Church's understanding of the Isaianic writings as especially prophetic of Christ's coming - particularly chapters 7, 10 - 14, 9, 1 - 7 and 11, 1 - 9 - will be the reason for their importance to Symeon, and this importance is demonstrated if we observe how much less often he is influenced by the other prophets listed:

Jeremiah 32 instances and Ezekiel only 25, with 52 for the 12 Minor Prophets. This last figure, it should be noted, includes no less than 12 references to Malachi which can again to a large extent be accounted for in terms of Symeon's Christocentric devotion:

he was impressed by verses such as Malachi 4, 2 which speaks of the advent of the Sun of Righteousness and has been understood by Christians as foretelling the coming of Christ.(7)

The number of references to Exodus is understandable when one remembers that this book contains a wealth of typology for the Christian expositor, while the extent to which Symeon drew on the Wisdom literature for practical counsel is shown by the figures relating to Proverbs, the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus.

(7) Isaiah 9 is the only one of the three chapters mentioned in the text which Symeon in fact refers to - twice in each of the following: Cats., Hymn and Trs according to the indices in the 8C volumes. It is interesting that only twice, according to the same indices, does he ever refer to the great chapter understood as prophesying Christ's sufferings, Isaiah 53, which comes in the part of the book known as "second Isaiah", and in both these cases (Tr Eth VI, 365f. and Tr Eth VII, 358) the verses in question are also cited by a New Testament writer, who might thus be Symeon's source.

It is rather surprising that Symeon, though a mystic, cites or alludes to the Song of Songs only 12 times, an indication that it did not deeply affect him, in spite of its being, as is well-known, a great favourite with very many mystical writers.(8)

Turning to the New Testament, we can readily account for the large number of references to St. Matthew, since

"at least from the time of Irenaeus and early canonical witnesses, Matthew was for seventeen centuries the 'first Gospel' in a most real sense".

With regard to St. John, it has been stated that

"the Johannine Christ may ... be described as himself the one true mystic",

and so one is not surprised to find as many as 684 examples of this Gospel's being referred to by one who was a mystic himself.

The figure of 122 for I John, a work either by the same writer, or at least emanating from the same school, is of course similarly explicable. However, as we add up the figures for works from the Pauline corpus given in the table (Romans to Ephesians, - omitting the probably pseudonymous I Timothy and the certainly non-Pauline Hebrews), we find that the total is 1,169, and this suggests that Symeon was profoundly influenced not only by the theology and mysticism of the Johannine writings but also by the no less theological and mystical writings of St. Paul which have a rather different ethos.(9)

(8) St. Gregory of Nyssa in the East and St. Bernard in the West are notable examples of mystical theologians who have been inspired to write at length about the Song of Songs.

(9) St. Matthew, K. Stendahl in Peake's commentary (revised edition), London, 1962, p. 769; St. John, C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John, London, 1955, p. 73.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this is, of course, that Symeon knew the Bible intimately and that many of its books exercised a very marked influence upon him. To illustrate what this could mean in practice, we may notice two of the Catecheses which, as will be seen later, also furnish us with good examples of his treatment of other Christian literature. In the Sources Chrétiennes edition Cat IV runs to 720 lines in which can be found 12 quotations from, and 65 allusions to, or reminiscences of, Scriptural texts, that is more than one reference to the Bible for every 10 lines; Cat VI, running to 370 lines, is even more biblical with 20 quotations and 52 allusions in this much shorter work, which includes a kind of paraphrase of the Gospels in a passage dealing with our Lord's trial and crucifixion. Further evidence of the profound way in which the Bible influenced Symeon appears from the very fact that he must have largely relied on memory when quoting from it, as he often does not quote accurately and at times conflates two or more texts. The frequent reminiscences of Scriptural phrases were the result of his familiarity not only with the Psalms, but also with many other books of the Bible, through liturgical use as well as through private reading, and when delivering his Catecheses he no doubt assumed a like familiarity on the part of his hearers. Cats IV and VI also exemplify the way in which Symeon made use of the authority attaching to the Bible: Sometimes he appealed to it in illustration of a point he wished to make, as in Cat IV he recalled the description of the two thieves on Calvary, one penitent and the other not, in this way showing how we are justified or condemned through our choices and our thoughts;

alternatively, he might use the Bible to prove his assertions, as when in Cat VI he justified his claim about what he had received from the Studite by citing verses from St. John.⁽¹⁰⁾

Nevertheless, important as the Bible was for Symeon, Darrouzès has arrived at a convincing verdict in his comment on him.

"In his infrequent citations of the Fathers", he writes, "in his citations of the Bible, it is not the thought of someone else that he is seeking, it is an echo of his own inner life that he is rediscovering".

That this is in general true, and that for Symeon the Scriptures were often made use of for just this reason, can be well illustrated by examining how the parable of the Prodigal Son haunted him when writing his Hymns, which were largely compositions inspired by his spiritual experiences. The well-known story relates how the younger brother journeyed to a far country, wasted his substance *ἡν ἐξώτας*, and was reduced to poverty and near-starvation. When he at last came to his senses and returned home, his father welcomed him with a feast, thus leading the elder brother to complain about such treatment of one whom he described as *καταβόλιν σου τὸν βίον μετὰ τῶν πόρνων* (*πόρνων* being here a feminine plural and translated 'harlots'). . Symeon clearly found in this parable an echo of his experience as a sinner, deserving nothing good but yet welcomed home by God, for in the Hymns no less than 19 times does he describe himself as

(10) A good example of the conflation of texts by Symeon can be found at Cat VI, 237 - 239, where II Corinthians 1, 3 and 11, 31 are conflated and the language has also been influenced by Romans 9, 1 or I Timothy 2, 7. (It is amusing to notice how he twice (Hym XV 35 and Hym L, 221) attributes St. James 2, 26 to St. Paul); Cat IV, 81 - 91, cf. St. Luke 23, 39 - 43; Cat VI, 198 - 220, in the concluding lines citing St. John 4, 13f. and 7, 39.

ἀσέως and once confesses to having lived ἀσέως .
 Moreover 5 times he couples with this description of himself as
 ἀσέως the word πορνός (masculine). This
 in New Testament and patristic Greek has the primary meaning of
 'fornicator', but can also be used more generally for an 'unchaste,
 sensual person'. It is possible, however, that instead of, or as
 well as, this general sense, it has for Symeon something of its
 classical meaning, 'sodomite', for as we have already seen, there is
 certainly a possibility that he may earlier on have been involved in
 some form of homosexual misconduct. At all events, there can be no
 doubt that in the parable of the Prodigal Son Symeon found a notable
 echo of his own experience, so much so that in one place, forgetting
 or ignoring the fact that it is really a story told by Christ, he
 appeals to Christ,

"as thou didst receive the ἀσέως, so receive me".

It is interesting, too, that he once adds to his description of
 himself as ἀσέως the word τελώνης ('tax-collector'; A.V.
 'publican'), perhaps thus combining a reminiscence of the parable of
 the Pharisee and the Publican with that of the Prodigal Son.
 Elsewhere he lays stress on our Lord's willingness to associate and
 eat with ἀσέως and τελώναι, that is with those who were
 outcasts in the eyes of the Jewish religious leaders. Since seven
 lines earlier Symeon has lamented the fact that

"tribulation arising from earthly matters is separating (him)
 from (Christ's) joy",

it is reasonable to detect here another echo of personal experience and think of him as seeking comfort in comparing his Master with himself, inasmuch as he similarly was regarded with suspicion by religious authorities, that is by the syncellus Stephen of Nicomedia and other members of the hierarchy.(11)

In conclusion, to high-light the way in which for Symeon personal experience and the Scriptures are inter-related, as a contrast mention may be made of the writings of St. Dorotheus of Gaza: his editors in the Sources Chrétiennes series have noted no allusions to, or quotations from, St. Luke 15, the chapter in which the parable of the Prodigal Son occurs; they give a single instance of the use of ἀσωτία by Dorotheus, one of ἀσωτος and two (both in the same context) of τεισμός, while in spite of the fact that he suffered much from temptations to impurity, the word πόρνος does not come into Dorotheus' vocabulary.

Dorotheus and Symeon were both monks and both could hardly fail to become very familiar with the Bible, through their daily worship and through studying it in their cells. Symeon, however, cannot avoid revealing that for him the Scriptures were more than writings accepted as authoritative by the Church, since in them he found words that reflected and interpreted the experiences of his life.(12)

(11) Darrrouzés, Chs SC 51 intr. pp. 33f.; the Prodigal Son, St. Luke 15, 11 - 32; ἀσωτος, Hymns I, 5, II, 3, XI, 28, 93; XIII, 54, XIV, 51, XV, 18, XVII, 75, XVIII, 178, XIX, 130, XX, 67, 115, XXII, 2, XXIV, 34, 48, XXV, 145f., XXVIII 170, XLII, 53, LVI, 18; in view of the use in St. Luke 15, 22 of ἐτολμήν τὴν πρῶτην, it is also interesting that in Hym XXV, 151 Symeon prays that Christ's light ἐτολμήσῃ με φειδῶς; ἀσωτος, Hym XLI, 21; ἀσωτος and πόρνος, Hym I, 3, XIV, 51, XVIII, 178, XXV, 145f., XXVIII, 170; on πόρνος, v. Lampe, Lexicon: Aristophanes, Demosthenes and Xenophon use πόρνος in the sense of 'sodomite', v. refs. in H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, Greek - English Lexicon (new edition, revised and augmented by H.S. Jones), Oxford, 1940; Symeon and the Prodigal Son, Hym XVII, 75 - 77; Symeon and the Publican, Hym XI, 67, referring to St. Luke, 18, 9 - 14; Symeon and Christ's association with ἀσωτος, Hym XLI, 48f.

(12) L. Regnault and J. de Preville, Dorotheus, SC 92.

The Fathers

When we pass to consider the influence of non-Biblical writers on Symeon, as demonstrated by his use of them, we may first notice Holl's comment that only to a very moderate extent was he acquainted with the literature of his Church. This is certainly the impression that anyone would get by counting the number of occasions on which Symeon gives an explicit citation of a named author. But closer investigation leads to some modification of this verdict, for as with the Bible, Symeon not infrequently has been influenced by, alludes to, or uses language reminiscent of, some earlier work, without either naming the writer or indicating that he is indebted to anyone other than himself. In this respect his relationship with St. John Climacus is instructive. Nicetas recounts how Symeon, while visiting his home before his admission at Studios, found a copy of the Scala Paradisi in the family library, read it and was extremely receptive to its teaching. If there were any doubt as to whether this work,

"the manuscripts (of which) are innumerable", was available at St. Mamas, the fact is established by Symeon's own words in Cat. IV. when he invites any of his hearers to read the work from which he has quoted a few words. But apart from this there is only one other occasion on which he mentions Climacus by name, citing Sc. Par. 5 as authority for what he himself has to say about repentance. In addition, there are just two places noted in the nine Sources Chrétiennes volumes as possible reminiscences. Thus, in spite of Climacus' immense reputation, and in spite of Nicetas' comment on the

incident referred to above, that Symeon

"like good soil received the seed of the word in his heart", one might be tempted to suppose that the Scala Paradisi actually influenced him very little. (13)

However, by an analysis of subjects dealt with by both writers Völker has demonstrated that in fact Symeon was, as might be expected, very greatly influenced by Climacus in his treatment of matters which are our concern in this thesis. The section where this is done is headed:

"Der Verzicht auf den eigenen Willen und der Πατὴρ πνευματικός", and towards the end Völker writes:

"Our thorough-going comparison has moreover shown us that Symeon presents nothing original in his ideas, but merely reproduces those of Climacus even down to precise phrases and terms".

At a later stage we shall produce instances to show that this judgement is too sweeping and that as well as his reading of Climacus, Symeon's experience as a disciple of the Studite needs to be taken into account in any assessment of his teaching about spiritual fatherhood. But we may accept much of the evidence that Völker accumulates and agree that Symeon had so absorbed many of the ideas of Climacus that he reproduced them in his own words, since in fact he had made them his own. Thus, to take one of Völker's examples, Climacus issues a warning against "self-direction" (ἰδιοπροθυμία) in terms of a temptation to leave the short but rough road which leads to one's journey's end;

(13) Holl, Enthusiasmus, p. 37; Nicetas, Life, 6, 21 - 39; Scala Paradisi manuscripts, L. Petit, Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique 8 (1), Paris, 1924, col. 692; "own words", Cat IV, 540 - 543; Climacus mentioned, Cat XXX, 140 - 142, quoting the first words of the title, Πατὴρ πνευματικός, 764B; "possible reminiscences", Cat VI, 146, Ch I, 70 - at Tr Eth XI, 94ff. he speaks of a ladder (καλὴ) of ascent to heaven, "an allusion to the well-known work of John Climacus", Darrouzes ad loc. SC 129 pp. 336f. n.1; Nicetas, Life, 6, 23f.

Symeon's admonition has the same meaning, but he uses the expression,

"living by self-direction (ἑαυτοῦ ἑαυτοῦ) and gathering in the worthless fruits of one's own will".

It must therefore be concluded, in the case of Scala Paradisi, that neither failure to name his source nor even the absence of verbal reminiscences should be taken as proofs that Symeon remained uninfluenced by Climacus.(14)

If then with regard to Climacus Holl's criticism cannot be sustained, the position as far as other writers go is somewhat different. If we take St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the Father whom Symeon quotes or refers to by name most frequently, it is again instructive to compare his practice with that of Dorotheus of Gaza. The latter in the one SC volume which contains his works quotes Gregory eight times, while Symeon in nine volumes has no more than twenty-nine quotations and one definite allusion. When one moves on from cases where an author is mentioned by name to those where there appears to be a more or less certain reminiscence of something he has written, there will clearly be scope for disagreement among editors in many instances. Thus for the Hymns, Kambylis in his edition on the one hand, and on the other Koder, Paramelle and Neyrand in the Sources Chrétiennes series, in several cases fail to agree, with the result that what is designated by one editor as an allusion to Gregory may be ignored by the other. It is, however, necessary to concentrate on the Sources Chrétiennes since there we have available all Symeon's works, apart from the Epistles, whereas Kambylis has confined his attention to the Hymns. With this general

(14) Völker, Praxis, pp. 111 - 129; "self-direction", ibid., p. 112, n.1. and p. 116, n.5, referring to So. Par. 4, 680C and Cat. II, 53f. - on "self-direction" v. Part Two, chapters I (b) and IV (b), and Glossary.

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(14) Völker, Praxis, pp. 111 - 129; "self-direction", *ibid.*, p. 112, n.1. and p. 116, n.5, referring to Sc. Par. 4, 680C and Gal. II, 53f. - on "self-direction" v. Part Two, chapters I (b) and IV (b), and Glossary.

warning as to the nature of the evidence now to be brought forward, we may proceed to add ten possible reminiscences to the figure of twenty-nine quotations and one allusion. Of this total of forty instances, no fewer than twenty-five are found to refer to a mere three of Gregory's works, Orations XXXVIII, XXXIX and XL, known as In Theophania, In Sancta Lumina and In Sanctum Baptisma respectively, sermons preached at Christmas, Epiphany and on the day after Epiphany. In them can be found examples of themes which, as we shall see, were dear to Symeon, such as the healing power of tears, the deification or 'christification' of the redeemed and the conscious realisation of grace received. But if it was by these three works of Gregory that Symeon was chiefly influenced, he can be shown to have had knowledge possibly of a further nine, but certainly anyhow of a further six. He appears, indeed to have been particularly impressed by Oration XXI, "In Laudem S. Athanasii". As with Climacus, Symeon only rarely names Gregory as his source: in connection with his favourite Orations XXXVIII - XL, we find that on no more than three occasions does he actually mention him by name, while twice he says that he is quoting from "a theologian" and three times merely indicates that he is citing the words of another. In the remaining cases, which are sometimes just reminiscences of notable words or phrases, he gives no overt indication that he is borrowing. Furthermore, - and this presents a parallel to his use of the Bible - it is interesting that in one of the three places where Gregory is specifically named, Symeon's quotation is far from exact

and cannot with complete certainty be said to be derived from Oration XXXIX.(15)

As can be seen from the references already given, Symeon's predilection for Gregory manifests itself throughout his works. On occasion he seems to cite him as an authority, even without giving his name but simply introducing the quotation by a formula which marks it as such. He makes no attempt, however, to expound or develop the thought contained in the words that he quotes: a good illustration of his attitude of mind can be found in Tr Eth V where, again without naming Gregory, he quotes from Oration XXXVIII as authority for what he has just said, prefacing his quotation by κατὰ τὸ. But in point of fact it is some echo of his own thought that has led him to the words, which actually refer to God's method of creating the universe, whereas Symeon makes use of them to justify his oft-repeated demand that Christians should consciously know God and be aware that they possess the Holy Spirit.(16)

A passage in Cat IV is instructive as revealing something of the influence of Oration XL upon Symeon. In lines 686-688 occur the words, "as Gregory the theologian says"

(15) For Kambylis, (op.cit.) and his over-enthusiasm for detecting possible parallels, v.n.4; "twenty-five instances", but this might be reduced to twenty, since in five cases the same, or very similar, wording is found elsewhere in Gregory; "tears", Or. XXXIX, PG 36, 356A, Or. XL, ibid...369A; "deification", Or. XXXIX, ibid.., 353D - 356A, Or. XL, ibid... 372A; "conscious realisation", Or. XL, ibid... 372B; Or. XXI, PG 35, 1084A, Ch. II, 22 and Tr. Eth X, 688 - 690, but similar wording occurs in Or. XXVIII, PG 36, 69A; Or. XXI, PG 35, 1084B, Ch II, 17; Or. XXI, ibid... 1104A, Hym XLIX, 34; Or. XII, ibid.., 1104B, Tr Eth XV, 168 - 170, where although Symeon specifically names Gregory, Darrouzes (SC 129 p. 456 n.e.) can find a resemblance in thought but not in actual language; Gregory "named" when the three Orations cited, Cat IV, 686, Cat XXII, 179, Hym XXIII, 419f., referred to as "a theologian", Cat XXVIII, 417, Tr Eth IV, 801, quotation indicated but nothing more, Tr Eth V, 221, Ch I, 5, 15 and III, 21, 15, "not certainly from Or. XXXIX", Hym XXIII, 415 - 418, where Meyrand comments that "Symeon is perhaps thinking of Or. XXXIX .. PG 36, 344A" (SC 174, p. 217,n.1).

(16) Tr Eth V, 221, citing. Or. XXXVIII, PG 36, 320C.

and these are followed by an almost exact quotation, which is quite fairly cited as authority for the proposition Symeon is upholding, namely that if we fail to allow our spiritual sight to be purified in this life, we cannot expect to be capable of seeing God in the life to come. A few lines later (702f.) we can see further indications of Gregory's influence, when Symeon speaks of readiness to meet the Bridegroom, using language marked by a pronounced verbal reminiscence of that which can be found in Oration XL not far from the words explicitly quoted. Then at line 715 there is another phrase which occurs at a much earlier point in Gregory's Oration XL. Furthermore, much nearer the beginning of Cat IV another possible reminiscence of the same work has been noted. Taken together these instances provide a good illustration of the influence on Symeon of a single work of Gregory's, and incline one to speculate as to whether he had recently been reading or re-reading it at the time of composing this Catechesis.(17)

The general impression thus gained from an attempt to study how he was influenced by Gregory is that Symeon must have read quite widely in the works of this Father and have been familiar enough with parts of them for sentences and phrases to have become lodged in his mind; on the other hand, he shows no sign of having been so inspired by Gregory as to be moved to try to enter deeply into his thought and commend it to others. It is not, of course, remarkable that he should have been fairly well acquainted with Gregory, one of "the Christian classics", who

(17) "quotation", PG 36, 424C; "influence", ibid., 425B; "earlier point", ibid., 393AB λαμπρῶς; λαμπρῶς; ; "nearer the beginning", Cat IV, 99f., πῶς ἵδεις κακίαν... μετελθόντων; PG 36, 388B, πῶς ἵδεις κακίαν μεταλθόντων.

"judging by the number of preserved manuscripts, were read more than any other authors",

but it is interesting in this connection that two of the monasteries in Constantinople are definitely known to have had copies made of Gregory's works during the life-time of Symeon. It is reasonable also to suppose that interest in Gregory was stimulated by the bringing of his relics from Cappadocia to the imperial capital at a date either a few years before, or a few years after, that of Symeon's birth. When all is said and done, however, it would be impossible to claim that in respect of Gregory Darrrouzès' assessment is incorrect: Symeon was not really seeking the thought of this great theologian - indeed, he does not appear to have assimilated it to the extent to which he assimilated much of the thought of Climacus.(18)

St. John Chrysostom stands next to St. Gregory of Nazianzus as the Father with whom Symeon appears to have been best acquainted. This is not surprising, for he too is reckoned by Mango among "the Christian classics". Works by Chrysostom, or ascribed to him, can be detected as influencing Symeon to the following extent: Kambylis has noted one reminiscence, which however he describes as

"locus communis apud patres Graecos", apart from which the Sources Chrétiennes editors record fourteen possible or probable reminiscences, one somewhat general allusion, and one case where, although Symeon explicitly claims to be quoting Chrysostom on Psalms 50 (51), it has proved impossible to identify the source of the alleged quotation.

(18) "one of the Christian classics", Mango, Byzantium, p. 240; "two monasteries", Janin, Eglises et monastères, records that the Μονή τοῦ Πισκηνίδου possessed one dated 5 June 975 (p.396) and the Μονή τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀσπασίου one dated 14 May 1007 (p.299); "relics brought to Constantinople", P. Lemerle, Premier humanisme, p. 271, putting date at 955/6, or possibly 944; Darrrouzès, v.p.71 .

It is striking that no less than 11 of these 14 reminiscences are to be found in the Hymns, indeed in only seven Hymns out of the total number of fifty-eight. Furthermore, 7 of these allusions are to Chrysostom's homilies De Incomprehensibili and occur in Hymns XIX, XXI, XXIX, XXX and XXXI. On this basis, it seems reasonable to suggest that it was when composing his Hymns that Symeon was most likely to recall ideas or phrases from Chrysostom, and that at the time of writing the five just enumerated he was particularly subject to the influence of the homilies De Incomprehensibili. This suggestion might be compared with what was said earlier about his use of Gregory of Nazianzus' Oration XL in Cat IV. (19)

Other earlier writers, of whom Symeon had some knowledge and who may therefore have exercised some influence upon him, include St. Basil the Great (three citations, two definite allusions and seven possible reminiscences, on the basis of the Sources Chrétiennes indices) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (one allusion, seven possible reminiscences). Krivocheine also remarks upon a striking resemblance between the opening part of Cat XXXIV and the second part of the 'Epistula Magna' of Pseudo-Macarius, although Symeon gives no indication of indebtedness. Again, it is interesting that although in an autobiographical passage he recounts how as a young man he was given by the Studite a work of St. Mark the Hermit to read, and in the same context cites three sentences from this author, apart from this he never quotes him directly and indeed has only a few possible, but not certain reminiscences of him.

(19) Mango, Byzantium: p.240; Kambylis, op.cit., on Hym II, 13f., referring to In Johannem hom. 46, PG 59, 260 - Koder on Hym V, 8 (SC 156 p. 201, n.1) notes an allusion to the same passage, and compares Hym II, 12ff., without having there remarked on the possible reminiscence; "general allusion", Hym XIX, 80, where Neyrand (SC 174 p.101, n.3) says that Symeon has in mind De Sacerdotio, particularly books II and III, PG 48, 632 - 659; Psalm 50 (51) Cat V, 126 - 135 and Paramelle's notes (SC 96 p. 387, n.1 and n.2) ; De Incomprehensibili, PG 48, 701 - 748.

It is remarkable, too, that Symeon never definitely quotes from Pseudo-Dionysius, although at times one can find him using similar language, and although Nicetas explicitly cites the Divine Names as authoritative support for the teaching contained in the Hymns. (20)

In addition to the writers and works so far spoken of, Symeon on some fifteen occasions quotes from, or refers to, the Lives of various saints and martyrs. These are books of the kind one might expect to be available for edifying reading in a monastery, and Symeon once indeed explicitly bids his monks read "the lives" of "our holy fathers", citing their prowess in support of his own teaching. In Krivochéine's words he "appears to have been deeply moved by" the Life of St. Mary of Egypt which he three times cites, while on another occasion he uses language reminiscent of it without mentioning his source. In Cat V, as well as that of St. Mary of Egypt he mentions the Lives of St. Pelagia, St. Theodora, St. Euphrosyne and St. Xene, and in Cat VI those of St. Antony, St. Arsenius, St. Euthymius and St. Sabas. He was thus sufficiently familiar with many examples of hagiography to refer to them in his teaching, and it is interesting that in so doing he appeared to assume that his hearers also would know these works and be able to read them for themselves. (21)

(20) Pseudo-Macarius, v. Krivochéine Cat XXXIV SC 113 pp. 270f., n.1, and notes on subsequent pages pointing out parallels; and for the "Epistula Magna", v. W. Jaeger, Two rediscovered works of ancient Christian literature - Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius, Leiden, 1954; St. Mark the Hermit, Cat XXII, 34 - 51, cf. Nicetas, Life, 4, 16 - 19 - the work cited was De Long Spiritualis (PG 65, 905 - 929), which Symeon must have known in a manuscript which does not separate it from ibid., 929 - 965, De his qui putant se ex operibus justificari - v. Krivochéine's notes, Cat XXII, SC 104 pp. 367, n.3, and pp. 368f., notes 1, 2 and 3; "similar language", eg. Tr Th I, 79 - 81, Tr Th III, 108 - 111, cf. Divine Names 1, 1; 4, 32 (PG 3, 588B; 732D); "Nicetas", Preface to Hymns, 84 - 86 (SC 156 p. 114).

(21) "the lives of our holy fathers", Cat VI, 18 - 20; St. Mary of Egypt, Cat V, 562, IX, 61 - 84, XII, 179 - 192, with a reminiscence of the language of her Life at Cat XVI, 10f., v. also Krivochéine's note, Cat V, SC 96 p.424, n.1; Cat V, 560 - 566; Cat VI, Antony, 40 - 69, Arsenius, 70 - 98, Euthymius and Sabas, 102.

The Words of the Studite.

However, Cat VI provides good evidence that none of the saints of former days inspired in Symeon anything approaching the devotion which he had come to feel for his spiritual father, the Studite, whom of course he regarded as a saint of his own time. This Catechesis runs to 370 lines, and it is in line 102 that Euthymius and Sabas are mentioned, simply by name, whereas a good many details are given concerning Antony and Arsenius of whom he had previously spoken. At line 164 Symeon brings in the name of the Studite, and shortly afterwards quotes an enigmatic saying of his to the effect that a monk in his monastery should be

"as one who is and is not and does not appear, or rather does not even make his existence known".

After giving the explanation of this as the Studite himself had interpreted it, Symeon is moved to exclaim:

"O blessed words, by means of which his superhuman, angelic mode of life is proclaimed...",

a display of enthusiasm enormously in excess of anything manifested in connection with his references to the saints of old. We are now not quite half-way through the Catechesis, and of the remainder the greater part is concerned with this one subject. There are more quotations from the Studite, and after the last of these another enthusiastic comment,

"O blessed voice, or rather blessed soul, judged worthy to become like this, and separated from the entire world".

These examples illustrate vividly the difference Symeon felt between what he received from writers of the past and what he was given by his spiritual father. (22)

(22) "as one who is, etc", Cat VI, 172 - 179, also p. 94 and Part Two, chapter III (c), p. 201; "enthusiastic comment", Cat VI, 273 - 275.

This theme will be found recurring many times in the course of this thesis, for we shall frequently have occasion to illustrate and remark on the overwhelming importance for Symeon of his actual experience as a spiritual child of the Studite. The several instances will be commented on as they arise, but at this stage we must proceed to discuss the general concept of spiritual fatherhood as part of the heritage into which Symeon entered.

Spiritual Fatherhood.

Is it possible to say when and where, in Christianity, this tradition began? Holl observed that even before the commencement of the monastic movement, Clement of Alexandria had advised the typical wealthy and haughty man to submit himself to some "man of God" who would be his trainer and director. But it is in a saying ascribed to St. Antony, often regarded as the founder of monasticism, that we seem to be hearing of something in process at least of becoming an institution.

"The monk ought, if possible, to confide to the elders how many steps he takes or how many drops (of water) he drinks in his cell, to avoid making a mistake in these matters".

Here, as Hausherr noted, is found the first explicit enunciation of what will become a central feature of the spiritual father's work, the receiving of his disciple's disclosures with regard to all he thinks, says or does. Details of the activities of the spiritual father, including what has just been mentioned, will be discussed in later chapters; at this point is necessary to speak of his titles. Having examined these, Hausherr states that while

"spiritual father", "father" or "abba" are the terms used most often, there are also many others. He instances "elder" (γέρων, as in the example just cited, or πατήρ), appropriate since the person concerned would normally be an older man; also "teacher" (διδάσκαλος;) suitable for one who would have to instruct, and

other words indicative of training or correction. In cenobitic communities, the father would usually be in some sense a "superior", and this aspect is expressed by words such as *πρωτεύων*, *ἐπιστάτης* or *ἡγούμενος*. Hausherr adds that there are other titles also, but that "father", with or without the epithet "spiritual" is the most common and the only one which emphasises what is essential. (23)

While it will be necessary in a future chapter to examine on what basis one can be regarded as qualified to undertake the work of a spiritual father, it is worthwhile here to quote what Rousseau has to say about the early period.

"A claim to the title of *πῶρ*, spiritual father, depended on a wide range of qualifications, recognized throughout the desert".

He then proceeds to list: belonging to a historical tradition; personal experience; hard work (physical); interior watchfulness; purity of heart; visions; foreknowledge and insight, inspiration and discernment. Many of these we shall be encountering again, but here it is only necessary to stress that, from the beginning, spiritual fatherhood, though in itself a 'charismatic' rather than an 'official' ministry, has always demanded certain recognisable qualifications of those who exercise it. This is why Symeon, as we shall see, was able to denounce some of his contemporaries as falsely claiming to be spiritual fathers while in essential matters they were unqualified for the role. (24)

(23) Holl, *Enthusiasmus*, pp. 228f., citing Clement, *Quis dives salvetur?*, PG 9, 645 C; Antony, PG 65, 86B; Hausherr, 'Penthos', *O.C.A.*, 132, (1944), p. 83; Hausherr, *Direction spirituelle*, p. 13.

(24) Rousseau, *Ascetics*, pp. 22 - 31; by 'charismatic' ministry is meant one which depends on the possession of a personal gift (*χάρισμα*), which may or should be recognised, and its exercise supervised, by ecclesiastical authority, but which that authority of itself cannot bestow. The possibility of conflict between 'charismatic' ministries and those pertaining to the Church's hierarchy is obvious, but there are examples of harmony as well as of friction, v. Barringer, *Penance*, pp. 105, 159f., 178; Symeon, v. Part One, chapter I (c), p. 122.

Examples from the pre-Basilian era show, according to Rousseau, a variety of types of relationship between a spiritual father and those who had recourse to him.

"Questioners may have come on isolated occasions, to appeal in general terms to the father's spiritual wisdom...When communities were expanding in Nitria and Scetis, questioners may have sought for more detailed advice, which would have required a more lengthy revelation of their state of soul and longer acquaintance and deeper knowledge on the part of the father. Finally, once a young man had found a mentor suited to his taste, he would stay in his company, and in that of his fellow disciples for a considerable time, even until death".(25)

Dissatisfied though he was with eremitical forms of monasticism, St. Basil the Great was very far from wishing to do away with spiritual fatherhood. Lowther Clarke and de Mendieta both agree in translating a rather obscure sentence of Basil's referring to spiritual directors in terms which indicate that one should expect to find such people in monasteries:

"Such a guide it is difficult to find in solitude, unless one has already formed a link with him in community life".

Whatever exactly Basil here intended to say, there can be no question of his disdaining spiritual fatherhood, for in the very same context he speaks of the cure of sin being undertaken with understanding by one who genuinely loves. Moreover, as Baus observes, Basil prescribes being a spiritual father to his monks as the first duty of a monastic superior. This was doubtless an admirable idea in intention, but as we shall have to notice, it could and did also lead to problems: a hegumen might be immersed in administration relating to the temporalities of the monastery, and might indeed have been chosen primarily for his ability in this field; on the other hand, a monk might be convinced that he was acting in the best interests of his soul by adhering to someone other than his hegumen as his spiritual father.

(25) Rousseau, Ascetics, p. 36.

The result, as Hausherr has expressed it, is that

"one has to record after reading through the typika a continual oscillation between two positions: a single spiritual father who is at the same time none other than the hegumen and a freedom to choose accorded more or less sparingly to individuals".

But whatever disagreements of this kind might arise,

"by the time of the Council of Chalcedon, the monastic penitential institutions of confession of λογισμός, spiritual direction, and the correction of sinners within the sphere of the monastic ecclesiola have become normative". (26)

To summarise, then, what we have tried to establish so far:

spiritual fatherhood had by Symeon's time a long history behind it; in the course of this it had from time to time given rise to various contentions; and, lastly, it had a special relationship with the monastic life. (27)

However, although spiritual fathers were generally monks - not of course necessarily cenobitic monks - and all cenobitic monks in theory at least had a spiritual father, yet it must not be imagined that when this subject is being discussed the outside world is to be excluded from view. At all times some of those living in the world are found amongst the spiritual children of at least some fathers, but naturally, as we shall consider later, the relationship in this case is not the same as when the disciple is a monk, and very probably

(26) W.K. Lowther Clarke, St. Basil the Great, Cambridge, 1913, p. 163; E.A. de Mendota, L'ascèse monastique de St. Basile, Maredsous, 1949, p. 121, n.6, Basil, Regulae fusiue tractatae, VII, PG 31, 929 A; K. Baus, 'Early Christian Monasticism', History of the Church, (edd. H. Jedin and J. Dolan), London, 1980, II, 368f., referring to Basil, ibid., XXIV - LIV, PG 31, 984 C - 1044 B; "administration", of. Part Two, chapter II (d), p. 156; "adhering to other than hegumen", as, of course, was the case with Symeon, of. Part One, chapter I, pp. 50f.; Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, p. 114, of. Part Two, chapter I (c) p. 117 and (e) p. 132, chapter V (c) p. 317; "monastic penitential institutions", Barringer, Penance, p. 53.

(27) "monastic life", monks can be expected to have a special care for their souls, since they are by definition "those who wish to be saved" (Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, p. 298), and furthermore, the hegumen is assisted in his task of leadership if all his monks disclose their thoughts to him, 'Le typikon de la Théotokos Evergetis', ed. P. Gautier, R.E.B., 40, (1982), chapter 15, p. 57). The Studite, as will be seen, looked at the matter differently, v. Part II, chapter III (c), p. 192.

subject also to the authority of his father qua hegumen. The secular not only has responsibilities different from those of the monk, but also is free at any time to cease from submitting himself to his father's spiritual direction, perhaps becoming the disciple of someone else or perhaps no longer following any guide. (28)

It may be asked with regard to Byzantium, why it was to monks rather than to the secular clergy that those living in the world seem regularly to have turned when they sought a spiritual father. At first sight one would suppose that it would be the parish priests who would be best qualified to help those who like themselves had not withdrawn from the everyday life of ordinary men and women. Holl provides a convincing explanation when he remarks that as a result of the high value ascribed to virginity, coupled with the fact that celibacy was not imposed on the ordinary clergy, the non-monastic priest was seen simply as a cultic figure, so that for confession it was natural to turn to monks who were believed to be more perfect Christians and to possess the gift of discernment. Of the parish clergy it has been said:

"The people liked the papas and respected them hardly at all, because they were like themselves".

Symeon, it is true, believed that some of the seculars who acquired spiritual fathers did so without very much sincerity, while some of

(28) "generally monks" - because of the dearth of information about the secular clergy of the Byzantine world in Symeon's time and earlier, it is impossible to be certain that none of them ever acted as spiritual fathers. However, for the reasons given in the next paragraph, it would have been very unusual for someone not a monk to have been accepted as a spiritual father, and in Ep 1 (De Confessione) pp. 122 - 124, Symeon argues that because of their worldliness etc., the power to bind and loose has passed from bishops and priests and now resides in monks, or rather in those monks who are true to their profession; "relationship with spiritual children living in the world", v. Part Two, chapter V (c).

those who set themselves up as spiritual fathers lacked any real qualifications for the work. Apart from such cases, however, one can understand, in the light of what has been said, that a man or woman living in the world and devout enough to seek a spiritual guide would be drawn not to the parish clergy but to the monks, and particularly to such monks as had a reputation for wisdom and for sanctity. (29)

Spiritual fathers in Symeon's time, then, while numbering amongst their disciples both monks and people outside the monasteries, are for our purposes taken as belonging to the monastic order, but this is not to say that they were necessarily priests. The monasteries as a rule had amongst their members only a few in priests' orders, no more than required to officiate in the Divine Liturgy and the other services. Furthermore, as we have seen, spiritual fatherhood is essentially a 'charismatic' ministry, whereas priesthood is in the Christian Church necessarily an 'official' one. The same monk might, of course, be both a priest and a spiritual father, but the fact that this need not be so was bound to raise the question of whether an unordained monk was or could be authorised to absolve those for whom he acted as spiritual father. This is a matter which calls for some discussion, in view of the fact that Symeon, though himself ordained, wrote Ep 1 (De Confessione) as a vehement rejoinder to those who sought to attach the power to absolve simply and exclusively to the holders of ecclesiastical office as such. He had been asked whether

(29) Holl, Enthusiasmus, p. 311 - discernment (διδασκαλία) will be discussed in Part Two, chapter II (b) in connection with the qualifications of a spiritual father; "parish clergy", E. Le Barbier, S. Christodule et la réforme des couvents grecs au XIe siècle, Paris, 1863, p. 10 (cited by L. Oeconomos, La vie religieuse dans l'empire byzantin au temps des Coménes et des Anges, New York, 1972 (reprint of 1918 edition), p. 126; for Symeon's criticisms, v. Part Two, chapter V (c).

it was lawful to confess to unordained monks, since authority to bind and loose was believed to have been granted to none but priests, and in reply, after arguing at some length in favour of his 'charismatic' stance, concluded with what was for him the most important proof of all: his own father, the Studite, had been one

"who had no ordination from men". (30)

It must be remembered that although a judicial aspect is bound to be involved, for the Eastern Church the subject of confession and absolution is not approached from this angle to the degree that it has generally been in the West. As has been often remarked, and will be illustrated in connection with Symeon, the Eastern spiritual father views his relationship with the penitent primarily in therapeutic terms. There are other factors also which contribute to making the claim of an unordained spiritual father to absolve less startling than it appears to those whose viewpoint is more or less restricted by the limits of the theology and practice of the Western Church. Thus, while the confessor, acting as such, is concerned to absolve the penitent on a specific occasion, the spiritual father is, as we shall see, ideally engaged in helping his child to attain, perhaps after many years, a new and authentic personal relationship with God, which amongst other things, will be marked by an interior assurance that he has received the forgiveness of sins. Furthermore, for the attainment of this result very great importance is attached to the prayers offered by the father, and the greater his sanctity, the greater the effectiveness of his prayers is held to be, regardless of his 'official' rank in the Church. It is also worth noting that although, in spite of Symeon and others, the Eastern Church has reserved to priests (and bishops) the authority to absolve, the formula used is precatory,

(30) *Ep.* 1, p. 110, 1 - 5; *ibid.*, p. 127, 6f.

unlike the Western "I absolve thee". This would tend to blur the distinction between sacramental absolution and the father's general work of intercession for his disciple. (31)

It is, then, not difficult to understand how unordained spiritual fathers could find themselves the subject of controversy. There was no question that for much that they did ordination was not required, and it is not surprising if occasionally, perhaps in response to pressure from men or women very conscious of having sinned, they claimed the right to grant sacramental absolution. From the other side, of course, there would always be on the part of the 'official' element in the Church a desire to ensure that this 'charismatic' ministry was exercised under proper control. Barringer, after studying the matter, concludes that confession to unordained monks was a temporary phenomenon, for when it became more than a pastoral supplement,

"it provoked a firm, measured reaction on the part of the bishops and the canonists".

It is inevitably, however, a part of the background which has to be taken into account for the purpose of any study of Symeon. (32)

(31) "in therapeutic terms", v. Part Two, chapter II (c); "personal relationship with God", v. Part Two, chapter III (d); "prayers by the father", v. Part Two, chapter III (b), pp. 172-175 and Excursus at end of Part One, Chapter I; "precatory formula", some Orthodox Churches, however, as a result of Latin influence have in more recent times adopted an indicative form of words; "blur the distinction", it should be noted that there is also a possibility of confusion between absolution and permission to communicate, on which v. also Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 218f.

(32) "ordination not required", cf. Hausherr, *Life*, P. LXXVII, "the power to bind and loose is only one part of the spiritual father's role, and perhaps not the main part"; Barringer, *Penance*, p. 194, cf. P. Gauthier, 'Le Chartophylax Nicéphore', *R.E.B.* 27, (1969), pp. 170-172 and 182-184, where from two letters written c. 1100 A.D. one gathers that Nicephorus knew that unordained monks were not qualified to hear confessions but that in fact some did so even perhaps some who were inexperienced and ignorant (ἀπειροι καὶ ἀμαθεῖς), cf. also the *typikon* of St. Mamas, compiled after its rebuilding in the 12th century, which states in its ninth chapter, entitled "On confession by the brethren and that all should have the hegumen as spiritual father", that this rule applies "even if (the hegumen) is not a priest, because he has authority from the ecumenical patriarch, and can apply the appropriate remedy for every sickness" (Hausherr, *Direction spirituelle*, p. 114). Krivocheine, *Lumière*, pp. 146f. insists that the Orthodox Church has never officially pronounced on the question although in practice it has restricted the giving of absolution to bishops and priests, and K. Ware 'Tradition and Personal Experience in Later Byzantine Theology' *Eastern Churches Review*, III, 2, (1970), p. 137 (inc.n.25), writes in similar terms.

Monasticism. Something, it is clear, must be said about the monastic heritage into which Symeon entered. It would be out of the question to attempt here to write a history of Eastern monasticism up to the tenth century, but there are some features which deserve brief mention because of their relevance to this study. In spite of Symeon's having had there only a short and stormy sojourn, we begin with the Studios monastery.

As Holl observed, Nicetas regarded Symeon as a true exponent of the tradition of St. Theodore the Studite: in the address to his monks and to his disciple Arsenius, at the time of his resigning the hegumenate of St. Mamas in favour of the latter, words are placed on Symeon's lips which quite definitely state this. There would seem to be no reason for doubting the general accuracy of Nicetas on this point. After all, not only, as Delehaye says, were Theodore's

"reforms widely disseminated by his writings, his will, the hypotyposis, and his Catechisms".

but Symeon must have absorbed many of the characteristics of Studios under the influence of his spiritual father who remained there until death. When the Patriarch Sergius II reluctantly expressed his admiration for Symeon's refusal to compromise in the words,

"You are genuinely a Studite ..", he of course had in mind

"that policy of uncompromising opposition (which) their master Theodore handed on to the Studites".

But Sergius' words are true in respect of more than Symeon's resolute refusal to moderate his publicly expressed devotion to the memory of his spiritual father. There are cases of verbal resemblances between Symeon's language and that found in Studite sources, and Krivocheine has observed that Cats XI, XII and XIII, on the themes of Lent and Easter, are not unlike some writings of Theodore who delivered several Catecheses

on these subjects, the opening of Cat XIII particularly resembling Parva Catechesis 1, 1 - 5 and 2, 1 - 2. But Krivochéine also remarks on the great differences both in style and spirituality between the two writers. Bouyer and Völker, though the latter with some qualification, both agree that the influence of Studios was an important factor in Symeon's development. (33)

In one matter, however, both the Studite and Symeon did not follow the intentions of Theodore, of whom Leroy stated:

"The goal which he establishes for monasticism is not the acquiring of contemplation, but the realising of the old Christian ideal. The monastery is a kind of village on the Christian pattern, and nothing more".

This accounts for the importance ascribed to work in the Studite tradition, something which Leroy also notes. At the same time, as often happens after the death of a great founder or reformer, by the tenth century there had been some decline in fervour on the part of the Studite community, so that, to use Krivochéine's words once again,

"one may say that Symeon's spirituality was a kind of reaction against the formal cenobitism which developed at Studios under Theodore's successors".

(33) Holl, Enthusiasmus, p. 13, n.1, Nicetas, Life, 63, 15 - 17, cf. also, ibid., 44, 14f., 61, 20 - 23; parts of Nicetas' version of Symeon's address are found in Cat XVIII, 461 - 569, where, however, the occasion is not specified and the references to Theodore are lacking; H. Delehaye, 'Byzantine Monasticism', Byzantium, (edd. N.H. Paynes and H. St. L.B. Moss), Oxford, 1948, p. 150; "Bergius", Nicetas, Life, 108, 2; "uncompromising opposition", H. Delehaye, op. cit., p. 162; "verbal resemblance", the Studios hypotyposis mentions as part of the diet for the second week of Lent δ'σπριον (PG 99, 1716B), and Symeon, speaking one year at the end of that week, congratulated his monks on having been satisfied with τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπιτίμιον λαχάνους καὶ ὀσπρίους (Cat XII, 69f.) The words μὲν λαχάνους occur after δ'σπριον in the version of the hypotyposis given by A. Dmitrievskij (Opisanie Liturgieskikh rukopisej. I. Typika, Kiev, (1895), p.235 5f.) and although J. Leroy ('La vie quotidienne du moine studite,' Irénikon, XXVII, (1954), p.24) states that Dmitrievskij's text is later than that of Migne some details in it could also have been found in the version known to Symeon. For a contrast with Studios and St. Mamas under Symeon, v. 'Le typikon de la Théotokos Evergétis' (ed. P. Gautier, R.E.B., 40, (1982), p.39) which prescribes δ'σπριον for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the first week of Lent. Again, Symeon styles the work assigned to individual monks διακονία (Cat XXVI, 72), cf. ibid., 82, διακονίης one who oversees such work, and Cat V, 917, διακονίης used as the verb for performing it, and according to Leroy (op. cit., p. 35) such usage is rare in Basil, found in Barsanuphius and Dorotheus of Gaza, but normal from Theodore of Studios onwards; Krivochéine, Cat XI, SC 104 pp. 152f., n.1, Cat XIII, ibid., p. 191, n.2; L. Bouyer, A History of Christian Spirituality, London, 1968, II, 572; Völker, Praxis, p.86.

One aspect of this reaction is to be found in one of the chief lessons which Symeon learnt from his spiritual father and himself subsequently taught, namely that contemplation is the monk's proper goal, and that to acquire it *ἡσυχία* is to be cultivated rather than work or involvement in the common life. Work indeed for Symeon, unlike Theodore, appears to have no intrinsic value, but to be merely a means for avoiding the temptations which will attack a novice who sits idly in his cell. (34)

Away from cities it had long been accepted that a monk judged to be of sufficient maturity, who felt called to a life of contemplation, might with his hegumen's consent retire into solitude in some kind of cell outside, but fairly close to, the monastery. This was clearly not possible in the case of an urban monastery, but *ἡσυχία* might still be a practical goal. According to Meyendorff,

"Symeon taught the practice thereof in the very centre of Constantinople, at the monastery of Studios".

In this strange statement the practice of withdrawal within the monastery is said to have originated with the New Theologian, who certainly taught it, but certainly did not do so during the short time he was at Studios. In fact, however, the practice goes back at least to Symeon's spiritual father, - is a confusion here the cause of Meyendorff's mentioning Studios? -, for the Studite had asserted that the monk should be in his monastery as one who is and is not and does not appear, or rather does not even make his existence known.

(34) J. Leroy, 'La réforme studite', O.C.A. 153, (1958), p. 195; "decline in fervour", cf. H-G. Beck, 'The Greek Church in the Epoch of Iconoclasm', History of the Church, (edd. H. Jedin and J. Dolan), London, 1980, III, 53, for a statement to the effect that the success of Theodore's efforts did not endure; Krivochéine, Cats SC 96 intr. p. 41; *ἡσυχία*, v. Glossary.

Although the actual word *ἡσυχία* does not occur here, it is obvious that what is being advocated is a life of withdrawal so far as possible within the monastery. Symeon himself makes use of the verb *ἡσυχάζω*, when speaking of the disciple's training having reached the stage where his father bids him quietly await the revelation of the Spirit. Symeon's monastic background is thus far from being purely cenobitic, in spite of the influence that Studios had on him; he was also in touch with the old tradition of withdrawal from community life into solitude, a tradition which had been revived and adapted to fit the conditions of urban monasteries, and which had great attractions not only for the Studite but also for Symeon himself. (35)

The Studite.

We must now try to bring together the themes of spiritual fatherhood and monasticism, as aspects of Symeon's background, by focussing our attention on one particular monk, Symeon the Studite, who as his spiritual father exercised such a massive influence upon him. Unfortunately, in any consideration of the Studite we are hampered by the lack of evidence: apart from a small amount of his own writing, there is only what we can learn from his disciple, Symeon, and from the latter's biographer, Nicetas, neither of whom can be claimed to be impartial witnesses.

Hausherr and Krivocheine agree, on the basis of what can be inferred from the Life and Cat XVI, that the Studite must have been born in 917 or thereabouts, have become a monk at Studios in 942 and

(35) "retire into solitude", cf. M. Jugie, Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, II (ii), Paris, 1932, col. 1750f.; J. Meyendorff (tr. C. Lawrence), A Study of Gregory Palamas, Leighton Buzzard, 1974, p. 18; "the Studite had asserted", v. above, p. 83; Symeon, Cat XX, 162; there are also examples of solitude being sought by means of enclosure within a cenobitic community not situated in urban surroundings, e.g. Barsanuphius and John at Thavatha, v. D.J. Chitty, The Desert a City, Oxford, 1966, p. 132, cf. L. Regnault and J. de Préville, Dorotheus SC 92 intr. p. 15.

died at approximately the age of seventy in 986 or 987. In that he was never ordained to the priesthood, he followed the practice of the majority of Orthodox monks. Nicetas and Symeon both assert that he was uneducated, a hagiographical topos not to be taken too seriously. In fact his writings show him capable of expressing himself in the kind of Greek which in the 10th century was beyond anyone without at least an elementary level of education. Moreover, the Studios hypotyposis prescribed that on days when they were not engaged in manual work the monks were to read a book from the library, so that it may be presumed that he had some acquaintance with Christian literature. Besides what he learnt from books belonging to the monastery, the Studite must have been familiar also with at least one book belonging to himself, since he thought it suitable to lend to the young Symeon at an early stage in their relationship, the very fact that he could let him have it indicating that it was a personal possession and not the monastery's property. His disdain for books was thus not as intense as one might at first be inclined to suppose. (36)

Nicetas says that the Studite had gifts of healing and miraculous powers, and one may guess that it was these, as well as his reputation for sanctity, which gained him many spiritual children in Constantinople, whom he used to visit, as Symeon informs us. However, it appears that he was not always or universally accepted as saintly, and this will have resulted from his own decision, for there is evidence, which must now be looked at, that he deliberately acted as a "holy fool"

(36) Hausherr, Life, p. XC, Krivochéine, Cat IV SC 96, pp. 313f., n.4; Nicetas, Life, 72, 13, ὑποτύπωσις, Symeon, Cat VI, 195, μαθήριον; ὑποτύπωσις ἑσπερίων ἀδελφῶν; hypotyposis, PG 99, 1713 AB; "one book", a work of St. Mark the Hermit, v. above, p. 81 (Cat XXII, 34f.), Nicetas, Life, 4, 16 adding Diadochus, apparently by mistake, v. Hausherr's note ad loc.; "disdain for books", expressed in the maxim cited on p. 65. This was perhaps something of a topos, cf. Climacus, Sc Par. 5, 780D - 781A. and ad Pastorem 1165C.

(σῆλός) in order not to appear pious. Mango states that the idea of feigning madness first appeared in the 4th century in a cenobitic context, the motive being to add to one's humiliations for the sake of gaining a greater heavenly reward, but he adds that with the most famous holy fool, St. Symeon of Emesa, another motive is to be seen, that of evangelization. Symeon and some others sought in this way to reach the most despised elements in society, who were impervious to the type of approach made to them by respectable Christians. These two motives exactly correspond with what Nicetas says of the Studite's

"wishing to conceal the treasure of his dispassion - for he fled from the praise of men and the honours they bestow as if from a serpent that bites the heel - and doing this also in order that, by means of this bait, he might unobserved haul up from the pit of destruction some of those lying there. indeed all of them if possible.."

In spite of the absence of the actual word σῆλός , Mango's two motives are here clearly visible, even though we are not told what social class the Studite was hoping to evangelize. (37)

None of our sources specifically applies the word σῆλός to the Studite, but Ryden, following Rosenthal-Kamarinea, speaks of him as

"a part-time holy fool", meaning that for some part of his life he lived as such. Ryden further suggests what may well be the reason for the avoiding of the term σῆλός on the part of Symeon and Nicetas, namely that it was often brought into disrepute by "pseudo-holy fools",

(37) Nicetas, *Life*, 72, 12; "spiritual children", *Cat XVI*, 31 - 34; Mango, *Byzantium*, p. 112; for an instance of seeking humiliations by feigning madness v. Palladius' account of a nun in Egypt, PG 34, 1106A - 1107C, and for the motive of evangelism, Symeon of Emesa' words to his companion in the desert, "let us depart and save others also", PG 99, 1704A; for the further possibility that Symeon himself in some sense sought to be regarded as a σῆλός , v. Part One, chapter I, pp. 47f; Nicetas, *Life*, 81, 6 - 10.

impostors who adopted this mode of life in its external features, but were really far from being saints. Ryden cites a telling passage from Cat XXVIII in which Symeon in fact utters a warning about such people. Clearly there would be uncertainty about individuals of this kind, and it is interesting that Holl observed that the charges brought by Stephen the syncellus against Symeon in connection with the Studite relate less to unauthorised "canonisation" than to the "canonising" of an unworthy person. In fact Symeon depicts his father in a way which by the standards of contemporary monasticism must have appeared bizarre, to say the least:

"Symeon, the holy, the devout (ἐὺλαβής), the Studite, was not afflicted by shame regarding any man's limbs and organs, neither if he saw others naked, nor if he himself was seen naked.."

Further, as Hausherr argued, the title ἐὺλαβής could originally have been intended as a sarcastic appellation,

"because his enemies accused him of a serious lack of modesty".

It is likely, then, that the syncellus had indeed heard reports of the Studite's strange behaviour, and that Nicetas is substantially correct when he represents him as saying to the synod:

"(Symeon's) spiritual father was a sinner, but he is extolling him with the saints and as a saint".

In fact, the evidence all fits well together and strongly suggests that the Studite should be classed as a "holy fool". (38)

(38) L. Ryden, 'The Holy Fool', The Byzantine Saint, London, 1981, p. 111; I. Rosenthal-Kamarinea, 'Symeon Studites, ein heiliger Narr', Akten des XI internationale Byzantinisten Kongresses, (1958), pp. 515 - 519; L. Ryden, op. cit. p. 111, referring to Cat XXVIII, 365-386; in Cat VI, 300f. Symeon asks indignantly whether his hearers think the Studite μῶρος, a word for 'foolish' which does not have the specialised meaning of εἰλαός; Holl, Enthusiasmus, pp. 20f.; "depicts his father", Hym XV, 205-208; ἐὺλαβής, rendered "devout" in most English versions, is used to describe a Biblical Symeon in St. Luke 2, 25; Hausherr, Life, p. LXXXIX; Nicetas, Life, 81, 13f., cf. also Cat VI, 304 - 308, Cat XXVI, 99 - 125, and Cat XX, 80 - 87, where Symeon adds an apparent autobiographical touch to the injunction not to be scandalized if one sees one's spiritual father eating μετὰ πονηρῶν καὶ τολωῶν καὶ ἀμαρτωλῶν... ἀλλὰ μετὰ τοῖς ὁρθοδόμοις βίβωμεν τοῦτοις περιστάσι τὸ συνέλον. Πλανῶνται γὰρ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι, ὡς ἐργα μελέθῃκα.

Further confirmation of our judgement that this is a true description of the Studite can be had if we compare what Nicetas says about his dispassion and its results with what is found in the accounts of the two most famous "holy fools", St. Symeon of Emesa and St. Andrew the Fool. Nicetas states that the Studite

"was totally mortified as to his flesh as a result of dispassion of the highest order .. and as for any bodies coming near to him, his perception of them was like that which a corpse might have of another corpse".

Symeon of Emesa, as an act of deliberate folly, on one occasion made his way into the women's section of the public baths, but said of himself afterwards,

"I remained like a piece of wood among other pieces of wood".

In the Life of Andrew the two images of "corpse" and "wood" are combined, and a third is added, for when he was once in the company of some prostitutes, who tried unsuccessfully to arouse his sexual appetite, one of them in disgust finally remarked,

"This fellow is a corpse, or a piece of wood that cannot feel, or else a stone that never moves".

The similarity of motif in each case justifies our contention that Nicetas is indicating that the Studite could be regarded as a σολοι even though the word is not explicitly used. (39)

Something of the part which the Studite played in Symeon's life has already been depicted in the last chapter, and there will of course be further references to this subject as the thesis proceeds.

(39) Nicetas, Life, 81, 3 - 5; Symeon of Emesa, PG 99, 1713C; Andrew the Fool, PG 111, 653A. cf. also Symeon's insistence on the possibility of one who has God within him being unharmed if γυμνὸς τῷ σώματι γυμνὸς αὐτῷ τῷ θεῷ ἵσταται, Tr. Eth VI, 209f.

We now turn to the Studite's writings in order to supplement by direct evidence what has so far been said in our attempt to describe him. Hausherr, Darrouzes and Krivochéine agree that the Studite is the author of forty Chapters which are found in some manuscripts with those of Symeon, his spiritual child, but in Patmiacus 427 are noted as being the work of

"Symeon the devout (Συμεὼν ὁ εὐσεβὴς)".

Thirty-three of these appear in Migne, (but are there ascribed to Symeon the New Theologian) and Hausherr adds another in translation. They are, for the most part, short paragraphs, and their intention is to provide advice for a novice or a monk who is starting to make a serious effort to advance in the spiritual life. Symeon twice quotes directly from them, and shows various signs of having been influenced by the teaching they contain. (40)

Unfortunately, however, these Chapters provide only a minimum of information about their author. They confirm that he lived in a cenobitic monastery, and reveal him as having a practical approach to the opportunities for spiritual progress afforded by such an environment. One of the themes later taken up by Symeon, the necessity of keeping so far as one can aloof from fellow-monks, reinforces what was said about the Studite's desire for ἡσυχία and may also be an indication that the contemporary tone of his monastery did not impress him by its spiritual earnestness.

(40) Hausherr, Life, pp. XLIV - XLVII, presents the full arguments on the basis of the manuscripts and two citations by Symeon the New Theologian; Darrouzes concurs, Chs SC 51, intr. p. 13 and p. 27 including n. 2; Krivochéine also agrees Cat IV, 8, SC 96 p. 315, n.1; details of Patmiacus 427, ibid., pp. 102f; Migne, PG 120, 668C - 685C, numbered as Chapters 120 - 152, i.e. 33 in all, in spite of Hausherr's remark (p.XLV) that 32 are there printed; a further argument against their coming from the New Theologian is that unlike him the writer uses ἀρχαίος for "novice" (669 C and D, 672B) a word not found in Cat XXVI which is devoted to the instruction of novices, and also according to the index absent from the Chs, which contain much similar material (in Tr Eth I, 12, 338f. it is used, but not in this technical sense); additional Chapter in translation by Hausherr, Life, pp. XLIXf; Symeon's quotations, Cat IV, 11f., Cat VI, 271 - 273.

His character is attractively revealed by a qualification which he adds at one point:

"(Cultivate) single-mindedness and spiritual exile from all (fellow-monks), but visit the sick and encourage the afflicted, Do not turn away from any who ask your help, on the pretext that you yourself should be holding converse with God, for charity (ἀγάπη) is better than prayer".

If it has to be admitted that a study of the chapters from the Studite's pen adds little to our knowledge of him, nothing at any rate is found in them to contradict what can be learnt from Symeon and Nicetas concerning his character. On the other hand, they unfortunately do not provide any clue to help us understand why he was able to exercise such a profound influence on Symeon, so that to explain this all that can be suggested is that his temperament and the gifts he possessed were what corresponded almost perfectly with his disciple's needs. (41)

Heretical Movements.

It is necessary, before concluding this chapter, to mention the possibility that Symeon did not escape being to some extent influenced by the teachings of some of the dualistic heretical movements flourishing in his time. Krivochéine notices Deppe's astonishment that Symeon was never accused of Messalianism, and Holl supposes that his name was virtually forgotten for a considerable time because the notorious heresy of the Bogomils rendered suspect anything that had a flavour of Enthusiasmus. In fact one can easily recognise points at which Symeon's teaching resembles that of heretical sects,

(41) "aloof from fellow-monks", v. Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 201f, 211; "tone of his monastery", cf. p. 94 n. 34; on ἡσυχασμός, v. Part Two, chapter III (c) p. 211; quotation from PG 120, 680 BC, the concluding words being closely similar to Climacus' ἡσυχασμός ἡσυχασμός, Sc Par 26, 1028B.

but even if influenced by them to some extent, he can be shown in important matters to have maintained a very different standpoint. (42)

As to how Symeon came into contact with the heretics, if indeed he ever directly did so, one can only speculate. It is far from impossible that some of them, having assumed the monastic habit, were already penetrating into monasteries and disseminating their views in them. Obolensky, referring it is true to a later period, writes that

"they recruited many adherents in the monasteries, which were also the centres of Hesychasm",

and notes also that

"both Anna (Comnena) and Zigabenus explicitly state that the Bogomils dressed as monks and led the monastic life".

Similarly, Obolensky remarks as well that the doctrines of Constantine Chrysomallus were especially popular in monastic circles, particularly in the monastery of St. Nicholas in Constantinople, and on the basis of Cosmas' Treatise he also concludes that

"by the middle of the tenth century, if not earlier, heretical proselytism had been active and often successful in the monastic circles in Bulgaria". (43)

An obvious partial parallel between Symeon's teaching and that of the Bogomils is found in connection with confession. These heretics, according to Cosmas, rejected the Church's provision for absolution by its priests, and insisted that one must look for forgiveness through confession to those who were truly spiritual in their sense of the word, that is, initiated as Bogomils. Symeon, as we have seen, maintained that the essential qualification for reconciling the penitent was to be a truly spiritual man, whether or not one had been ordained priest.

(42) Krivocheine, Lumière, pp. 62f., n. 74, citing Klaus Deppe, Der wahre Christ. Eine Untersuchung zum Frömmigkeitsverständnis Symeons des Neuen Theologen und zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Messalianismus und Hesychasmus, (dissertation), Göttingen, 1971, p. 37; Holl, Enthusiasmus, p. 214.

(43) D. Obolensky, The Bogomils; A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism, Cambridge, 1948, p. 254; ibid., p. 219; ibid., p. 105, referring to Cosmas, Traité.

Being himself both monk and priest, he does not appear to deny that ordination to the priesthood confers the right to absolve, but he feels bound to warn any unspiritual cleric,

"Do not presume to give absolution without having received in thy heart Him who taketh away the sin of the world".

Doubtless Symeon and the heretics were far from being in total agreement about confession and absolution, but they did concur in asserting that it is on the basis of something other than ordination that a person is qualified to be a minister of reconciliation. (44)

As far as the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are concerned, the Bogomils would participate in the latter in order to avoid detection and persecution, while for the Messalians

"it was simply meaningless", whereas in Symeon's case one can cite instance after instance which reveals the sincerity of his Eucharistic piety. However, by insisting that

"not all who are baptized receive Christ through Baptism", he might be taken as going some way towards the Bogomils' position, which was that it was completely useless to be baptized, and that in place of Baptism another initiation ceremony of their own was required, in preparation for which converts must submit themselves to a long course of instruction. Symeon certainly teaches the importance of a second baptism in or by Spirit (*πνεύματι*), but as Krivochéine points out, he does not deny that in the sacramental Baptism of infants the Spirit is received for the remission of original sin. (45)

(44) Obolensky, op. cit., pp. 133, 135, cf. Cosmas, op.cit., p. 249; Symeon's warning, Tr Eth VI, 419 - 421.

(45) "Eucharist" - Bogomils, Obolensky, op.cit., p. 196, Messalians, Vöðbus Early Monasticism, p. 137, Symeon, e.g. Hym LV, 145 - 147, and on his high Eucharistic doctrine, v. Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 225f; "Baptism" - Symeon, Tr Eth X, 324f., Bogomils, Cosmas, Traité, p. 257; *πνεύματι*, Hym LV, 28 - 51, Krivochéine, Lumière, pp. 150f. "

Another matter about which it seems that Symeon may have undergone some influence from heretical quarters, leads us into an examination of language. The Messalians, according to Theodoret,

"teach that the Holy Spirit manifests his presence in a way that is perceptible and visible (αἰσθητὸν καὶ ὁρατὸν).

Gouillard presents an example of this in a debased form: a disciple of Eleutherus of Paphlagonia is reported to have said to a bishop whom he was attempting to proselytise,

"Open your mouth so that I may spit into it, and with your own eyes you will see the Spirit descend upon you".

Symeon also was prepared to speak of "perceptibly" beholding God or Christ, and it appears that copyists or editors felt that he was here treading on dangerous ground, for Krivochéine has observed that at two places αἰσθητὸν is in some manuscripts replaced by the variant ὁρατὸν. He then remarks that in fact there is little difference between the two, but the preference for the latter term

"is explained by the editors' wish to avoid an expression, which completely orthodox though it might be in Symeon's usage.. could cause a scandal on account of the unpleasant Messalian resonances it evoked". (46)

These examples demonstrate that Symeon was not isolated from the ideas and sentiments current among adherents of heretical sects such as the Messalians and the Bogomils. Accordingly, it is not surprising that, as we saw, works ascribed to him were chosen as suitable for interpolation by someone who wished to propagate under acceptable auspices the heretical teachings of Constantine Chrysomallos.

(46) Theodoret, Eccles. Hist. IV, 11, PG 82, 1145A-Krivochéine, Cats SC 96 intr. p. 152 quotes this, and, as a later authority, but to the same effect, St. John of Damascus, De haeresibus, PG 94 732B; J. Gouillard, 'Quatre procès de mystiques à Byzance (vers 960 - 1143)', R.E.B., 36, (1978), p.50, and note his connecting this with Symeon's aspirations, p. 16; Krivochéine, Cats SC 96 intr.pp. 151f., referring to Cat II, 423 and Cat XXIV, 64; quotation from Krivochéine, ibid., p. 152.

It is ironical, though instructive, that something rather similar took place with regard to Symeon's own Ep 1 (De Confessione): the doctrine contained in this, though in fact it differs little from what can be found in, for example, the words from Tr Eth VI quoted above, must have been felt in some quarters to need support from an authority more conspicuously orthodox than Symeon, and so, as already mentioned, some person boldly presented the letter as a work of St. John of Damascus. In fact, by whatever paths Symeon may have reached certain opinions approaching those of the heretics, his affirmation of these views, sometimes in very strong language, is most fairly to be reckoned less as a result of contact with the unorthodox, than as a consequence of his vivid personal experience of the truth of doctrines which most of his orthodox contemporaries held formally and intellectually, yet without the deep feelings with which they affected him. (47)

This survey has sought to introduce the major factors composing the heritage into which Symeon entered or which influenced his "formation". It might be objected that the Eastern Orthodox Church, with its whole range of doctrine, worship, sacraments and personal piety, ought to have been included, as well as what has just been said in connection with some of the heresies which assailed it. It seemed best, however, not to try to depict what could not be dealt with adequately in much more than the space available, and therefore this subject has been deliberately left aside. But it must not be forgotten that Symeon, critical though he was of certain features of

(47) "Chrysomallos", v. Introduction II, p. 30: Ep 1, v. Introduction II, p. 27.

the Church of his day, still held to the importance of

"thinking in an orthodox way", and one must therefore never lose sight of his roots which are to be sought within the whole tradition of Orthodoxy. (48)

(48) "in an orthodox way", Hym L, 202.

PART II: SYLIRON AND SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD.

1. SECURING A SPIRITUAL FATHER.

(a) The Basic Motive.

"The people came with their religious needs," writes Voobus, to the huts of anchorites and to the monasteries of monks and nuns, making their peace of heart dependent upon the blessings and intercessory prayers available in these places. Here they laid down their problems of the inner life and their restless thoughts before men to whom they supposed all the secrets of heart and thought were known".

A longing of this nature for spiritual help in a general sense would of course operate as a motive for people to search out someone who could give them guidance either on a specific occasion or on a regular basis. Some, however, and amongst them especially those who embraced the religious life, were driven by an urge that can be more sharply defined, the desire for assurance of salvation. So, according to Dörries,

"the basic question with which every person who entered the monastic life addressed himself to the elder: *πῶς σωθῶ*; was a confessional question. It expresses the need of a distressed conscience..."

Here recourse to a spiritual father is specifically felt to be a step on the road leading to salvation for all eternity.(1)

This, the tradition of early monasticism, is that in which Climacus was nurtured, and which he transmitted to later generations:

"As a ship which has a good helmsman reaches harbour safely, with God's help, in the same way a soul which has a good pastor easily climbs up to heaven, in spite of a great deal of earlier wrongdoing. As someone who has no guide easily loses his way, in spite of being very intelligent, so someone who is self-directed as he travels on the monastic road may easily perish, in spite of possessing all the wisdom of the world". (2)

(1) Voobus, Early Monasticism, p. 318; H. Dörries, 'Confession' T.U. 80, (1962), p. 248, cf. for modern times, "I became a monk so as to make certain of my eternal salvation", described as the usual answer given when Athonite monks were asked why they had entered a monastery, E. Amand de Mendieta, Mount Athos, the Garden of the Panaghia, Berlin, 1972, p. 217.

(2) Sc.Par. 26, 1089B. In fact this is something of a topos, cf. St. Dorotheus of Gaza, passim, e.g., Doctrinae V, 61, 8f.

In this passage Climacus made use both of positive imagery - reaching heaven -, and of negative - not missing one's way -, but the two equally provided a motive for reliance upon a spiritual father.

Such was the tradition, well represented by Climacus and thus well known to Symeon. But the latter's insistence on the need for a spiritual father clearly owes much not only to his faithfulness to the past but also to his own personal experience. Thus he tells God that while still living in the world, he had

"longed to see one of thy saints (ὁ ἅγιος) in the belief that through him I should find mercy from thee".

A little further on he repeats and amplifies this in the words,

"Mindful of my sins, I sought only for forgiveness of them and desired ... to find a mediator and ambassador, in order that through his intercession and my service of him, I might, at least in time to come, find pardon for my many faults".

Elsewhere he can be found generalising from the distress and anxiety which he had personally lived through, and writing with regard to anyone with a distressed conscience:

"The man who as a result of sin has become enslaved to the devil.. and become the devil's child, instead of being a child of God - what will he do for himself in order to regain the past state from which he has fallen? He will most certainly seek a mediator, one who is a friend of God, and able to restore him to being what he was before, and reconcile him to his God and Father". (3)

(3) Because of Symeon's connection with Studios, he perhaps knew St. Theodore's letter to St. Plato in which he asks τὴν γὰρ πατρὶν ἀληθειᾶν τοθεύσαντες καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ Θεοῦ λαμβανόμενοι; PG 99, 909B; "tells God", Cat XXXV, 19-21, and 73-78, the Greek of the latter being τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν μου μετρησόμενος τὴν ἐκείνου συγχώρησιν μόνον ἐξήγαγον καὶ μετέστη καὶ πρὸς Θεοῦ ἐλπίς... ἐκείνου γὰρ ἐκ τῆς ἐκείνου ἐνταύφως καὶ τῆς πρὸς ἐκείνου καὶ ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι εὐδοκίᾳ τῶν προδόντων μου ἁμαρτημάτων ἐπὶ Θεοῦ. By ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι Symeon indicates that the essential object for him was to secure eventual salvation; "elsewhere", Ep.1, p.115, 1-11, "mediator" here also being μεσότης; in the Greek.

The motive so far encountered has thus been simply the acquiring of peace of mind as a result of gaining an assurance of salvation through the mediation of a spiritual father. A good father would naturally be concerned to do all he could to help his spiritual child advance to other and deeper desires, as we shall see when we come to discuss his obligations and work. But Symeon as a young man was, as he himself definitely states, conscious of no aim in searching for a spiritual father other than that of making sure that he would in the end be saved. In the same autobiographical context from which two citations have already been taken, he addressed Christ in moving words:

"How could I ever have conceived the thought that thou, O Master, Creator of all that exists, dost unite thyself to men whom thou thyself didst fashion..so that in consequence I might have come to long for, and to seek from thee, such benefits? How could I have known, O Lord, that I have such a God, such a Master, Protector, Father, Brother and King as thou who didst become poor and take upon thee the form of a servant, for my sake?" (4)

These words provide an explicit repudiation of the possibility of Symeon's having been in a condition in which he might have anticipated any positive spiritual experience in the present, when he was starting on the quest that was to lead him to the Studite.

We may therefore assert that in spite of the fact the tradition knew of motives for attaching oneself to a spiritual father besides that of ensuring one's salvation, these only became apparent to Symeon as a result of his own experience as a disciple. Further motives which might

(4) "as a young man", of. Part One, chapter I, pp. 43 f., and as evidence that the common view of spiritual fatherhood was that expressed by Symeon, v. Hym XXXI, 1-5, quoted and commented on in Part Two, chapter III(d), p. 252; "moving words", Cat XXXV, 38-45, with reminiscences of II Corinthians 8, 9 and Philippians 2, 7.

have influenced him, if in his early life he had been more familiar with the whole tradition of ascetical theology, will come to light and be examined when we proceed to consider the benefits of having a spiritual father.

Before passing to this, however, it is necessary to summarise a fairly long section of Ep 3, which shows Symeon's awareness of the existence of some who, unlike himself, were apparently complacent about their present condition and their prospects of future salvation. As against them, Symeon insists that without self-knowledge it is indeed impossible to understand that a spiritual father is essential to assist one in the keeping of God's commandments and in escaping from the snares of the devil. Anyone who ignorantly thinks that he needs no instruction or help from others is both conceited and unaware of the fact that he knows nothing. His blindness is the result of his love for this present world. In order to avoid being like this, the person to whom Symeon is writing is bidden to pray to have his eyes opened, a prayer which God will not reject, and as a result of which he will come to know himself, and to appreciate the truth of what he is being told. This is Symeon's reaction to a complacency which feels no need for a spiritual father, for it has no fears of forfeiting salvation, since it believes itself capable of keeping the commandments and overcoming the devil. The cure proposed is prayer, something which we shall come to see is a notable feature of Symeon's teaching, but so ^{far} as motive goes, his basic position is here unaltered: a spiritual father is to be sought in order to enable one to escape from the devil. This he never denied, although later he came to see that there is much else that a father can do for his disciples. (5)

(5) Ep 3, 215v - 216r, cf. also the introduction to the prayer for finding a spiritual father in Tr Eth VII, 435f., "Do not desire to justify yourself, but humble yourself before God". Here the bidding to be humble is the positive antithesis to the negative attitude castigated in Ep 3. In both cases he enjoins prayer, cf. below, section (d) of this chapter.

I (b) A Good Father - the Benefits.

If Symeon at first thought of a spiritual father solely as one who would enable him to gain the assurance of future salvation, he found as a disciple that he received from the Studite a great deal more than this; and if also, generalising from his own experiences and being realistic in his estimate of human nature, he could write as though motives similar to his own would be what first impelled most of those who wanted to find a father, he none the less became concerned to teach that discipleship should convey positive benefits in the present, as well as being a means of avoiding damnation at the last.

To illustrate this we may cite a passage in which, speaking of himself, he says to Christ

"Set free from care, I followed (the Studite) and I rejoiced, O Word, with joy unspeakable as I beheld him following in thy footsteps and often holding converse with thee. But when I saw thee, our good Master, present with my guide, my father, the love and the longing I had were inexpressible. I passed beyond both faith and hope, and I was wont to say, 'Lo, I see things to come, and the Kingdom of heaven is here, and before my eyes I behold those good things which eye has not seen nor ear heard. Since I possess these, what more can I hope for, or in what else show that I have faith? Beyond this there will be nothing greater'." (1)

This passage demonstrates how Symeon in the course of his discipleship came to appreciate that as well as obtaining salvation after death, he could also here and now begin to enjoy eternal life, being humanly speaking indebted to his spiritual father for the latter as well as for the former.

(1) Hym XXXVII, 29-43, cf. Cat XVI, 9-12, and Cat XXXVI, 247-250, where in the course of a dialogue with Christ Symeon speaks of the blessings he is receiving in the present as being all that he would want even after death, and is reproached for being $\mu\iota\kappa\rho\psi\chi\alpha\varsigma$.

A good spiritual father, who himself has a real and living experience of God, will enable his disciple to share it. The traditional wisdom of direction insisted, as Hausherr from the opposite side expressed it, that "the necessary and indispensable condition for becoming the spiritual father of someone else, is that one must first have become spiritual oneself". (2)

It then became a recognised part of the tradition that through the agency of such a father one might enjoy a real experience of God in this present life. Thus Climacus writes:

"If, when (your director) continually reproves you, you acquire greater faith and love towards him, you should know that the Holy Spirit has come invisibly to dwell in your soul, and the power of the Most High has overshadowed you".

Symeon also came himself to give teaching along these lines, but in view of the fact that in a passage already cited he insists that before becoming a disciple he knew nothing about the possibility of experiences of this kind, we must say that the predominating reason why he taught as he did is that his discipleship had made it all real to him. (3)

Further evidence in support of the contention that it was not so much what he had read as what he had lived through that shaped Symeon's teaching, is provided by setting out in parallel the summaries of two passages. That on the left is taken from what is in itself a summary, which follows the autobiographical thanksgiving of Cat. XXV and seems to have been added for the purpose of adapting this as a Catechesis; the other is an abstract

(2) Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, p. 39, where he cites "πνευματικός πατήρ, anderer kann nur sein, wer πνευματικός geworden ist" from R. Reitzenstein, Historia Monachorum und Historia Lausiaca, Göttingen, 1916, p. 195, and v. Part Two, chapter II (a) and (b) for further discussion of the need for πίστις.

(3) Climacus, Se. Par. 4, 725D, where the language is reminiscent of St. Luke 1, 35 (the Annunciation); Symeon, Cat. XX, 161-180, speaking of conscious reception of the Holy Spirit by the disciple of a genuinely spiritual director, but drawing on the language of Acts 1, 8 and 2, 1-4 (Pentecost); "already cited", Cat. XXV, 38-45, v. previous section, p. 109.

of the opening of a straight forward Catechesis. In both cases he is tracing the steps by which, under the guidance of a spiritual father, a penitent attains to maturity in Christ.

Cat. XXXIV, 247-267.
(Autobiographical Summary)

Symeon, in darkness, was stirred by his conscience to seek forgiveness, and to this end to look for a mediator.

He found a mediator, pastor and ambassador, designated as such by a vision.

But there followed a time of relapse until the pastor recovered him.

Symeon showed obedience, trust, humility and submission to the pastor.

His progress in knowledge and contemplation led to his complete transformation.

Cat. XIV, 5-23.
(Straightforward Address)

A man who abandons the world cannot by himself learn true πράσις.

Therefore he goes to someone who is τελειός and ἐμπειρος.

He submits to him, receives his teaching as God's, regarding obedience to it a matter of life or death.

His progress leads to his becoming a full-grown man in Christ.

The similarity in outline between these two summaries testifies to Symeon's teaching having been based not only on the tradition he had received but also on the experience through which he has passed. The benefit available in this life from having a spiritual father is something which he taught but of which, as he says, he was unaware until he had become the Studite's disciple. Symeon was familiar with Climacus, but in this instance it is a case of the tradition confirming his experience rather than vice versa. (4)

There are several other matters about which we can see Climacus and Symeon in agreement about benefits that accrue from having a spiritual father,

(4) "a time of relapse", naturally has no equivalent in Cat XIV where what ought to be the normal course of development is described; τελειός and ἐμπειρος will be discussed and examined in the next chapter.

but where the latter's teaching may be reasonably held to be directly dependent on traditional material. This seems to be the case, for example, when both writers are found decidedly opposing all attempts to live without direction (*ἰδ. οὐκ ὁδηγῶν*); again, when in a long autobiographical passage Symeon recounts his deliverance from "Pharaoh" and his "countless folk", the forces of evil, by means of the Studite, his "Moses", it is likely that his imagery was drawn from the passage near the beginning of the Scala Paradisi in which Climacus speaks of sinners' need for a father in terms of their requiring "a Moses", so that

"they may cross the sea of sin and rout the Amalek of passions".(5)

However, Symeon was far from being a mere plagiarist, dependent on the images found in Climacus, as is shown by his use of one which is absent from the Scala Paradisi and the Liber ad Pastorem. This is the parallel he draws between physical and spiritual begetting, with the consequence that for spiritual birth (or re-birth) a spiritual father is an absolute necessity. He insists that

"as children born according to the flesh are neither begotten nor born without a father, so to be born from above is impossible for anyone who has not the Spirit from those who themselves have been born from above. And as the fleshly father causes fleshly children to be born, so a spiritual man renders spiritual those who want to become his true spiritual sons".

The conclusion is:

"If then the disciple is his teacher's spiritual child, a person who is seeking a father ought by all means to seek one who himself has had a spiritual birth, who consciously knows his God and Father, in order that by such a one he may himself also be brought to spiritual birth and be distinctly designated a son of God". (6)

(5) "*ἰδ. οὐκ ὁδηγῶν*", Symeon, Cat XX, 52-54, cf. Hym XLIV, 190, Climacus, So. Par. 4, 680C, ibid., 26, 1024B, ibid., 27, 1105A, v. Glossary; Symeon's deliverance", Hym XVIII, 124-224, the Studite being styled "Moses" ibid., 164, 197, 209, 219, "Pharaoh" with "his countless folk", ibid., 212f.; Climacus, So. Par. 1, 633D - 636A, cf. ad Pastorem, 1201C - 1208A.

(6) Ep 4, 121-126 and 158-161; "from above" on both occasions represents *νωθέρ* in the original, and here - as in St. John 3, 3, which Symeon has in mind - "from above" or "again" are equally possible renderings.

Symeon's language is somewhat confused, since he is combining the concepts of becoming the spiritual child of one's director and of becoming through the director a child of God. There is, of course, nothing very original in the imagery, once the word "father" has begun to be used for a spiritual director, but its use provides an interesting example of a case where Symeon can be shown to be independent of the influence of Climacus.

As time went on, then, Symeon's experience, his increasing knowledge of traditional teaching, and his reflection led him to a less limited understanding of the benefits obtainable by means of a spiritual father. Without abandoning, either for himself or as a motive likely to be effective with others, the belief that finding a saintly father was the way to secure one's eternal salvation, he came to realise that much more was involved in being a disciple than he had at first realised. A demonstration of his development can be found in Cat XVII, where he recounts how he was given assurance (*παρρησία*) of the forgiveness of his sins, was raised to the heights of contemplation, and how there was bestowed on him an eternal kingdom, which cannot be shaken. The context here, it is true, is a description of visionary experience rather than anything pertaining directly to spiritual fatherhood, but it has to be remembered that, as we have already seen adumbrated, and shall be examining in more detail later, the work of the spiritual father includes the giving to his disciple whatever help the latter requires to obtain all that Symeon is here claiming to have received. Increasing maturity thus resulted in Symeon's not only realising that his first expectations of what might be gained from having a spiritual father had been too limited,

but also in his coming to lay stress on what might accrue to a disciple in his present life as well as after death. What, however, needs all the time to be emphasised is that the decisive cause of this change in Symeon was, as he himself said, his own experience as a disciple of the Studite. (7)

(7) Cat XVII, 61-70, with reminiscence of Hebrews, 12, 28 regarding the "Kingdom which cannot be shaken"; "more detail later", v. Part Two, chapter III (d); "himself said", v. passage quoted above, p.111 .

I (c) A Bad Father - the Dangers.

Some consideration has now been given to the benefits to be found by securing a spiritual father, but it must not be supposed that either Symeon or his predecessors imagined that these benefits could be expected as returns automatically available from the relationship, and unrelated to the character of the father. On the contrary, very definite statements were made to the effect that everything was dependent on his being a man of the right type, and that to become the disciple of someone unworthy to be a father was absolutely disastrous.⁽¹⁾

We are to look in the next chapter at the qualifications regarded as necessary for spiritual fatherhood, but at this stage it will be useful to notice some warnings about the danger of encountering a father of the wrong type. From the earliest period common-sense will have led to the utterance of such warnings, in view of the immense authority with which a spiritual father is invested and of the requirement that once a disciple has attached himself to a chosen guide he must never presume to judge or criticise him. It is not unlikely, incidentally, that the dangers anticipated from an unworthy father may in part account for the way in which Symeon and Nicetas castigate worldly and unspiritual hegumens, for the hegumen, as already mentioned, was ex officio his monks' spiritual father according to the typika of many monasteries. (2)

By the 6th century, then, there was already an abundance of material intended to caution those seeking a spiritual father about the possible

(1) cf. preceding section I (b) p.114

(2) the prohibition of judging is dealt with in Part Two, chapter IV (c) pp. 286 f.; "castigation of worldly hegumens", Cat. XVIII, 479 - 495 and Nicetas, Life, 42; "hegumen ex officio spiritual father", v. Part One, chapter II, pp. 86 f.

dangers involved. Thus a story about two of the Desert Fathers and their different treatment of the same penitent concludes:

"I have related this so that we may know what danger there is in manifestation, whether of thoughts or of sins, to those who do not have discernment". (3)

Similarly we find Cassian including amongst the teaching which he had received from the Abbot Moses:

"There are some, and indeed, sad to say, they comprise the larger number, who having become tepid in youth grow old in the same disposition and in slothfulness, and thus gain authority for themselves not by reason of maturity of character but simply by reason of age.. Our most cunning adversary utilises their grey hairs for the purpose of deceiving young men..., leading them to hurtful tepidity or to deadly despair through the teachings and habits of these men". (4)

Climacus puts the matter very clearly when, speaking from the would-be disciple's point of view he says:

"Before we enter upon (our discipleship), if we have any cunning or prudence about us, let us examine, scrutinise and, so to speak, put our director to the test, as a precaution against taking one who is a sailor for a helmsman, a sick man for a physician, one who is swayed by passions for a dispassionate being, or the open sea for the harbour, with spiritual shipwreck as a result. But once we have entered upon the race of pious and submissive living, let us from then on totally refrain from examining our noble president of the games ..." (5)

With his clear distinction between the disciple's duties before and after he has acquired a spiritual father, Climacus leaves us in no doubt that he is far from recommending a hasty and unconsidered submission to a possibly inexperienced person or to one who might prove completely unqualified to be a spiritual father. The consequence of this might well

(3) B. Ward, Desert Fathers, p. 28 translating original in PL 73, 928C;

(4) Cassian, Conlationes, II, 13, C.S.E.L. XIII, Vienna, 1886, p. 53, cf. very similarly, Pseudo-Basil, De renuntiatione saeculi, PG 31, 632 CD.

(5) Climacus, Sc. Par. 4, 680CD: "director" and "helmsman" both translate *κυβερνήτης*.

be "shipwreck", whereas it is necessary to have "a good helmsman" if the ship is to "reach harbour safely". And the very fact that once he has "entered upon the race" the disciple should obey unhesitatingly and uncritically, enhances the possibility of disaster if through inadequate scrutiny an unfortunate choice has been made at the outset.

As one who entered into a long heritage of ascetical theology, Symeon not surprisingly utters similar cautions. Using a different image from Climacus, but one that equally suggests possible disasters, he tells the imaginary aspirant whom he is addressing in Cat XX to be careful not to "follow the wolf as though he were a shepherd". This comes a little after he has contrasted the paucity of genuine directors with the large number of those who are qualified in outward appearance only.

"Those who understand how to be good pastors and physicians to rational souls are few in number, especially nowadays. There are in all likelihood many with pretensions as to fasting, keeping vigils and observing a form of devotion, or for whom indeed these things may be realities; even more find no difficulty in reciting much material they have learnt by heart, and in teaching by means of words; very few, however, can be found who eradicate passions by weeping and acquire for good and all those virtues which include all the others".(6)

It is interesting to observe how in this passage Symeon's suspicion of a mere book-knowledge of spirituality comes to the fore, and it is reasonable to connect this with his own experience as a disciple of the Studite, who had laid it down as a principle that those who had gained a genuine knowledge of God no longer needed to depend on book-learning. Furthermore when Symeon insists that the wolf can be distinguished from the shepherd by the fact that the latter will have "eradicated the passions by

(6) Cat XX, 216f.; Cat XX, 197-204, the first sentence of which, ^{ὁ δὲ μαθητὴς} might be suspected of being a mere topos, since it is also put into the mouth of St. Cyril the Philote (Life, ed. E. Sargologos, Subsidia Hagiographica, 39, (1964), P. 99), Darrouzès, however, notes that the Life was written by a wholesale borrower who drew on Symeon amongst others, of which he provides examples, though this is not among them (R.E.B., 25, (1967) p. 256, cf. Tra SC 122 intr. p. 72, n.2.). In fact it is likely that good spiritual fathers are not very numerous at any time.

weeping", he is not only touching on a subject, the importance of tears, which is of great importance to him, but also upon something prominent in the teaching given by his father. At the same time, too, it would have been impossible for him to write these words if he had not been convinced that the Studite had attained complete dispassion, and was in no sense one who merely possessed "the externals of devotion". (7)

In slightly different language Symeon speaks elsewhere of the danger of resorting to a spiritual father who is not himself mature:

"One who has reached the perfect manhood of the fulness of Christ.. is able also to lead Christ's flock in the way of God's commandments; but as for him who ... is not like this, it is evident that he does not keep the senses of his soul in an enlightened and healthy condition, and it would be much better that he should himself be guided rather than guide others with all the risks therein involved".(8)

In Ep 1 the matter is treated in some detail and with no attempt to soften the language.

"Do not find one who is a flatterer or the slave of his belly and strive to make him your counsellor and ally. If you do, he may comply with your self-will, and teach you what you will welcome but not what God loves, and thus you will remain an enemy (of God), unreconciled to him. And (do not choose) an inexperienced physician, lest he either plunge you into the depths of despair through excessive severity and inopportune surgery and cauterisation (of the soul), or else through overmuch tenderness leave you in your sickness, though thinking you are healthy - most terrible of fates - and so be the means of delivering you up to eternal punishment, something very different from your expectations".(9)

The seriousness with which Symeon regards the matter is brought out again in a passage in Cat XXVIII, a work which has much in common with Ep 1,

(7) "laid it down as a principle", v. Part One, chapter II, p.65; . . . "importance of tears", Cat XXIX, 225-230 is significant, since Symeon here speaks vehemently on the subject, and cites the authority of the Studite, of. Hausherr, Life, p. XLVIII for the prominence of tears in the latter's Chapters.

(8) Ch I, 54, 23 - 29, with reminiscence of Ephesians, 4, 13.

(9) Ep 1, p. 117, 6 - 13, on the father as spiritual physician, v. Part Two, chapter II (c).

where he says of those who are not really spiritual and whose authority is based simply on their having received ordination at the hands of men, that it is not theirs to bind and loose, to act as priests and to teach. The consequence for any attaching themselves to such a person, instead of to a genuinely good spiritual father, is that they would be relying on someone incapable of reconciling them to God, while deceiving them and leading them to suppose mistakenly that their spiritual sickness had been healed. (10)

There seems to have been discussion in monastic and other circles about the merits and demerits of different fathers, and it is ironical that Symeon, who came to issue the warnings quoted above, had himself earlier been the recipient of warnings from others about the folly of continuing to attach himself to the Studite. It was presumably during his short time in the Studios monastery that he was reproached by those who wanted him to have recourse to a father whose standards and demands were less exacting.

"Why act foolishly, "they said, "and labour in vain? Why follow this deceiver and charlatan in the vain and futile expectation of recovering your spiritual sight? Such a thing is impossible nowadays. Why follow him, when it hurts your feet and they bleed? ... Alas for you! On the one hand you will miss the treatment that would be given you by sympathetic men who love both Christ and their brethren, and on the other you will endure afflictions and tribulations to which you are submitting on the basis of vain hopes, without ever really obtaining what this cheat and charlatan promises you". (11)

This passage suggests that Symeon was not simply repeating traditional wisdom when he gave warnings about the dangers inherent in the mere existence of spiritual fathers of the wrong kind: the situation, as he

(10) Cat XXVIII, 291-296.

(11) "discussion about spiritual fathers", cf. the Studite's Ch 36, Hausherr, Life, p. L, and Part Two, chapter V (c), pp. 320-325; "reproached" Cat XXXVI, 102-116 (extracts), cf. Nicetas, Life, 17; for "charlatan", παλῶς, cf. Hym XXXII, 1-4, where Symeon complains that he himself is called this, because he claims to have received the Holy Spirit through the Studite's prayers, while at Cat XXVII 52f. παλῶς are significantly coupled with ψευδὲς ἑσπέρητος, as also at Ch I, 49, 24f.

saw it, was worse than that, for he had himself experienced the attempts of others, by means of similar-sounding cautions, to persuade him to transfer from a good to a lax father, and he thus had personal reasons for doing all he could to put potential spiritual children on their guard.

Symeon did indeed refer in Ep 1 to the possibility of disaster arising from "excessive severity" on the part of the spiritual physician, but it is clear that he was more commonly concerned about the dangers resulting from the choice of a director who had not attained dispassion and was therefore inevitably lacking in the full experience of God. Thus in the Chapters, where the disastrous consequences of a wrong choice are spelled out, we find:

"If you desire to renounce the world and be instructed in the Gospel manner of life, do not give yourself into the hands of an inexperienced teacher or one who is dominated by passions, lest instead of (learning) the Gospel manner of life you should be instructed in the devil's. For good lessons come from good teachers and bad from bad, and rotten seeds will assuredly produce rotten crops". (12)

Elsewhere Symeon gives warnings of the same type concerning the danger of encountering a spiritual guide who lacks a genuine knowledge of the love of God:

"He who seems to be a leader is actually no leader but travels along a road of which he is ignorant, or rather he misses the road and flings his followers and himself over the precipice, at the bottom of which is the eternal fire. Again, he who seems to be a teacher is in fact no teacher of others but a liar and a charlatan, for he does not possess in himself the true wisdom, which is our Lord Jesus Christ". (13)

(12) Ch I, 48, "inexperienced" translating ἀπείροτος, the opposite of ἐμπείροτος, v. above (b) p.113, n. 4; "dominated by passions" translates ἐμπαθής, the opposite of one who has gained "dispassion" (ἀπαθής), on the importance of which for spiritual fatherhood, v. Part Two, chapter II (f) pp.164 f.

(13) Tr Eth XV, 183 - 180, cf. Cat XXVIII, 201-218.

Warnings such as these result from a conviction that nothing less than eternal salvation is at stake, and that while a good father may ensure that his spiritual children will be saved, a lax or inexperienced one will be the cause of their damnation.

In uttering warnings of the kind we have quoted, Symeon was not merely reproducing conventional wisdom drawn from the tradition he had inherited, but was aware of real dangers threatening his contemporaries. Those with a vocation to the monastic life, who would be likely to have their hegumen as their spiritual father, needed to find a community led by someone of the right kind, not a man addicted to self-indulgence and luxury, and not one who would be frequently leaving the monastery and parading here and there with a large escort mounted on expensive-looking mules. As for those living in the world and seeking a spiritual father, we shall see in a later chapter how in Symeon's view they were surrounded by unworthy persons, desirous of gaining spiritual children because of mere self-interest. It was against such a background that he not only warned others about dangers, but also, as we proceed to discuss, gave instructions about how to find the right person to be one's spiritual father.(14)

(14) Hegumens of the type described are castigated in Cat XVIII, 476 - 483; in Part Two, chapter V (c) pp.322f., where the difficulties facing a spiritual father are being examined, Symeon is shown to be very much aware of competition on the part of unscrupulous men seeking to recruit spiritual children from among those living in the world.

I (d) The Need for Prayer, Divine Help and Prudence.

Since the issue at stake was held to be nothing less than eternal salvation, in so far as this might be gained or lost through the right or wrong choice of a spiritual father, it is not surprising that Climacus enjoined the greatest prudence in the matter of selection. To the passage cited in the previous section one might add another where the need for wise judgement on the part of the intending disciple is again stressed:

"Let us determine our submission in the light of the nature of our passions and make a fit choice, (of a spiritual father). If you lack self-control and are inclined to lust, let him be a trainer of (spiritual) athletes and an ascetic, inflexible with regard to diet, but not a wonder-worker, ready to welcome and entertain all and sundry; if you are arrogant, let him be quick-tempered and difficult to placate, but not gentle and kindly. Let us not be on the look-out for men endowed with foreknowledge or with second sight, but in the first place for those who are really humble, and whose conduct and abode are what our diseased self requires".

This passage gives useful guidelines, and demands on the part of the disciple both self-knowledge and the ability to sum up the characters of those whom he might consider as possible spiritual fathers. It does not, however, in spite of what Völker implies, state that prayer enters at all into the question. Climacus indeed never directly mentions prayer as a necessary preliminary in the search for a guide or physician of the soul. (1)

With Symeon the case is far different. Cat XX is devoted to spiritual fatherhood, and in the introductory part Symeon affirms that

(1) Sc. Par. 4, 680 CD; ibid., 725 CD, Völker, Praxis, p. 116.

anyone who is doing his own will, even in the smallest degree, will never be enabled to obey Christ's command to leave father and mother and take up his cross and follow him. Having then explained that he proposes to proceed as if he were addressing a single individual, he begins:

"Brother, call earnestly upon God, that he may show you a man capable of shepherding you well.."

Thus Symeon emphatically prescribes that in the search for the right spiritual father, prayer must come first. A few lines later, without mentioning the disciple's prudence or judgement, he anticipates one of two things happening: either, through grace, his confidence in his existing father will be strengthened, so that he will continue with him, or the Holy Spirit may send him to someone else, in which case he is to have no hesitation in obeying this leading, attaching himself to the man who will be designated to him by direct revelation from God or else "by means of his servant". (2)

Again in one of the Epistles we find:

"We need great earnestness, much vigil and many prayers, so that we do not fall into the hands of a charlatan, a cheat, a false apostle and false Christ, but instead meet with a teacher who is genuine, a lover of God and one who bears Christ within himself.."

Here, at the very point where Symeon is emphasising the danger of entrusting oneself to someone who is far from possessing the qualities which a spiritual father should possess, prayer is mentioned as a safeguard, whereas Climacus had spoken of reliance on one's own judgement and even on "cunning" (*πρυγία*).(3)

(2) Cat XX, 30-41, and, quotation of ibid., 45f., cf. the prayer suggested in Tr Eth VII, 437-445; "a few lines later", Cat XX, 50-60; "his servant" - the identity of this person is uncertain: the previous spiritual father is unlikely, but it has been suggested that a group of senior monks or favoured disciples (cf. Part One, chapter II(a)) may have acted as intermediaries between holy men and the general public, and the "servant" have been envisaged as one of such a group v. also Part Two Chapter II (a), p.136. Compare too the way in which, after the death of his spiritual father, Gregory asked the advice of a certain John, who suggested that he should go to St. Basil the Younger, Acta Sanctorum, March III, Paris, 1865, p.25, 26DE.

(3) Ep 3, 210v - 211r, my underlining, cf. also Ch I, 49, 16f.; So. Par. 4, 680C, and contrast Symeon's advice in Ep 3, 213r that when seeking a spiritual father one should not trust to one's own prudence.

This difference from Climacus appears striking, and there may be various reasons for it: Symeon, for instance, seems to teach in a direct and straightforward manner, whereas Climacus

"is often intentionally enigmatic .. (he) avoids spelling out his conclusions too plainly".

If this is true, the difference might be more apparent than real, for in so important a matter - and of its importance he leaves us in no doubt - Climacus might assume that any serious would-be disciple ought to conclude for himself that prayer was essential. Again, although he must surely have had other possible readers in mind, formally at least Climacus was writing the Scala Paradisi for John of Raithu, the hegumen of another monastery, for whose spiritual maturity he clearly had great respect; Symeon, on the other hand, is addressing himself to those whose status is that of spiritual children. Hence an injunction to pray might well be appropriate in their case, but unsuitable for the recipient of the Scala. (4)

Nevertheless, here also it would be unwise to conclude that Symeon's own experience does not enter into the matter. We must refer again to the passage in Cat. XXXV mentioned in an earlier section, in which he says to God:

"I longed to see one of thy saints (αγιος) in the belief that through him I should find mercy from thee".

Symeon, however, was told by those whom he consulted and indeed by everybody that no such saint existed at that time. His grief therefore

(4) Regarding Climacus, v. Ware, Climacus, p. 9; "for John of Raithu", cf. ad Pastorem, 1201C - 1208A, and also the introduction to Sc. Par., in which Climacus says that John will have ἡ ἀσκήσιος ἀσκήσιος, ibid., 628AB.

increased. "Nevertheless", he continues,

"I never believed what they said, but I had an answer for such people as thou knowest, O Christ my Master, and I used to say, 'My Lord, have mercy! And has the devil become so much more powerful than God our Master as to draw all men to himself and enrol them in his party, so that not one is left to take God's part?' It is for this reason, I think, that thou, O King who lovest mankind, didst cause thy holy light to shine on me who sat in the darkness of this life and in the midst of evils, and in that light didst reveal to me thy saint". (5)

It is tempting to describe the words which Symeon says he uttered as a prayer, but formally considered they are more likely to have been simply an answer to those who had caused him disappointment, an answer preceded by a few words apostrophising the Lord. They are introduced by, "I used to say", not by any formula indicating the offering of a prayer to God. However, as the last sentence quoted shows, Symeon did feel that in his experience he was being thrown back on God, and we may reasonably infer that here, in part at least, is the reason for his later on discouraging others from depending on their own judgement in the matter of choosing a spiritual father.

"Do not suppose that you will discover him by relying on yourself and your own prudence, for this is impossible".

This is markedly different from Climacus, and the difference may well be ascribed to the effect of his own experience. In the light of all this, and when we remember his insistence that the would-be disciple should start by praying to be shown a good spiritual father, it does not seem fanciful to hold that Symeon's answer, "My Lord, have mercy! etc.", was one which he himself felt to have had in it the quality of prayer. (6)

(5) "no saint at that time", cf. Part Two, chapter V (b); Cat XXXV, 19 - 21, cited in (a) of this chapter, p. 108; Cat XXXV 78 - 90, "draw all men", being a parody of St. John 12, 32.

(6) "Do not suppose . . .", Ep 3, 213r, referred to in n. 3. It is noteworthy that "prudence" (φρόνησις) is precisely what Climacus does recommend, in conjunction with "cunning" (πονηρία) in the passage from So. Par. 4, 680 CD. quoted in (c), p. 118 above. Contrast, however, So. Par. 24, 984D, πάλαι πλανῶν σου τῇ φρόνησει.

If, however, one follows Symeon's advice and begins by earnestly praying for guidance, there is still the question of how to recognise the father to whom God is wishing to lead one. Symeon, of course, was in no doubt that God had guided him to the Studite: he says to Christ,

"Thou leddest me to the man who was to become my father on earth - such was thy good pleasure". (7)

In his own case the divine choice of the Studite for this role was confirmed by a vision:

"Thou didst count me worthy to see him .. standing near thy divine glory, yet thou hadst not decked (with him) a crown or with shining raiment - no! his appearance was unaltered, and thou didst show him to me in heaven just as he was wont to appear in our company and as we saw him day by day on earth. What was thy purpose? It was that I should not reckon him who was with us as a different being from him whom I saw there, and so - lost sheep that I was - be deceived and wander away from the good shepherd".

This kind of experience Symeon did not, however, regard as a privilege so unique that other people must not expect God similarly to indicate to them the right man to be their spiritual father. On the contrary, we have already seen that a disciple may be sent by the Holy Spirit to the father whom God points out to him "by direct revelation" (ποσεισθε δὲ αὐτόν). In suggesting this, just as in enjoining prayer at the start of the process, Symeon is striking a different note from Climacus, who appears never to envisage the possibility of divine intervention at this point. (8)

But Symeon did not claim, in spite of his personal experience, that this was the only means by which a spiritual father could be recognised. We have already noticed one alternative:

(7) "Thou leddest me ...", Hym LVI 13f., one of many similar expressions to be found in Symeon's writings.

(8) "thou didst count me worthy ...", Cat XXXV, 106 - 113, cf. Cat XXXVI, 77; "by direct revelation", Cat XX, 59, v. above p. 125.

the director is made known to the disciple "by means of (God's) servant", in other words by a holy, yet human adviser. Furthermore, in spite of his condemning reliance on merely natural prudence when one is looking for a spiritual father, he is far from ruling out the total use of one's faculties. This is implied in his statement that the beginner will go to a man who is "proficient and experienced (τεχνητός καὶ ἐμπειρὸς)", and still more when he says that the intending disciple should seek for someone "who himself has had spiritual birth, who consciously knows his God and Father". (9) All these are points which could only be verified by some personal investigation, although any one in search of a spiritual guide would doubtless first hear them spoken of, when - as Symeon had done - he began to ask others to help him in his quest. Again in the same letter in which he stated that by relying on one's own prudence one would not succeed in this matter, Symeon also described the qualities of the true and holy pastor and of one who is the reverse of this. He then gave the warning already cited, preceded by the significant words:

"When then you see that someone is engaged in any of all these (wicked practices)"

The implication of this is that if a disciple can be supposed capable of recognising the unworthiness of a potential father through the man's conduct, he would be equally able on the same basis to judge that another was truly worthy. Similarly Ep 1 contains a long section on the recognition of those genuinely entitled to claim to be spiritual fathers. In this Symeon quotes loosely from 1 Corinthians 12, 8-11, and other New Testament texts, adding - with reference to St. Matthew 5, 14f. - that they will also be known by Christlike behaviour. (10)

(9) "by means of (God's) servant", Cat XI, 59, v. above p. 125, n. 2; "proficient and experienced", v. (b), p. 113, citing Cat XIV 9; "someone who himself has had spiritual birth ...", v. (b), p. 114, citing Ep 4, 158 - 161.

(10) "true and holy pastor ...", Ep 3, 213v - 214v; Symeon's quotation mixes St. Matthew 5, 15 with the parallels in St. Mark 4, 21 and St. Luke 8, 16; with the general ideas of this paragraph, cf. also Cat XVIII, 335 - 388, where Symeon maintains that a spiritually-minded potential disciple will recognise a father of the same kind, and on the circular nature of this advice, v. Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, p. 183, quoting Ep 3.

The evidence thus shows that Symeon regards as a pre-requisite in the search for a spiritual father something which Climacus does not mention, namely prayer, and insists that it is impossible to find the right person by relying on one's own prudence - in other words, that he demonstrates a marked sense of the need to depend on divine assistance. When, however, it comes to the stage of actual recognition, while he does not rule out direct revelation, he closely resembles Climacus since in effect he also expects the would-be disciple to scrutinise the life and conduct of anyone whom he might ask to be his director. Indeed Symeon provides considerably more detail than Climacus when it comes to the actual criteria by which assessment is to be made.

There is, finally, a further point which can be briefly mentioned: the question of the sincerity of the disciple. In Ep 3 we find Symeon affirming that those

"who hide themselves beneath the darkness of their own passions, lusts and wills, and walk therein as in the depth of night, find teachers of their own kind". (11)

On the other hand, a little earlier he has cited the example of the centurion Cornelius in Acts 10 to prove that God will always provide the earnest and genuine seeker with a true spiritual father, just as St. Peter was sent to Cornelius. In addition, then, to prayer and prudence, and indeed as the most fundamental of all requirements, the would-be disciple needs to be genuinely attempting to live the Christian life, and if he fulfils these conditions, he may expect to discover a true father. (12)

(11) Tr Eth VII, 400f, $\mu\eta\delta\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\epsilon\lambda\upsilon\theta\epsilon\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\varsigma$ is not really an exception to his advice to judge, for here Symeon is dealing with the case of the prospective disciple considering, at an early stage in his quest, the various monks who enjoyed a considerable reputation ($\epsilon\upsilon\theta\upsilon\mu\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\ \mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\chi\omicron\iota$), and who might outwardly appear at first sight very impressive.

(12) "sincerity of the disciple", is discussed more fully in Part Two, chapter V (c); Ep 3, 211v - 212v; "expect to discover", but it is true that in Tr Eth VII, 402 - 405, he does appear to contemplate the case of someone unable to find a spiritual father and compelled to look directly to Christ.

I (e) The Recipients of the Warnings.

Before we leave the subject of securing a spiritual father, there is a final question which must be examined: for whom did Symeon intend the advice and warnings which have been noted in the two previous sections?

The obvious answer would be that he is addressing pious Christians, living in the world, who are concerned about their souls and have not yet found, and committed themselves to, a spiritual father. This on the whole accords well with the situation which can be inferred from Ep 3, from which several quotations have been made. A difficulty, however, arises in that according to the title prefixed to it in Vaticanus graecus 1782, this letter was addressed "to one of his disciples", and in the fact that towards its end Symeon both repeats his exhortation to the recipient to secure a spiritual father and also addresses him as "my beloved and spiritual child". One may assume that the composer of the title of the letter, while basing himself on Symeon's wording, was not troubled by any feeling of incongruity between the recipient's being a "disciple", while not as yet having Symeon or anyone else as his spiritual father. In the same way, Symeon himself must have apparently been able to regard a person such as his correspondent as in some sense his "spiritual child", without thereby implying that the relationship between them was that of father and committed disciple. To put it in another way, Symeon was prepared to act as a father on this one occasion, giving his advice to the recipient of his letter, without its necessarily following that the relationship between them would become permanent. It is also, indeed, quite possible that while addressing a single correspondent Symeon was aware that his letter would be circulated to others as well, and that thus in his advice he had this wider constituency

in mind, while being reasonably certain that his correspondent was in fact prepared to commit himself to becoming his "spiritual child". A person such as this devout secular might, of course, either continue to live in the world as a committed disciple or intend sooner or later to become a monk. In the latter case, since he might normally expect to have the hegumen of his monastery as his spiritual father, the warnings to be careful in the choice of the latter would amount to warnings to be careful in the selection of his monastery. (1)

With Cat XX, which we have also looked at, and which is of course ostensibly addressed to monks, the problem arises in another form: why should the intending disciple be instructed to pray to be shown the right spiritual father for him, when as a member of a monastery he was in all probability already supposed to have as such the hegumen, or at least someone designated by him? The difficulty, nevertheless, is probably more apparent than real, for although classed among the Catecheses, this work is in the first few lines stated by Symeon to have been actually a letter, intended to help a soul to flee from the world and attain the love of God and perfect dispassion. The theme of spiritual fatherhood, which occupies most of the letter, is introduced as a necessary means to these ends. Symeon, then, is in fact not primarily addressing his monks, and this is confirmed by the opening words, "Beloved and very dear brethren...", whereas the genuine spoken Catecheses usually begin, "Brethren and fathers, ...". It would seem probable, then, that we have to do with a kind of circular letter, designed for earnest Christians

(1) "my beloved and spiritual child", Ep 3, 221r : "permanent", cf. the quotation from Rousseau, Ascetics, p. 36, given Part One, chapter II, p. 86 : for an instance of one of Symeon's secular spiritual children introducing a future member of St. Mamas' monastery, v. Nicetas, Life, 55, 1-8.

living in the world, and of a type not unlike the recipient of Ep 3 which we have just been considering. Inasmuch as this piece deals not only with the choice of a spiritual father but also with the disciple's relationship with him, Symeon could well have considered that in this aspect it would be profitable to his monks and made it available to them, which would account for its place among the Catechesea. (2)

It may therefore be not unreasonably concluded that when Symeon gave advice and warnings about the selection of the right spiritual father, he did not have in mind his own monks for whom he himself, together at first with the Studite, acted as such. His concern was rather with Christians living in the world, conscious of their need, but requiring both encouragement to seek such a guide for the right motives, and also warnings against inadvertently becoming the victims of the wrong kind of person.

(2) Cat XI, cf. above (d) pp.124f.; on the hegumen as the usually spiritual father of his monks, cf. Part One, chapter II, pp.66f, including n. 26; "actually a letter", Cat XI, 10-15; however, *ἡμεῖς τῶν πατέρων*, Cat XVII, 67, shows that this work in spite of beginning, "Brethren and fathers," was actually a letter.

II THE SPIRITUAL FATHER'S QUALIFICATIONS.

(a) The Meaning of "Qualification".

I. Hausherr, in his "Direction spirituelle en Orient autrefois" devotes a chapter to the "qualités requises pour être père spirituel", classifying them under the headings "moral" and "intellectual", and with a third section dealing with the matters of Church order involved in hierarchical qualifications. In an approach to Symeon, however, a somewhat different method is suggested by some words in his Life, and by a phrase already quoted: Symeon, Nicetas says, was recognised by one of his spiritual children, the patrician Genesios, as possessed of the ability "to be pastor and physician of souls", while he himself, as we discovered when summarising the opening of Cat XIV, assumed that a penitent would have recourse to someone who was τεχνίτης and ἐμπειρος. (1)

For τεχνίτης Lampe gives the meanings: "artificer, craftsman, artist" and adds that it is used "of skilled workers, including makers of perfumes, hairdressers, cooks, astrologers, copyists of scriptures, church architects". It is therefore a word which implies some kind of professional training, and could fittingly be used of a person who had acquired the skills needed to function as a spiritual pastor and physician. It implies moreover that these were skills which could be systematically imparted and more or less definitely recognised - in the realm of spirituality no less than in areas such as cookery, astrology or architecture. We shall look later in this chapter at some examples which substantiate and illustrate this point. (2)

(1) Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, ch. III (pp. 56 - 123); Nicetas, Life, 55, and of. Symeon in Cat XX, 198f., of καὶ ὁ πνευματικὸς καὶ ἰατρικὸς ψυχῆς λειτουργὸς ἐμπειρὸς; Cat XIV, 9, referred to, Part Two, chapter I(b), p.113.

(2) Lampe, Lexicon, τεχνίτης; Dorotheus uses τεχνίτης for the skill of Macarius in persuading an unwilling brother to reveal "his λογισμοί", Doctrinae, V, 65, 24.

But Symeon could never be content that any Christian, far less a spiritual father, should have no more than a theoretical or academic knowledge of those matters which he needed to know. Hence to *τεχνίτης*, he adds *ἐμπειρὴς*, which makes the point that the man to whom the penitent resorts must not only have received the necessary training as it were 'academically', but also have assimilated it in his actual life and experience (*πείρα*). Furthermore, if at times we get the impression that in practice Symeon lays more stress on *πείρα* than on *τέχνη*, this does not mean that he at all undervalued the latter, something which would be inconceivable for one who was the heir to a long tradition, and who in particular was conscious of the training he had been given by his father the Studite. (3)

Obviously, when speaking of qualifications for spiritual fatherhood, we must not be understood as having in mind any system of formal examinations and certificates. The model is much more that of apprenticeship, and it is significant that Lemerle can speak of something similar as the normal way of qualifying as a member of one of the learned professions in Byzantium:

"How does one become a doctor, an engineer, a judge or an official in the imperial offices? There are certainly plenty of examples which demonstrate that knowledge is often gained by means of working alongside someone who has mastered the subject". (4)

In much the same way, one who was to become a spiritual father would in part be trained simply by being the disciple of an existing father. No doubt he would receive suggestions as to what books to study, and we have seen Symeon, while still living in the world, being provided by

(3) An interesting juxtaposition of *πείρα* and *τέχνη* occurs in Diadochus of Photice when he is speaking of God's providence in creating remedies which at some future time could be used, because of the skill which physicians would gain through experience: *ἐπειδὴ δὲ τῆς ἀποσκευῆς, πείρας ποτὲ εὐδαίμονος ἢ τέχνης*, Ch LIII, 2f. (SC 5, 2nd edit., 1955); "Symeon's stress on *πείρα*", Tr Eth V and Tr Eth VI, in each of which *πείρα* occurs (V, 12; VI, 376), are amongst those works described by Darrouzés as directed against "les faux savants qui n'ont pas la véritable expérience", Tr Eth VI, SC 129, p. 121, n.1; cf. section (1).

(4) Lemerle, *Premier humanisme*, p. 261, cf. also, *ibid.*, p. 150.

the Studite with a work of St. Mark the Hermit to read. But the more important factor will always have been the influence exercised on the disciple by his father as a living person, one who "guides and forms others, not primarily by words of advice, but by his companionship".(5)

The way then in which the qualifications for spiritual fatherhood were acquired, both before, during and after the time of Symeon, will have been somewhat as follows: a recognised father would attract disciples, or perhaps even recruit them, for Cassian

"considered that (fathers) should not seek for pupils among the virtuous or perceptive only, but rather among those who are weighed down with sorrow and grief, repenting of their former misdeeds".

Amongst his disciples he would find one or two who were specially receptive, and to the training of these he would devote particular care, with a view to their eventually taking his place in the succession of spiritual guides. Such disciples might be entrusted with some part of their father's work, more or less under his supervision while he was still living and could guide them, and would thus by the time of his death be qualified, as men both *τεχνηται* and *ἐμπειροί*, to act as spiritual fathers in their own right.(6)

For the middle of the 11th century this is well illustrated by the career of Nikon, who had been tonsured by, and became the favourite disciple of, Luke, the founder of a monastery on the Black Mountain, to the North of Antioch in Syria.

"Luke taught him and gave him the commandments of the Lord in writing, also narrating the entire story of his own (i.e. Luke's) life ... He was chosen by Luke to assist in the correction of the brethren"

(5) "a work of St. Mark the Hermit", v. Part One, chapter II, pp. 81f., n. 20 and p. 96, n. 36; "guides and forms ..", K. Ware 'The Spiritual Father in Orthodox Christianity', *Cross Currents*, XXIV, (1974) p. 300.

(6) Cassian, *Conlationes*, XIV, 17, C.S.E.L. XIII, Vienna, 1886, p. 422 (apud Rousseau, *Asceticon*, p. 204), cf. Dorotheus' role in training Dositheus, while himself a disciple of Barsanuphius, *Life*, (SC 92), p. 128, 1-17, and the significant *καὶ τὸ μαθητὴς αὐτοῦ*, p. 144, 5f., also the reference by A. Gardner (*Theodore of Studium: His Life and Times*, London, 1905, p. 175) to Theodore's "son" Naukratius, afterwards his successor at Studium, and probably already selected as such by (him)".

Nicon, however, although in his turn he became a spiritual father, did not succeed peacefully to Luke's position in the monastery: presumably he first became unpopular through his efforts to help Luke, and then through his exercise of the function of instructing and correcting monks throughout the patriarchate of Antioch, another duty which was entrusted to him. Anyhow, he had to flee, but his correspondence shows that he again in his turn had a favourite disciple, Gerasimos, who became a monk at the monastery of St. Sabas, near Jerusalem, and to whom he wrote the most intimate of his letters.(7)

We can trace a somewhat similar development in the life of Symeon himself: he was clearly quite early on seen by the Studite as his successor, for in Cat XVI he tells us how as "a young man" he was told by his father

"I trust in God, who has richly bestowed his grace upon me, that he will bestow a double portion of it upon you, simply because of the faith you have in him and in me, humble as I am".

The "double portion" has obvious overtones from the story of Elijah and his successor Elisha, as indeed Symeon a line or two later makes explicit. It is worth noticing that on the very day when this prediction was made by the Studite, he had been visiting various of his spiritual children in the city, and had taken Symeon with him while so doing, a part of his apprenticeship, as it might be described. Then Nicetas tells us that after Symeon had had to move to St. Mamas, the Studite visited him frequently, and that after two years he began to consider

"placing him as a lamp now burning upon the lampstand of the Church of the faithful, that he might cause to shine on all those within it that light of knowledge by which he himself had been illuminated".(8)

(7) Nicon, v. I. Doens, 'Nicon de la montagne noire', Byzantion, XXIV, (1954), pp. 131 - 140.

(8) Cat XVI, 7; ibid., 67 - 70; ibid., 71f., referring to II Kings, 2,9; "taken Symeon with him", Cat XVI, 31-35, and in connection with the statement in parenthesis in 34, that many were benefited simply by seeing the Studite, cf. P. Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', J.R.S. LXI, (1971) p. 97: "merely to see a holy man stirred East Romans deeply": Nicetas, Life, 24, 1f., 29, 8-10, cf. Cat XVIII, 311-315, where Symeon insists that one should only become a hegumen on the advice of one's spiritual father.

Even after Symeon had become hegumen of St. Mamas, and so ex officio spiritual father to his monks, he shows himself in Cat XXI as unwilling to function independently at a particularly solemn occasion, namely when one of his monks is on his deathbed. Symeon tells us of his own conversation with the dying man, and then adds:

"After this he conversed privately with our holy father".

One would like to press the plural "our" as evidence that Symeon regarded the Studite as equally with himself the spiritual father of St. Mamas' monastery, but this would be illegitimate, since in the same sentence he is found speaking of himself in the first person plural, as he often does elsewhere. But the required confirmation is to be found in the words which he reports as addressed to him by the dying monk and which include the phrase,

"with confidence in God and in the prayer of our holy father".

This shows that in the lifetime of the Studite, Symeon regarded him, and taught his community to regard him, as in a real sense the spiritual father of them all - in other words, Symeon then had not as yet completely left behind the role of apprentice. (9)

Later, Symeon himself, as Nicetas informs us, trained one of his own disciples, Arsenius, with particular care. Nicetas does not indeed say that Arsenius was from early on marked out as a possible successor, but we are surely intended to attach some significance to the considerable detail in which his training is described, whereas other disciples of Symeon are merely mentioned by name, apart that is from one, a bishop from the West, who had come to Constantinople to do penance for having accidentally killed his nephew, and who clearly would never have consented to undertake a position of responsibility. It comes therefore as no surprise when

(9) Cat XXI, 39f.; "elsewhere", e.g. Cat VI, 195f., ἡμετέροισιν ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ μοναστεί; Cat XXI, 26f., cf. Cat XII, 17f., ἡμετέροισιν τῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ μοναστεί.

Nicetas states that Symeon, on deciding to retire, arranged for Arsenius to be the new hegumen of St. Mamas, when "he had lately attained the stature of Christ". It is noteworthy that even so Arsenius may not have accounted himself qualified for totally independent exercise of the spiritual side of the office, since while he

"was to lead the flock, (Symeon) was to support the leader by prayer, observe the secret impulses of the other brethren and direct them to what was better and more perfect".

Hausherr in his note on this passage interprets it as meaning that

"even after his resignation Symeon remained the monks' spiritual director",

but this, if it means sole director, is not borne out by the charge which, according to Nicetas, he delivered to Arsenius, especially since in it the latter was exhorted to "exactness in the examination of the λογισμοί of each (monk)". Such examination is of course a principal responsibility of a spiritual father. However, without going as far as Hausherr, we may safely say that at the time of his resignation, Symeon though satisfied with Arsenius' progress in *τίχνη* and *πείρα* to the extent of being willing that he should become hegumen, still did not bring the apprenticeship definitively to an end. (10)

This indeed is where the model of apprenticeship, useful though it is in connection with the qualifications of a spiritual father, requires to be slightly modified: the apprentice, at the end of a stated period, is regarded and regards himself as being an independent craftsman, but a spiritual father's disciple, however much special training he may have

(10) Nicetas, *Life*, 45 - 51, seven chapters devoted to Arsenius; *ibid.*, 58, six named in a single chapter; *ibid.*, 52-57, the bishop from the West, the reason for whose coming to St. Mamas has to be explained, and whose penitential behaviour is described, and who therefore has six chapters devoted to his story; "Arsenius the new hegumen", *ibid.*, 59, 12-14; "Symeon remaining spiritual director", *ibid.*, 59, 20-23, and Hausherr's note, p. 81, n.1; "charge delivered to Arsenius", *ibid.*, 63, 1f.; "not in total independence", cf. Dorotheus who consulted Barsanuphius about the problems of "directing" his fellow-monks - Regnault and de Preville, *Dorotheus SC 92* intr. p. 23, citing *Letters of Barsanuphius and John*, 331, 332 and 333 (re-edited by S.N. Scholinas, Volos, 1960); it has also been suggested that we have a kind of parallel with what was mentioned in the previous chapter (Part Two, chapter I(d), p. 125, n.2), the holy man's disciples acting both as "apprentice" spiritual fathers and also as links with the outside world.

received, will be bound, if his progress in πr^2 has been genuine, to have been continually becoming more humble, and therefore, so long as he has access to his father, he will not desire to function in total independence of him.

II (b) The Qualifications: a Modern Re-interpretation.

Before examining the images and actual language used by Symeon and others, it will be advantageous, from the point of view of clarity, to try to describe simply and in modern terms the qualifications needed by a spiritual father, in order to fulfil his obligations to his children. They may be classified under four heads, three of which belong to the area of $\tau\epsilon\chi\nu\eta$ and one to that of $\pi\epsilon\pi\alpha$.

Discernment

Since he is intended to receive the disclosure of his disciples' $\lambda\omicron\gamma\sigma\mu\omicron\iota$, something which in the case of disciples in the same monastery is expected to take place at frequent intervals, the spiritual father needs skill in evaluating the significance of these and in interpreting it to his children. Something of what this could involve in the realm of what we might describe as practical psychology, appears in a remark addressed by St. Theodore the Studite to Plato, his uncle and spiritual father:

"You are my light, an ever-shining lamp for the dark $\lambda\omicron\gamma\sigma\mu\omicron\iota$ in my soul".

Discernment ($\delta\iota\alpha\gamma\gamma\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$) was the term used for this skill, and it was something which, when markedly possessed by any spiritual father, attracted disciples. Thus, of the father of Cyril the Philote we are told that besides being nobly born,

"he was adorned with all virtue and surpassed many in discernment, for which reason many would resort to him for their profit, not only people living in the world, but also the more devout of the beginners".

This skill was of course rooted in a religious understanding and directed towards a religious end, but it was clearly not attainable by anyone content to be ignorant of what we now call psychology. (1)

Support

Not only has the spiritual father need of *Σιδήριος* in respect of his disciple's *λογισμοί*, but also he should be able effectively to help him in his struggles against vices and the temptations which may lead to them. The first step will have been taken by the very act of disclosing his *λογισμοί*, for as Dörries puts it,

"in the struggle for the soul it is Satan's concern to prevent confession and that of the counselling holy man to break down the barrier of silence". (2)

But clearly a conscience in the process of becoming more sensitive, will require both the assurance that forgiveness is available for sins committed in the past, and also assistance in overcoming temptations in the future. Here the father requires much patience to sustain "a supportive role", as the following example illustrates.

"A brother was attacked by lust. He got up at night, went to an old man and told him his thoughts. The old man comforted him and he returned to his cell strengthened. But the struggle began again in him. Again he went to the old man. And he did this many times. The old man did not reproach him but spoke to him of what might help him, saying to him, 'Do not give way, but rather come every time the demon wars against you'".

(1) Disclosure of *λογισμοί* should, according to Symeon, take place hourly, if possible. *Cat XXVI*, 299 - 303, cf. for fuller treatment, Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 130ff.; the skill needed to evaluate is for Symeon more than simply "technical", since he refers to "the light of the Holy Spirit within oneself", *Cat XXXIII*, 35; St. Theodore the Studite, *PG* 99, 909B; on *Σιδήριος*, cf. K. Ware, 'The Spiritual Father in Orthodox Christianity', *Cross Currents* XXIV, (1974), pp. 301 - 304; St. Cyril the Philote, *Life*, (ed. E. Sargolagos), *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 39 (1964), Chapter 19, p. 99.

(2) Dörries, 'Confession', p. 289, citing *PG* 65, 345D, "In none does the Enemy rejoice so much as in those who do not articulate their thoughts" (*λογισμοί*).

The spiritual father thus requires knowledge of how best in each individual case support may be given to the tempted in their struggles, together with the willingness to continue giving this support for as long as it may be needed.(3)

Ability to Train

Because the disciple must do more than the negative feat of overcoming temptations to the various vices, that is, because he must be helped positively to acquire virtues, the spiritual father needs to be well versed in what is called "ascetical theology". This involves giving practical advice concerning the nature of the virtues and the methods of cultivating them. Much of the Scala Paradisi, as well as much in the writings of many other fathers, including Symeon himself, is devoted to these themes in general terms, but in specific details such teaching must be given to each disciple according to his needs at any particular moment. A good example is found in Symeon's Ep 2, written to a disciple living in the world, and providing guidance in respect of such matters as attendance at church, private prayer and fasting. The practices enjoined are intended, Symeon says, to keep his correspondent mindful of the sins he has committed, and thus by implication we may add, to help him acquire the virtue of penitence. As a master of ascetical theology, Symeon prescribes what we might call "a rule of life" in considerable detail, instructing him, for instance, on which psalms to recite, how many ~~metévoia~~ to make, and from what foods to abstain on what days. (4)

(3) Example of "supportive role", Ward, Desert Fathers pp. 7f., no. 32, and cf. the title of one of Hausherr's sections on the spiritual father's duties: Porter une part de leur fardeau. Part Two, chapter III (a), p.169.

(4) Ep 2, 205v - 208r (Holl, Enthusiasmus, p. 318, n.1, gives some extracts from the same letter, taken from Coislin, 292) cf. Part Two, chapter III (c) pp.226 - 229 for more detailed discussion of the contents of the letter.

Spiritual Experience

While the foregoing are matters of $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma$, the fourth field in which a spiritual father ought to be qualified comes under the heading of $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$. This is what Symeon came to appreciate as being the truest benefit received through a spiritual father in this life, the conscious experience of God in a mystical but personal relationship. To guide effectively a disciple in this matter, and to help him keep free from the dangers of self-deception, is something impossible for anyone who has not himself some first-hand acquaintance with this level of prayer. This is well exemplified in the description Symeon gives of a disciple consulting his father about a mystical experience he has had and receiving the assurance, "My child, that is He" (sc. Christ). Clearly only from one who is $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\omega\gamma\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ can such an endorsement be safely received.(5)

In the above four points we have an outline description of four basic areas in which a good spiritual father ought to be qualified. The attempt has been made to portray them in contemporary Western terms, and this will, it is hoped, provided useful landmarks as we proceed to examine the language of Symeon and some of his predecessors.

(5) Tr Eth V, 294 - 316, cf. Part Two, chapter III (d) pp.258f. for further consideration of this passage.

II (c) The Physician of the Soul.

Having briefly looked at the terms in which some at least of the qualifications for spiritual fatherhood might be described by people of the twentieth century in the Western world, we must turn to examine Symeon's language. Prominent here are two images, those of the physician and of the shepherd, and it is with the former of these that we shall begin.⁽¹⁾

Barringer writes in relation to the period 330 - 451 A.D.,

"the clear intent of all penitential language is to heal the wounds of sin as these touch both the individual Christian and the whole community. This medicinal understanding of penance certainly dates from the earliest Christian ages ..."

He gives various examples which show how characteristic this was of the thought of the Eastern Church, and on this basis it is not surprising that in writers such as Climacus and Symeon we find the spiritual father pictured as one who needs to be qualified as a physician of souls. (2)

In Sc. Par. 1. Climacus succinctly remarks:

"Because of the suppurating condition of our wounds, we need someone who is very much a *τῆχνητός*, and also a physician".

What it should mean to be such a highly qualified and skilled physician of the soul, he spells out in detail in chapter 2 of his Liber ad Pastorem, which he devotes to this subject. Here he translates into what he considers their spiritual equivalents the means of treatment employed in ordinary medical practice. Thus, for instance,

(1) cf. Cat XX, 198f., οἱ καλῶς θεραπεύουσιν καὶ ἰατροῦσιν ψυχὰς λογικὰς ἐπιστάμενοι.

(2) Barringer, Penance, pp. 32f., 34f., 110, 160. Amongst these examples one may notice, St. John Chrysostom, Vita Phocae, 1, PG 50, 699, οὗτοι ἐξ ὧν ἐστὶν ἀπαύσις ἀμαρτημάτων, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἀποθνήσκειν φάρμακα κατασκευάζω.

"a plaster is the healing of the passions that can be seen, that is those of the body; a dose is the healing of passions that are internal and the expulsion of unseen filth; a desiccative is humiliation which stings and heals the suppuration of self-conceit",

to cite but three items from a lengthy catalogue. This device used by Climacus clearly demonstrates how the ~~recovery~~ of a spiritual 'αἴτιος' was indeed held to comprise a variety of skills, the acquisition of which constituted his qualification as ~~recovery~~. To connect this with the description in twentieth-century terminology delineated in the last section, it is readily apparent that to function as an effective healer, the spiritual father needs to be qualified to fulfil the roles of psychologist, of sympathetic supporter and of ascetical theologian.(3)

It is noteworthy that, although Symeon as we shall see was very much aware of the need for directors to be well-qualified as spiritual physicians, he appears never to claim such a qualification for his own father, the Studite. The reason for this can only of course be conjectured, but a likely explanation might be that he took this qualification for granted, while his concern was mainly directed to the vindication of the Studite's sanctity in the face of those who regarded him as a charlatan. The nearest approach to the use of a medical image in wording occurs in the passage already cited, where Symeon recalls what he heard from the mouths of those attempting to persuade him to abandon his father. The Studite's opponents spoke of Symeon's

"vain and futile expectation of recovering ...(spiritual) sight" through "this deceiver", and contrasted Symeon's hardships as his disciple with "the treatment that would be given" by themselves. (4)

(3) Climacus, Sc. Par. 1, 636AB, ad Pastorem, 1168D-1169C, cf. also Sc. Par. 8, 833CD, and for the difference between the skilful and unskilful spiritual physician, Sc. Par. 26, 1020BC. It is interesting to notice that St. Dorotheus of Gaza prefers to restrict the role of spiritual physician to Christ himself, Doctrinae, XI, 113, 22ff., and Symeon, without so restricting it, does apply the title to Christ, Hym XLVI, 8.

(4) Cat XXXVI, 102-116, partly cited Part Two, chapter I(c), p.121; the Greek has simply αἰατῶνα, an obviously "medical" term, but in the context it was necessary to translate "recover spiritual sight"; "treatment" is a rendering of θεραπεῖα (the verb θεραπεύω occurs four lines earlier), which may, but need not necessarily, refer to medical treatment.

A passage in which he acknowledges his need of a spiritual physician is found in Hym XII, which must be assigned to a time when all was going well for him, since Symeon speaks of himself as succumbing to the temptation to consider that he is

"rightly held in honour by all men, and also praised because worthy of their praises".

He then continues, in language which is reminiscent of that used by Climacus, but significantly without any mention of the Studite:

"How is it that I do not .. perceive my stripes, that I am not grieved and do not weep? (How is it that) I do not lie down in some hospital and seek for healing, call for physicians and show them my wounds, laying bare my hidden passions, so that they might apply desiccatives, plasters and cauteries ...?"

It is possible that Symeon here is not so much thinking of himself as of one Oporopoulos. for the scholiast says that it is he whose manner of life is being lamented inasmuch as

"being totally devoted to the glory that comes from men, he dared without the Spirit to speak theologically of the things of the Spirit".

But in any case, whether or not the scholiast is correct, in such a context one would certainly not have been surprised, and might even have expected, to find a reference to his spiritual father as one pre-eminently qualified to heal, or if by this time the Studite was no longer alive, an expression of sorrow that this great physician of the soul had been taken away. Symeon's failure to include anything of this nature may then be taken as support for the hypothesis suggested above: when he mentioned his father he was less likely to be concerned with questions regarding qualification in the realm of $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\eta$, than with establishing the Studite's sanctity, for this was the principal matter about which dispute had arisen.(5)

(5) Hym XII, 63 - 120; "praised", ibid. 91f.; "how is that ...?", ibid. 105 - 110; scholiast at ibid. 69.

We have already noticed a passage in which Symeon in his teaching makes use of the image of the physician when referring to the work of a spiritual father. Looking again at this from the point of view of a father's qualifications, it is apparent that the main thrust here is concerned with ability to diagnose accurately and prescribe the proper treatment. For this the physician requires not only $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\eta$ but $\pi\epsilon\pi\alpha$ also.

"Do not choose an inexperienced ($\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\pi\omicron\varsigma$) physician, lest he either plunge you into the depths of despair through excessive severity and inopportune surgery and cauterisation (of the soul), or else through overmuch tenderness leave you in your sickness.."

Somewhat earlier in the same work Symeon had indicated that in part at least the right treatment, when translated into spiritual terms, was a matter of knowing what penances ($\epsilon\pi\iota\tau\acute{\iota}\mu\eta\epsilon\upsilon$) were needed to heal the soul.

"Let us run to the spiritual physician, and by means of confession vomit out the poison of sin, spitting out the noxiousness of it. Let us with earnestness receive from him as an antidote the penances given in response to our repentance." (6)

In these passages is shown an awareness that the spiritual physician needs skill both in understanding the true condition of a soul and in choosing from the available penances those which will be most effective in promoting a cure for the sinful condition revealed in confession. To revert to the terminology of the preceding section, he requires both to have a knowledge of practical psychology and of ascetical theology.

The need for psychological understanding, skill in dealing with others, comes very much to the fore when we turn to a passage in Tr Bk VI.

(6) Ep 1, p. 117, 6 - 13, ibid. p. 115, 26 - p. 116, 3; an $\epsilon\pi\iota\tau\acute{\iota}\mu\eta\epsilon\upsilon$ was usually something much more severe than the very light penances normally imposed by Western confessors to-day, but Morris, "Confession", p. 291, observes that long periods of penance were rejected by the Desert Fathers.

Here we must quote at length from an imaginary case-history, which Symeon introduces as follows:

"To demonstrate, (the spiritual physician's) skillful treatment (ἐμπειρὸς ἰατρικὴ) through what I say, I shall speak as though describing an actual happening. The spiritual physician is approached by a sick man, who is so stupefied by his disorder and has a mind so entirely disturbed, that he asks for what would harm rather than heal him, that is to say what would worsen his disease and result before long in death. The kindly and sympathetic physician examines his brother, understands his infirmity and the inflamed nature of his disorder, and its distention. He sees the invalid altogether at death's door .. When then a wise spiritual physician sees his brother in such a state as we have described, he neither at once shouts at him, nor fobs him off, nor tells him, 'You are asking for what would be bad for you and indeed fatal; I will not give you that kind of help'. (He refrains from saying this) lest the other on hearing it should make his escape and go to someone else without experience of disorders of that kind, and so die straight away, No! What he does is to welcome him, keep him by him, encourage him, show him every token of love and liberality, in order to convince him that he will use the medicines he has asked for to work his cure and that he will satisfy his desire ... The experienced physician does not straight away refuse what is asked for by the sick man, but promises to satisfy all his requests; the sick man is eager to do as he is exhorted, confident that this is good; the physician conceals the ways in which he is helping him". (7)

This extract hints at something which will be looked at in a later chapter, the shallowness of some disciples and their habit of going from one spiritual father to another if they felt the first to be insufficiently complaisant. In these circumstances, Symeon sees that if the "patient" is not to run away and suffer "death" at the hands of an "inexperienced practitioner", it is necessary for the spiritual physician to be skilled not only in diagnosing the penitent's true condition, but also in the use of innocent ruses by which to retain him and begin his treatment. To be qualified in these ways,

(7) In St. VI, 276 - 311 (excerpts): "without experience", ἀπειρος ; "experienced", ἐμπειρὸς .

the future physician needed teaching such as Symeon gives in this passage, but as his use of "experienced" and without "experience" suggests, not only psychological theory, but also practice in real life would be necessary. Since, however, the matter at stake is nothing less than the fate of a human soul, and of this Symeon is very conscious, one must suppose that the disciples selected for special training would gain this practical experience by at first working closely under the supervision of their own highly-qualified spiritual father. This, in fact, would be a part of their apprenticeship.

Before concluding our consideration of the need for a spiritual father to be qualified as a physician of the soul, we must allude to the matter of dispassion ($\alpha\pi\alpha\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$). This will be further discussed in a later section of this chapter and also when in the next one the training of disciples is investigated but it deserves mention here as a prerequisite for the work of a spiritual physician.

Christophorides has rightly pointed out that Symeon saw that a father would himself suffer spiritual injury if, without being dispassionate, he sought to heal the souls of others. Thus we find in Tr Eth VI, which is largely devoted to the subject of dispassion, the following significant passage:

"The understanding of holy men remains unstained, even if they look into filthy and shameful passions, for their mind is naked and a stranger to all passionate ($\pi\alpha\theta\eta$) desire. If ever it determines to enter upon an investigation of such things, it does so for no reason other than a wish to observe and understand the passionate ($\pi\alpha\theta\eta$) movements of the passions and their workings, and (to know) what causes them and what remedies get rid of them, just as we hear that physicians do (with regard to the body)" (8)

(8) Christophorides, op. cit. p. 80; Tr Eth VI, 262 - 270.

Dispassion, then, which is one of the accompaniments of holiness, must be counted also as one of the indispensable qualifications of the father as spiritual physician, if he is to be able, without endangering himself, to diagnose sins and bring healing to sinners.

To sum up, we may say that in his use of medical imagery in connection with the qualifications necessary for spiritual fatherhood, Symeon was following a well-established tradition which recognised healing as a basic need of the sinner's soul, and that he was confirmed in this by his own experience as disciple and as spiritual father. Moreover his observation of the sad consequences of people putting themselves in the hands of men who claimed to be physicians of the soul but were without experience showed him that proper qualifications were essential for the proper undertaking of this work.

II (d) The Pastor.

When attempting to write about the qualifications needed by the spiritual father in his role of pastor, one is confronted at the outset by two difficulties. The first has to do with language: Greek has the single word ποιμήν, 'shepherd', which can be used either literally or metaphorically: English, except when speaking of God or Christ, prefers to substitute for 'shepherd' in the metaphorical sense the Latin noun 'pastor', which has a convenient adjective, 'pastoral'. But while Greek has the verb ποιμαίνω, 'to shepherd' or 'to look after (a flock)', literal or metaphorical. English lacks any verb corresponding to the noun 'pastor'. It will therefore be necessary to resort to the cumbersome device of inserting ποιμαίνω in brackets whenever it is desired to make it clear that the original contains this verb, used metaphorically, and on occasion translated by some periphrasis.

The second difficulty lies in the fact that as compared with "medical", "pastoral" qualifications are bound to appear somewhat vague. This is because, although τέχνη is involved here also, it is chiefly his moral and religious qualities that enable someone to be a good pastor, and such things are not usually assessed in terms of technical skill. Of the categories proposed in section (b), we may thus anticipate that the most important pastorally will prove to be the fourth, spiritual experience, and the second, the knowledge of how best to help the tempted and erring, combined with the willingness to continue providing support at the cost of personal hardship.

For the Christian the origin of the shepherd/pastor image is of course to be found in the Bible, and particularly in its application to Christ in the New Testament. In the Fourth Gospel he is represented as

claiming himself to be the Good Shepherd (ὁ ποιμήν ὁ καλός), who knows his sheep and lays down his life for them: in the First Epistle of Peter he is styled the Chief Shepherd (ἀρχιποιμήν), and the elders of the Church are exhorted to shepherd (ποιμαίνω) God's flock, as men responsible to him. Through such an injunction it will have seemed very natural to apply pastoral terminology to spiritual father, for in his monastery the hegumen is at one and the same time both shepherd, under Christ, of his flock, and normally also ex officio their spiritual father. It is also noteworthy that in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the only place in the New Testament where the noun ποιμήν is used in its metaphorical sense of persons other than Christ, it is coupled with διδάσκαλοι, teachers, and to be a teacher is another of the roles which the spiritual father is expected to fulfil.(1)

We have already noticed Symeon's linking of medical and pastoral qualifications in his phrase, "those who understand how to be good pastors and physicians to rational souls". That he was not the first to do this is shown by the presence in Climacus of a sentence which also is more directly reminiscent of the New Testament:

"a good shepherd (καλὸς ποιμήν) will give life to (ζωοποιήσει) and will heal his spiritual (πνευματικός) sheep". (2)

It is not hard to discover in Climacus' 'Liber ad Pastorem' the various qualifications which he considers that the pastor requires.

(1) St. John, 10, 11-15, cf. St. Matthew, 18, 12f. and St. Luke, 15, 3-7, the parable of the shepherd and the lost sheep; I Peter, 5, 1-4, cf. St. John, 21, 16, Christ's words to St. Peter, ποιμαίνει τὰ πρόβατά μου; Ephesians, 4, 11.

(2) Cat. XX, 198f., quoted above at (c), p. 145, n.1; ad Pastorem, 1168A.

These include: guilelessness, zeal, prayer, vigilance and above all, love, since

"love marks out a true shepherd, for because of love the Shepherd was crucified". (3)

What all this might mean in practice is well brought out by a sentence of Dorries:

"The gentleness with which (some fathers) sought after those who had isolated themselves out of fear or obstinacy touches the reader all the more for its not being the expression of soft yielding but often being combined with an actually inflexible severity of demand".

He illustrates this by an account, taken from the Apophthegmata Patrum, of Macarius, who knowing the young hermit Theopemptos to be in danger, makes a point of visiting him, and leads him to confession by himself admitting that he too is tempted. (4)

Whatever the reasons why the Studite as spiritual physician was not spoken of by Symeon in terms which allude to his qualifications in that area, those reasons did not operate when it came to speaking of him as pastor. Nicetas indeed, when mentioning his care for Symeon at St. Mamas, goes so far as to style him "the good shepherd", and the New Theologian himself both uses the word ποιμήν of his father, and also employs language regarding him which illustrates the pastoral qualities which he must have possessed. Addressing Christ in Cat XXXV, and referring to the time when although he had been favoured with a visionary experience he had become "a lost sheep", Symeon says "thou didst convert (ἐπιστρεψας) me through him, that saintly man".

(3) ad Pastorem, 1165B, 1177B.

(4) Dorries, 'Confession' p. 288, and for a summary of the anecdote, v. Part Two, chapter III (c), pp.192f.

The pastoral reference is evident in view of the LXX version of the 'Shepherd Psalm' - Psalm 22 (23) in verse 3 of which we find τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα. In other words. In terms of I Peter 5, 1-4. Symeon saw the Studite as well-qualified to act as pastor under the direction of Christ the Chief Shepherd. (5)

It is interesting in connection with our present topic to revert to the period of Symeon's life referred to in Part I and for which information was derived from Cat XXII. Usually the image of the shepherd would suggest that we are dealing with one who takes initiatives, such as, for example, going out to look for a lost sheep. Such an initiative might be understood from the words "thou didst convert me through him" which occurred in the passage from Cat XXXV, quoted in the last paragraph. That it would be wrong, however, to insist that to be a pastor must mean undertaking at all times such an active role, is conveyed to us by the actual course of events in the story in Cat XXII. After his great mystical experiences, Symeon - putting his story on the lips of the young man, George - admits:

"Little by little I became oblivious of all that I have just recounted (sc. his vision) and reached the point of being in total darkness .. I even looked upon that saint as a mere ordinary man .. In spite of my unworthiness, I did not entirely keep away from him, but used to confess to him the events of my life (τὰ γινόμενα ἐξηγέσθαι), and even though, being deaf to my conscience, I did not observe his injunctions, I would frequently go to his cell when I chanced to be in the city".

In these words there is well brought out the patience of the pastor and his readiness to remain in the background, watching over an erring member of his flock without intervening until an appropriate occasion presents itself. By implication also we are given a glimpse of the attractiveness of the Studite's personality, which could make Symeon feel that he was a welcome visitor, even at a time when he must have been a great

(5) Nicetas, Life, 24, 1, ὁ καλὸς ποιμὴν ; ποιμὴν Cat XXXV, 256, 262; ibid., 113, 118, in which the word ποιμὴν may be a reminiscence not of Ps 22 (23) but of St. James, 5, 19f., where it is used of converting a sinner.

disappointment to his future father. In fact, when the "lost one" is not a sheep but a human being, the wise pastor knows that waiting patiently is often the most effective means of caring for him, until there comes the opportune moment for taking an initiative. So, with Symeon,

"after such a long period of years had passed, God who loves mankind had mercy upon me in response to (the Studite's) prayers, and by means of him rescued and delivered me from much going astray and from an abyss of evils". (6)

Such was Symeon's experience of being 'shepherded', but we shall have to observe in the next chapter that when a pastor himself he appears to have lacked the Studite's capacity for being patient with the erring. With regard to his teaching about qualifications, the first point to notice is his stress on the need for freedom from earthly concerns. He appears to have been unhappy about the results of the practice of combining in one person, the hegumen, both spiritual and administrative responsibilities. Thus he writes:

"He who wishes to care for (τὸν αἶνῶν) Christ's flock .. can he at the same time manifest anxiety over fields and be concerned about possessions, taking legal action to protect such things and to repel those who would harm or threaten them, now having to go before the courts, and now to withstand false accusations, and sometimes becoming responsible for oaths being sworn and perjury committed?". (7)

It is easy to see how the necessary concern for the temporalities of a monastery might distract a hegumen from the cultivation of those personal qualities which he needed in order to be a good pastor.

(6) cf. Part One, chapter I, pp. 44 - 47; Cat XXII, 284 - 308 (extracts), cf. Archdeacon W. Cunningham's opinion that "a clergyman .. should aim to retain a hold as a friend on those who could no longer regard him as a teacher." (A. Cunningham, William Cunningham - Teacher and Priest, London, 1950, p. 90).

(7) Tr Eth XI, 649 - 657, cf. Cat XVIII, 483 - 488, where the body of monks is styled a "flock" (τὸν ποίμνιον), and the hegumen is bidden to delegate administrative duties so far as possible, and not go out of the monastery on business more than once a month, cf. also Hym XLIII, 11-19, where Symeon laments that he has to choose between either "being anxious about the affairs of the monastery, giving thought unreservedly to temporal needs" or cultivating ἡσυχία and "gently teaching others".

St. Stephen the Younger, for example, will have been conscious of the necessity of protecting himself against distractions of this nature when, after the number of his monks had increased to twenty, he handed over the administration of the monastery to his disciple Marinus, and withdrew to a small cell in order to lead a more ascetic life. But this did not mean that he ceased to function as a spiritual father; on the contrary, we are told by his biographer that many resorted to him "in order to be profited". On the positive side, what Symeon held that the hegumen or spiritual father ought to be free to attend to, he summed up in these words

"being at the head of a flock and manifesting anxiety over the salvation of his neighbours". (8)

This would involve being able to instruct them for

"caring for a flock (τὸ ποιμαίνειν) means nothing other than by speech and teaching to pay attention to those being cared for (οἱ ποιοιμένοι)".

Similarly, in words that he believed were addressed to him by Christ, Symeon was reminded of his own duty as hegumen to lead his "sheep" to

"the pastures of (Christ's) commandments" But in the same context it is made clear that more than purely intellectual qualifications are required, since the flock must also be led to

"the spiritual (ὄρη) mountains of mystical contemplations".

With this latter we are once again moving into the realm of *πύριμα*, since a pastor who himself has no experience of "mystical contemplations" would find it hard to guide a disciple to those "mountains".

(8) St. Stephen, the Younger, *Life*, (by Stephen the Deacon), PG 100, 1104D - 1108A, cited by J. Leroy, 'La Réforme Studite', O.C.A., 153, (1958), p. 53; St. Symeon's summing up, *Tr Eth* XI, 399 - 401, cf. also the injunction that the hegumen shall make himself available twice a day to hear confessions "having laid aside every other work of whatever kind and everything to do with management and making arrangements", 'Le typikon de la Théotokos Evergetis' (ed. P. Gautier) R.E.B., 40, (1982), p. 29.

An even more basic qualification of this sort is prescribed when Symeon issues the warning:

"Do not attempt to function as a (spiritual) shepherd (ποιμαίνω) until you have gained the Good Shepherd as your true friend".

Similarly, and once again linking pastors and medical imagery,

"You, who still sit in darkness and have not acquired the eye which sees, the true light, do you not fear to be pastor (ποιμαίνω) of your brethren? When you yourself are sick, and unable even to recognise your own wounds, are you not ashamed to be a physician (ιατρίσω) to others?". (9)

From the foregoing pages, it can be seen that both Symeon and his forerunners would expect a spiritual father to manifest certain definite qualities in himself and to arrange the circumstances of his life in suitable way, if he were to be regarded as qualified for the work of caring for/being a pastor to (ποιμαίνω) his disciples or spiritual children. In fact, because the image of the shepherd/pastor in the Bible comes to full expression in Christ himself, who is both the Good Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd, the qualifications required in the case of anyone who would act as an "under-shepherd" are bound ideally to be expressed in language that appears very demanding.

"No rest for your body in this labour, no gratification. Your nights no less than your days will be consumed by anxiety for the souls entrusted to you, in order that none of them may become the prey of wild beasts...but so that you may preserve your flock for Christ our God, the Chief Shepherd, keeping it safe and with its size increasing...."

In so far as a spiritual father lacks the proper qualifications as pastor, he is liable to injure souls which belong not to him but to Christ.(10)

(9) Tr Eth XI, 496f., a reminiscence of I Timothy, 5, 17; Eva XLIII, 70 - 73, cf. Tr Eth XI, 542f. and Ch I, 54, 25f.; "warning", Tr Eth VI, 413f., ibid., 397 - 401.

(10) Cat XVIII, 432 - 440, cf. Climacus, ad Pastorem, 1168A.

II (e) Further Requirements.

It is now necessary to mention briefly one or two other respects in which Symeon and others held that a spiritual father should be qualified.

Teaching

The first of these is the ability to teach, which as we saw, is frequently linked with, or implied in, the activity of a pastor. What knowledge ought the spiritual father, as teacher, to be able to impart?

For Symeon, well versed as he was in the Bible, and constantly quoting from or alluding to it, the answer is obvious:

"the divinely-inspired and useful teaching of the Word", or - as he represents Christ as saying - "the life-giving food of my commandments". (1)

In addition to being able to use the Bible in teaching about how to live, Symeon we may conclude expected a spiritual father to know how to teach others to draw from it, or at least from the Psalms, material to use in their private devotions. Thus we find him, in the course of instructing one of his own spiritual children about what prayers to say in the evening, telling him to recite Psalm 6. Outside the Scriptures, we see Symeon bidding a hegumen

"apply (himself) carefully to the reading of the ordinances and canons" of those who were "eye-witnesses and disciples of the Word", presumably a reference to the Apostolic Canons which he has mentioned a little earlier. A spiritual father might not need to teach such material directly, but would no doubt find it useful as background information when giving instruction to his disciples. (2)

(1) Ep 1, p. 125, 1f., a reminiscence of II Timothy 3, 16; Tr Bth XI, 542f.

(2) Ep 2, 207v; Cat XVIII, 551 - 553, (a reminiscence of St. Luke, 1, 2): ibid., 512, at which place (Cat XVIII SC 104, pp. 306f., n.1) Krivocheine has a note about the origins and history of the Apostolic Canons.

Support

In section (b) mention was made of the spiritual father's supportive role. There is no one Greek word, such as 'physician', 'pastor' or 'teacher', which expresses this, but the concept none the less is clearly found. There is usually a reminiscence of St. Paul's exhortation: "Bear one another's burdens ..", besides which, paradoxically, he sets three verses later the warning:

"Each man will have to bear his own load".

The original has φορτίον for 'load' and Βάρος for 'burden'.

By a strange confusion, Climacus offers the advice that

"he who is able and willing to toil with you on the burden (φορτίον) of your sins should be your father".

Similarly,

"a simple monk is a rational animal, is obedient and lays his burden (φορτίον) entirely on the one who leads him". (3)

Symeon, however, when recommending the hegumen to find colleagues who will "take on the burdens (Βάρη) of the brethren", avoids mixing the two Pauline texts. He also comes very close to the wording of another text in St. Paul when he insists that the hegumen,

"as one who is strong must bear the infirmities of the weak".

The spiritual father, therefore, or the hegumen when acting in that capacity, needs to be qualified as a person able to give effective support to those whose pastor he is, when they are faced with the need to struggle against temptations and sins. (4)

(3) Galatians, 6, 2 & 5, cf. Romans, 15, 1; Climacus, Sc. Par. 3, 665D, ibid., 24, 984C.

(4) Cat XVIII, 429, ibid., 468f., cf. Romans, 15, 1.

Love

Although not the kind of qualification which can be assessed by prescribed standards, love (ἀγάπη) is clearly something which is absolutely essential for there to be a motive powerful enough to lead a father to undertake and persist in the bearing of "loads". Christophorides emphasises the importance of love as a quality of the spiritual father, and in the preceding section of this chapter, Climacus' beautiful statement was quoted:

"Love marks out a true shepherd, for because of love the Shepherd was crucified".

Symeon had the same conviction, as is shown not least in Cat I, addressed to his monks on the day of his installation as hegumen, and containing a long and lyrical passage apostrophizing ἀγάπη. In the course of this he engaged himself, in imitation of the apostles and martyrs who were inspired by love, to suffer and endure everything in order to edify and benefit his monks. It must not be assumed that the love thus spoken of is simply a matter of relationships between one human being and some of his fellows; it is, on the contrary, though directed towards other human beings, to be understood essentially as an expression of love for God. This is well brought out in Pseudo-Basil's De renuntiatione saeculi, where prominent among the list of qualifications to be looked for in a spiritual father we find the requirement of

"love for God (ἡ πρὸς Θεὸν ἀγάπη) attested by his works".

In the same way Symeon in Cat I speaks of as

"kindling in me a boundless love (πρόθυμα) for God and for my brethren and fathers".(5)

(5) Christophorides, op. cit., pp. 105 - 109; Climacus, 1177B; Cat I, 70-134; Pseudo-Basil, PG 31, 632B; Cat I, 129f.

Discipleship to a Spiritual Father

Finally, we must notice Symeon's insistence on including among the spiritual father's qualifications that of himself having had, and been obedient to, a spiritual father of his own. In this, of course, we are confronted again by the model of apprenticeship which was looked at in section (a). In Ep 4, writing to one whom he addresses as "spiritual father", but whom he suspects of not being genuinely qualified, Symeon tells him:

"You must first then become a disciple of Christ and moreover be well instructed by him in his mysteries, and only so attempt to instruct others in them. You must follow a spiritual father and without turning back travel along the way which leads to Christ..."

This is, indeed, exactly what one might expect if the normal mode of becoming a spiritual father is through becoming a disciple and apprentice of someone who is already qualified and established as a practitioner of this demanding ministry. Symeon would maintain that part of a genuine father's qualification is that he should stand in a succession of predecessors, each in turn the recipient of a true spiritual formation.(6)

(6) (a), pp. 135 - 139 above; Ep 4, 326 - 329.

II (f) Symeon's Emphasis on Experiences.

Reference has already been made more than once to Symeon's sense of the importance of πίστη as well as τῆς when one is concerned with a spiritual father's qualifications. In this section we shall notice something of the way in which he emphasises this aspect of the matter, beginning with some of his references to his own father, the Studite. (1)

A passage already quoted for a different purpose shows the impression made on him by the depth and reality of the latter's spiritual life.

"I followed him and I rejoiced, O Word, with joy unspeakable as I beheld him following in thy footsteps and often holding converse with thee. But when I saw thee, our good Master, present with my guide, my father, the love and the longing I had were inexpressible". (2)

Symeon is here voicing the intense impression made on him by the fact that prayer, for the Studite, was quite obviously a real meeting and conversation with Christ. Indeed, if we pressed the words in the second sentence, "when I saw thee", we might conclude that he was somehow enabled to share in a vision or visions granted to his father, and certainly in Hymn XVIII we have a description of the Studite standing in the middle of a fire, calling Symeon to him and then embracing him, which is most easily understood as a shared visionary experience.

It is possible, however, that "when I saw thee" should be interpreted less literally as simply denoting the deep-seated feeling conveyed to Symeon that Christ's presence could be almost physically perceived when the Studite was at prayer. In either case, the important point so far as we are now concerned is that Symeon as disciple had a spiritual

(1) cf. Volker, Praxis, p. 114.

(2) Hymn XXXVII, 29-35, cf. Part Two, chapter I(b), p. 111.

father of whose qualifications in the realm of *ἡσυχία* he could not be in any doubt. (3)

Furthermore, the acquiring of 'dispassion' (*ἀπαθία*) as a personal characteristic is a vital part of the experience needed by a spiritual father. Symeon is tireless in claiming that the Studite was truly and totally *ἀπαθής*, and although some of his ardour is to be understood as a response to those who challenged this in order to deny his father's sanctity, in a passage such as the following there is also a clear connection with the thought of qualification as a spiritual teacher.

"He came to equal many of the most illustrious martyrs. That is why he was glorified by God, and became dispassionate (*ἀπαθής*) and was a saint (*ἅγιος*), receiving within himself the Paraclete in, so to speak, his entirety. Then, just as a father freely gives an inheritance to his son, so he filled me, his unworthy servant, without any toil or any payment on my part, with the Holy Spirit". (4)

When we remember that, after the ending of the persecutions, the life of a monk began to be considered the equivalent of literally dying for one's Christian faith, it will be recognised that here we have a very illuminating sequence: the Studite's progress in the monastic life was accepted by God as no less valuable than the martyrs' sacrifice of their lives; it was therefore rewarded by the gifts of dispassion and sanctity; so he was able to receive the Holy Spirit in full measure and personally (within himself, *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*); thus he was then qualified, as a spiritual father, to pass on the Spirit to Symeon, his disciple and spiritual child. The Studite's qualifications from the point of view of *ἡσυχία* are of course taken for granted in a passage such as this, where all the emphasis falls on the interior life. This is quite typical of Symeon, who, for example, only incidentally in the passage cited in section (d) enables us to glimpse the skill of his father

(3) *Hymn* XVIII, 143 - 160.

(4) *Cat* VI, 261-267; for the Studite's total dispassion, cf. *Hymn* XV, 205-214 and Nicetas, *Life*, 81, 3-5; for the monk's life being equivalent to martyrdom, cf. Symeon's disquisition on this subject in *Tr* *Edh* X, 566-611, which incidentally may incorporate material originally spoken and addressed to monks, since at 606 (and 612) we find the vocative, *ἀδελφοί*.

as a pastor who could retain the confidence of someone who had temporarily become a backslider and ceased to "observe his injunctions".(5)

On turning to the teaching Symeon gave, we may first briefly recall how, with regard to the father as spiritual physician, he insisted on the need for not simply theoretical knowledge but for the practical ability which results from experience. In respect of the director's role as pastor, we noticed how Symeon presupposed personal experience of the higher states of prayer in anyone who was to guide others to

"the spiritual mountains of mystical contemplations". In Tr Eth V we are fortunate enough to have a description of a spiritual father's treatment of his disciple who comes and relates a mystical experience and is reassured as to its genuineness. This passage - almost certainly autobiographical in origin - will be examined in more detail later on, but is again mentioned here in passing to provide an example of Symeon's awareness that in order to fulfil properly the pastoral role, one must be qualified by experience to understand a spiritual child's account of his visions in order to pronounce authoritatively as to whether or not they come from God.

In the teaching given in Cat XI there is a revealing passage which demonstrates the connection Symeon saw between $\pi\epsilon\pi\eta$ and the gaining of discernment ($\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa\rho\iota\varsigma$) and provides us with some details about the interior struggle involved in seeking to attain true $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$.

"There are in all likelihood many with pretensions as to fasting, keeping vigils and observing a form of devoutness, or for whom indeed these things may be realities; even more find no difficulty in reciting much material they have learnt by heart and in teaching by means of words: very few however can be found who eradicate passions by weeping and acquire for good and all those virtues which include all the others. By virtues which include all the others we mean (first) humility which annihilates the passions and procures heavenly, angelic dispassion, and (second) love ($\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$) which never stands still and never fails, but continually inclines towards what lies ahead, adding desire to desire ($\pi\upsilon\theta\epsilon\iota$) and love to love ($\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$), while it is itself the source of perfect discernment. This in its

(5) "spiritual physician", (c), pp.148-150, Tr Eth VI, 276 - 311; "pastor", (d), pp.157f., Hym XLIII, 70-73; Tr Eth V, 294-316, v. Part Two, chapter III (d), pp.258f.

"turn does not go astray when guiding both itself and those who follow it, but brings them in safely across the spiritual ($\nu\sigma\gamma\tau\omicron\varsigma$) sea". (6)

Here the importance of discernment is brought out, but it is noteworthy that Symeon believes that it depends not on some $\tau\epsilon\chi\eta$ which might be, as it were, externally acquired, but rather on the "all-embracing virtue" of love, the necessity of which we have already mentioned, and which is essentially an internal motive-force. Dispassion likewise, which Symeon also regards as absolutely necessary, is not to be gained by ascetic practices per se, however genuinely they are carried out: what according to this passage is needed if the passions are to be destroyed, is humility, and this once again is, when real and true, a matter of internal disposition. The importance which Symeon attached to a spiritual father's $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho$ is thus well illustrated in these lines which speak of the virtues of humility and love.

Graef has drawn attention to Cat XXVIII, in the course of which there is a long passage in which Symeon dismisses the claim to have the power to "bind and loose" made by those whose qualifications are only external and based on "human appointment and ordination". Such priests he contrasts with those who "offer themselves to the Lord, and as a perfect, holy and acceptable sacrifice manifest their pure worship internally and in a spiritual fashion, in the temple of their body..." Here again, although the actual word $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho$ is not used, we are in the same area of thought: the emphasis is being laid on the need for inner, spiritual experience, and this is typical of Symeon's thought concerning qualifications for spiritual fatherhood. (7)

(6) Cat XX, 199 - 211; "never fails", cf. I Corinthians, 13, 8; "towards what lies ahead", cf. Philippians, 3, 13.

(7) Graef, 'Spiritual Director', pp. 612f. (I have made my own translation in the quotation, since Graef's is somewhat loose); Cat XXVIII, 190-296; words quoted, ibid., 265 - 268, comprising a wealth of Biblical allusions: Romans, 6, 16, and 12, and 2, St. James, 1, 27.

Before leaving this subject, we must turn briefly to Nicetas' description of Symeon's own practice as a spiritual father, which suggests that he regarded his personal mystical experiences as revelations to be conveyed to his spiritual children. In the course of his Preface to the Hymns, Nicetas, using language that owes much to Pseudo-Dionysius, writes of Symeon:

"The divine visions which in sacredness he had contemplated, he revealed to his disciples as though in payment of a debt. He did so as a person of the highest rank, (sharing) ungrudgingly, but yet in proportion to their capacities, with those who ranked second and were subordinate to him. He communicated sacred things to those who with understanding and entire devotion had shared in the sacred initiation, and he did this in proportion to their worthiness. He kept such matters from the laughter and mockery of the uninitiated, or rather he kept those (scoffers), if he found any such, from coming into conflict with God, because he did not divulge these (mysteries) to all and sundry while he was himself still to be seen among the living". (8)

When Nicetas speaks here of Symeon's taking care not to expose scoffers to the risk of coming into conflict with God (θεομαχία), he gives us a glimpse of the farthest reach to which πείρα can extend: this is nothing less than the deepest possible personal experience of God, fraught with danger for those unprepared for it, but essential for a spiritual father if he is to be capable of bringing others "to spiritual birth". So, in Cat XXXIV, Symeon himself tells his monks:

"humble as I am, poor, destitute of (all) good and slave of the holy brotherhood to which you all belong, yet I have had experience (πείρα) of God's love for men and his compassion, having drawn near to him by repentance and by the mediation of holy (αγία) Symeon, my father and your father ..." (9)

These words form part of an appeal by Symeon to the community in St. Mamas to accept what he longs to share with them, the treasure which is true fellowship with God. In spite of being nothing in himself, he knows that he is qualified by πείρα to make this offer, for he does have personal

(8) Nicetas' Preface is printed in Hymns I, SC 156, pp. 107 - 135, and the words quoted are from lines 215 - 223; "sacred initiation" represents the Greek ἱερατική τελεωσις, which Paramelle renders "initiation sacerdotale". This, however, would seem to imply that Symeon related his visionary experiences only to disciples who had been ordained priest, which is rather unlikely, and I have therefore not followed Paramelle in my translation.

(9) "spiritual birth", Ep 4, 158 - 161; Cat XXXIV, 44 - 48.

knowledge of God's love for men, and significantly enough, in his own approach to God he has relied on the mediation of his spiritual father.(10)

From the foregoing pages, it will have become clear how much for Symeon was involved in being qualified for spiritual fatherhood. This is not a role for the well-meaning amateur, but one that demands the utmost in professional dedication. We shall find ourselves confirmed in this judgment as we move on from considering qualifications to examine, in the next chapter, the actual duties which according to Symeon the spiritual father ought to undertake.

(10) "his spiritual father", cf. (e), p. 161 above.

III THE WORK OF A SPIRITUAL FATHER

(a) Introduction.

Because of the amount and the variety of the material to be looked at when we are considering what a spiritual father actually does or should do for his disciples, this chapter will be by far the longest in the thesis. Some arrangement according to a suitable scheme of classification is necessary, even though this is bound to introduce an element of artificiality, since the truth of the matter is that the work ought to be regarded as a single whole rather than as an agglomeration of individual items.

Hausherr devotes a chapter to the spiritual father's duties, subdividing it into sections headed : 1. En accepter les fonctions?
2. Prier pour ses enfants spirituels 3. Porter une part de leur fardeau
4. Aimer ses enfants spirituels

Christophorides has a rather similar chapter, with six sections dealing in turn with acceptance of spiritual fatherhood, instruction, prayer, correction, love and severity. Ware, writing of the gifts which "distinguish the spiritual father" and of how they are exercised, mentions "insight and discernment", which are needed when he receives the disciple's disclosure of thoughts ($\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$) "the ability to love and to make others' sufferings his own", which will be expressed in a genuinely caring relationship; and "the power to transform the human environment", which is exercised in various ways including that of helping

"disciples to perceive the world as God created it and as God desires it once more to be". (1)

(1) Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, chapter IV; (pp. 124 - 151) - some of Hausherr's requirements have in fact been discussed in Part Two, chapter II. Christophorides, op. cit., chapter IV: Ware, 'The Spiritual Father in Orthodox Christianity', Cross Currents, XXIV, (1974), pp. 301 - 304.

For the purpose of this thesis, in order to give scope for illustrating what a spiritual father such as Symeon actually may expect to do, a scheme different from any of the above has been chosen as likely to prove more satisfactory. We shall first treat of the father's role in ensuring his spiritual child's salvation, proceed to discuss and illustrate what is involved in training, and conclude by considering the closer fellowship with God into which the disciple ought to be led. The section on training is much longer than either of the others, and is therefore sub-divided in order to deal separately with the various facets of the process. On the basis of this method of classification, prayer does not get mentioned in a section to itself: it is prominent in connection with the ensuring of salvation, but, together with a truly caring relationship, it is presupposed at every stage.

As we approach this part of our subject, we shall do well to remember that, as Ware remarks, we are examining a relationship of "extreme flexibility", for

"some may see their spiritual father daily or even hourly .. others may see him only once a month or once a year". (2)

Thus Symeon when concerned with one of his monks at St. Mamas, with whom he was in daily contact, must obviously have adopted a very different style of direction from that which he used when dealing with spiritual children living in the world. The fact remains, however, that as has been already pointed out, we have very little information concerning spiritual guidance given to those who were outside the monasteries, and therefore inevitably most of the material to be examined in this chapter will be found to relate to men who were, in theory at least, dedicated to the quest for their own salvation, in isolation from the world and under the care of a father who had

(2) Ware, ibid., p. 310.

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(2) Ware, ibid., p. 310.

assumed a large measure of responsibility for their eternal happiness. The concept of flexibility is nevertheless important, even given the practical limitation just mentioned, for as Symeon's writings clearly show, monks were of varying temperaments and in varying degrees either zealous or recalcitrant. A writer such as Symeon will therefore at one time concentrate on the ideal, but at another time will provide much evidence of the obstacles he encountered in the attempt to help his children reach it.

It is, of course, in the section dealing with training that what is involved in flexibility comes to the fore; one might also expect it to be noticeable when fellowship with God is being discussed, but in fact we shall see little evidence of Symeon's being concerned that each spiritual child should come to know God in his own way, and on reflection this can be readily understood, since we have to do with one who described himself as a "most enthusiastic zealot": lastly, in the section with which we begin the idea of flexibility does not bulk very large, for whether with a smaller or greater degree of understanding what is involved, all disciples have one and the same goal, salvation. (3)

(3) "most enthusiastic zealot", (ζῆλος ὁ μάλιστα), Cat XII, 139f.

III (b) Ensuring the Disciple's Salvation.

It is above all by his prayers for his spiritual children that a father is expected to ensure their eternal happiness. When it is remembered that one of the alternative titles for a hegumen is superior (Προσώτος) and that a hegumen is expected to be a spiritual father, some words of Climacus provide us with a suitable introduction:

"As a helmet of salvation they have the protection given by the superior through his prayer".

This sentence unites the thought of salvation with both the person of the spiritual father and the work of prayer which he undertakes for his disciples. Ware writes to the same effect

"The spiritual father helps his children by interceding for them. This is clearly seen in The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: what you say when you visit your abba is 'Pray for me' ". (1)

The reason for the conviction that through his prayers the father ought to ensure his spiritual child's salvation lies of course in the belief that the intercession of a holy man is bound to be efficacious. One might claim a Scriptural basis for this in a text from St. James.

"The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects", which significantly comes in a section where confession of sins and forgiveness are also mentioned. But superstitious reliance on that text is excluded if one sets beside it what is said in I John.

"If any one sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal".

Here not only the "righteous", but "any one" is regarded as capable of interceding effectively for a sinner, provided that the latter has not placed himself beyond the scope of prayer, for

(1) Climacus, So. Par. 4, 677D, "helmet", cf. Ephesians 6, 17; Ware, Climacus, p. 40, cf. Rousseau, Ascetics, p. 36.

"there is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is to pray for that".

The boundary between faith and superstition in this area is, not surprisingly, difficult to define, and we have already observed Symeon himself in his youth under the influence of superstitious ideas in this regard. (2)

The importance attached to intercession by a spiritual father is well illustrated by a few lines in Climacus:

"Do not be astounded at what I am going to say .. It is better to sin against God than against our father, because if God be angry with us, he can be reconciled to us by our guide, whereas if we make the latter cross, we shall be left without any one to make atonement for us".

This, of course, is deliberately paradoxical, as Climacus makes clear by his introductory,

"Do not be astounded ..", but it is a striking testimony to the importance attached to intercession by a spiritual father on behalf of the salvation of his children. Ware uses this passage in illustration of the father's work as mediator (*μεσίτης*), an allied concept, the meaning of which he implies is brought out by some lines in the Liber ad Pastorem which do not contain the actual term, but which suggest that the hegumen is

"the friend of the Great King, who can plead on our behalf with boldness in the royal presence". (3)

We have already seen how Symeon, at an early stage, hoped to obtain salvation by finding a "saint" who would be his *μεσίτης*, and through "intercession" secure "pardon" for him. But, as we also observed, his actual experience as the Studite's disciple led to the perception that this is far from being all that a spiritual father has to do. Yet there

(2) James, 5, 16; I John, 5, 16; "Symeon in his youth", cf. Part One, chapter I, p.43 n. 13 and Part Two, chapter I(a) p.108f, notes 3 and 4 .

(3) Climacus, Sc. Par., 4, 725D - 728A; Ware, Climacus, p. 40 (referring to Climacus, ad Pastorem, 1172D): "mediator", cf. "Seek for the mediator who can show you the way to the Kingdom of God", Cosmas, Traité, p. 96 and Part Two, chapter I(a) p.108 n. 3 .

persisted in Symeon the conviction that humanly speaking he did owe his salvation to what the Studite had done and was doing for him. This is illustrated in a passage in which we can see a refining of his early and rather crude expectation of happiness in the world to come, but not its abolition.

"Who drew and guided me towards these good things? Who raised me from the depth of this world's deceit? ... Who showed me the way of repentance and of sorrow (for sin), by means of which I found day, the day that has no end? (He who did this) was an angel, not a man, yet one who is a man .."

Here, of course, "day" stands for the life of the redeemed in Heaven, of which Symeon, in his fuller understanding of Christianity has begun to enjoy a foretaste, but which, since it "has no end", he can share in fully only in the next world. This, and much besides, he owes to the Studite,

"an angel ..yet...a man". (4)

Attention has also been drawn to Symeon's statement in general about any sinner's need for a *μεσiτης* "to reconcile him to his God and Father". We must, however, now notice how with maturity he became aware of the danger of superstitious reliance upon this, as if it were something which a spiritual father, through his intercession, could ensure for his "client", quite apart from any personal religious experience on the part of the latter.

"He who has not received Christ and his Father and the Holy Spirit, so as to know (*γνωσας*) the One God living and walking within his heart .. Who will be a mediator (*μεσiτης*) for such a one, or reconcile him to God ...?"

The spiritual father, in other words, cannot ensure the salvation of any who harden their hearts. (5)

(4) For Symeon's conviction of the power of the Studite's prayers, v. Cat XXXV, 164f., "assured (in myself) that whatever he wanted he could have from thee (Christ)"; experience as the Studite's disciple", v. Part Two, chapter I(b); *Hymn* XVIII, 124-130.

(5) *Ep* 1, p. 115, 9-11; *Hymn* LVIII, 205-212.

On the other hand, as was made clear in the preceding chapter, it is vital for the father to be *ἐμπροσθέν* if he is to do all that he should do for the spiritual life of his child. Symeon teaches that this need is present not least when a person is functioning as *μεσίτης*, for he portrays God as condemning those who

"do not even have any knowledge of my grace, but yet undertake to act as mediators (*μεσίουσιν*) for others, while they themselves are guilty of countless faults".

Symeon indeed could himself be troubled by doubts as to his own qualification for this work, as is shown by his asking Christ,

"How am I to act as mediator for others, when I do not have, through faith and good works, loving freedom of access (*παρρησία*) to thee?". (6)

Symeon thus followed closely what he had found in Climacus concerning the spiritual father's task of ensuring the salvation of his disciples, particularly by interceding for them as a *μεσίτης*. Nevertheless, here as elsewhere, we can observe in him a characteristic emphasis on the need for personal experience, which applies to the "client" and the father alike.

An extension of the concept of mediator must now be briefly considered, namely the idea of the *ἀνὰ δόχους*. This term "signifying", in Ware's words,

"One who takes responsibility for another", is used of the spiritual father as a man willing to "assume responsibility for his disciple's sins". Barringer remarks that the concept, with the use of the cognate verb *ἀνὰ δόχους*, is found in connection with Pachomius, but not necessarily in the context of eternal salvation, for in one instance it denotes acceptance before the hegumen of spiritual responsibility for the future conduct of a penitent sinner. Barringer, however, also points out that the thought of the spiritual father's making himself responsible for the

(6) Hym LVIII, 115-117; Hym XX, 76-78.

eternal well-being of his children is an established topos. It is thus only to be expected that in Climacus we should find both the actual term ἀνέδοχος, and a vivid statement of the theme even when use is made of other words:

"If someone has obtained a completely clear conscience as regards obedience to his spiritual father, from then on he day by day awaits death as if it were a sleep, or rather as if it were life. This is because he knows definitely that when he departs, it will be, not he, but his director who will be called to account". (7)

Symeon, with his stress on personal experience, is not surprisingly more reserved about this aspect of a father's work. The Sources Chrétiennes indices show him using the verb only three times, and always simply to refer to receiving a disclosure of λογισμοί. The noun occurs once in the context of repentance, purification and reception of the Spirit, where he writes of getting

"complete remission of sins from one's father and ἀνέδοχος".

In Ep 1 the word is clearly used in the sense of one who accepts responsibility for another's sins, but significantly in the following lines Symeon speaks of the sinner's own need for

"sincere and painful repentance".

Here again can be seen his reluctance to allow the work of the spiritual father to be thought of as something automatic, and the same impression is gained from a passage in Cat XXX where we find the role of ἀνέδοχος being accepted by Symeon himself, although the actual word is avoided, and it is emphatically stated that the penitent for his part must not have any "hesitation in his heart or be double-minded". (8)

(7) Ware, Climacus, p. 41; Barringer, Penance, p. 42 and p. 232, n. 138; Climacus, Sc. Par. 4, 705B, cf. Regnault and de Préville, Dorotheus, SC 92 intr. p. 25, quoting letters of Barsanuphius to Dorotheus.

(8) Unfortunately the Catecheses are not supplied with an index that would include such terms, but there is one for all the other works of Symeon published by Sources Chrétiennes: "the verb", Tr Th I, 292, Tr Eth V, 524, Tr Eth VI, 395; "the noun", Cb III, 46, 24-26, where Darrouzes in a note (SC 51, p. 147) explains it in monastic terms as "un parrain de profession", but in the light of Symeon's usage in Ep 1, there seems no reason for assigning any other than the ordinary meaning; Ep 1, p. 116, 8 - 17; Cat XXX, 221 - 227.

We pass now to a consideration of the more general way in which a spiritual father, by caring for and protecting his disciples, should work to ensure their salvation. This involves to a greater or less extent what to-day would be called 'pastoral care', although Climacus, as was noted earlier, uses the image of a helmsman, in combination with that of a shepherd. In the Liber ad Pastorem, where at the very beginning he speaks in succession of the hegumen as shepherd, helmsman and physician, as well as teacher, he describes the helmsman as one

"who is able to deliver the ship not merely from a great wave but from the mighty deep itself".

The picture thus emerges of the work of the spiritual father as comprising the steering of his disciple away from danger and into the harbour of salvation. (9)

This protective care would be exercised usually as the two met in daily life. A good example can be found in the Life of St. Dositheus, who as a young soldier, very ignorant but desiring to escape damnation, arrived at a monastery and was entrusted by the hegumen to the care of St. Dorotheus, with the words:

"Undertake a work of charity and keep him by you so that he may be saved, for I do not want him mixing with the brethren".

Dorotheus was reluctant, but finally complied on receiving from the *μίσος γίγνων*, St. Barsanuphius, the command,

"Receive him, for it is through you that God will save him". (10)

While the narrative continues with accounts of Dorotheus' methods of training and of how Dositheus reacted to them, it remains clear that the training is continually being reviewed in the light of the father's

(9) Sc. Par. 26, 1089B, ad Pastorem, 1165B.

(10) St. Dositheus, Life, 4, 1-19.

responsibility for his young disciple's salvation. Thus, when the latter began to gain some understanding of the Bible, the concern manifested by Dorotheus was "that he should be kept safe through humility", rather than that he should devote himself to this study. Dorotheus was enabled to care pastorally for Dositheus, because he arranged for him to be his assistant in the monastery's infirmary, of which he was in charge. (11)

Clearly such daily contact would not always be possible, and we have already seen how, while Symeon was a temporary backslider, the most the Studite could do for him was to welcome him on the occasions of his visits. Later, during the short time that Symeon spent in the Studios monastery, the two will have been in close contact, especially to begin with, since according to Nicetas, the disciple was at first lodged in his father's cell. Then, after Symeon had had to move from Studios to St. Mamas, the Studite still kept in close touch with him, for "the good shepherd watched ceaselessly over his disciple" - a significant remark in the light of Christ's words in St. John. 10, 11 and 28,

"I am the Good Shepherd .. I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish .."

This pastoral work of the Studite's, undergirded by his prayers, was directed to ensuring his spiritual child's salvation. (12)

Symeon's own teaching shows how well he understood the purpose of this kind of care. After the passage in Cat XVIII dealing with pastoral labour which was quoted in section (d) of the last chapter, there follow the words:

"Thus you will save many, bringing them to perfection in works that are perfect, so that they are in no way lacking in anything .."

(11) "concern manifested", ibid.. 12, 4; "infirmary", ibid.. 1, 18 - 20 and 6, 2

(12) "backslider", Cat XXII, 304 - 308; Nicetas, Life, 11, 4-10, cf. for the same period in Symeon's life, ibid.. 13, 1-4, where he is described as protected by the Studite's prayer against demonic assaults; "St. Mamas", ibid.. 24, 1f., cf. Cat XXII, 311, περί τῆς ἐκείνου ἐν Στουδίοις, which must refer to Symeon at St. Mamas, since he had by this time been a monk for two or three years (Cat XXII, 271f.).

What is involved in training spiritual children "in works" is to be looked at in the next section, but the object of it all is here clearly stated, namely to "save many". Thus the spiritual father bears a tremendous responsibility for his disciples, who for their part should, as Symeon advises, have found him after they have offered prayers to

"reach quickly the haven of a good father..., for the sea of life contains much which is dangerous and might lead to final perdition".

Here Symeon is using language which echoes Climacus' nautical metaphor, instead of the "shepherd" imagery of Cat XVIII, but the purport is identical in both cases. He thus reproduces the traditional view of the spiritual father as one who ensures his children's salvation, by his intercession (even accepting responsibility for them before God), and by his pastoral care for them to the extent that personal contact makes this possible. Such teaching was undoubtedly traditional, but for Symeon as the Studite's disciple it was above all what he believed had been, was being and would be confirmed in his own experience. (13)

(13) Cat XVIII, 413f., the last words quoted being a reminiscence of St. James, 1, 4; "Symeon advises", Ch I, 17, 24 - 29; Climacus, Sc. Par. 26, 1089B.

III (c) Training the Disciple.

This section will inevitably cover a wide field, for we must consider training as it relates to the body, thoughts (λογισμοί), moral character, spiritual life and dispassion (ἀπάθεια). While looking in some detail at each of these, it is important that we do not lose sight either of the totality of the spiritual father's work or of his qualifications for it: the training he prescribes and directs is not an end in itself, but is intended as something which will contribute to a disciple's salvation, and his qualifications, particularly those of spiritual physician and of pastor are of the utmost importance, since it is only by skilful treatment of each individual being trained that success can be expected. Furthermore, although Climacus once speaks with approval of the sending of a certain novice to a cantankerous spiritual father, the system of training at which we shall be looking is one that is bound to demand of the father a genuine, but unsentimental, love for his spiritual child. As Symeon says of himself, Christ was pleased to grant him "to be loved by" the Studite, and in his turn he could tell his monks,

"I came to have a dispassionate passion for you more than for all others, and I confess that although commanded to love all men equally, (for you) I have come to have a greater love".

The rigorous discipline involved in training a spiritual child must be seen as having its source in

"the sharp compassion of the healer's art". (1)

(1) Climacus, Sc. Par. 4, 724B; Symeon, Cat. XXXV, 23f., Cat. XIX, 40 - 42, ἡ ἀπαθὴς ἀγάπη; being rendered "to have a dispassionate passion for"; "the sharp compassion ...", T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets - East Coker, IV.

The Body. Vööbus has detected a marked difference in attitude towards physical asceticism between Egyptian and Greek monks on the one hand and those of Syria on the other. There was

"a certain passion toward pain and affliction in Syrian asceticism", whereas in Egypt and in Hellenized circles the clearly-stated aim was to kill, not the body, but its dangerous desires. But whatever his background, any spiritual father was obliged to give considerable attention to the amount and kind of food consumed by his disciples. Thus, according to the Life of St. Dositheus, the first thing that St. Dorotheus did as his director was to say to him when a meal-time came:

"Eat as much as you like, but tell me how much you eat".

Gradually Dorotheus reduced the quantity, until at last Dositheus was eating only one ninth of the amount of bread which he had originally taken. This, it is not unlikely, either caused, or at least contributed to, the consumption of which he died after only some five years in the monastery. There is no suggestion, however, that Dorotheus was being intentionally harsh or unnecessarily strict: on the contrary, when Dositheus died, some of the monks grumbled on hearing that St. Barsanuphius, the *μείας γέρων* had sent a message to him on his death-bed virtually assuring him that he would go to heaven, although in their eyes he had not been conspicuous for asceticism. (2)

Naturally, in a work such as that of Climacus there are no detailed regulations about fasting addressed to individual spiritual children, but gluttony, and its evil consequences, forms the subject of So. Par. 14. Thus, we are told that

"being satiated with food engenders fornication, but afflicting one's belly leads to purity".

Yet Climacus would not have his readers become over-reliant on their ascetic achievements, for they are warned:

(2) Vööbus, Early Monasticism, pp. 293ff, the actual words quoted being from p. 299; "aim .. to kill the body's dangerous desires", cf. below, p. 190 n. 73; Dositheus, Life, 5, 1-22 ibid., 10, 15-22, and 11, 1-19; cf. also (referring to Dositheus) Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, pp. 81f.

"Do not be too certain that you will avoid falling because you are master of your body; it was a being who never even eats who was cast out of heaven".

Climacus in fact shows himself well aware of the ambivalent feelings which the body may give rise to.

"He (sc. my body) is ally and enemy, assistant and opponent, helper and betrayer .. at one and the same time I both turn from him and embrace him".

But there is no mistaking Climacus' insistence that a monk's spiritual development must take account of the body, since

"we who live in communities are to struggle every hour against all the passions, but perhaps especially against these two: gluttony and irritability". (3)

From considering Climacus as a representative of the general background influences on Symeon, we move on to see whether he may have been affected by any particular emphases in teaching about disciplining the body given by the Studite. His father's Chapters, in line with St. Theodore's approach, do not give the impression of being excessive in the demands they make on a disciple. The three Lents, for example, are to be observed by fasting, which is to be more rigorous in Great Lent than in the other two, but during the rest of the year a single meal a day is prescribed, apart from Saturdays, Sundays and festivals when it is implied that more may be eaten, though "not to the point of satiety". By way of advice about the kinds of food he should take, the cenobite is told:

"Eat what is set before you, whatever it may be, and similarly drink wine in moderation and without complaining. If you are by yourself, because you are ill, eat raw vegetables with oil. If one of the brethren sends you some food, receive it like a guest, thankfully and humbly and partake of some, whatever it is. Then send what remains to some other brother who is poor and devout".

(3) So. Par. 14, 864C; ibid. 15, 881D; ibid. 15, 901D - 904A; ibid. 4, 725B.

Again,

"if you go to a meal with some devout brethren, partake of what is before you, whatever may be there, without making distinctions (between foods of different kinds). But suppose someone has ordered you not to partake of fish or of some other foodstuff, and these are served, go and persuade the person who gave you the order to grant you leave to partake, if he is close at hand. But if he is not, or should you even know that he will not grant it, but yet you are unwilling to offend (your brethren), tell him about it after the meal and ask for forgiveness. If you do not wish to pursue either of these courses, you had better not go to the brethren".

Although, as with Climacus, examples have to be taken from the Studite's general teaching, one gets the feeling that the robust common-sense of the advice in the last example owes much to knowledge of real monks and their actual circumstances. (4)

For the Studite's treatment of Symeon, Cat XVI provides direct evidence which corroborates what is suggested by his Chapters, that is to say that judged by contemporary standards he did not demand from his children an excessive degree of physical asceticism. Symeon says that his own ardour was in fact restrained by his father, for "speaking imperatively he would give me an order, and so I used, unwillingly, to eat". (5)

This is a reminder of the need for a spiritual father to be qualified by Τίτλος in order to assess correctly the state of his disciples: some, such as Dositheus, had to be taught to moderate their appetite, while other, over-enthusiastic, beginners had to be held back from inordinate fasting. One evening, after an active day when he had accompanied the Studite on visits to spiritual children in the city.

Symeon was given the order,

"Eat my child, and drink, and henceforth do not be sad, for had not God willed to have mercy upon you, it would not have been his pleasure that you should come to us".

(4) "Theodore deprecated over-strenuous fasts", J.M. Hussey, 'Byzantine Monasticism', Cambridge Medieval History, Cambridge, 1967, IV (ii), 176; Ch 142, 680B, Ch 145, 681B, Ch 148, 684A; Great Lent is the period before Easter, while the other two Lents are observed, one in Advent, and one after Pentecost; "a single meal a day", whereas some of the monks who criticised St. Dositheus regularly ate only every other day, Life, 11, 4f. (5) Cat XVI, 22f., "imperatively", being an attempt to render μὴ ἐν τιμῇ which one might expect to mean "with a penance", although this would not suit the sense - perhaps because of the difficulty, one manuscript reads μὴ ἐν τιμῇ.

After their meal, at which they ate and drank "more than (they) actually needed", the Studite said:

"Know, my child, that God does not rejoice in, or reveal himself because of, our fasting, our keeping vigil, our bodily toil, or any other of our right actions, but rather because in soul and heart we are humble and merely simple and good".

The insistence on eating may thus be linked with the need to eradicate self-will, a topic to be considered in the next chapter, but we are also shown a father aware that an over-enthusiastic beginner at times needs to be restrained from excessive efforts in the field of asceticism, and helped to understand that there are more important objectives which must be kept in mind. The Studite's words are not, of course, meant as a repudiation of all ascetic practices, but are intended to put them, and all other good works, in their proper context in the Christian scheme of things, in which they are to be valued, not for themselves, but as outward expressions of, or as means to attain, the right inward dispositions. As a spiritual father, but not a hegumen, the Studite did not have the concern for monastic discipline which was inevitably a matter of anxiety to Symeon. Therefore, as we proceed to consider⁶ latter, it will not be surprising if we find him revealing a tendency to be less mild and more demanding than his father. The evidence of the Catecheses, as well as what can be gathered from Nicetas, suggests that many of his monks were much inclined to laxity, and this will have provoked in him what we do not find in the Studite, a strong reaction in the opposite direction. (6)

(6) "one evening", ibid. 31 - 57, (extracts); "eradicate self-will", not surprisingly, in the use he makes of Cat XVI for his narrative, Nicetas puts all the emphasis on this (Life, 12, 2 - 17, cf. ibid., 18, 11 - 20); for the Studite's reputation, cf. Cat VI, 306 - 308, and what was said about the Studite in Part One, Chapter II, pp. 96 - 99.

However, to start with an episode narrated by Nicetas, Symeon in his turn, just like his spiritual father, had sometimes to moderate the inordinate zeal for asceticism displayed by an enthusiastic disciple. On one occasion, against Symeon's better judgment, Arsenius, the monk who later succeeded him as a hegumen, undertook a total fast for the first week of Great Lent, while still at the beginning of his monastic life. The result was that Symeon (because of his ~~τε~~^{τη}_χ^η, we may add), had anticipated: during the vigil on the fourth night Arsenius fainted and fell to the ground in church, and was revived with the wine and bread which Symeon had foreseen might be needed and had arranged should be in readiness. Nicetas stressed the fact that Arsenius had not yet received sufficient training in asceticism to be able to endure such a rigorous fast: he and other beginners were meant to take food after the ninth hour, although Symeon himself, whom Arsenius wished to imitate, had through practice become able to undertake an absolute fast without succumbing physically. Thus, as Dorotheus had trained Dositheus to manage with less and less food, Symeon's plan had been gradually to introduce Arsenius to complete fasting; and as from Symeon's obedience the Studite drew a lesson about what is of most value in God's sight, so according to Nicetas Symeon drew a different lesson from the disobedience of Arsenius:

"Since it was through your soul's presumption and refractoriness that you were eager prematurely to win a greater (reward) and carry off a first prize by surpassing the others. you have missed a lesser prize and got what you deserve". (7)

The teaching which he gives in Cat. XXVI. addressed to an imaginary novice, and in which he claims to be passing on the tradition he has received "from our fathers", illustrates the ways in which Symeon agreed with, and differed from, his spiritual father concerning food and eating.

(7) Nicetas, Life, 47, 12 - 21 and 48, 1 - 25; that internal disposition is of more value than exterior mortification is a topos, cf. Basil, Reg. fus. tract. 128, PG 31, 1168D.

The two agree in giving a warning against "satiety" (κόπας), but Symeon's demand is the more exacting, for he proceeds to tell his novice to eat much less than he needs and to go to the limit of what he can endure. On the other hand, whereas the Studite assumed that ordinarily only one meal a day would be eaten, Symeon, while recommending this, does permit those who really need it to take a biscuit, with a cup of water, after Vespers, and also implicitly allows more in the case of those who are ill. He agrees with the Studite that one should eat what is set before one on the table, but his concern for the mortification of desire leads him to add the injunction to abstain deliberately from anything which appears specially attractive. But it is important to observe the reason given for this demand, namely that obedience in regard to such details is necessary, lest a monk lapse

"little by little into greater and hurtful desires".

Thus, for Symeon, as for his father, self-discipline in respect of eating is not an end in itself, but, as he says, in Cat XI,

"fasting is the beginning and foundation of all spiritual activity".(8)

However, while the Studite permitted the acceptance of an invitation to a meal with "devout brethren", Symeon would forbid all such hospitality. This, as already suggested, is explicable when it is remembered that he was the hegumen of a monastery, the inmates of which were by no means all men like Arsenius. The picture he gives in Cat IV is one of undisciplined and self-indulgent monks seeking invitations and looking for excuses to eat and drink, and it is doubtless in reaction against such practices that he issued his prohibition in Cat XXVI. The

(8) Cat XXVI, 13-19; "satiety", Studite, Ch 142, 680B, Symeon, Cat XXVI, 149; ibid., 184f.; "one meal a day", Studite, loc. cit., Symeon, Cat XXVI, 260 - 267, but in Cat XXX, 107 a penitent is told to take no food until evening; "what is set before one", Studite, Ch 145, 681B, Symeon, Cat XXVI, 190-194 (cf. I Corinthians, 10, 27); ibid., 201f. (cf. I Timothy, 6, 9); Cat XI, 85.

importance he attached to training in being abstemious at meals is shown by the fact that of Cat XXVI, in which the novice is told how to spend each day, well over a third is devoted to behaviour in the refectory.

"Set your will to observe these things, beloved brother",

Symeon exhorts the novice,

"even if this of necessity entails your death, for in no other way will you be enabled to escape the demon of gluttony".

Similarly, the whole of Cat XI is a panegyric on the benefits of fasting, by means of which Symeon hoped to persuade his monastic spiritual children not to relax their efforts after the first week of Great Lent. In Ch 1, 26 the responsibility attaching to a spiritual father is very plain, for the novice is told that however much he suffers from thirst, he must not ask for permission to drink, but is to wait until his father is inspired to give it. The general impression thus given by these examples is that Symeon, perhaps because he felt it demanded by monastic discipline, was more rigorous than the Studite as regards restrictions on eating and drinking. (9)

Outside the monastery as well as inside spiritual children need to be trained in disciplining their bodies. An example of Symeon's direction of a disciple living in the world is found in Ep. 2, and this includes a section on food and fasting. This man is bidden to abstain from meat, cheese, eggs, wine and fish on Wednesdays and Fridays, but - and this indicates that Symeon was less demanding in the case of those who were not his monks - he is told that if this total prohibition is too taxing, he may partake moderately of fish and wine. During the Lents greater abstinence is required of him. This letter then provides definite evidence that Symeon believed that all his spiritual children, secular as well as monastic, were to be trained by him not only in spiritual matters,

(9) Cat IV, 247 - 315; Cat XXVI, containing 319 lines, deals with the refectory from 121 to 249; ibid., 222 - 224; Ch. I, 26, 8 - 15.

but also as regards their eating and drinking and their abstaining from food and drink. (10)

Symeon was concerned also with other aspects of bodily training and asceticism, although he had less to say about them than about fasting. He had observed the effect that the climate could have even on men who were attempting to live an ascetic life, and we find him commenting on this. Then in Cat XXVI he instructs the novice about how long to sleep, permitting him, in summer only, a short siesta, and remarking that this is less likely to be prolonged if he is moderate in the amount he eats and confines himself to a diet of bread, vegetables or pulse and a limited quantity of water. The same novice is also told to rise at midnight in order to have time for prayer by himself, before joining in the community's worship. By way of contrast we may notice the picture which Symeon gives in Cat IV of the gluttonous monk, who because of his overcharged stomach does not pray before going to sleep, and then when he first wakes says to himself that it is still early, falls asleep again, and in the end has no time for prayer before attending the office in church. (11)

The general principle that we find in Symeon is that, subject always to the higher duty of obedience to one's spiritual father, any suggestion of mitigating bodily asceticism is to be reckoned a temptation which one must resist. This is illustrated in Ch I, 21 in connection with bathing, which for the Byzantine monk was considered to be a way of indulging the flesh.

(10) Ep 2, 207r.

(11) "climate", Cat XXV, 133 - 146, Ch I, 73, 9 - 11; Cat XXVI, 295 - 297, 249 - 254; Cat IV, 299 - 315.

"If urged by (your spiritual father) or by your fellow-ascetics to have recourse to baths, foods or bodily comforts by way of relaxation, do not consent, but be always ready for fasting, hardship and the utmost self-control. Be like this, so that while never herein choosing to do your own will, you may be found obedient to your father in the Lord, should he urge you to resort to some creature comfort; but if he does not do so, you will joyfully endure what you have voluntarily chosen to undertake, and so your soul will be profited".

This is not altogether clear - and indeed some liberties have been taken in translating, since the original is even less perspicacious -, but it seems that Symeon is envisaging an over-kindly father who suggests some relaxation of ascetic practice to his disciple. Such suggestions, the latter is apparently told, should certainly be resisted if made by fellow-monks, and are not even to be followed when they originate with the spiritual father, unless they are made a matter of obedience. In such a case the disciple must mortify his will rather than his body, as of course Symeon himself had done when bidden to eat and drink by the Studite. (12)

What then is presupposed by Symeon is this: the disciple ought to have a bias towards the more rigorous ascetical path, but must always be ready to obey a definite order, while the father is responsible, as a trainer, for adapting his injunctions to the capacities of his spiritual children, in accordance with their physical condition at any given time. If, as in the case of Arsenius, the father allows something excessive which he knows will end in failure on the disciple's part, this will be done in order to teach the important lesson that what really matters is to be humble and good in soul and heart. In Tr Eth VII Symeon explicitly states that one's physical asceticism benefits neither God nor one's neighbour, but that it is profitable to oneself, provided always that it is undertaken with

(12) Ch I, 21, 17 - 26; "monastic typika of the eleventh and twelfth centuries varied between washing twice a month to three times a year, but the most usual frequency was once a month", A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, People and Power in Byzantium, Dumbarton Oaks, 1982, p. 69.

humility and spiritual understanding. Thus, although the modern reader of Symeon will on the whole probably receive an unfavourable impression of his ascetic teaching, and feel that he is unduly harsh in his attitude to the body, he himself would certainly have denied the charge.

We must add that even if at times he appears excessively rigorous, his intentions were basically much the same as those of Vonier, a Benedictine abbot of this century, who wrote:

"The aim of asceticism is to strengthen virtue..." (13)

Thoughts (λογισμοί). The spiritual father's work in connection with the thoughts which come into his child's mind cannot perhaps strictly be called training, but it is convenient to discuss it at this point as we leave the physical and are preparing to pass on to consider the moral and spiritual aspects of the subject. The work is not a matter of prescribing certain actions but, in the first instance, of encouraging the disciple to disclose, so far as possible, every thought which has occurred to him, particularly those which are perplexing. The father then has the task of interpreting their significance and their origin, and giving guidance as to what they indicate about a right course of action for the future. It is important at the outset to make it plain that, while in speaking of this matter language may be used which suggests to Western ears what Anglicans and Roman Catholics understand by "confession", in reality the laying bare of all one's thoughts is something quite different, even though it may sometimes be combined with "sacramental confession". The Spiritual father, unlike the confessor, invites the disclosure of all thoughts which have come into his child's mind, not merely of those which were sinful and in which he has indulged.

(13) Arsenius, v. above p. 185; Tr. Bk VII, 117-124; "modern reader", but cf. F.W. Faber "to be spiritual, bodily mortification is indispensable", Growth in Holiness, London, 3rd edition, 1859 (reprinted 1928), p. 138; A. Vonier, The Human Soul and its Relations with Other Spirits, London, 1913, p. 127, cf. Poemen (Apophthegmata Patrum, PG 65, 368A) οὗτος ἡ δὲ Χθρὸς μετὰ συμφορὰς τοῖς ἀλλοῖς π-θεύετο, with which Symeon would have concurred.

Such disclosures, if undertaken faithfully by the disciple, will inevitably make heavy demands on the father's patience and upon his insight, but the method is an extremely practical way of gaining a true knowledge of each individual's inner development and thus enabling effective guidance to be given. Climacus very appropriately classes the work of encouraging and dealing with the disclosure of thoughts as part of what the director does in his capacity as spiritual physician,

"unable to heal the patient" unless the latter

"with complete trust reveals his wound". (14)

Complete openness was and is the ideal, but there is evidence that not all spiritual children found it easy to disclose their thoughts to their fathers, and that this reluctance was sometimes found particularly amongst monks, in spite of the fact that for them the practice was supposed to be a regular feature of their life. It would seem that by no means all of them resented Dositheus who

"was so outspoken and eager to declare his thoughts that often when he was taking great care over making a bed (in the infirmary), he would see the saint (Dorotheus) coming by and say to him 'Sir, sir'. My thought is telling me, You are a good bed-maker'." (15)

We have already noticed that

"the counselling holy man" was frequently faced by the need "to break down the barrier of silence," and Symeon's older contemporary, the Patriarch Antony III, who perhaps significantly was himself a former Studite monk, found it needful to issue an appeal for the recovery of the practice of *λογισμός*. It might be suggested that some of this reluctance on the part of monks sprang from the more or less successful

(14) *λογισμός*, cf. Part Two, chapter II(A), 141. Climacus, *ad Pastorem*, 1184AE, cf. Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, PG 87, 2933A, *ὁ θεὸς ἰατρίαν τοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἀρετῆς σου ὁὕτως καὶ τὰς ἀρετὰς ἀποδίδοντα προσὶς ἡμῶν*; it is interesting that in *Tr. Th. I*, 291-293, Symeon differentiates between confession of sins and disclosure of *λογισμοί*.

(15) "the ideal", cf. Faber, *op. cit.* pp. 311f., "Our sins and imperfections, the working of our passions, our inward disorderly inclinations, our temptations and the secret suggestions of evil which haunt us, the style of architecture of our castles in the air .. must all be open to (our spiritual director)"; St. Dositheus, *Life*, 7, 1 - 5.

attempts to compel them to have the hegumen and none other as their spiritual father, since apart from the fact that hegumens, very capable as administrators, might not inspire confidence as guides in spiritual matters, there could well have been a fear on the part of some that too full a disclosure of their thoughts might result in disciplinary action rather than healing for a troubled spirit.

The Studite probably had this in mind when he wrote that

"it would be right for all to go to the hegumen for confession (of thoughts), but since some are unwilling to reveal their thoughts to the hegumen, because of their great frailty and their lack of trust in him",

they should choose and be faithful to some other brother. With these reminders of an antecedent difficulty, we may attempt to survey some material which bears on this part of the work of a spiritual father. (16)

It is unnecessary to spend much time illustrating the importance which the tradition of spiritual direction attached to the revealing of thoughts, but in view of the difficulty mentioned as sometimes encountered in eliciting such disclosure, it is relevant to summarise an anecdote about Macarius from the Apophthegmata Patrum. This is a good example both of one means adopted by a spiritual father for this purpose, and of the counsel he might give after obtaining the necessary confession. Learning from a vision that Theopemptos was being tempted by the devil, Macarius visited him, but found him too ashamed to admit the truth when asked,

"Are your thoughts warring against you?"

Macarius therefore confessed that even after many years of asceticism he was himself still beset by thoughts of sexual impurity, and so encouraged Theopemptos to admit to being similarly assaulted. Macarius repeated

(16) "Antony III", Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, pp. 159f. citing A. Papadopolous-Kerameus, Ἀποφθέγματα ἁγίων πατέρων ὁσίων καὶ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων, Jerusalem, 1905, pp. 5-12; the Studite, Ch 36, Life, pp. XLIX. .

the process in respect of other vices, and then asked him about his practice of fasting. Learning that he was accustomed to fast until the ninth hour, he recommended him to prolong his fast till evening, to learn by heart and recite the Gospel and other Scriptures, and

"if the thought comes, never look down, but up, and the Lord will help you".

Macarius then departed, and a later vision assured him of Theopemptos' victory over Satan. (17)

Although Symeon must often have disclosed his *λογισμοί* to the Studite, we have in fact no actual references to his doing so. This none the less is not really surprising, for the practice was taken for granted, and we can be sure that it was not omitted in Symeon's case, especially since we find among the Studite's Chapters the bidding:

"Every day you are to confess every thought to your spiritual father"(18).

It is reasonable to conjecture that what Symeon taught on this subject provides indirect evidence as to his own practice, and we therefore select two passages for quotation and comment. In Hym IV, entitled

"An Instruction to Monks who have Recently Renounced the World and to Men Living in the World .."

there occurs the injunction,

"Tell (your father) your thoughts as if you were speaking to God, including any temptation, and do not hide anything".

(17) "the importance", cf. Rousseau, Asceticon, p. 20, quoting Esaias of Scetis, "The man who will not reveal his thoughts finds them marshalled against him; but the man who speaks out with confidence before his fathers puts those thoughts to flight, and wins himself peace" (Asceticon, XV, 76) and cf. also Climacus, So. Par. 4, 701CD, referring to monks who carried notebooks in which to record their thoughts; Macarius, cited by Dörries, 'Confession', p. 288, from PG 65, 261A - 264B - the popularity of this narrative for hortatory purposes is evidenced by the use Dorotheus makes of it, Doctrinae V, 65 and 66.

(18) Ch 122, 669C.

We have seen that in the case of Theopemptos shame led to reluctance to engage in the process of disclosure, but until this was done, Satan could not be defeated. It is for this reason that Symeon says that nothing is to be hidden, and we may infer that as well as finding it in the traditional teaching, he had himself personally been taught this lesson as the Studite's spiritual child. (19)

In Cat XXVI the novice receives the very demanding order:

"Confess the thoughts of your heart to your spiritual father each hour, if possible".

Now Nicetas recounts how Symeon, when first admitted at Studios, was lodged in his father's cell, and we may therefore surmise that at that period he did disclose his thoughts every hour, for in the circumstances that would have been a real possibility. Here, too, we can trace a connection with the attempts to compel Symeon, in accordance with the usual monastic custom, to have the hegumen and no other for his spiritual father. Naturally, a hegumen with many other matters to attend to, could not possibly be available for such frequent consultations. There is indeed a regulation in the Studios typikon that the hegumen, at a certain point in the course of the office of Orthros, should go aside and receive any monks who wished to come to him for the healing of their spiritual diseases. However, in so large a monastery there will not have been time for more than a rather perfunctory performance. Symeon, therefore, quite apart from his personal loyalty to the Studite, would be

(19) Hym IV, 27f.

very liable to sense that the kind of spiritual fatherhood offered by the hegumen was likely to be inadequate as a substitute for the hourly attention he was currently able to receive, and thus be unwilling to abandon one for the other. (20)

No doubt, as hegumen of St. Mamas, he himself found that with increasing numbers he was unable literally to make himself available every hour to listen to every monk disclosing his thoughts, but at least that remained his ideal, as the command in Cat XXVI testifies, though the words "if possible" suggest that he knew that the ideal could not always be realised. It is noteworthy, too, that in spite of his having himself been determined to be the disciple of no other father, and in spite of the Studite's allowing that a monk might attach himself to someone other than his hegumen, there is no evidence that at St. Mamas Symeon permitted his monks any choice in the matter. The reason could well have been that in the decayed state in which he found the monastery there was no one apart from himself and, later, his disciple and successor Arsenius, whom he regarded as capable of undertaking this work. In these circumstances he could only do his best to make himself as available as possible for the purpose of receiving the disclosure of thoughts. (21)

(20) Cat XXVI, 299f., Nicetas, Life, 11, 4 - 11, 21, 5 - 12; even when, as we learn from Cat XVI, 75ff., Symeon apparently came to have a separate cell, the Studite not holding any official position and not being a priest could have listened to his disclosure of thoughts at frequent intervals; Studios typikon, PG 99, 1712B, and cf. Part Two, chapter II (d), p.157, n.8; "perfunctory performance", cf. J. Leroy, 'La vie quotidienne du moine studite', Irenikon, XXVII, (1954), p. 33; with regard to the services and their Greek names, v. below n.51.

(21) We saw that Symeon expected the monks of St. Mamas to accept the Studite, while still living, as their spiritual father, with himself as a kind of apprentice, Part Two, chapter II(a), p.136; Cat XIX, 82 - 84, "If you truly love me, reveal to me the purposes of your hearts", suggests that he certainly did not envisage, after the Studite's death, that any of the monks should have a father other than himself: Arsenius, cf. Part Two, chapter II(a), pp.136f.

In following the above line of thought, we have automatically seen something of the important position that this obligation to reveal one's thoughts had in the teaching of Symeon. From many other parts of his writings, examples could be quoted to reinforce this impression. One is chosen for special notice because it shows him aware of the demand that the practice must make on the spiritual father, not simply in terms of patience in listening and willingness to devote time to his disciples, but also as regards skill in evaluating what he is told. In his charge to a hegumen, Symeon says:

"See to it that strict accuracy marks your dealings with all men and your examination of the thoughts of each, so that you may know who amongst them all ought to be admitted to join with others in prayer and communion, and who ought to be kept away and made to join the penitents, giving themselves to repentance with tears..."

Here is a reminder that thoughts, when disclosed to a spiritual father, provide the raw material on which to base a judgement about the true condition of the person who has revealed himself, but that skill will be needed in order that the disclosure may be accurately evaluated and in consequence a right decision reached and conveyed to him. Otherwise, as Symeon continues, the father, whether acting in ignorance or in full knowledge, may incur the guilt of allowing God's church to be profaned, and himself come under judgement. (22)

(22) "examples", in addition to references already given, v. Cat IV, 388-396, 607 - 609, Völker, Praxis, p. 123, remarking on this that it is precisely the bad monk who is unwilling to disclose his thoughts; On I, 58, 13 - 25; Tr Eth VI, 75f., which explicitly states that each and every thought is to be revealed; however, Cat III, 267 - 271, enjoins the discerning of one's own thoughts; "charge to a hegumen", Cat XVIII, 541 - 549; if it be asked what hegumens were to do about their λογισμοί, the answer may be suggested by a passage in the Life of St. Euthymius, hegumen of Peamathia, where it is stated that he and Arcadius, hegumen of Studios, revealed their thoughts to one another (Life, ed. P. Karlin-Hayter, Byzantion, XXV, (1955), p. 62, 17f.). Potential hegumens also seem to have been exceptions for Symeon, since in Cat XVIII, 311ff. he directs that on the death of a hegumen a possible candidate should consult his spiritual father and only accept the position if permitted by him to do so.

In the above there is a note of sternness, both in the admonition to the father and also in the treatment to be prescribed to some of those who reveal their thoughts to him. We miss the gentle and persuasive method used by Macarius in his dealings with Theopemptos. Is there any evidence of Symeon's behaving at all in that way? It must be admitted that if direct evidence is demanded, this is not forthcoming. On the other hand, in the Catecheses and elsewhere, Symeon does quite frequently accuse himself of many shortcomings and sins, and while on different occasions there may well have been different reasons which impelled him to this, it is at least possible that sometimes, although not, it is true, combining such admissions with an appeal to his monks to disclose their thoughts, he was in fact hoping, like Macarius, that the revelation of his own weakness would encourage others to have confidence to approach him as a sympathetic listener. (23)

We could hardly expect to have any written records describing how Symeon dealt with those who came to disclose to him their thoughts. Fortunately, however, there does exist a narrative of a visionary experience which can claim a high degree of verisimilitude. Speaking of himself according to Byzantine custom in the third person, Nicetas who in his youth had been Symeon's disciple, recounts how one Lent, in which as a mature monk he was practising his usual austerities, he was plagued by an evil spirit of sexual immorality (πρωτοβλαστία). Despite his self-examination, he could not understand the reason for the onset of these impure thoughts, and in great distress at being unable to find

(23) The quotation from Cat XIX given above in n.21 does show Symeon appealing to his monks to give him their confidence; examples of self-accusation are found in Cats V. 87f., XII, 6 - 13, 241f., XIX, 257f., as well as in several places in the Hymns, which are mainly addressed to God and not to a congregation; one motive for self-accusation in the Catecheses could, of course, have been genuine humility, cf. Part One, chapter I, pp.47fn. 17.

a remedy for his 'passion' (παθος), he prayed fervently to God and to the Saint (i.e. Symeon, now dead). Then, one day while he was lying on his pallet, Symeon came to him in a waking vision (καθ' ὕπνον), addressed him by name and said:

"My child, do you not know the origin and cause of these passionate thoughts (ἐκ παθῶν λογισμοί)?"

Nicetas answered that he had examined himself thoroughly, but could find no reason for them.

"I have come", said Symeon, "to reveal this to you, and you must pay heed to my words. Know then that the cause is arrogance and conceit persisting in the thinking portion (λογιστικὸν μέρος) of your soul. Humble your mind, therefore, by measuring yourself and what is yours in the light of Christ's commandments, and (the trouble) will vanish quickly".

Thus the vision ended, but obedience to the bidding proved effective:

Nicetas

"humbled his mind and measured his own good deeds against one part of Christ's sufferings, his being spat upon, and was immediately freed from being vexed by thoughts and passion". (24)

Although all the details in this episode might be explained away as the working of Nicetas' subconscious mind, it is clear that the visionary experience could never have appeared convincing to him, had it not represented what in general accorded with his memories of actual occasions when he had revealed his thoughts to Symeon. In artistic terms we may claim that the account gives us, not a 'photograph', but a 'portrait' - perhaps idealised - of Symeon and of the way he received a disciple who came to disclose his thoughts.

The sequence of events, although it presents no unexpected features, is nevertheless instructive, being typical, one may suppose, of many similar cases in which Symeon in his life-time was involved. A temptation makes itself felt through unclean or "passionate thoughts":

(24) Nicetas, Life, 149, summarised in this paragraph.

thereupon there is an attempt made by the disciple to understand the cause of the temptation, with failure leading to the decision to reveal the matter to the spiritual father, this stage being represented by Nicetas' prayer to God and to the Saint; the Saint answers the prayer, that is, he manifests himself to his disciple, the equivalent of the spiritual father's listening to the disclosure of the latter's thoughts; because he has the gift of discernment (*Σιχαρισ*), he goes to the root of the matter, tracing it to an interior fault, self-satisfaction and conceit; he therefore prescribes a remedy, suited to the spiritual sickness which he has diagnosed, and not - as might perhaps have been expected - one requiring an intensification of physical asceticism. Naturally the account concludes both with a testimony to the efficacy of Symeon's advice and with a statement about Nicetas' gratitude to, and increased confidence in, his spiritual father. This is a reminder that willingness to disclose one's thoughts, and consequently the frequency with which they are in fact disclosed, will increase in proportion as the results are found to be valuable, and so his very successes are likely to involve a spiritual father in having more demands made upon him.

Moral Character. Whatever its merits as a true portrayal of Symeon, the narrative summarised above demonstrates that disclosing one's thoughts is not an end in itself, but is practised in order to gain the help of one's spiritual father in leading the Christian life more perfectly. Sometimes the emphasis will fall on the overcoming of temptations, and sometimes on the acquisition of virtues; it must not be supposed that these two are consecutive for there will always be the possibility of being tempted, at least until one has undergone the "transformation" (*ἀλλοίωσις*) which results in dispassion. Thus Nicetas, at the

time when he was troubled by "passionate thoughts", was obviously far from being a novice, since he was permitted to live apart in an underground cell. If we observe the successive 'steps' in Climacus, it is noteworthy that some virtues to be cultivated, for example obedience and sorrow (πένθος), are placed before vices such as anger and despondency (ἀκηδία) which of course have to be fought against. These non-physical disorders are then followed by the extremely physical one of gluttony, and the virtue of humility does not appear until fairly close to the summit of the ladder.

As Ware puts it,

"While placed in ordered sequence, the different steps are not to be regarded as consecutive stages, the one terminating before the next commences". (25)

When writing about virtues and vices Climacus is, in general, mostly concerned to provide an analysis of their origins, to describe their manifestations, and to exhort his readers to appropriate conduct. He also includes on occasion an illustrative anecdote, and indeed there are many of these in Sc. Par 4. It is through such anecdotes that he gives from time to time glimpses of spiritual fathers engaged in the work of training their disciples to conquer vices and acquire virtues, and we also have in the Liber ad Pastorem direct injunctions, for instance,

"Train them not to injure one another in any way, yourself setting an example".

Although his works are very different in character, Symeon's familiarity with the tradition as represented by Climacus is reflected in his dealing with many of the same aspects of good and bad behaviour. Yet in respect of this facet of training, just as with regard to many other matters, we

(25) "more perfectly", cf. P. De Meester, De Monachico Statu juxta Disciplinam Byzantinam, Vatican, 1942, p. 364, Aliquando Pater Spiritualis, ὁ πνευματικὸς, πᾶσι non solum ad confessiones audiendas eligitur, verum etiam ad discipulos in vias sanctas asceseos dirigendos"; "ἀλλοτρίως", cf. section (d) of this chapter, pp. 249 and Hausherr, Life, p. XXXII; "live apart" Nicetas, Life, 149, 18; cf. Part One, chapter II, pp. 94f., n. 35; Climacus, cf. Ware, Climacus, pp. 12 - 16, the words quoted being found on p. 16.

shall have to conclude that it was Symeon's personal experience of discipleship to the Studite that exercised the greatest influence upon him. (26)

Nicetas provides some details of how Symeon was trained by the Studite, and these he must have collected either from information given to him orally or from the written material which he inherited. In view of his hagiographical interest it may well be that he has also included some items or comments which belonged by convention to this style of writing. Thus he states that Symeon, at the outset of his monastic life was told to

"meditate ($\phi\lambda\sigma\sigma\phi\omega$) on the narrow way", and to

"keep in mind (his) sins and reckon up the punishments" which were their due. That has a conventional air, and this might be thought true also of the following which occurs in the same context:

"Concern yourself with noone other than yourself ... but be a stranger ($\xi\epsilon\upsilon\sigma$) to all and avoid familiarity".

But there are grounds for surmising that such orders may actually have been given by the Studite, for they reflect an emphasis in his teaching which Symeon remembered and transmitted.

"(The Studite) who lived among a large number of monks once said: 'The monk should be in his monastery as one who is and is not and does not appear, or rather does not even make his existence known'. This he interpreted by saying, 'as one who is there bodily, but spiritually is not; appearing only to those who are pure in heart through the action of the Holy Spirit; not making his existence known, because of having nothing to do with anybody'. O blessed words ... by means of which he revealed how we ought to walk with God, when he said that we should have nothing to do with anybody."

(26) ad Pastorem, 1189D; Symeon's familiarity with Climacus is in evidence directly in Cat IV, 540 - 542, where he cites him by name and quotes from So. Par. 6, 796B - v. also Part One, chapter II, pp. 75f.

Although there is no verbal identity, the similarity of outlook in the two passages is a proof of Nicetas' accuracy in recording that the Studite did indeed lay much stress on the importance of the novice keeping aloof from his fellow-monks. Symeon also, as will be demonstrated, was later to take the same line. One can envisage several reasons for discouraging novices from conversing with each other or with other monks, but one factor that must have influenced spiritual fathers was Climacus' castigating talkativeness (πολυλογία) as a vice,

"the chair of vainglory .. annihilator of compunction .. darkener of prayer",

while he correspondingly extolled silence as a virtue, and concluded that

"he who has known the fragrant smell of supernal fire flees from the company of men as a bee flees from smoke, for just as smoke drives the bee away so does such a man find company abhorrent". (27)

Symeon himself has unfortunately left no detailed record of this aspect of the training given him by his father. It would seem that a great deal was conveyed simply by example, as a result of Symeon's being with the Studite. As he says to Christ:

"Thou gavest me a guide to lead me towards thy commandments.
Set free from care, I followed him, and I rejoiced, O Word,
with joy unspeakable as I beheld him following in thy footsteps.."

Here the stress is laid on the father's whole way of life being a model for his disciple, but in Hymn XLI Symeon relates one of his experiences in which he heard Christ saying to him,

"I gave you into the hands of a tutor (παιδαγωγός) - you know whom I mean - and he took good care of you as of a little child growing up hour by hour, and he brought you up properly".

(27) "Nicetas' sources of information", v. Introduction II, p. 1 and Part One, chapter I passim; Nicetas, Life, ll. 9f., 14-17, of. the Studite, Ch 126, 672B, "you must be a stranger (ξένος) to every brother in the monastery", ξένος, being of course one of the marks of the perfect monk, cf. below p. 211; "avoid familiarity" represents ἀπρρηστικός, v. Part One, Chapter I, Excursus, n.1, also cf. I. Hausherr, 'Penthos; La doctrine de la componction dans l'Orient chrétien', O.C.A., 132, (1944), p. 107; Symeon, Cat VI, 171 - 182; Climacus, Sc. Par. 11, 852AB, 852D.

In this the emphasis would seem to be on instruction, although no indication of the content is afforded, and it must be remembered that a *παιδαγωγός* was originally not an instructor but a slave who accompanied a boy from home to school or to his teacher's house. However some idea of teaching is present in the words about bringing Symeon up properly, and the *παιδαγωγός* in any case had to supervise the behaviour of his charges. From these two passages we may conclude that Symeon's training in virtue, as he saw it, was a matter both of precept and example, with the latter no doubt being something unconscious on the part of the Studite. (28)

These passages, though disappointingly meagre, are quite straightforward; in Cat XXXVI there occurs a longer, but more cryptic, description of how Symeon was cleansed while under the tutelage of the Studite. This must have some reference to progressive liberation from sins and the defilement they cause, but it cannot be said that there is any description of training given in it. As can be seen from the extracts which follow, Symeon's memory dwelt chiefly on the slowness of the process by which he gained or regained his spiritual sight.

"When I was all filthy and had my eyes, my ears and my mouth encrusted with mud",

(28) "conveyed by example", cf. D.J. Chitty, The Desert a City, Oxford, 1966, pp. 70f., for the statement that some leaders insisted on showing the way by example rather than by precept, and to the instances he gives might be added Dorotheus, Doctrinae, IV, 52, 7 - 11, citing Poemen, and cf. also Ware, Climacus, p. 37, for the importance of "the personal example which the father sets in daily life"; Symeon, Evangelia XXXVII, 27 - 31, XLI, 56 - 58, a passage which will be further discussed in (d), pp. 253f.

he says to Christ,

"thou didst entrust me to thy servant and disciple... saying to me, 'Hold fast to this man, cleave to him and follow him, for he it is who will lead you away and wash you clean' I followed him without turning back, as with much labour he led me to fountains and springs ... Had he not held my hand, stood me by the spring and guided my spiritual hands (*Χεῖρας τοῖς νοεῖς*) I should have been unable to find where the fountain of water was. And even when he showed me and often permitted me to wash myself, as well as the pure water I would take up in my hands the clay and mud which happened to be there beside the spring, and thus make my face dirty. Often as I felt around to find the fountain of water, I actually pushed earth into it and stirred up mud. Then in my complete blindness I would dirty my face with mud, mistaking it for water and supposing I was getting perfectly clean". (29)

Now comes the passage in which Symeon tells of the ineffectual attempts to detach him from the Studite, and he then speaks of the continuance of his pilgrimage and of mystical experiences in which Christ himself bathed him in the waters. By now certainly we have passed from the sphere of moral training, but in the earlier passages where the Studite is his guide, the symbolism of washing away mud must have reference to being purified from the filth of the sins in which he had indulged in his earlier life and which he elsewhere speaks of as mud. His father "with much labour" led him by the hand to the springs of water, and in this it would seem natural to find a reference to the training needed to free him from evil practices and the temptations to them; the picture of Symeon's blindness fits this interpretation, when we remember the Biblical connection between sin and being metaphorically blind. However, as already mentioned, no indication is given of the methods used by the Studite, and moreover gradually the moral implications of blindness give way to the idea of it as a condition awaiting mystical illumination which finally Christ

(29) Cat XXXVI, 68 - 98 (extracts), with "cleave", cf. Acts 8, 29 (Κολαῖς μαλ.).

about whom any details are given is no novice but the bishop from the West who came deliberately seeking a penitential life, because he had inadvertently killed his nephew. Of Arsenius we learn that before being given the habit, he was tested to see if he would endure various kinds of hard service and suffering. On giving proof of his submissiveness and showing ardour in the way he entered upon the struggle for virtue, he was tonsured. Subsequently Nicetas says that Symeon trained him for this struggle and found him zealous in his obedience. He was then further exercised in the performance of the most menial kinds of service. (32)

There follows the account (already discussed) of what happened when Arsenius was permitted to have his own way and attempt to fast more rigorously than he had yet been trained to do. The result of this was actually a great increase in his humility, and Nicetas gives examples of how Symeon found ways to further this yet more. Thus, once when Arsenius had killed some crows which were eating the monastery's store of corn, he came and proudly reported to Symeon what he had done. The sight of the dead birds, however, saddened Symeon and he ordered them to be fastened to a cord and hung around Arsenius' neck. Arsenius was then to be led round the premises as a spectacle to the other monks, all of which he endured so readily that he shed torrents of tears and accused himself of being a murderer. (33)

Nicetas recounts a final incident concerning the training of Arsenius in which he describes how Symeon seized an opportunity

(32) "several chapters", Nicetas, Life, 45 - 58; "bishop", ibid., 52-57; "Arsenius", ibid., 45, 9 - 20; "trained", ibid., 47, 4 - 9.

(33) "already discussed", v. above p.185; "had killed some crows", Nicetas, Life, 49, 5 - 26.

of teaching him

"to keep his attention fixed on himself alone, and at the same time not to consider anything as per se a source of defilement when eaten ..., while wishing also to demonstrate to those sitting at table how extremely humble he was".

A guest who was sick was being entertained, and on Symeon's orders was given pigeons to eat. Symeon noticed that Arsenius, seated at the same table, watched this with a gloomy expression on his face. He therefore rebuked him, and after quoting two New Testament texts said:

"Eat some of (the pigeons) yourself, and be sure that you have incurred more defilement from your thoughts (λογισμοί) than from devouring the birds".

So saying he flung one of them at Arsenius, who obediently, but with tears, began to eat it. When Symeon saw him actually chewing it, he stopped him before he could swallow and bade him spit it out, "for if you start eating, glutton that you are, the entire dovecot will prove insufficient for you".

Once again, Arsenius instantly obeyed. (34)

The excessive harshness of such methods of training a spiritual child may produce on us a disagreeable impression, but in so far as Arsenius was treated with abnormal severity it will have been because he had early been singled out by Symeon as a likely successor to himself. Seridos, who became hegumen of his monastery at Thavatha was trained with similar harshness by St. Barsanuphius,

"in order that he might emerge from his hands like gold from the furnace". (35)

Nicetas' anecdotes illustrate an important feature of the training in virtue given by Symeon and others, namely that it depends to a

(34) Nicetas, Life, 50 and 51; "watched with a gloomy expression", cf. for a warning not to watch critically when others for some special reason are served special food, Dorotheus, Doctrinae, XV, 162, 19 - 24; St. Matthew, 15, 11 and 19 (quoted loosely), Romans, 14, 3.

(35) Regnault and de Préville, Dorotheus, SC 92, intr. p. 16, quoting Letters of Barsanuphius and John, Volos, 2nd edition, 1960, pp. 268-270.

large extent on the father's ability to profit by opportunities for inculcating obedience, humility and so on, when these arise in the course of daily life. Neither of the incidents just described was the result of premeditation, and when Arsenius was set on fasting Symeon merely allowed him to behave in a way which would teach him a useful lesson. Training of this kind, therefore, is only possible when the disciple and his father are for long periods in each other's company, something which is unlikely when in a large monastery the hegumen is the sole spiritual father for all the monks, and impossible when a monk is directing seculars. When at St. Mamas the numbers rose to more than thirty, Symeon may have felt that he could no longer exercise close supervision over each monk, in which case he doubtless concentrated specially on a small group of the more responsive, including Arsenius and any others who showed themselves potentially capable of becoming spiritual fathers in due course. The six names given by Nicetas as Symeon's *ἐκτετακτοὶ μαθηταί* testify to the existence of such a group. No doubt, too, in his exile, when he was surrounded by a small community of sympathetic disciples at St. Marina, he rejoiced at being able to watch over the training of each one. Nicetas as a youth knew him at this period of his life, a fact which provides good reason for our trusting that the picture in the Life of Symeon as a trainer of disciples is essentially accurate. (36)

(36) "above thirty", Nicetas, Life, 38, 10; "successor", cf. Part Two, chapter II(a), p.138; "six names", Nicetas, Life, 58, 4 - 6; "Nicetas as a youth", ibid., 133, 1f.

Even when it is not a question of a person's having been singled out as a future spiritual father, numerous examples can be found of disciples being trained by harsh methods such as those which, according to Nicetas, Symeon employed when dealing with Arsenius. Climacus, for instance, tells how the hegumen of the monastery he visited near Alexandria commanded one of his monks, Isidore, to stand at the gate and bend the knee to all who entered or left, saying

"Pray for me, father, for I am an epileptic".

This treatment lasted no less than seven years, and was prescribed as a cure for the vices which the hegumen had observed in him. On one occasion when Climacus had himself heard the same hegumen berate a monk and order him to leave the church, he asked the reason for this treatment, since he happened to know that the man was innocent of the offence for which ostensibly he was being punished. The hegumen replied that he was aware of this, but added:

"A superior injures himself and also the ascetic if he does not every hour make it possible for him to win the crowns of endurance of which he (the superior) knows him capable, whether through being insulted, dishonoured, despised or ridiculed".

He then continued with some additional reasons in support of this apparently unfair way of behaving. (37)

From his own writings, as distinct from what Nicetas tells us about him, we can find evidence that Symeon's practice was on occasions somewhat similar, and of course this is not surprising in view of the fact that for him Climacus was a prime source of

(37) Sc. Par. 4, 689, A-C; ibid., 692C - 693C.

authority. Thus while invoking the monk Antony who had lived and recently died in the most exemplary fashion, he addressed these words to him.

"You now know for a certainty my disposition in regard to you, and how I rebuked you and used every method to keep you safe through my reproofs, without ever hating or loathing you, but on the contrary having great affection for you, and inflamed by an inflexible love for you".

In the same way, moreover, Symeon exhorts a disciple to love his master as one who knows well how to secure for him rewards that are greater by means of things that are humiliating. (38)

The written works of Symeon do not include anything which in scope or arrangement resembles Climacus' Scala Paradisi. It can, however, be shown that most of the virtues which the earlier author discusses were also inculcated by Symeon, which is not at all surprising in one who was both steeped in tradition and determined to revivify it in his own generation. For Climacus love (ἀγάπη) is the topmost rung of his ladder, with dispassion (ἀπάθεια) coming next below it; Symeon is not so far from this pattern when he speaks of humility and love as

"virtues which include all the others" and says that the former is "that which procures .. dispassion",

while elsewhere insisting that perseverance in fasting, will help each, according to his need, to overcome his vices and gain the virtues he lacks, and thus reach

"the harbour of dispassion". (39)

(38) Cat XXI, 140-144; "keep safe." ἀεὶ φεῦγε, cf. section (b) of this chapter; Cat XX, 108f.

(39) The only virtues in the headings of the various sections of Sc. Par. not appearing in the indices of Symeon's Chs and Trs Th and Eth are δεικνύς, πρᾶξις, ἀκακία and ἀλλοτρίη, but the adjective ἀλλοτρίη occurs at Ch II, 17, 25 and III, 64, 30, while δεικνύς can be found at Cat XX, 209; "in his own generation", cf. his antipathy to those who said that it was impossible to reach the level of sanctity attained in the past, Cats VI, 251 - 258, XXII, 137ff.; Cat XX, 204-206 "virtues which include all others", cf. Tr. Eth IV, 372f. where "faith and holy humility" are called "a firm and secure basis"; Cat XI, 46-74; Climacus commends fasting in Sc. Par. 14, the subject of which is gluttony (864C-872B).

In Cat XXVI, when Symeon is impressing on the imaginary novice, whom he addresses for the benefit of all his monks, the importance of spiritual exile (ἡσυχία) and of silence, two interesting features should be noted. In the first place, the injunctions are fitted into the framework of the monastic day: the novice is warned, when he leaves the church after Orthros not to chatter but to go to his cell and pray privately. Then he is to undertake some work and not to wander round the monastery, "but to

"maintain silence and that separation from others which is genuine ἡσυχία."

He is not to enter another monk's cell without a direct order to do so, and if in going about his work he sees others talking he is not to join them. The command to maintain silence and spiritual exile is repeated, and as regards the former, he is told to say to himself:

"What good thing could I have to say, being nothing but mud and a fool and, moreover, a stranger (ξένος) and unworthy to speak or to listen or even to be numbered amongst men?"

Concerning ἡσυχία he is given a longer passage to rehearse internally, beginning:

"Who am I, an outcaste and a worthless individual, base and beggarly - who am I to enter anyone's cell? When he sees me, will he not turn away from me as from some loathsome object..?"

The second point of interest has to do with the actual remarks given to the novice to address to himself: Symeon is well aware that they are liable to strike him as artificial, so he adds that they should be repeated while

"you keep your sins before your eyes. You are to say the words as though they issued from your very soul, not merely from your lips. And even if to begin with you are unable to say these things as from your soul, still you will attain to that by degrees, as grace assists you".

Here is evidence of Symeon's psychological realism and his understanding of what might be a genuine difficulty for a sincere novice. The section closes with a fervent appeal:

"Only listen to me, lowly as I am, only lay this foundation, brother, only start doing, practising and saying these things, and God will not forsake you. He loves you greatly and desires that you should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved".

This passage, then, well illustrates how Symeon's training was bound up with his own religious fervour and was undertaken with both psychological awareness and an understanding of the realities of life in a contemporary monastery. (40)

A passage in Cat IX reinforces the suggestion just made that Symeon's high ideals as a spiritual father sprang ultimately from his religious life, in fact from his relationship with Christ. Here he quotes - not quite accurately - from the Gospel: "Inasmuch as you did it to each one of these, you did it to Me". He then says that Christ spoke these words not only with reference to those who suffer from physical hunger,

"but concerning all our other brethren who are wasting away, not through a famine of bread and water, but through idleness and through a famine of obedience to the commandments of the Lord".

After a parenthesis he continues,

"I think it is with reference to this (famine) rather (than the other) that the Lord says, 'I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink'..."

(40) Orthros, v. below p.223n.52 ; Climacus devotes So. Par. 3 (664B-669A) to ἐκείνη, and deals mainly with the monk's separation from the outside world and from his family, whereas Symeon is conscious that "the world" may invade the monastery; Cat XXVI, 67 - 113, condensed and with extracts quoted; according to H. Chadwick ('Pachomios and the Idea of Sanctity', The Byzantine Saint, London, 1981, p. 20) the forbidding of monks to enter other monks' cells went back to the Pachomian rule and became a permanent monastic custom: the Studite had the same prohibition, Chs 120 and 124, 668D, 672A; "Symeon is well aware", but the Studite, when he makes a similar demand, seems to lack this awareness, Ch 123, 669CD, while Symeon in Ep 3, (216r, 216v) again shows himself conscious of the fact that such an estimate of oneself does not come naturally, for he exhorts his correspondent to pray that his eyes may be opened, and to seek eagerly for this humility; "knowledge of the truth", cf. I Timothy. 2, 4.

The conclusion Symeon draws is that Christ

"truly thirsts and hungers for the salvation of each one of us, and our salvation consists in abstaining from all sin. But it is impossible for abstention from all sin to become a reality, if one does not practise the virtues and fulfil all the commandments. Thus our Master, who is God and Lord of all, is wont to be fed through our fulfilling of the commandments".

Here Symeon is not directly dealing with the work of a spiritual father, but since such work was very much concerned, as we have seen, with training in the overcoming of vices and the acquisition of virtues, the passage is actually very relevant. He sees, then, this aspect of the work as related not simply to the disciple who is being trained, but also, and in a sense primarily, to Christ himself, whose hunger and thirst for the salvation of human souls is assuaged as they are rendered capable of keeping the commandments. Symeon appears conscious that his exegesis of the text is idiosyncratic and so introduces it with the words,

"I think it was in reference to this..." (41)

In connection with his naturally enthusiastic temperament, this devotional dimension provides the background which does much to explain the perhaps excessive idealism which Symeon manifested as his monks' spiritual father, and which seems to have provoked some of them to revolt. But he can be shown to have been strongly influenced also by his intense conviction that the current climate of opinion was seriously at fault in acquiescing in low standards, as though these were inevitable in that era.

Thus in Cat XXIX, whose title begins,

"That one should not assert that it is impossible nowadays for anyone who wishes, to reach the summit of virtue and emulate the saints of old...",

(41) Cat IX, 30 - 51; St. Matthew, 25, 40; "famine", a reminiscence of Amos, 8, 11; St. Matthew, 25, 42; although "not directly dealing with the work of a spiritual father", the opening lines (Cat IX, 30-32) refer to the conduct of "the great" towards "the small", who resemble "true children".

Symeon attacks latter-day "heretics"

"Those of whom I am speaking and whom I call heretics are they who insist that there is nobody in our time and amongst us capable of keeping the commandments of the Gospel and of becoming like the holy fathers".

This was of course to him a most odious form of "heresy", inasmuch as it denied by implication the sanctity of his father, the Studite. However, the - for Symeon - indisputable fact that the Studite had equalled or surpassed the great saints of old, necessarily carried with it the corollary that, in spite of any impediments which life in a cenobitic community might be thought to involve, he ought to be able to train his monks to reach similar perfection. This, then, as well as the religious motive described above, lay at the root of the idealistic favour which he manifested in dealing with them, and which led him to castigate the worldliness which infected contemporary monasticism.

"In my opinion", he told his hearers,

"you rely for the salvation of your souls merely on your cloak, your cowl and your analabos - and some of you even on a long and majestic beard..."

Having reminded them of the certainty of the Last Judgment, he continued:

"Where then will be the robe which covers and adorns our bodies? Where will be our sumptuous analaboi ...? Where will be our luxurious dinners, our lengthy meals, with their unseasonable conversations? Where will be these great names? Where the sanctity which we are now believed to possess, or believe ourselves to have? ... Where will be the glory that belongs to people living in the world and in high position, who come to visit us, and because of whom I, wretch that I am, am the first to think and esteem myself more glorious than others? ..." (42)

(42) "enthusiastic temperament", cf. the title of Krivochéine's article, "The Most Enthusiastic Zealot", *Ostkirchliche Studien*, IV, (1955), pp.108-128 based on Symeon's self-description in Cat XXI, 139f., ἡ ἀρετὴ μακροχρόνιος; "provoked some to revolt", v. Part One, chapter I, p.54; "low standards", cf. passages cited in n. 39, above; Cat XXIX, 137-140; "the Studite", Cat VI, 165-171, 261f.; "heresy" cf. Part Two, chapter V (b) pp.305; "castigate worldliness", cf. similar accusations made by Cosmas in Bulgaria, *Traité*, pp. 100f. Cosmas' work being dated by A. Vaillant (*op. cit.*, p. 24) very shortly after 972; Cat XXIX, 262 - 297 (extracts), cf. Cat V, 806-814; the analabos looks something like a scapular and represents symbolically the cross which the monk takes up (ἀνάλυψιν) each day, thus providing a good target for Symeon's irony; "majestic beard", something of which Symeon, the beardless monk, perhaps felt the lack.

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These extracts provided good illustrations both of Symeon's ardour and of his uncompromising opposition to the climate of thought which he held responsible not only for permitting worldly ambitions to become at home in the monastery, but also for spreading the false gospel that the ideals of the past were no longer realisable. This is the back-ground which needs to be borne in mind when we look at his efforts to train his monks at St. Mamas and help them to acquire the virtues. Nevertheless tirades of the type of Cat XXIX were perhaps not the best way to win support for his ideals, even though Symeon here again, in the last sentence quoted, explicitly included himself amongst those whom he accused.

When we come later to consider the difficulties of a spiritual father, we shall naturally have to take more account of the disappointments which Symeon met with at St. Mamas. Here it is sufficient to say that since vices are not easily overcome nor virtues acquired without a struggle, this part of a spiritual father's work is one in which for success he definitely needs disciples who ardently desire to attain sanctity, for without that desire on their part he is doomed to failure. Symeon found and was able to foster such an aspiration in some, such as Arsenius, but by no means in all of those who were nominally his spiritual children. One may know that humility and love are

"virtues which include all the others", and one may be able to devise appropriate methods for inculcating them, but still the basic difficulty has not been tackled: how is it possible to instil in the unresponsive the desire to be loving and humble?

Spiritual Life.

A spiritual father's guidance would be lacking in some of its most vital constituents if it did not include training in private prayer, instruction about participating in Church services and teaching related to the reception of Holy Communion. With regard to these matters there is much variety in the records, and often the evidence is either anecdotal or unspecific, but as regards Symeon there is fortunately a reasonable amount of material which can be drawn on to illustrate his methods of training.

In the sixth century Dositheus, whom we have more than once had occasion to mention, is said to have had God always in remembrance, because he had been taught by Dorotheus to repeat unceasingly,

"Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me", and at intervals, "Son of God, help me". However, when he lay dying, Dorotheus

"said to him, 'How goes it with your prayer, Dositheus?' Then he replied 'Forgive me, sir, I have not the strength any longer to maintain it'. (Dorotheus) said to him, 'Then give up your prayer; simply keep God in mind and think of him as present with you'."

This vivid narrative shows Dorotheus dealing with one disciple of an exceptional kind, but his Doctrinae, addresses not unlike Symeon's and also delivered to monks,

"contain no theoretical and systematic instruction on prayer", although many scattered references to the subject can be found in them. (43)

(43) St. Dositheus, Life, 10, 1-14; L. Regnault and J. de Préville, SC 92, p. 72 (quotation) and ibid., pp. 72 - 75.

Again, Ware, discussing Climacus' approach, describes something very different from what we shall find in Symeon:

"(Climacus) gives no description of the liturgical offices, no advice about preparation for Holy Communion, and its frequency, no specific instructions about methods of private prayer, about formulae, bodily posture, breathing exercises and the like. These omissions are surely .. deliberate .. What he offers is not techniques and formulae but a way of life, not regulations but a path of initiation".

Dorotheus and Climacus, however, in dealing with individuals probably did follow some definite plan of training in prayer, modified as necessary, and in his letters Dorotheus certainly shows himself willing to give fairly specific guidance. (44)

The teaching of the Studite, as given in his Chapters, is of a fairly general nature, but it calls for some attention at this point, in view of the influence which it must have had on Symeon. It is interesting, first, to notice a coincidence between Ch 124 and an actual piece of direction recorded in Cat XVI. In the latter, on the occasion already mentioned when the Studite compelled him to eat and drink, and spoke about the comparative values of asceticism and humility, Symeon tells us that his father sent him to his cell with the injunction

"only to say the Trisagion and (then) go to sleep".

In Ch 124 we find the principle laid down:

"One Trisagion (said) with attention before sleeping is more valuable than a four hours' vigil (spent) in unprofitable conversations".

Although, as Krivochéine remarks,

"as well as in the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Trisagion is continually recited in other Church services, and also in private prayers",

(44) Ware, Climacus, p. 9, of. C. Babington Smith, I. de Beausobre, A Russian Christian in the West, London, 1983, p. 174, "On Athos early accounts of the Jesus Prayer were usually jotted down by young monks.. but it was soon forgotten that these accounts were only notes. Advice that could only be given by word of mouth, in discussion, was omitted"; Dorotheus, e.g. "Unite prayer to meditation", Ep 4, 189, 7.

and therefore too much should not be made of the parallel, we can at least claim that the particular instance in Cat XVI reveals the Studite as acting in conformity with his general teaching in which he recommended it as a prayer to be said before going to sleep. (45)

In spite, however, of Symeon's intense devotion to his spiritual father, we shall be disappointed if we expect to find in the Chapters anything like identity with the devotional teaching given by the New Theologian in his Catecheses or elsewhere; there are, indeed, some striking examples of independence within a pattern of overall similarity. It is important to remember that whereas the Studite's surviving work consists solely of a series of Chapters, intended apparently for a novice in a monastery, Symeon has left us material which comprises productions of many types, intended for readers of various kinds. (46)

Some actual examples will now be examined. The Studite, one may say, never tired of insisting on the importance of tears, compunction (κατ' ἔννοιαν) and sorrow for sin (πένθος). In this he was, of course, heir to a long tradition and was also later faithfully followed by Symeon. In particular, the older man's Ch 144 contained the injunction never to communicate without tears, and this his disciple repeated and took, as it were, for his text in Cat IV. On the other hand, the Studite's surviving writings contain no mention as a necessary condition for receiving Holy Communion, of something demanded by Symeon, namely that one shall have

"received the necessary absolution".

(45) Cat XVI, 75 - 77; the Trisagion, Ἄγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἄγιος ἱσχυρός, Ἄγιος ἀθάνατος, ἰσχυρὸς ὁ Θεός, is the subject of the long note by Krivochéine, from which an extract is quoted, Cat XVI, SC 104, pp. 244f., n.1; for Symeon's teaching, of. Cat XXX, 147f., where however other prayers are recommended after the Trisagion and before sleep; Ch 124, 672A.

(46) "for a novice", v. Ch 120, 668C, Ch 123, 669D; Symeon's Catecheses are addressed to his whole community, not just to the novices, while the directions in Ep 2 are given to a spiritual child living in the world.

The Greek here is *si ti ei eph' hos kai apoluthi eis touto*, which Paramelle, whom I have followed, though hesitantly, renders,

"si tu es digne et as reçu l'absolution nécessaire",

thus suggesting a sacramental preliminary, with absolution presumably being given by the spiritual father. But while according to Lampe this is one possible meaning of the word, *α'πολύω*, it can also have other meanings, including simply 'allow', and, if so translated here, would not suggest that the novice had to be absolved before communicating, but simply to receive permission. In either case, the spiritual father is certainly involved, in spite of not being named. However, although in Ep 1 Symeon shows himself a vociferous champion of the right of unordained monks to hear confessions, it might be easier to suppose that in Cat XXVI he is not necessarily implying that whether ordained or not the father has authority to absolve, but rather that he is referring only to the giving or withholding of permission to receive Holy Communion. Be this as it may, we have an instance here of an apparent extension by Symeon, as compared with the Studite, of the role of the spiritual father. (47)

With regard to attendance at services, in Ch 137 the Studite's novice is bidden to be the first to arrive, and except for some great necessity, the last to leave, a command which Symeon softens

(47) Studite, Chs 121, 123, 126, 136, 140, 142, 144, 151, 152; for Climacus, tears are even superior to baptism, "though it may be audacious to say so", Sc. Par. 7. 804AB; Symeon, Ch I, 35 and 36 says much the same as Climacus, v. also Cats passim and pp. 230-233 below; "a long tradition", besides Climacus, e.g. Evagrius Ponticus, De Oratione V - VII, PG 79, 1168D - 1169A (wrongly ascribed to Nilus in Migne), Ephraem Syrus, quoted by Vööbus, Early Monasticism, p. 284; Ch 144, 681B, Cat IV, 11f.; Cat XXVI, 119; Lampe, Lexicon, *α'πολύω*; Krivochéine, Cat XXVI, SC 113, p. 81, n.1, refers to "una permission (absolution)" and assumes that this is given by the spiritual father, as the context indeed clearly indicates; Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, p. 117, quotes from a typikon which orders the disclosure of *λογισμοί* to the hegumen alone, on the ground that his is the responsibility for permitting a monk to communicate; cf. Cat XVIII, 541 - 549, cited p. 196 above.

into a simple prohibition of leaving before the end of the last prayer, having said nothing about endeavouring to be the earliest to enter. (48)

Again, the Studite gives directions as to how the time devoted to a vigil is to be spent: two hours for reading, and two for prayer "in compunction and with tears". He suggests certain psalms and prayers, but leaves a good deal to the choice of the person concerned. Symeon, by contrast, is much more explicit: In Cat XXVI his novice is told to shut the door of his cell, take his book and read about three pages. Then

"stand up to pray, singing quietly and praying to God but not being audible to anyone else".

There follow detailed instructions about posture and the concentrating of one's thought, and a demand for tears and groans. This section we shall have to revert to for fuller examination hereafter. But one sentence must be quoted now, since it again brings in the thought of direction by the spiritual father which is absent from the Studite's treatment:

"Let there be psalms fixed by your spiritual father for you (to recite), such as are sufficient to provide you with words of repentance and compunction, and correspond to your capacity and your disposition".

Here also Symeon can be observed covering the same ground as the Studite, but neither slavishly copying him, nor afraid to assign extra responsibilities to the spiritual father. Lastly, we may observe that both men saw fit to provide their disciples with special prayers to be used for special purposes. (49)

(48) Ch 137, 673D - 676A; Cat XXVI, 60-62, while Cat XXX, 188f. in fact bids the monk go with all the others to Orthros - Nicetas, Life, 28, 8f. says that Symeon was the last to leave.

(49) Ch 144, 681A; Cat XXVI, 272 - 285 (extracts); the novice, however, is not restricted to these psalms, for the next sentence suggests that he may recite additional ones, v. p. 233 below; "special prayers", Studite, Ch 140, 677A - C, Symeon, Cat XXX, 70^o - 97, Ch I, 60, 5 - 19.

Hitherto, we have only looked at material from Symeon in so far as it needed to be introduced for the sake of comparing or contrasting it with what is to be found in the Studite's Chapters. Dependent as we are on the letter for direct information as to how the older man set about training his spiritual children in prayer, we cannot rule out the possibility that some of the additional details to be found in Symeon may in fact derive from his memory of instruction orally given to him by his father. Certainly, as has already been noted, it was personal experience as a disciple, rather than reading what the Studite had written, which inspired Symeon with the longing to reach the higher levels of mystical prayer and illumination. It may well be the case that much of what he has to say about the work of the spiritual father in training disciples really came to him in somewhat the same way. We can be sure at least that he always believed himself to be true to the spirit of the teaching he had received from one whom he revered as both saintly and inspired. (50)

In view of Symeon's position as hegumen/spiritual father of his monks, anything that he said to them in his Catecheses on the subjects of prayer, worship and Holy Communion, might be quoted as examples of the ways in which he undertook the training of his children in these matters. But most attention will be paid ^{to} Cat XXVI and Cat XXX because in these Symeon, in the form of an address to an individual novice, gives systematic and in some cases very detailed instruction. Similar teaching, but addressed to a disciple living in the world, is to be found in Ep 2, which thus complements what we learn from the Catecheses about his ways of dealing with his monks.

(50) "already noted", v. Part Two, chapter I(b), p. 111; "saintly and inspired", Cat VI, 226 - 232.

Cat XXX, which in some manuscripts is said to be addressed to those who have recently renounced the world, deals at great length with repentance, and includes directions for both private prayer and behaviour in church. The novice is to stand during the services as though he were with the angels in heaven, trembling and considering himself unworthy to be there amongst his brethren.

"Pay attention to yourself, so that you do not look this way and that, and do not have a busybody's concern for the brethren, observing how each of them is standing or singing the psalms. No, be concerned only with yourself and the psalmody and your sins. Remember also your prayer in your cell. During the service speak no idle word whatsoever to anyone, and do not leave before the final prayer. If possible, avoid sitting down during the reading, but go to some inconspicuous spot and stand while you listen, as though God who is over all were addressing you through the reader".

There follow directions as to how to behave if selected to be a reader one self or to be a Canonarch, and the section concludes:

"When, after the dismissal, you leave (the church), call to mind how you spent yesterday, and if you committed any fault amend your conduct to-day".

In this passage, although Symeon speaks of the need to feel unworthy, he does not specifically enjoin weeping during the Divine Office, but in Cat XXVI which is also primarily addressed to a novice, though without particular reference to repentance, we are told that if possible one should not get to the end of the service without having wept, because

"while you shed sweet tears, you spend the time in church as if you were in heaven itself, amongst the Powers on high". (51)

(51) "some manuscripts", Vatopedi 667, Coislin 291, Coislin 292 and Lavra 937 - 975; Cat XXX, 189 - 220 (summary and extracts); according to Nicetas, Life, 28, 5 - 7, Symeon himself stood throughout the services, motionless and weeping; "canonarch", the monk who intoned beforehand the words to be sung by the choir, so that only one manuscript was needed - on Mount Athos canonarchs are still to be found, Krivochéine Cat IV SC 96, pp. 334f., n.l; Cat XXVI, 47f., 57 - 59.

In Cat XXVI mention is made of four separate occasions each day when the monk should attend service in the monastery church, the fullest instruction about behaviour naturally being given in connection with the first that is spoken of, Orthros. The general sense of what is said differs little from what we have noticed in Cat XXX, though there are some additions or matters which receive increased emphasis; the commendation of weeping, cited above; an injunction to keep the body absolutely still, without leaning against a wall or a pillar; and a command not to allow oneself to be distracted by the less zealous brethren who may chatter or whisper to one another. This last remark provides a further indication that Symeon, however unwillingly, had to recognise that not all his monks would strive to reach the standards which he, as spiritual father, set before them as their ideal, and that therefore the best that he could do for his obedient disciples was to warn them against fellow-monks who were less devout. (52)

Because of the length of the monastic services, it cannot be denied that Symeon was making great demands both on the bodies and minds of his spiritual children. It is not surprising that in Cat IV he found it necessary to censure the kind of monk who

"slips out of the service during the reading of the divine Scriptures and sits down, nearby or far away, and gossips with some others, now he and now they telling idle tales, one saying, 'Have you heard what the hegumen did to such-and-such a brother?', and someone else adding, 'Well, what will you say if I tell you what he has done to so-and-so, poor fellow?'."

(52) "Orthros", corresponding to the Western Matins and Lauds, is sung after midnight, in the very early hours of the new day, Krivochéine Cat XXVI SC 113, pp. 70f., n.1; the (Divine) Liturgy (Cat XXVI, 114) is the Eucharist; Lychnikon (Cat XXVI, 258 - 261) corresponds to the Western Vespers, is the first office of the liturgical day and is sung at dusk, Krivochéine Cat XXVI SC 113, p. 91, n.1; Apodeipnon (Cat XXVI, 268, where it is styled "evening prayers") corresponds to the Western Compline, Krivochéine Cat XXVI SC 113, pp. 92f., n.1 - these are the "four occasions each day"; Cat XXVI 28 - 35.

It was perhaps characteristic of Symeon that although, as these extracts show, he had no illusions about his monks and their temptations, his method of trying to help them was simply to bid them concentrate on the words of the service, and to remind them of the angelic Powers. Climacus was more practical when he wrote:

"Let your mind be occupied in contemplating the oracles which are being recited, or have a fixed prayer to say as you wait during the singing of the alternate verses".

An explanation of Symeon's attitude may be discovered in Cat IV from which the description of the unspiritual monk has just been quoted: only a few lines earlier he had said,

"It is not the result of nature, as some hold, but of deliberate choice that each man becomes either humble and given to compunction, or stubborn in heart, hardened and devoid of compunction".

If the story of Arsenius and his attempt to fast excessively is true, and there would seem to be no reason for Nicetas' having invented it, Symeon was well-versed in the Τεχνή of estimating the physical abilities of his monks. His emphasis, however, on the power of choice would seem to have been on a cause of his unsympathetic and unrealistic attitude towards those who morally or spiritually were weaker brethren. It might at least have helped some of them if, like Climacus, Symeon had recommended a short fixed prayer to be recited mentally while the choir on the other side of the church was singing its appointed verses. (53)

We have already seen how Symeon insisted that Holy Communion should not be received without permission from, or perhaps absolution by, one's spiritual father. However this does not by any

(53) Cat IV, 144 - 151; "concentrate", Cat XXVI, 26 - 28, 58f, Cat XXX, 189f.; Climacus, So. Par. 19, 937D; Cat IV, 126 - 129.

means imply infrequent Communion. for Cat XXVI assumes in fact that the novice will be present daily at the Divine Liturgy and will communicate if allowed to do so.

"If you are worthy and have received the necessary absolution, approach with fear and joy to receive the ineffable blessings in communion".

Certainly Symeon's disciples were not allowed to think lightly either of communicating or even of being present at the Eucharist. Immediately before the sentence quoted occurs a reminder never, while at that service, to allow oneself to forget sorrow for sin ($\pi \acute{\epsilon} \nu \theta \omicron \varsigma$), and this is followed by the words:

"Stand trembling, as though you were watching the Son of God being sacrificed for you". (54)

This attitude to the Eucharist, based on a vivid sense of the reality of Christ's presence, was not just something which Symeon tried to inculcate in others; as many passages show, it was deeply rooted in his own spiritual experience. In Hym XIV, for instance, in the course of a prayer to Christ he says:

"Where the bread is placed and the wine poured out in token of thy flesh and blood, O Word, there thou thyself art, my God, the Word, and by the coming of the Spirit and the power of the Most High these things in truth become thy body and blood, and we are bold to touch God the unapproachable.."

This is all part of his experience as a priest which in a sense renders him superior to the angels inasmuch as he touches with his hands and consumes in his mouth "the One before whom they stand shuddering in fear". If angels themselves tremble at the presence of Christ, obviously nothing less can be expected of human worshippers. This is,

(54) Cat XXVI, 116 - 120; Krivocheine, Cat XXVI, SC 113, p. 81, n.1 remarks that it may be assumed that the Divine Liturgy was celebrated daily at St. Mamas, apart from the days on which it is forbidden to celebrate, and he compares Cat IV 612 - 616, where also daily Communion is mentioned.

of course, totally in the spirit of the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, where at the beginning of the Anaphora, for example, the deacon proclaims:

"Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear ..."

For Symeon this was no liturgical convention, but a real part of what he felt he had personally experienced, and something which, moreover, he was convinced others ought to experience also. But for him it was not simply a matter of being awestruck in the presence of the numinous apart from any moral challenge, as a passage in Cat V makes clear. He envisaged Christ at the Judgement saying to unworthy members of the hierarchy:

"Why were you not afraid to hold and to consume me who am unspotted and undefiled, while your hands were impure and your souls more impure still?... Why did you lavish what belonged to the poor on your pleasures and on your familiar friends and on your kinsfolk? ..."

In keeping with the authentic spirit of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, Symeon conceived of no disjunction between the ethical and the numinous. (55)

The directions given in the Catecheses, in spite of Symeon's sometimes saying that he will address a single imagined novice, are inevitably general and cannot reveal him at work in the training of an individual spiritual child. By way of contrast in Ep 2 we can see him actually directing a non-monastic disciple. This man is temporarily excluded from Communion, for

"you must not share in the divine and awesome Gifts, I mean the immaculate Body and the Blood of our Master and Lord, Jesus Christ..until your state of spirit is firm and resolute with regard to the wicked deeds of sin, and until you get a steadfast will with a definite hatred for sin".

(55) Hym XIV, 55 - 74 (extracts); 'Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom' in Euchologion, Venice, 6th edition, 1891, p. 61; the Anaphora, called in the West "the Canon", is the most solemn part and climax of the Eucharist; Cat V, 654 - 658.

However, presumably because he is writing to someone with whom he is not in daily contact, Symeon leaves it to his spiritual child to decide for himself when he is fit to communicate.

"But when you perceive that you have reached such a state, my brother, then approach with faith unwavering, and partake not of mere bread and wine but of the Body and Blood of God, and of God himself...."

Equally the man is warned:

"If, without first becoming someone of this kind, you receive Christ, then the demons will see that you have held God in contempt and drawn near unworthily, and with greater jealousy will come back against you in a violent fashion..." (56)

Here then, as spiritual father of a Christian who is not a monk, Symeon is seen as no less concerned to emphasise the numinous and ethical challenge with which the communicant is confronted when he receives the sacrament: the difference between his approach to his monks and to this particular correspondent is simply that the latter is given the responsibility of deciding for himself when he should communicate, but this, we may suppose, is done for the purely practical reason that he is so far away from his director that letters have to take the place of personal meetings, and had these been possible he would presumably have been dealt with in much the same way as the monks in St. Mamas.

Because this man is for the time being to abstain from Communion, Symeon has given him special instructions concerning his attendance at church: after taking part in the first part of the Eucharist (Liturgy of the Catechumens),

(56) "non-monastic disciple", cf. Ep 3, 216r, when Symeon shows himself clearly aware both of the difference between such men and monks, and of what can be demanded of all without distinctions: "Do not say that this (humility) is impossible, or that it is fitting only for monks and not for those who live in the world"; Ep 2, a passage quoted and translated into French by Krivochéine, Lumière, p. 127, using Coislin 292.

"you must leave the church when the celebration of the Divine Mystery is being accomplished, at the point when the priest or the deacon says, 'As many as are catechumens, go forth'. Do not, however, go far away, and do not converse with anybody at that time, but stand in front of the doors in the narthex of the church and mourn over the faults which you call to mind. Then after the elevation of the Divine Mysteries, go back inside".

It appears that Symeon expects this disciple to be in church again later in the day, for the next sentence begins. "In the evening after Compline...", and then continues with directions about private recitation of prayers and psalms. The fact that in this case there is no mention of Vespers between the Divine Liturgy and Compline shows the difference between what could be demanded of monks and of those living in the world: again, the absence of warnings about behaviour - apart from the bidding not to talk to others in the narthex -, indicates a recognition that this penitent, sinner though he may have been in the past, now has strong motives for conducting himself devoutly in church and so does not need reminders of the kind appropriate to monks for whom, even if they themselves were sincere, temptations to irreverence might arise from contact with those of their brethren who were less spiritually-minded. (57)

When he comes to the time after Compline, Symeon enters into considerable detail with regard to the private devotions in which this disciple should engage. There are no directions as to bodily posture, although prostrations (*περάσεις*) are enjoined, but in conformity with the generalised order of Can. XXVI, Symeon as

(57) "catechumens go forth", Ep. 2, 207v, the dismissal occurring before the Great Entrance, itself the prelude to the Anaphora, Euchologion, p.55; "elevation", this follows the Communion, the deacon saying to the priest, *ὕψωσιν, Δείπνον*, Euchologion, p. 72; "Vespers", v. above, n. 52.

spiritual father now prescribes exactly what prayers and psalms this particular individual should recite;

"the Trisagion: Psalm 50 (51); 'Lord, have mercy' fifty times; 'Lord, pardon me, a sinner' fifty times; and then Psalm 6, ('O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation...') and 'Lord, pardon me whatsoever I have sinned in deed and word and by thought' fifty times".

This is interesting, not only as showing Symeon, in the role of spiritual physician, prescribing devotional exercises which he considers suited to the needs of a penitent disciple, but also as correcting the temptation to see him as a father whose demands on his children were liable to be unrealistic. It would not, in fact, take very many minutes to say the prayers and psalms listed, and in spite of the fact that the many repetitions might seem to some of us to-day very mechanical and unreal, this would not be how they would strike a person brought up in the Eastern liturgical tradition. In Ep 2, then, we are afforded a valuable glimpse of Symeon undertaking that part of the spiritual father's work which is concerned with the training of his disciple in devotion, at a level suited to his particular needs and attainments. There is, however, no mistaking the authoritative tone which Symeon adopts, no doubt a reflection of his personality, for spiritual guides differ temperamentally one from another and their temperament affects their style of direction. Thus, a complete contrast with Symeon is provided by Baron von Hügel in our century, who when writing to a spiritual daughter a long letter of guidance said at the start,

"You will not for one moment strain, or torture yourself, to think or to do any one of the things here proposed to you. Only in the degree and manner in which.. they really come to your mind and really appeal to your own heart and conscience, will you quietly accept them..." (58)

Before concluding this part of the subject, we must revert to Symeon's directions addressed to typical, but imagined, novices, which were glanced at in so far as was necessary to compare them with those of the Studite. Cat XXVI, as was pointed out, leaves the prescribing of psalms and prayers to be said at night in the cell to the judgement of the spiritual father, with the proviso that they should be expressive of "repentance and compunction". Cat XXX, where a novice who is definitely a penitent is envisaged, goes into more detail: after making ready the mat on which he will later sleep, the man should stand up to pray as though he were a condemned prisoner.

"First of all recite the Trisagion, and then say the Our Father, and while doing it call to mind who you are and who, and of what kind, is the Father whom you are addressing. When you proceed to say 'Lord, have mercy' and would wish to stretch out your hands towards the height of heaven, look upwards with your bodily eyes, and while concentrating your mind and keeping your hands fixed in that position, call to mind your evil deeds, and the sins you committed by means of your hands and the kinds of shameful actions in which perhaps you engaged through them. So be afraid and say within yourself, 'Woe is me, impure and defiled as I am ! It may be that when God sees me shamelessly spreading out my hands before him, he will remember my iniquities, those which I committed by means of these (hands), and he will send fire against me and consume me'."

(58) Ep 2, 207v; it is noteworthy that here again the Trisagion is prescribed for use at night, cf. above p. 217. J.P. Whelan, The Spirituality of Friedrich von Hügel, London, 1971, pp. 226f., quoting the letter which was published in Dublin Review (1951); this kind of approach is ancient as well as modern, "You know that I have never laid any constraint on anyone..." St. Barsanuphius, quoted by S. Tugwell, Ways of Imperfection, London, 1984, p. 90, from Barsanuphe et Jean de Gaza: Correspondance, (translators, L. Regnault, P. Lemaire and B. Outtier), Solesmes, 1972, p. 51.

After this the penitent is told to clasp his hands behind his back, as though he were being led off to execution, and say 'Have mercy on me a sinner, not deserving to live, but indeed deserving every punishment', with such other prayers as God's grace suggests to him. He is then to recall his sins and beat himself unmercifully, afterwards replacing his hands behind his back while he stands entreating God. Next he is to strike himself on the face and pull out his hairs, asking himself, 'Why have you done such-and-such things?' At last, after having done sufficient violence to himself, he is told to recite two or three psalms attentively and prostrate himself as many times as he thinks he has the strength for. Then,

"stand up again, collect your thoughts and review in your mind what you have said, if perchance God may grant that tears and compunction overtake you. If this happens, do not slacken until they have passed, but if it does not happen, do not be disquieted, but say to yourself, 'Compunction and tears are for those who are worthy and have prepared themselves for them... Is it not enough for you that you are alive?' Having said this, give thanks, sign your face, your chest, and your whole body with the sign of the precious Cross, and then get on your mat and stretch yourself out (for sleep)". (59)

This rather terrifying set of commands is not, it should be noted, absolutely required of the novice, but is presented by Symeon as one possible

"method of repenting with genuine fervour", which he proposes as "fatherly advice". But the contrast between this and the more moderate practices ordered in Ep 2 is very striking. The difference might be ascribed to the fact that in Cat XXX Symeon is addressing

(59) Cat XXVI, 282f. cf. ibid., 290f.; Cat XXX, 145 - 184 (summary and extracts); "what you have said", the Greek, τὰ προειρημένα, might be taken to mean "what I have said", which is how Paramelle understands it, but this does not seem to yield such good sense.

monks, from whom it would be natural to expect greater and more painful self-punishment than from those in the world, such as the recipient of Ep 2. There may, though, be a further reason, namely that if any of his monks embarked on a programme of this nature, Symeon, as spiritual father and hegumen, would be at hand to guard against excesses, in much the same way as he attempted to restrain Arsenius from fasting more than his physical strength permitted. On the other hand, apart from the possibility that Symeon knew that the actual man to whom he was writing was physically or temperamentally unsuited to the mortifications described in Cat XXX, he may in any case have thought it necessary to be careful about what he enjoined, knowing that he could not personally watch over a spiritual child living at a distance. This is in keeping with the quite moderate demands in respect of fasting which have already been noted as imposed in this letter on the same disciple: a prudent spiritual father, such as Symeon shows himself to be in these matters, will not risk suggesting rigorous ascetic practices which might prove dangerous if he is not himself going to be able to modify them should need arise. (60)

Cat XXVI, addressed like Cat XXX to a typical imagined novice, has in it some directions relating to the body, but since Symeon does not here have in mind one who has special reasons for penitence,

(60) Cat XXX, 123f., 143; as Krivocheïne notes, Symeon is here following Climacus, whom he mentions by name, and who in So. Par. 5, 764B - 781A describes the harsh treatment voluntarily accepted by monks who had fallen into sin (Lumière, p. 73, n.20); "Arsenius", v. above, p.185; "fasting", v. above, pp.187f; "prudent spiritual father", cf. F.P. Harton, The Elements of the Spiritual Life, London, 1932, p. 185, "It is quite certain that no voluntary austerities should be practised unless permission has been asked and obtained from one's director".

these injunctions are more in the nature of aids to prayer than of methods to induce compunction. In Cat XXVI, then, we find a bidding to concentrate one's thoughts and not to allow them to stray, accompanied by the command:

"Join your hands, put your feet together and keep them motionless in one position, and close your eyes to prevent their looking at other things and distracting your mind. But lift your mind and your whole heart up to heaven and to God, entreating mercy from that quarter with tears and groanings".

Symeon continues with the sentence mentioned earlier about the spiritual father determining what psalms the novice should recite, commensurate with his "capacity and...disposition".

There follows an explanation of this last phrase,

"for it is in proportion to your vigour and your manly strength that you should settle the psalms to be sung, the number of genuflexions to be made, and the length of time to stand (in prayer), so that you do not have your conscience reproving you and saying, 'You were capable of standing longer and singing and making confession to God'."

All this is to be classed as practical advice of the sensible kind which acknowledges that it is a mistake for human beings to embark upon spiritual exercises without taking the body into account. The conclusion of this section gives the same impression, when, like the corresponding passage in Cat XXX, it bids the novice sign his whole body with the Cross, stretch himself out on his mat and sleep until midnight. Again, unpleasant as we may find the programme given in Cat XXX for inducing repentance, it has to be admitted that the combination of physical and mental ingredients shows a practical understanding of the interaction of mind and body, and would in all likelihood prove effective in eliciting the compunction and tears which for Symeon were so important. And, theologically, it must

here be stressed that he was no Pelagian: he enjoined mortification merely as a means of disposing oneself for receiving the gift of tears and repentance which he recognised that God might give or withhold at his own discretion. (61)

Thus, although Symeon has left no specific treatise on the work of a spiritual father in training disciples in the practices of devotion, we have ample material to enable us to learn a good deal of the way he himself went about it and to appreciate the experience and the theology which underlay his practice.

Dispassion. (ἀπάθεια.) The activities which we have just been considering are for the Christian ends, in one sense, in themselves. But when examining the work of the spiritual father as a trainer of disciples, we may legitimately view them also as steps on the path which leads to the personal experience of union with God. If they are so regarded, dispassion may be thought of as a further step beyond them, which is how Climacus conceived of the matter, since in Sc. Par. 28 he treats of prayer, and proceeds to discuss dispassion in Sc. Par. 29.

Sc. Par. 29, indeed, is largely a description and eulogy of dispassion, with exhortations to acquire it. But significantly Climacus affirms that it can not be won in its perfection

(61) Cat. XXVI, 275 - 289 (summary and extracts); "conscience", and autobiographical touch, of. "If then his conscience said to him (George, ie. Symeon) 'You should certainly accomplish some more prostrations....', he readily obeyed it, without hesitation....", Cat. XXII, 61 - 65, on which Nicetas draws, Life. 4, 19 - 24; Cat. XXVI, 295 - 297; Cat. XXX, 182 - 184; "compunction and tears", of. Ch. III, 23, 24 - 27, where Symeon denies the possibility of genuine repentance before one has obtained ~~tears~~ and tears; "God might give or withhold", Cat. XXX, 175 - 181.

"if we neglect a single ~~virtue~~ even of the most pedestrian kind",

while earlier he has accepted the definition of it as

"the perfect but limitless perfection of the perfect",

Furthermore, by adding to the words of the psalmist, he represents God as claiming it as a title for himself:

"Be still and know that I am God and am Dispassion". (62)

In the light of this, we may fittingly investigate dispassion before we end our discussion of the spiritual father's work in training his disciples. It is necessary first to say something about the meanings conveyed by ἀπαθία. Lampe gives examples of a variety of uses, noting particularly that in connection with the contemplative life patristic writers use it in a Christian sense, developed from the Stoic ideal. Bardy remarks that

"it has an important place in descriptions of the spiritual life, but not all writers understand it in the same way... The majority give (it) a deeply Christian meaning. (It) is in fact a gift of God, a grace earned for men by the incarnation of the Word".

Although, as will be seen, Symeon does speak of it as a gift of God, he would also agree with a modern Greek writer who insists that

"to become passionless (ἀπαθής) in the patristic and not in the Stoic meaning of the word, requires struggle, time, hardship, fasting, vigils, prayer..."

Lastly we must mention the holy fool's need for dispassion. Seward writes of such persons:

"Their asceticism is of a particular kind - that of an extreme apatheia. In them the growth of apatheia, which must accompany all spiritual endeavour, helps them to resist the lure of worldly respect and honour..."

(62) Sc. Par. 29, 1149D, cf. Sc. Par. 4, 709D, where we are told that obedience leads to humility and humility to dispassion; So. Par. 29, 1152B, quoting Psalms 45, 11 (46, 10).

Speaking of those who seek to ~~vanquish~~ evangelize and identify themselves with

"the mental and moral outcasts", he comments that

"in all such 'dangerous' encounters the fool is guarded by his spiritual discipline and apatheia, which do not destroy warm and loving relationships but rather protect him against the tyranny of the instincts.." (63)

This final point is relevant when the Studite is being considered. It has earlier been argued that he should be reckoned a "holy fool", and in support of this contention some lines from Hym XV were cited. We must now quote one more line from the same context in which the Studite's attitude to nakedness is being described:

"He remained unmoved, unharmed and dispassionate (αἰσθητής).."

This suggests an awareness that only if his father could be shown to have genuinely acquired dispassion would his conduct be viewed as that of a saint, for, to quote from the passage in Cat XXVIII referred to by Rydén, on one occasion Symeon himself thought it needful to warn his hearers against those who "act the fool (οἱ τοῦ σαδὸν ὑποκρινόμενοι)" and are falsely believed to do so because

"they are eager to conceal .. their virtue and dispassion".

When therefore he wrote of the Studite's behaviour in terms which suggested that of holy fools, Symeon took care to emphasise at the same time the dispassion which protected him "against the tyranny of the instincts". The implications of this phrase are well

(63) Lampe, Lexicon, απαθεια; G. Bardy, Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, I, Paris, 1937, col. 727 - 746 (quotation from 738); "modern Greek writer", Theocletus, Between Heaven and Earth, Athens, 1956, pp. 128f., quoted by E. Amand de Mendieta, Mount Athos, the Garden of the Panaghia, Berlin, 1972, p. 323, cf. also Ware, Climacus, pp. 32 - 34, and Koder Hym IX SC 156, p. 227, n. 2; J. Saward, Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality, Oxford, 1980, 29f.

illustrated by further words from the same context in Hym XV, when an imaginary critic is addressed:

"If you happen to be naked and flesh comes in contact with flesh, you become sexually inflamed like an ass or a stallion". (64)

Dispassion, of course, is important for others besides "holy fools", and indeed for the Eastern Church is closely linked with sanctity. As Krivochéine has noticed, Symeon actually taught that

"dispassion is superior to sanctity or rather is a higher degree of sanctity, itself comprising differing degrees".

Naturally, then, it cannot fail to have its place in a spiritual father's programme for the training of disciples. However, just as Symeon had to contend against those who asserted that it was impossible to be a saint in contemporary Byzantium, so he was forced to oppose those who refused to recognise

"that even now there are some who are dispassionate and holy (ἁγιοί) and filled with divine light, dwelling in our midst".

Such people are described in the same sentence as

"having so mortified their members which are upon the earth from all impurity and impassioned desire, as not only of themselves never to conceive what is evil or to move towards doing it, but also not to undergo any change from the state of dispassion which is theirs, even if others tempt them".

This description, with the reminiscence of Colossians 3, 5, clearly implies that for the attainment of dispassion human effort is needed to mortify one's members. It illustrates at the same time Symeon's conviction that there were in his day some who through

(64) "earlier argued", Part One, chapter II, pp. 97-99 and notes 37-39; Hym XV, 212; Cat XXVIII, 369-375, and for Rydén, v. Part One, chapter II, n. 38; Hym XV, 215f.

such effort had become truly dispassionate, with the result that they were henceforth impervious to the assaults of evil from within or without. We shall see, however, that Symeon was not consistent with regard to these last points, and in fact that there are other examples of inconsistency which can be detected in his treatment of the subject. (65)

That the spiritual father is involved in a person's gaining dispassion is implied in Cat V, where Symeon utters the warning that to die without having acquired it means that one will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. It will be remembered that spiritual fatherhood, even when it is not thought of in a primitive and crude manner, has for one of its objects the securing of salvation for the disciple, and this can be symbolically represented by the concept of entering the Kingdom of Heaven. The training given by a father is therefore bound to include all that is necessary to help disciples make the effort to become dispassionate. So, in the passage referred to,

"the understanding", says Symeon, needs to

"be given wings by repentance and tears and the spiritual humility which results from them, and thus be raised to the height of dispassion",

but should this not take place, one will in this life constantly be the prey of one passion or another, and after death be excluded from the Kingdom and subjected to eternal punishment. This passage, since it occurs in a Catechesis, is addressed to monks,

(65) Krivochéine, Lumière, pp. 376f., citing Tr Bth IV, 61 - 63; Ch III, 87, 9 - 24; Colossians 3, 5 (A.V.) "Mortify .. your members which are upon the earth".

but it is noteworthy that it follows a long paragraph in which Symeon stresses the importance of struggling against what he calls "lesser passions", such as "greediness" and "grumbling", to name two out of his list. It is faults of this nature, as well as the greater passions, which need to be overcome, and there is no reason to suppose that he would have exempted people living in the world from the requirement to strive for mastery over "lesser passions" which can injure them just as they can injure monks. We must conclude, then, that in Symeon's view seculars as well as those who have taken monastic vows are obliged, if they wish to be saved, to struggle to acquire dispassion. Repentance, moreover, is something to which all Christians are called, and the need for repentance is much emphasised in the context we are considering, but as we have seen, in order to learn how to repent truly, Symeon expects that one will have recourse to a spiritual father. The father's help in this will then be an element in his training of the disciple to become dispassionate, something which can be described in positive terms as an "entering into the supra-sensible realm". (66)

The mention of repentance as a precursor of dispassion leads appropriately to consideration of a passage in Cat XXX, in which Symeon urges the novice whom he purports to be addressing to continue as a penitent until he draws his last breath. Through so doing, he will not only, by God's grace, be granted

(66) Cat V, 1054 - 1067 (summary and extracts); ibid., 1013 - 1049; "repentance emphasised", mirava once and mirvona twice, ibid., 1054 - 1059; "we have seen", Cat XIV, 5 - 9, v. Part Two, chapter I (b) p.113; "entering into" Ch III, 33, 1f., cited by Krivocheine, Lumière, p. 374.

"a fountain of tears but also ... liberation from all his passions",

or, as it is expressed a few lines later, brought to "purification and dispassion".

Thus he will be made

"a partaker of the Holy Spirit and the equal of the great Fathers, Antony, Sabas and Euthymius".

But in contrast with what is taught here, namely that dispassion is to be regarded as something gained as a result of a process in which one's own effort plays a prominent and perhaps decisive part, in Cat XX Symeon says something different. Here we learn that when, at the time foreseen by the spiritual father, the disciple undergoes an experience in which the Holy Spirit comes to him as he came to the first disciples at Pentecost,

"then every passionate thought (ἐμπάθητι λογισμός) disappears and every passion in the soul (πάθος ψυχικόν) is driven away".

It is true that the actual word 'dispassion' does not occur at this point, but the dispassionate state is clearly described, and is represented not as the prelude to receiving the Spirit in a special way, but rather as the consequence, or perhaps the concomitant, of such reception. Furthermore, although effort has been involved in the disciple's attendance upon, and obedience to, his spiritual father - Symeon describes it all at some length - , nevertheless at the stage in Cat XX where we find this reference to what is in effect dispassion, the emphasis is laid not at all upon effort but entirely upon the gift of the Holy Spirit's presence,

something which can only be awaited in solitude and quiet. No doubt, if taxed with inconsistency, Symeon would have denied the accusation and retorted that God's grace and man's effort are both indispensable, and that the teacher must sometimes emphasise one and sometimes the other. In the same way he would have insisted that dispassion may be regarded from one angle as a prerequisite of the Spirit's coming, but from another as a consequence of a person's receiving the Spirit in a particular, fully conscious way. However this may be, it is very interesting that in both Cat XX and Cat XXX dispassion is spoken of in connection with the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and with the spiritual father on the other. (67)

A similar inconsistency can be discovered if Hym XLVI is compared with Cat XI: in the former Symeon prays to be given once again both cleansing and healing of the soul, various virtues and the gift of tears, and as the culmination of all these gifts, dispassion which implants in him the desire for union with God. In the past all these benefits had been his, but though he had been raised above all passion, Symeon through self-reliance had become slack and fallen victim to worry about earthly matters, and instead of glowing had become black, like iron which has grown cold. So he ends this brief Hymn with a renewed prayer to be restored to his former state of beauty and of enjoyment of the divine light. (The confession of a fall from dispassion appears in itself rather inconsistent with what has gone before, for in the lines which make use of nuptial imagery, the impression is given that a permanent union had been established:

"dispassion lived with me and associated with me always".

(67) Cat XXX, 253 - 273 (summary and extracts); Cat XX, 172 - 174; "at some length", Cat XX, 60 - 160; "gift", but of. ibid., 204 - 206 where humility is stated to procure dispassion.

However, in view of the emotion under which Symeon is writing, it would be a mistake to make much of the matter.) But in Cat XI, dispassion appears not so much to be the culmination of a sequence of divine gifts, as the almost automatic result of perseverance in fasting:

"Fasting, assisted by the keeping of vigils, makes its way into the heart and softens its hardness, causing springs of compunction to flow in the place where formerly debauchery was found. And I beseech you, brethren, let each of us strive earnestly for this to be effected in us. When it has been, we shall easily cross with God's help the whole sea of the passions and, having passed through the waves of temptations caused by the one who cruelly tyrannizes over us, shall reach the haven of dispassion".

The reason for the difference between the two passages is not hard to seek, and may fairly be held to account for any apparent inconsistency. In the Catechesis, Symeon is speaking as hegumen and spiritual father, exhorting his monks to fast strictly for the whole of Lent and not to follow the common practice of relaxing their efforts after the end of the first week. He therefore wishes to stimulate them to continued effort and to encourage them with the hope of soon becoming dispassionate by this means. In Hym XLVI, on the other hand, he is probing into the state of his own soul, and realises that the healing he needs cannot be gained automatically by physical asceticism, but can ultimately only be bestowed upon him as a gift from God. It is to be noted that even in the Catechesis where the stress is all on the duty of fasting, there is still a mention of divine assistance as well the exhortation to human effort. (68)

(68) Hym XLVI, 11 - 49 (summary) - for the possibility of falling from dispassion and later being restored, v. below (d) pp. 247f. (the Studite); "permanent union", Hym XLVI, 29f.: Cat XI, 64 - 74; "fasting for the whole of Lent", ibid., 30 - 41.

Although his language is frequently rather imprecise, a sentence at the beginning of Cat XX, seems to indicate that Symeon could visualise a state of partial dispassion as a kind of preliminary to the complete attainment of this condition. He announces that his intention is to speak of what

"is profitable to the soul and assists it in its flight from the world and in (gaining) deliverance from the passions, and the love of God, and perfect dispassion".

In the light of this, how are we to understand the passage towards the end of the same Catechesis in which the Pentecostal experience, given by God, causes or at least coincides with the expulsion of "every passion in the soul?" Although at first sight what is said in the latter passage might appear to be the equivalent of "deliverance from the passions" in the earlier, this can hardly be Symeon's real meaning, because the receiving of the Holy Spirit is in fact the climax to which, according to Cat XX, all the spiritual father's training has been directed. There is then every reason to suppose that in his words at the beginning of this Catechesis, Symeon envisaged the novice reaching first a preliminary stage in which he would be more or less freed from subjection to the passions, and then subsequently and by the grace of God receiving total freedom with the disappearance of "every passionate thought". This accords with Krivochéine's remark about "differing degrees" of dispassion, and with Hausherr's distinction between a "first" and "second" apatheia, as well as exemplifying what Darrouzès has stated about lack of preciseness in the setting forth of concepts. From the point of view of the spiritual father's work, the significant fact is that this idea of two degrees of dispassion occurs in Cat XX, the very same writing

which includes the advice to begin one's pilgrimage towards God by

"call(ing) earnestly upon (him), that he may show you a man capable of shepherding you well". (69)

How the spiritual child is trained in dispassion cannot be illustrated in isolation, for we are dealing with what in its first stage is "the fruit of asceticism, fasting and mortifying the senses", and in its second nothing less than a gift conveyed by the Holy Spirit, or received together with him. Nevertheless this discussion of the matter will have made it clear that dispassion is so important, and so bound up with the process of training, that it could not be omitted from this section. (70)

Thus through discipline of the body, through encouraging the revealing or confession of thoughts, through assistance in overcoming vices and gaining virtues, through instruction about how to pray, how to take part in worship and how and when to communicate, and finally through encouragement to acquire dispassion - through all of these, the spiritual father ought to help his disciple live a more dedicated and holy life. All such matters formed part of the tradition into which Symeon entered, and we have seen something of how in practice he understood this tradition. The demanding nature of these obligations is very obvious, and Symeon, like all conscientious spiritual fathers, could only discharge them by drawing upon all the resources of *τὸ πρῶτον* and *τὸ δεύτερον* at his disposal.

(69) "partial dispassion", cf. Hausherr, *Life*, pp. XXVII f., where a "first" and "second" *apatheia* are distinguished from one another, and Darrouzes, *Ch*, I, 94, *SC* 51, p. 97, n.1, "the ideas corresponding to this division remain somewhat imprecise."; *Cat* XX, 17 - 20; *ibid.*, 172 - 174, Krivochéine's statement, quoted above, p.237; *Cat* XX, 45f.

(70) "the fruit of asceticism..", Hausherr, *Life*, p. XXVII.

III (d) Promoting Closer Fellowship with God.

Training by definition is not an end in itself, but is a process directed towards an end. The spiritual father's obligations towards his disciple are still unfulfilled, however much training has been given, until the disciple has been brought to the point of enjoying an intimate relationship with God personally experienced. This is, of course, the salvation which we saw to be Symeon's original objective for himself, but which can be more truly perceived as something much richer in content and to be enjoyed, in part, already in this life.⁽¹⁾

Difficulties, however, are encountered when we seek to examine this facet of a director's work, since we are faced with experiences which because of their very nature will vary from person to person, and which moreover will of necessity be written about in language of a symbolic and pictorial nature. Thus a lack of precision both in terminology, and in regard to experiences described and their sequence, is only to be expected. With regard to language, the remark of Climacus may be cited:

"Love (ἀγάπη), dispassion, and adoption as sons, differ in name, but in name only. Think of them as being like light, fire and flame which co-operate in a single activity".

If such views are held, either consciously as by Climacus, or perhaps unconsciously by others, it is useless to expect to gain much understanding by means of methods which depend on exact linguistic analysis. Similarly, in respect of experiences and the order in which they occur, we have just observed that Symeon is inconsistent about whether dispassion is acquired before, or as a result of, the coming of the Spirit, and whether in fact it should be thought of as a quality gained by asceticism or as a divine gift. ⁽²⁾

(1) v. Part Two, chapter I(a), pp.108f and I(b).

(2) Climacus, Sc. Par., 30, 115B; Symeon, cf. above, (c) pp.240-241; in St. Paul himself, an inconsistency of the same kind can be found in consecutive verses. Philippians, 2, 12f.

Nevertheless, provided these inevitable difficulties are borne in mind, it is possible to attempt some kind of sketch of the goal to which the spiritual father ought to be conducting his child.

"Spiritual fatherhood", Hausherr wrote, "has no raison d'être other than that of leading a person from slavery to the liberty of the children of God .. this blessed transformation is effected by completely substituting the divine will for the human".

With this may be compared a fuller description of the monastic ideal in Orthodoxy summarised as follows: a complete break with the world; the absolute rejection of all purely human knowledge; the abandoning of the body, the world and family ties; self-renunciation and the surrender of one's own free-will; a ceaseless struggle against all forms of sin; the mortification of the body, the senses and the imagination; watchfulness, sobriety and obedience to one's spiritual father. As a result of all these the monk becomes open to receive the impulses of the Holy Spirit, to live a life of real contemplation, and attains a new life in Christ, being 'divinised'. (3)

This description by a modern writer is in some of its features remarkably similar to the thought of St. Gregory of Nyssa, which Jaeger has depicted as follows:

"God is the inaccessible object of a long process of purification of the soul, through which it approaches the knowledge of 'the absolute good' by degrees .. Christianity is .. the mystery of the separation and liberation of the soul from all material bondage to the senses and its ascent and return to God".

This is followed a few pages later by the statement that by Gregory the process of salvation

"is interpreted as the gradual purification of the soul (καθάρσις) from the stain (μολυσμός) of the material world and its final liberation (λύτρωσις) from the servitude (δοῦλος) of the passions (πάθος) .. This true freedom consists in the complete absence of passion (ἀπάθεια) : the free man is ἀπάθης".

(3) Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, p. 165; "monastic ideal", v. E. Amand de Mendieta, Mount Athos, the Garden of the Panaghia, Berlin, 1972, p. 165.

In much the same way, Climacus says:

"I consider dispassion to be nothing other than a spiritual heaven within the heart (*ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ οὐρανός*) .. The man who is genuinely dispassionate, and recognised to be such, is one who has rendered his flesh incorruptible, raised his spirit above everything created, and subjected to it all his senses .. Others again define dispassion as resurrection of the soul taking place before that of the body, while others call it perfect knowledge of God (*ἐν γνῶσει Θεοῦ τίθεσθαι*), second only to that of the angels".

These examples show dispassion shifting from being understood as an attainment laboriously acquired by ascetic training to being thought of as a condition of blessedness and perfection. The quotation from Climacus is found in Sc. Par. 29, in which we are also - and most significantly - informed that the dispassionate no longer needs a human guide, for

"he has been raised above all human instruction and apprehends the Lord's will within himself through some illumination".

This is in contrast with the statement, quoted in an earlier chapter from Sc. Par. 26, in which Climacus insists on the necessity of a spiritual father: the need for such a guide is no longer experienced once the disciple, established in the state of dispassion, has attained to personal knowledge of God and of God's will. (4)

It must not be supposed that the attainment of this condition was understood as precluding the possibility of falling away subsequently. In one of his Chapters indeed the Studite seems specifically to envisage the likelihood of such an occurrence, for he provides a prayer for use by one who is conscious of having lost his enjoyment of the grace of God. The condition from which such a one has fallen, as well as the means to attain it and one cause of losing it, he describes as follows:

(4) W. Jaeger, Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius, Leyden, 1954, pp. 73f.; *ibid.*, p. 79; Climacus, Sc. Par. 29, 1148BC; *ibid.*, 1149C; Sc. Par. 26, 1089B.

"Keep your spirit (νοῦς) ever directed towards God .. Esteem yourself more sinful than everyone else. If you continue mindful in this way for some time, illumination, like some ray of light, is wont to come upon your mind...And the more you seek after it the more clearly it appears; and as it appears, so it is loved; and as it is loved, so it purifies; and as it purifies, so it makes you godlike, giving you light and teaching you to discern (διακρίνω) the good from what is worse. But, brother, much toil is needed, together with God's help, for this to become perfectly at home in your soul ... Beware that you do not suffer harm through excess of joy and of compunction, and that you do not reckon that you have these things as a result of your own toil rather than by God's grace, for then they will be taken from you, and you will seek much for them in your prayers but will not find them. Then you will recognise what a gift you have lost".

It is true that the Studite does not explicitly say, as Climacus had done, that the disciple who has reached this state of being directly illuminated by God no longer needs a human teacher, but this is implied in what is said about his being able to discern what is good. This is not to be taken to mean that the Studite held that at this stage a disciple might deliberately abandon his director, for this would indeed conflict with what he teaches elsewhere. All that we may infer is that in so far as he is receiving divine illumination, the disciple does not need an earthly guide. If, however, he falls from this high estate, he will again require human help, as Nicetas at the time of his vision needed help to overcome the "arrogance and conceit" which he had been entertaining in his soul. (5)

The two sayings of the Studite which Symeon records in Cat VI can similarly be interpreted of a condition in which personal knowledge of God has superseded the necessity for human guidance whether oral or written:

"Gain God as a friend for yourself, and you have no need of the help of man", and
 "Gain God and you will have no need of a book".

(5) Ch 140, 676C - 677A (extracts); "elsewhere", Ch 36, Hausherr, Life, pp. XLIXf.; Nicetas, v. above (c), pp. 197f.

While the second doubtless reveals something of the Studite's suspicion of human learning and the first might be understood in terms of his intention that the novice should isolate himself from his brethren so far as possible, it is still not unreasonable to claim, in the light of the quotation given in the previous paragraph, that these sayings have a double reference, and so relate also to the disciple who has been introduced to a conscious relationship with God. (6)

The change which occurs when one reaches this state is frequently designated ἀλλοίωσις, sometimes with the epithet καλῇ. This word may also be used to refer to the transformation involved in becoming dispassionate, for as we have been seeing, there is the closest of connections between dispassion and the life in which God is experienced personally. The exact type of change denoted by ἀλλοίωσις varies from writer to writer, but there is often an indication that it is the result of divine activity, Pg. 76 (77) 11 (where it occurs in LXX) being quoted,

"This ἀλλοίωσις is from the hand of the Most High". St. Gregory of Nazianzus cites this text when speaking of a moral transformation, and Symeon also uses it, although the change which concerns him is connected with the spiritual condition which we are now investigating. It is noteworthy, that as with ἀπαθία, so with ἀλλοίωσις, he at one time implies that it depends upon divine action and at another that it is the result of human activity: thus in Tr Eth VIII the acquiring of virtues leads to divine knowledge of the mysteries of Christ

"which when one has attained, and with these become habituated, he is transformed by the noble transformation (τὴν καλὴν ἀλλοίωσιν ἀποθεῖται), and from being a mere man becomes an angel";

on the other hand, in Tr Eth X where Symeon is speaking of baptism as a new birth, although it is true that he mentions the keeping of

(6) Cat VI, 190 - 192; Studite, Ch 120, 668D - 669A, Ch 126, 672BC.

God's commandments, it is not this that he is at pains to stress, but rather the work God performs in making us his children, for he quotes from St. John's Gospel the words:

"Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God",

and then continues,

"(the evangelist) here calls the spiritual transformation 'birth', the transformation which is effected and made visible in the baptism of the Holy Spirit".

As in the case of dispassion, there is no real inconsistency in his way of treating the concept of transformation, but simply the desire to emphasise either the divine or the human element according to the needs of the teaching he is giving. In either case, it is worth remarking, the term is one which would have appealed to Symeon as in harmony with the idea of conscious personal experience on which he laid such stress. (7)

For himself, Symeon had no doubt that this noble transformation had taken place in him, and in view of what was stated in the last paragraph, it is interesting that in Hymn LI, where he is primarily giving thanks for the work of Christ within, he also speaks of the experience of being freed from evils, ransomed from darkness, from temptations, passions (πᾶσι) and from all thoughts (λογισμοί). He then goes on to say that he becomes conscious of "the strange transformation" in himself. This experience, however, was for Symeon, no once-for-all entry into a state from which it would be impossible to fall, for the passage in which ἀλλοίωσις occurs is in fact one where he is speaking of being restored after repeated falls which he

(7) "the transformation", cf. Hausherr, Life, p. XXXII; Gregory of Nazianzus, Or. XLIV PG 36, 616C; Symeon, Tr Eth 594f., cf. Cat XVIII, 378f., where though there is a reminiscence of the Psalms, the change is styled μεταστροφή; Indolence, v. above (c), p. 241; Tr Eth VIII, 195-209, cf. Cat XXXIV, 261 - 267, where a string of virtues are said to lead to ἀλλοίωσις, which itself is necessary if the Holy Spirit is to indwell one; Tr Eth X, 430 - 445 (summary and extract); St. John 1, 13; on the different names for this "transformation subite et radicale" v. Krivochéine, Lumière, p. 418.

has earlier confessed and as a result of which he has forfeited his enjoyment of the light of Christ. We are reminded that his spiritual father, the Studite, had similarly spoken of the possibility that a disciple who had attained the light might yet succumb to temptation and lose the intimacy with God which he had been enjoying. (8)

In the above passage, presumably because the transformation is actually a restoration to a condition previously attained but since forfeited, Symeon does not mention the work of the Studite. But there are several other places where he does emphasise the part played by his spiritual father in enabling him to enjoy this personal friendship with God now being discussed, even if the word *πατριάρχης* is not there employed. A straightforward statement is found in Hym LVI, in which Symeon recalls his past before God:

"Thou didst bring me to him who it pleased thee should become my father on earth, and didst cast me at his feet and (lay me) in his arms. And he it was who brought me to thy Father, O Christ, and to thee, through the Spirit - O Trinity, my God - while I wept like the Prodigal (Son) .. and thou didst not disdain to call me thy son ... And we, thy humble servants, according to thy good pleasure, are strong in weakness and are rich in poverty and rejoice in all affliction, since we are outside of this world. For we, O Master, are with thee, and the world has but our body".

In this passage Symeon does not say how the Studite had brought him to God except by implication: the reference to the Prodigal Son suggests that he had been helped to a profound repentance, and because of what we know about the importance both he and his father attached to this and the tears which accompany it, we may assume that it is this which he has mainly here in mind. (9)

(8) Hym LI, 38 - 54; "earlier confessed", ibid., 18 - 23.

(9) Hym LVI, 13 - 34 (extracts).

The Studite's work as spiritual physician, and perhaps his example, will have been in Symeon's understanding what brought him into the relationship with God described in the lines quoted from Hym LVI. In other passages, where entry into this state is spoken of perhaps in different terminology, the prayers of the spiritual father come into prominence. Thus in Cat XVI the disciple (Symeon) asked his father to pray for him, received the assurance that he would be granted a double portion of divine grace, and was that very night granted a wonderful vision of divine light and addressed by a divine voice. A more definite reference to the Studite's prayers on his behalf is found in the opening lines of Symeon's Hym XXXII:

"Look upon me, Master, who am reviled by the faithful as a charlatan and utterly astray, because I assert that through thy love for men and through the prayers of my father, I received the Holy Spirit .."

This is of great interest, not only because of its explicit statement about prayer, but also because it reveals the reaction of ordinary Christians ("the faithful") to claims made by those who believed themselves to have had a special experience of the Holy Spirit. As the Studite had been called a "charlatan" (πλάτης), Symeon now found the same insult being levelled at himself. This incidentally helps to explain why Symeon at the outset had never hoped for more from a spiritual father than a rather crudely conceived type of salvation in the next world: that, and no more, was the commonly held current expectation of what spiritual fatherhood would secure. By the time he wrote Hym XXXII Symeon's understanding had been enlarged, and the claims he now made both on behalf of his spiritual father and of himself naturally conflicted with the commonly held pessimism concerning what was possible for man in 10th or 11th century

Byzantium. Again, Symeon's visionary experiences, of gradually increasing clarity and intensity, are in Hym LV unequivocally described as being the result of the Studite's prayers and tears, although in Cat XXXV they appear to be simply the consequence of discipleship, and, as we have seen, in Cat XVI prayer though requested is not explicitly said to have been offered. Once again in these examples Symeon is seen varying his emphases on different occasions. (10)

In Hym XLI there occurs an interesting passage which seems to indicate a positive understanding by Symeon that the role of the Studite, and by implication that of any other spiritual father, should theoretically at least be regarded as at an end when his disciple reaches that spiritual maturity which can be spoken of in terms of receiving the Holy Spirit.

"I gave you into the hands of a tutor (Παιδαγωγός)",

Symeon believed he heard Christ say,

"...and he took good care of you as of a little child growing up hour by hour, and he brought you up properly. You have already approached manhood, indeed become a young man, and you yourself are not unaware that I was always with you, growing up in you and shielding you until you had passed well through all the stages of growth. Now, then, are you not of age? More than that, you have become in truth a man, mature and already on the way towards old age, so how is it that now you desire to be nursed in my arms like an infant? How is it that you ask to be put in swaddling clothes and once again carried about? to be fed on milk and to be under a tutor's care?"

Here there is a distinct rebuke: Symeon believed that Christ was castigating him for wishing to return to spiritual childhood when he

(10) "example", cf. the passage quoted Part Two chapter I(b), p.111, Hym XXXVII, 29 - 43; "spiritual father's prayers", cf. above (a), p.172; Cat XVI, 62 - 144; Hym XXXII, 1 - 5; "charlatan", cf. Part Two, chapter I (c), p.121, and for a similar complaint by Symeon on the subject of the attacks made on him because of his teaching, Hym 4, 38 - 45; "at the outset of. Part Two, chapter I(a), pp.107f; "commonly held pessimism", cf. Krivochéine, Lumière, pp. 32f., for a discussion of "l'impression d'insulte produite par l'enseignement de Syméon"; Hym LV, 80 - 87, 101 - 103; Cat XXXV, 129 - 139.

had in fact become a mature (τέλειος) man. Furthermore, in the case of one so steeped in Scripture the use of the word παιδαγωγός twice in thirteen lines of verse is of no little significance, in view of St. Paul's use of the same word in the Epistle to the Galatians.

"Thus the Law was a kind of tutor (παιδαγωγός) in charge of us until Christ should come, when we should be justified through faith; and now that faith has come, the tutor's charge is at an end".

Quite apart from Symeon's general familiarity with the Bible, he shows definite knowledge of this passage in Cat XXVIII when he speaks of the law as παιδαγωγός. In Hym XLI, then, it is legitimate to assert that, as in Galatians, there is intended to be a definite conclusion to the period during which the pupil or disciple is rightfully under the tutor's care. Spiritual fatherhood, in other words, is not meant to result in spiritual infantilism. (11)

Since Symeon whatever his faults as a hegumen was no hypocrite, we might expect to find this same note in his teaching - nor are we disappointed. The imagined novice who is being addressed in Cat XX is told that with the coming to him of the Holy Spirit

"the man is totally transformed (ἁλλοιόωται) and knows God and, first of all, is known by him". (12)

These words occur towards the conclusion of a passage describing the effects of this personal Pentecost in language expressive of the light-mysticism which was so integral a part of Symeon's experience.

(11) Hym XLI, 56 - 68, cf. above (c), pp. 202f; Galatians 3, 24f. (N.E.B.); Cat XXVIII, 71 - 82, where also Symeon is speaking of life under the direction of the Holy Spirit as something attained by those who have passed beyond the tutelage of the Law.

(12) Cat XX, 181f., with further reminiscences of St. Paul; cf. I Corinthians 13, 12 and Galatians 4, 9 for the emphasis on God's knowledge of us as more important than ours of him; Cat XX, 165f.

But the description began with the promise that

"upon you also will now come the power of the All-Holy Spirit no less than (upon the first disciples)".

Symeon's meaning is that just as on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to supply the place of the Ascended Christ who could no longer be with his disciples in the flesh, so the personal coming of the Spirit to an individual results in his no longer having to depend on his spiritual father for guidance and direction. This conclusion is all the clearer because for some four pages up to this point the relationship between spiritual father and disciple has been worked out in terms of that between Christ and his disciples during his earthly life. A similar inference about the goal at which a novice should aim can be drawn from a sentence in Cat XXVI:

"If in this way, brother, you accustom yourself to performing this task, you will make progress in a short time and will hasten to become a mature (*τελειος*) man, measured by the stature of the fulness of Christ".

In Cat XIV also much the same phraseology is found, the novice who becomes a disciple of someone who is *τελειος* and *σημιος*,

"increases in spiritual stature, and becomes a mature (*τελειος*) man in Christ our God".

This is spelt out a little later as follows:

"Every day he increases in spiritual stature, ridding himself of what belongs to an infantile mode of thought, and advancing towards manly maturity. For this reason he is transformed (*αλλάσσεται*) in respect of the powers and activities of his soul, in accordance with the measure of his stature...."

By implication, and in view of the reminiscence of Ephesians, the disciple who has become mature enjoys a very close relationship with Christ, and as Symeon further states,

"when he has become such, at once God dwells in him".

Although in these passages addressed to his monks Symeon does not in so many words teach that once the disciple has reached maturity he no longer has his former need of a spiritual father provided he continues in this state, there is no doubt that this is the logical consequence of what he is saying. (13)

There is in addition other language used by Symeon in his attempts to speak of the goal to which a spiritual father should be leading his disciple. Thus the passage in Cat XX about the coming of the Holy Spirit concludes with the statement that he who experiences this is made

"a friend of God and son of the Most High and himself a god, in so far as this is possible for men".

Taking the second term, we may say that we have here a link with what we saw in Ep 4 that Symeon asserted should be hoped for, provided that one attached oneself to the right kind of spiritual father: such a father can, and does, effect the rebirth of his children as sons of God. The third term, "a god", even though Symeon qualified it, may cause some amazement at first sight. In fact, of course, it is merely a variation of the verb $\theta\epsilon\omicron\tau\epsilon\iota\omega$, used by St. Athanasius in his well-known statement that Christ

"became human in order that we might be made divine". (14)

(13) Cat XXVI, 49 - 51, cf. Ephesians 4, 13; Cat XIV, 23, cf. the summary, Part Two, chapter I(b), p.115; Cat XIV, 111 - 115; ibid., 142f., cf. Cat X, 26 - 38, where Symeon insists that not only did the Studite reach perfection but that others still do so.

(14) Cat XX, 185f., where Krivochéine adopts the "harder" reading $\theta\epsilon\omicron$, though observing that some manuscripts have $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, but where in any case "of" is demanded in English, cf. James 2, 23, Wisdom 7, 27; Ep 4, 121 - 126; St. Athanasius, De Incarnatione, PG 25, 192B.

Symeon is not afraid of using *Θς ο's* , and there is another interesting example of this is Tr Eth IV, where again the word is qualified, and where there is also in the same context a reference to *αλλοιωσις* , with the verse mentioned earlier, Psalm 76 (77), 11 being quoted.

"Those then", runs this passage,

"who have been counted worthy to be united with (Christ) and to have him for their head.. become themselves also gods by adoption, and like the Son of God.. The Father puts on them the best robe, the Lord's cloak, with which he was clothed before the foundation of the world. 'For as many of you as were baptized into Christ', it is said, 'did put on Christ', clearly with reference to the Holy Spirit who transforms them, in their entirety, in such a manner as befits God, by a strange, ineffable and divine transformation (*αλλοιωσις*), concerning which David says : 'This is from the hand of the Most High'..."

Here, of course, "by adoption" is a significant qualification of "gods", and it is itself expanded in Scriptural phrases, the text from Galatians about putting on Christ being somewhat forcibly equated with the work of the Holy Spirit. Whatever judgment one might make concerning Symeon's exegesis, it must be admitted that he desired to remain within the limits of Scripture, even though he could be content with nothing less than the highest possible expressions to represent the destiny of the faithful disciple. In the same context it is noteworthy that Symeon expounds another text in such a way as to make it clear that this transformation begins in the present world and is completed in some future existence. He continues by citing and explaining I John 3,2 as follows:

"The disciple who lay on Christ's breast says, 'Brethren, we are now children (of God), but it has not yet been revealed' - this clearly means to those who are in the world - 'what we shall be '."

The worldling remains in ignorance of both the present and the future glory bestowed upon the true disciple.

" 'But we know' " - Symeon proceeds with his quotation, conflating it with a later verse from the same chapter - 'from the Spirit that he has given us, that when (Christ) is revealed, we shall be like him' " (15).

Symeon, then, was emphatic that the spiritual father's work was not at an end until his disciple had been granted some genuine personal experience of God, in whatever way this might be described. But the mystical tradition was well aware of the possibility of deception in this matter and the need to be on one's guard against the devil impersonating either an angel or perhaps even Christ. Symeon regarded it as what one might call the final obligation of the director to pronounce on the validity or otherwise of his spiritual child's early visionary experiences. In Tr Eth V we have the description of such an interview, with the disciple first coming to his father and saying,

"I have seen".

He is then asked what he has seen, and in reply describes his vision of a light, whose sweetness was such that he cannot express it in words, adding details about the effect produced in him, which included unspeakable joy and rivers of tears. On hearing this description, the father reassures him with the simple words:

"My child, that is He".

This passage is specially interesting because from a parallel in Cat XXXVI, as well as from a note in the margin of some manuscripts, it is legitimate to deduce that Symeon is speaking here of his own

(15) Tr Eth IV, 586 - 599, with reminiscences of St. Luke 15, 22 (the Prodigal Son) and St. John 17, 24 (Christ's prayer); Galatians 3, 27; "lay on Christ's breast", cf. St. John 13, 23, this disciple being traditionally identified with St. John; I John 3, 2 is quoted but not quite exactly; I John 3, 24.

experience: he, in fact, was the disciple, and the Studite the spiritual father. We have thus yet another instance of an event in Symeon's own life being used as the basis of, or at least support for, some of his teaching. (16)

From all that has been said in this chapter, it will have become clear how exacting and demanding was the work of a spiritual father in the tradition into which Symeon entered and which he himself developed. No doubt, as he and others were aware, many spiritual fathers were incapable of fulfilling all the obligations which properly belonged to the office. Moreover, however skilled and experienced and devoted a father might be, he could do little or nothing for an unwilling disciple or for one only prepared to travel a limited distance along the path pointed out to him. Accordingly, we must now turn in the next chapter to consider Symeon's expectations with regard to spiritual children, bearing in mind that whatever he demanded of them, he demanded in the context of all the work which we have seen he believed to be incumbent on a father.

(16) "the devil", cf. Ward, Desert Fathers, p. 50, nos. 178 and 180; Tr Eth V, 294 - 316, Oct XXXVI, 218 - 233, marginal note in three manuscripts at Tr Eth V, 301; cf. Part Two, chapter II(b), p.144, where the incident was mentioned in connection with the father's qualifications.

IV THE DUTY OF A DISCIPLE

(a) Basis: the Father as 'Icon'

"The old men used to say, 'If someone has faith in another, and hands himself over to him in complete submission, he does not need to pay attention to God's commands but he can entrust his whole will to his father. He will suffer no reproach from God, for God looks for nothing from beginners so much as renunciation through obedience'."

The tradition regarding spiritual fatherhood is well represented in this statement, at once uncompromising in its absoluteness, and holding out a hope of freedom from anxiety. Yet in the Christian scheme of things such a demand for "complete submission" can properly be made only by God, or at least by one who is accepted as invested with divine authority in the fullest sense. It is thus not surprising that we frequently encounter, alongside insistence on total obedience to the spiritual father, the injunction that the disciple is to render this "as to God himself". And this will be the consequence of the child's "regarding his teacher and guide as God".(1)

We may thus claim that underlying all the demands for obedience on the part of the disciple is the concept of his duty to view his father as an icon of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. Now in Eastern Orthodox theology icons have what may be called a sacramental function: they are not visual aids, but actual means whereby the worshipper is brought into the presence of, and into fellowship with, heavenly realities. Climacus provides an excellent illustration of the transference of this principle from the realm of iconography to that of living human beings. In one of his anecdotes he describes how he interrogated an aged monk whom the hegumen had kept standing

(1) Ward, Desert Fathers, p. 45, no. 158, of. Rousseau, Ascetics, p. 52, "the belief that by submitting to the guidance of the father one could guarantee fulfilment of God's will"; "as to God himself". Cat XX, 47; "regarding his teacher...", the verb is ἀντιβάζω and has thus been more or less literally translated, Ch I, 55, of. I, 28, 24f.

in silence beside the table while the others were eating. On asking what his thoughts were at that time, Climacus received this answer:

"Since I have mentally clothed our pastor with the features of the icon of Christ, I have never at all reckoned that orders came to me from him, but from God. Hence, father John, I stood in prayer to God, not as in front of a table at which men were eating, but as in front of God's altar..."

Here we have evidence of a conscious and deliberate regarding of the hegumen/spiritual father/pastor as an "icon of Christ", and the effect this has on the relationship is obvious, for the monk's reply continued,

"I conceived no evil thought at all against the pastor, because of my faith in him and my love for him".(2)

Once the disciple has begun to look on his father in this way, he will welcome every command as coming from God and will obey it gladly as a means of expressing his faith and love.

The concept of the spiritual father as an icon seems to have been misunderstood by Graef, who writes that

"Symeon elaborates this identification of the spiritual director with Christ at great length in catechesis 20".

She can admit that

"most spiritual writers recommend a religious to see Christ in his superior",

but holds that this "is mostly no more than a matter of obedience", whereas she fears that

"if (absolute devotion) is given to a personally chosen director, the mortal man may only too easily be identified with Christ in a way that can even be detrimental to the spiritual life".

But such fears are the result of a misunderstanding: "an icon", writes Ware,

"is in no sense identical with that which it depicts..... It is the function of an icon to make present a spiritual reality which surpasses it, but of which it acts as the sign".

(2) So. Par. 4, 692B, of ibid. 709A, also ad Pastorem, 1177B.

This is very far from the crude identification to which Graef is rightly opposed, but which she unfairly imputes to Symeon, since his words must be understood in the light of the theology of icons which was part of the tradition in which he lived, thought, wrote and acted.(3)

Clearly a worthwhile relationship between a spiritual father and his child requires a willingness to obey on the part of the latter. But the motive for obedience is raised to the highest level if the father is in all respects regarded as an "icon of Christ", for then one cannot doubt that by obeying him one can "guarantee the fulfilment of God's will", and obedience will be a joy, because, like Climacus' monk, one sees oneself "in front of God's altar" while fulfilling the orders given to one. Since in exhortations to obedience directed towards disciples the words "as to God" or "as to Christ" are common, the principle on which this is all based needs to be understood. If the father is regarded as an icon, he is not the representative of an absent Christ, and also he is certainly not to be identified with Christ, but he is the means whereby the Christ who has the right to demand obedience is effectively made present to the disciple.(4)

It is perhaps not fanciful to see a parallel between the intention that the spiritual child should regard his father in the quasi-sacramental way and the idea of the father as πατέρας which we met in the last chapter. In both cases the relationship will eventually be transformed, for sacraments are to be used by the Christian on earth but will not be needed in heaven, while the πατέρας, St. Paul teaches, has as such an essentially temporary function. The

(3) H. Graef, 'Spiritual Director' p. 610; K. Ware, 'Man, Woman, and the Priesthood of Christ', Man, Woman and Priesthood, (ed. P. Moore), London, 1978, pp. 80f.

(4) "as to God", e.g. Cat III, 216f., Cat XX, 47, cf. Ch I, 61, 23f., which reappears Tr Eth IV, 153f.

disciple is, one might say, to regard his father as an icon simply in order that thereby he may be brought into a personally-experienced fellowship with Christ.(5)

It would be too much to claim that whenever use is made of the idea of obeying a spiritual father as the mouthpiece of God or of Christ, this iconic conception always underlies what is said. There is, however, a most interesting passage in Symeon which suggests that for him the idea had become a more or less unconscious background presupposition, at least when he was composing some of his works. In Tr Eth IV the following is found:

"Men who have laid the good foundation of faith and hope on a rock of obedience to their spiritual fathers, doing this with fear and trembling, and who then without doubting build on this foundation of submission whatever their fathers enjoin them, as though it issued from the mouth of God - these are they who straightway succeed in denying themselves".

Apart from unimportant minor variations this sentence is found again in Ch I, 61. It is of course full of the Biblical echoes with which Symeon's writings abound, and of these the one which must at the moment concern us is the image of the foundation being laid on a rock.(6)

The well-known words addressed by Christ to St. Peter, in spite of their familiarity, do not seem here to be specially influencing Symeon, but "rocks" and "foundations" also make their appearance in other places in the New Testament. Thus in what is called the Sermon on the Plain in St. Luke's Gospel, Jesus compares anyone who both hears and performs his words with a man building a house who

(5) For the thought of sacraments as confined to this present age, cf. "grant us that whom we purpose to receive under a veil, we may at length behold with open face, even thy beloved Son", 'Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas before Holy Communion', Student Prayer, London, 1950, p. 89.

(6) Tr Eth IV, 151 - 156, Ch I, 61, 61 - 28, καὶ ὡς τὸν Ὁπίθεν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ ἀποστολὴ πατρὸς ; in Ep 3, 220r, "as from the mouth of God" is found again.

"dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock".

This was evidently in the background of Symeon's consciousness when he wrote the words quoted above, and the significance of this fact appears as we observe his use of the Gospel image. Christ, as teacher, used the illustration of the rock as the right place for a good foundation in order to encourage his hearers to build their lives on the basis of obedience to his own words: for Symeon, the foundation is to be laid "on a rock of obedience" to the spiritual father, an icon, as it were, of Christ, who himself is several times referred to as a rock in the Bible. The extent to which the concept of the spiritual father as "the icon of Christ" has penetrated Symeon's thinking is shown by his transferring, without explanation, the image of the rock from one context to the other. Because in Symeon's eyes the spiritual father represents Christ and this has become a presupposition of his thinking, he feels no need to justify his novel use of the image. This, as compared with the lengthy and explicit identification of which Graef complained in Cat XX, indicates an even more complete appropriation by Symeon of the obligation to regard one's spiritual father as an icon of Christ. Furthermore, in the light of what we know about his relationship with the Studite and his devotion to him, we can justifiably claim that this is a further example of how a facet of Symeon's teaching can owe a great deal not only to his acceptance of tradition, but also to his personal experience as an obedient disciple.(7)

(7) St. Luke 6. 47f., *Θεμέλιον ἐπὶ τῇ πέτρᾳ* (the parallel passage in St. Matthew 7, 24 does not include *ὁ πέτριος*); "Christ referred to as a rock", e.g. I Corinthians 10, 4; Völker, Praxis, pp. 117 - 122, notes Symeon's emphasis on viewing the father as Christ and he refers, like Graef, to Cat XX, but also cites Ch I, 28 where Symeon writes of the disciple's joy in seeing and conversing with his father, once he has acquired true faith in him and thus come to regard him as an icon of Christ.

IV (b) Obedience, Submission and Elimination of the Will.

In one of the homilies of Antiochus the Monk, who died at a date subsequent to 619 A.D., there occurs a sentence which may be freely translated as follows:

"Obedience (ὁπείκειν) is entire submission (ὑποτάξις), when one no longer has any will of one's own, and one is moved calmly to undertake any activity solely because of the bidding of one's superior in all the orders he gives".

The attitude there portrayed is the natural consequence of regarding one's spiritual father as an icon of Christ, the topic we have just discussed. The sentence serves also as a useful introduction to the present section, inasmuch as it not only brings in the two key terms ὑπακοή and ὑποτάξις, but also by mentioning the abandonment of one's own will reminds us not to ignore the theme of ἡλικία θείας, with which they are closely linked and which will have to be looked at in this section.(1)

Obedience and Submission.

Numerous anecdotes illustrate the obedience which was demanded from their disciples by the Desert Fathers. Chitty, for instance, cites an incident concerning Mark, a disciple of Silvanus. The latter showed particular favour to Mark and justified this to some visitors in the following way. He knocked on the door of each of his disciples in order to summon him. Mark was the only one who responded without even the slightest delay, and he was then sent away on some errand. In his absence, Silvanus and those with him entered the cell and could see that Mark, a calligrapher, had obeyed his father's summons so promptly that he had not even completed the omega he had been in the

(1) Antiochus, date from Lampe, Lexicon, p. xiii, quotation from PG 89, 1556B; ἡλικία θείας, v. Glossary.

course of writing. The story indeed implies that such immediate obedience was exceptional, but as an ideal it can readily be understood to be a logical consequence of the disciple's viewing his father as Christ.(2)

When we come to more formally established cenobitic styles of monastic life, the idea of obedience naturally acquires certain disciplinary overtones as far as the superior is concerned, but from the point of view of the monk as a spiritual child, it never ceases to be an important personal obligation. Thus Völker states that

"with Basil there are manifested the outlines of a life controlled and shaped by *ὑπακοή*".

With St. Dorotheus of Gaza the position is somewhat different, for

"the word *ὑπακοή* is found some ten times in his Doctrinas, but most frequently with reference either to God's commandments or in a mere passing mention".

However,

"it is easy to ascertain from (Dorotheus') teaching the interest he has in it. This is shown as much by his treating the elimination of one's own will as something essential, as by the primary importance attached to humility. Humility produces obedience, and Dorotheus holds these two virtues to be inseparable".

Climacus devotes to obedience the whole of the -very lengthy -

Sc. Par. 4, and in line with Basil, emphasises its importance for those living in community, where indeed he implies it is most likely to be learnt.(3)

In connection with the background of both Symeon and his spiritual father, it is interesting to observe how Theodore the Studite, who was greatly influenced by Dorotheus, follows him in associating obedience with humility.

(2) Chitty, op.cit. pp. 71f., referring to PG 65, 293D - 296A.

(3) W. Völker, Scala Paradisi: Eine Studie zu Johannes Climacus und zugleich eine Vorstudie zu Symeon dem Neuen Theologen, Wiesbaden, 1968, p. 28; Regnault and de Préville, Dorotheus SC 92, intr., p. 69, including n.1; Sc. Par. 4, 677C - 728C; "most likely to be learnt", ibid. 728B.

As Hussey puts it,

"he emphasized absolute obedience in the common life, stressing the responsibilities of the abbot both in administration and in spiritual direction".(4)

For the Studite and for Symeon his disciple, the common life meant, to put it mildly, far less than to Theodore; similarly while they were in no doubt as to the need for entire obedience on the part of a spiritual child, the Studite in his teaching, and Symeon by his actual behaviour, made it plain that the father who was to be obeyed might sometimes be other than the hegumen. In their case it may fairly be asserted that their concern was with the obedience owed to the father in virtue of the spiritual authority belonging to him, whether or not he actually held an official ecclesiastical position. The Studite specifically permitted the choice of a spiritual father other than the hegumen, while for Symeon, as Darrouzes remarks,

"a true master is one who has received the illumination of the Spirit.... and not simply one who is hierarchically a superior".(5)

As one might expect, Symeon is attested as having been obedient and submissive to the Studite. Nicetas, though without using the actual words, conveys their meaning in his description of his hero's early days in the monastery: after setting down the Studite's injunctions he continues,

(4) J.M. Hussey, The Byzantine World, London, 1st edition 1957, pp. 117f., cf. for Dorotheus' influence on Theodore, Regnault and de Preville, Dorotheus, SC 92, intr., pp. 91f., and p. 69.

(5) "the common life", v. Part Two, chapter III(c), pp. 201f. and 211-215; Studite, Ch 36, Hausherr, Life, pp. XLIXf.; Symeon, Nicetas, Life, 16 and 21; Darrouzes, Ch I, 49, SC 51, p. 67, n. 3, 1st cf. Part Two, chapter V(p. 311 for Symeon's practice as hegumen.

"Symeon listened to these words as if they were proceeding from the mouth of God, and he followed them to the letter.... Having once and for all made himself a slave to the elder, he did everything with eagerness.... for even if ordered to cast himself into a furnace of fire or into the depths of the sea he was prepared to do so joyfully and eagerly".

In Cat XXXIV Symeon himself claims that the account he has given of his relations with his father demonstrates his "obedience" and "submission" as well as other qualities, while in Cat XVI, as we have already had occasion to notice, he tells us how the Studite,

"speaking imperatively ... would give me the order, and I used to eat, but not of my own free will".

The next clause gives the significant explanation: "for I was afraid of being judged disobedient".

A few lines earlier he has mentioned that his father observed him unhesitatingly (ἀνεγκριτῶς) accomplishing his orders and nothing but them. Thus, even if Nicetas' language is more extravagant, the claims which he makes concerning Symeon's obedience and submission are in essence the same as those which Symeon makes for himself. At the same time it is noteworthy that while in Nicetas' account we find the concept of the father being regarded as God, somewhat surprisingly there appears to be no instance in Symeon's own writings where he expresses this as the ground of his own obedience. There is, though, a close approximation to the idea in a different context in Cat VI, where the Studite is stated to have received

"in himself the totality, so to speak, of the Paraclete",
a gift which he then transmitted to his disciple, Symeon.(6)

(6) Nicetas, Life, 12, 1 - 7, Cat XVI (extracts); Cat XXXIV, 262f.; Cat XVI 22f., Part Two, chapter III(c), p.183; Cat XVI, 18f., cf. Ch I, 27, 16 - 22, where Symeon autobiographically but in the third person mentions one who having gained a sincere faith in his spiritual father, resolved never to ask for permission to eat or drink but to wait till his father was inspired to bid him do so; Cat VI, 263 - 267.

As might be anticipated, Symeon in his teaching requires from spiritual children the obedience and submission which tradition demanded of them and which he had himself rendered to the Studite. In Cat III he reminds his monks that in virtue of their vows made when they received the habit they have

"promised to submit themselves (*ὡς τὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς*, cf. the cognate noun *ἵερος*) to their spiritual father as to God". (7)

This is interesting in that the promise made in the Rite does not actually include the phrase "as to God"; it shows, moreover, that in spite of his experience in the Studios monastery, Symeon did regard the hegumen as normally the monks' spiritual father, since it is of course to the hegumen that obedience is promised by the monk about to be given the habit.

In Cat XX Symeon shows himself aware that at times obedience might appear distasteful and could involve one in acting contrary to one's own apparent interests. He bids his imaginary novice, having found the right spiritual father,

"obey (him) as God himself, and accomplish what he tells you unhesitatingly, even if in your opinion what he orders seems adverse and injurious to you".

Here is found the idea that, however unpleasant the father's orders, the novice will be able to fulfil them if he is reminded that they come from one who for him occupies the position of God. Elsewhere, this thought is joined with a reminder of the obedience which Christ himself displayed, so as to provide an additional motive for obeying. Thus in Ch I, 61 there is, as we saw, the equating of obedience to the spiritual father with obedience to God, and this is followed in

(7) Cat III, 216f., cf. Euchologion ed. Zerbos, Venice, 1891, pp. 191 and 207; in Cat III, 143 - 157 Symeon's quotations show that the Rite he knew was almost word for word the same as in Zerbos' edition.

Ch I, 62, by a contrast between a disciple who gainsays and one who humbles himself, the latter

"becoming like the Son of God who carried through his obedience to his Father even to the point of death, death on a cross".

This reminiscence of Philippians 2, 8 incidentally, recurs in Nicetas' Centuries, and it would be tempting to suppose that for its use he was consciously indebted to Symeon, were it not a rather obvious text to cite in this connection.(8)

Not only does Symeon expect a disciple to obey whatever orders his director gives him, but he also insists that he should undertake nothing on his own initiative without being hidden.

"Do not ask him to leave with you anything either small or great (sc. of the things you have brought with you from the world), but let him, according to his own judgment, either tell you to take something or give it to you with his own hand".

Similarly,

"without the permission of your father in God do not give alms of the money you have brought with you..it is the mark of a pure faith to refer everything to be decided by the spiritual father, as though leaving it in the hands of God".

In the same way, as was said in the last chapter, the novice is not to ask for permission to eat or drink, but to wait until his father is inspired to give it.(9)

At the same time, while in the last chapter it was noted that a point is meant to be reached when the disciple passes from the tutelage of his director into an immediate relationship with God, it must here be observed that even the total dependence on one's father which Symeon can be shown to have inculcated was itself for him a mark of maturity. In Tr Eth IV, as Völker pointed out, he speaks of

(8) Cat XX, 46 - 50, "unhesitatingly" again being ~~ἀνισταίως~~ - the teaching is very similar to that of Climacus, So.Par. 4, 717B; Ch I, 61, v. above, (a), p.262; Ch I, 62, 3f.; Nicetas, Centuries II, 54, PG 120, 925BC.

(9) Chs I, 24, 25 - 27, I, 25, 1 - 5, I, 26, 8 - 15, I, 27, 16 - 22, cf. Part Two, chapter III (a) p.187.

"conscious submission (ὁμολογία κατὰ γυναικῆς)",

and this he there asserts is one of the essential parts of the

"measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". (10)

However it may have worked out in practice, in intention even this entire surrender of one's own will was according to Symeon a significant token of Christian adulthood. It is, in fact, the logical consequence not only of regarding the spiritual father as an icon of Christ, but also, and more basically, of coming to believe - as Symeon had done - that through him one can be initiated into a personal relationship with God while still living on this earth. Furthermore, as we must now briefly mention, this total obedience was seen as playing a most important part according to Symeon's estimation in the provision of a succession of spiritual fathers. In Cat XX he envisages a novice being spoken to by his father:

"If he says to you, 'Come here, into the land of obedience which I will show you', then run, my brother, putting forth all your strength, and neither give sleep to your eyes nor bend your knee through fainting because of laziness or slackness. It may be indeed that there God will reveal himself to you, he who intends to proclaim you the father of many spiritual children, and to give you the promised land, which none but the righteous shall inherit".

These lines, with their Biblical echoes, echoes particularly of the story of Abraham, are quite explicit: it is the disciple who is quick to learn obedience who may himself expect to become in his turn the father of other spiritual children. We have noticed the evidence which suggests that spiritual fathers might pick out one or more of their disciples as likely successors, and this passage in

(10) Völkner, Praxis. p. 118, Tr Eth IV, 374; "there asserts", ibid., 369ff., referring to Ephesians 4, 13.

Cat XX suggests that promptness in learning the lesson of obedience was one of the criteria in accordance with which the selection was made. Again, the image of "the promised land" used here is one more reminder that swift and total obedience is required not as an end itself but as the necessary means for attaining a deeper personal experience of God.(11)

Elimination of the Will.

(ἐκκοπή) θελήματος) It is convenient to treat this subject at this point, since it is very frequently found in the closest conjunction with passages which treat of obedience. This is well illustrated by a few lines from the Life of St. Romylos, which are very apposite, even though they come from a period much later than that of Symeon.

"If another elder's disciple, overpowered perhaps by gainsaying and disobedience, or by some other disordered passion, had been sent to him to be corrected, (Romylos) would speak to him in words such as these, 'My beloved brother, the way along which you are travelling is that of the apostles. Thus the same reverence which they had for Jesus Christ our Lord and God, each of us ought to have for his (spiritual) father, having renounced his own will once and for all!'"

A little later in the same address, Romylos uses the words:

"consciously (μετὰ γνώσεως) enduring the elimination of one's own will".

Here then the will and its renunciation appears in connection with the obedience due to a spiritual father, who it is suggested is in some sense to be regarded as Christ. It is also interesting that just as for Symeon submission ~~must~~ be "conscious" (μετὰ γνώσεως), so for Romylos the same should be true of the endurance of (ἐκκοπή) θελήματος.(12)

(11) Cat XX, 65 - 71; "Abraham", v. Genesis, 12, 1 and 17. 4f.; "likely successors". cf. Part Two, chapter II(a), pp. 135 - 139.

(12) On (ἐκκοπή) θελήματος, v. Glossary; for the connection with submission, cf. St. Theodore of Studios, ἡ ἐκκοπή τοῦ θελήματος, PG 99, 836B; St. Romylos belongs to the 14th century, v. F. Halkin, 'The Greek Life of St. Romylos', Byzantion, 31, (1961); passage quoted ibid. pp. 139f.

The importance of the elimination of one's own will had been recognised long before Symeon's time, and indeed St. Dorotheus of Gaza has already been mentioned in connection with this requirement. But he himself relies on earlier authority, quoting Poemen, the Desert Father. Dorotheus in one place suggests a method of self-help,

"if ... we wish to be completely set free and liberated...".

Thus, if one notices something and begins to think of fixing his attention on it, he is to say to himself: "Indeed, I will not do so". But although he recommends this, in the address in which he cites Poemen he remarks that

"the soul is in a state of safety when it reveals everything (that occurs to it) and is told by someone who possesses knowledge, 'Do this; do not do that ...'".

Here, although not expressed in so many words, we have obedience, together with the disclosure of thoughts enjoined on the disciple, preceded by the clear laying down of the principle,

"when a person renounces his own will, it is then that he beholds the way of God which is undefiled".

This process, we may agree, can be assisted by self-help, but for one's own will to be totally eliminated it seems probable that there will be required the help of a spiritual father to whom absolute obedience has been pledged. Not surprisingly Climacus too writes about *ἐκκων* *σημαίνει* and from the point of view of our interest in the link with obedience we may notice in him particularly:

"Take up your cross, carrying it by means of obedience, and firmly enduring the weight of the elimination of your will".(13)

(13) In Ward, Desert Fathers, pp. 43f., nos. 152 and 156, there are examples from that epoch; Dorotheus, p. 266 above, Doctrinae, V, 62, 16 - 21, 63, 1f., referring to Poemen, PG 65, 333D - 336A; Doctrinae I, 20, 1 - 33; ibid., V, 64, 14 - 16; ibid., V, 63, 8f.; Climacus, Sc. Par. 2, 657A, cf. Sc. Par. 4, 704D; "particularly", Sc. Par. 27, 1100D - 1101A.

Thus, when Symeon gave teaching of this kind he was in no sense innovating. Moreover when he spoke of "complete mortification (ἀπὸ ἐκπόρευσις) of one's own will", he could and did cite a sentence penned by his father, in which, however, the subject is connected not with obedience but with "perfect withdrawal from the world". The small total which remains of the Studite's writing does not in fact include anything else which refers directly to ἐκκοπή θείας ἡμέρας. But whether or not this was a matter on which the Studite specifically laid stress, Symeon as well as receiving it from the general ascetical tradition, had gained personal experience of its benefits for himself. He recounts how, after he had been restored following the time when he was a backslider, he began again to receive some renewed vision of the divine light, albeit nothing as wonderful as that which he had originally experienced. Nevertheless, even this less intense vision was won by

"much toil, many tears .. and perfect obedience and complete elimination of (his) own will .."

Thus the association between ὑπασμός and ἐκκοπή θείας ἡμέρας, although he had certainly read of it in Climacus and perhaps in other writers, was something which Symeon came to teach with the authority which comes from personal knowledge. It might be objected that his claim to have been entirely obedient cannot be proved or disproved, and was in any case made simply to edify his monastic hearers. It may well have been, as was suggested, that for the sake of his hearers he only claimed to have been rewarded by a vision

"in some obscure fashion of a small and scanty ray of that most sweet divine light",

but the words "much toil, many tears" have a flavour of authenticity about them which justifies the assertion that his remark was based on

something more than tradition. Nicetas provides some additional support for the view that Symeon, besides being familiarised with the traditional idea of the importance of the elimination of one's own will, had himself undergone this in the course of his training. In the Life we are told some details of the Studite's method, prefaced by the words:

"the elder, wishing to eliminate his will ..."

But in view of the fact that, trustworthy though he may be in many respects, Nicetas is a hagiographical writer, it is fortunate that, as was shown, the point can be established by the testimony of Symeon himself. (14)

A passage near the start of Cat XX provides some indication of the meaning Symeon gave to the concept in his teaching, as well as of the importance which he ascribed to it. Having spoken of the physical martyrdoms which many in earlier generations had to endure, he continues:

"But now, since by the grace of Christ we are in a season of profound and perfect peace, we can be assured that crucifixion and death are to be discovered in nothing other than complete mortification of one's own will. For he who, in however small a degree, fulfils his own will, will never be enabled to observe the ordinance of our Saviour Christ".

Thus on the positive side, ἡ ἐκκοπή τοῦ θελήματος is for Symeon the equivalent of the sufferings through which the martyrs had to pass, and by means of which they were privileged to share in some way in the passion of Christ himself. Negatively, as he puts it a few lines later, it is the way of escaping from

"living by self-direction (ἡ ἐκκοπή τοῦ θελήματος) and gathering in the worthless fruits of one's own will".

(14) Studite, Ch 127, PG 120, 672C, cited Cat VI, 271 - 272; Cat XXII, 312 - 318 (extracts); Nicetas, Life, 12, 10.

Hence the spiritual father is represented as summoning his child:

"Come out from the country of your own will and from the kindred of your own way of thinking".

Symeon therefore wished his disciples to look on the elimination of their own wills, painful though it would doubtless be, as liberation rather than bondage, its purpose being to make it possible for a Christian to devote himself entirely to obeying God, "whose service is perfect freedom". (15)

The importance of this part of the spiritual child's duty is shown by Symeon's placing the elimination of the will in Hym XXX as the climax of a long series of good practices which he commends with, significantly, "perfect obedience" as the one immediately proceeding. But while Symeon held that it was most important for the disciple to surrender himself to all that was involved in *ἐκκέννη θείῳ*, he did not try to hide the costliness of what was demanded. Thus we find him insisting:

"A man must, if he is in earnest, renounce his own soul, and this is effected by the mortification of his will. I am speaking here not only of external matters, such as not eating, not drinking, not undertaking anything on an impulse, not sleeping, not doing anything that may seem good without being ordered, but also I include (mortification) of the interior movement of the heart, such as not becoming subject to some passion while gazing at something.."

Here we return, in a sense, to Dorotheus' idea of self-help, since although the father, by the orders he gives to an obedient disciple

(15) Cat XX, 39 - 43, "mortification" here being *ἐκκέννη*, the meaning of which is little different from that of *ἀποκέννη*; Cat XX, 53 - 64, immediately preceding the passage cited on p. 271 above, and with a reminiscence of Genesis 12, 1; "perfect freedom", third collect at Matins, Book of Common Prayer, cf. Symeon's phrase *ἐν πρὸς θεῷ δουλείᾳ*, Tr. Eth IV, 375.

can promote the elimination of the will with regard to external actions, in what concerns the inner movements of the heart and mind, each person has, under God, to rely upon himself.(16)

Symeon, we observed, appears at times to have expected more from his monks than an objective assessment of them might have suggested as being realistic. But he writes, perhaps regretfully, as if he recognised that genuine *ἡκκουσι* *θεσπιατος* would always be somewhat rare;

"Many renounce this life and its affairs, but only a few renounce their own wills".

Such a state of things he saw as a fulfilment of the text, "Many are called, but few are chosen".

Even so, however, as the examples chosen have demonstrated. Symeon had no doubt that a disciple ought to offer his father that total obedience which is bound to lead to the elimination of his own will. But yet again, he did not regard this as an end in itself. For in accordance with tradition he believed that his disciples would be bound to be fulfilling the will of Christ by means of such entire obedience to their spiritual father, in this case of course obedience to himself, their hegumen. In Hym XLI he tells of how he was comforted by Christ in the troubles and difficulties which he had to face in his relationships with his monastic spiritual children, and the words which he thought that the Lord addressed to him included these:

"If they do not become dead to their own wills and live in this present life in accordance with your will, fulfilling my will through yours, still you will not lose your reward..."

(16) Hym XXX, 557 - 567; Tr Eth VI, 63 - 69, Darrouzes, ibid., SC 129, p. 125, n. 2 giving reasons why *ψυχῆς* should be rendered "soul", meaning "la volonté et les sentiments"; "mortification", here again being *νίπρωσις*.

With this we return to our 'iconic' conception of the spiritual father, who mediates the will of Christ to the disciple. When therefore the latter, having eliminated his own will, replaces it by that of his father, what he is really doing is to be understood as a form of that self-surrender to Christ which theoretically, at least, all Christians would accept as being a duty to which they have pledged themselves. One way of implementing this pledge is by handing oneself over to one's father "in complete submission" and thus "fulfilling (Christ's) will through (his)". (17)

(17) "expected more from his monks", cf. Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 213 - 215 ; Ch I, 31, 25 - 28; St. Matthew 22, 14; Hym XLI 157 - 159 cf. Symeon's appeal in Cat XII, 254 - 259; "iconic" conception, cf. (a) and quotation on p. 261 there.

IV (c) Further Obligations.

The last two sections clearly pre-suppose on the part of the disciple a deep reverence for his spiritual father and an unswerving confidence in him. These attitudes naturally spring from or result in others, which in their turn need some discussion.

Faith/Confidence.

Rousseau, having referred to Cassian's account of the obedience displayed by John of Lycopolis when

"the most daunting tasks (were) imposed upon him" by his spiritual father, adds the comment that

"such confidence could be based only on intimate knowledge of a spiritual director".

It is not, however, necessary to consider intimate knowledge as an essential basis, although doubtless this will frequently be found: the confidence or faith which leads to such obedience could well issue from an initial decision that the father to whom one has been guided by God is to be regarded as invested with God's authority, and so unquestioningly obeyed. Cassian's own words are instructive: he represents John's father as testing him in order to discover whether his obedience

"came from true faith and deep simplicity of heart or whether it was feigned and somehow forced and manifested only when it could be seen by the person who gave him an order".

What is required then as the foundation of obedience is genuine faith or confidence in the spiritual father, whatever biddings he may give.⁽¹⁾

Climacus similarly enjoins faith in one's father, and couples it with love $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$, and on this there is no need to pause for comment.

(1) Rousseau, Ascetics, p. 195; Cassian, Institutes, IV. 24.

With the Studite, on the other hand, we must spend a little more time, since he provides a vivid picture of the relationship we are studying. He tells his reader to reveal every thought (λογισμοί) to his spiritual father and continues:

"Receive what he says to you with complete confidence (παληροφρην), as though it proceeded from a divine mouth. Do not divulge it to anyone else, saying for example, 'When I asked my father such-and-such a question, this is what he said to me'. And do not add, 'Did he set it forth well or not?' and 'So what should I do to obtain (spiritual) healing?' Such remarks are abounding in distrust (ἀπιστία) of one's father, and inflict injuries on the soul, something which often occurs in the case of novices".

Here we are given what is almost a little sketch of the inexperienced novice, returning from a conference with his father and encountering another monk. He may at first wish simply to communicate his conversation, but gradually senses that his report of his spiritual father's remarks is engendering some doubts in his hearer's mind. Thus his own confidence begins to wane, and he is depicted as asking two questions typical of a doubter. One can well imagine how the mere voicing of these would decrease his faith, and therefore be judged by the Studite as harmful to his soul. There is no difficulty in supposing that any spiritual father living in a cenobitic monastery would more than once have happened to overhear a conversation of this sort. By talking in this way, it is obvious that a novice would be only too likely to undermine the faith he needed to have in his father, and therefore the Studite warns him against repeating to anybody what he ought to have received as though it came from the mouth of God.(2)

(2) Climacus, Sc Par 4, 705A; Studite, Ch 122, 669C.

Nicetas, who is concerned amongst other things to portray the relationship between his hero and the Studite as a model of that which should obtain between spiritual father and child, naturally mentions Symeon's "faith" in this context. But this was no mere pious convention on Nicetas' part, for Symeon himself had no hesitation in putting forward such a claim on his own behalf. In the light of the controversy in which his cult of the Studite involved him, a sentence in Tr Eth IX is particularly significant:

"Because of the revelation of the Spirit that was in him, we affirmed our faith in him and we maintain it in the face of all objections".

Darrouzès in a note assigns this Treatise to

"the period of the controversies, about 1005".

However, as we saw, even in the early days of his monastic life, as a would-be novice in the Studios monastery, Symeon had undergone the temptation to abandon the Studite, and although in the paragraph of Cat XXXVI in which he describes the criticisms he had to face, he does not use the actual word, it is clear that it was his faith in his spiritual father which preserved his loyalty.(3)

It is not unreasonable to suggest that, once again, we can see Symeon's personal experience colouring his teaching when in Cat XXVI he tells the novice whom he purports to be addressing:

"Maintain your faith in (your spiritual father) without any wavering (ἀσέβητος), even if the whole world reviles him and abuses him"

In Cat IX too, in the course of the passage where the relationship is described in terms of that between Christ and the disciples as

(3) Nicetas, Life 12, 19; Symeon, Cat XXXVI, 75 and Hym LV, 96 are examples; Tr Eth IX, 251 - 253, of. Part Two, chapter I (d), p. 128 ; Darrouzès, Tr Eth IX 251, SC 129, p. 239 n.2; "in the Studios monastery", of. Part Two, chapter I (c), p. 121 ; Cat XXXVI, 99 - 125.

recounted in the Gospels, Symeon envisages the possibility that threats to the father might lead a disciple, through lack of courage to deny him, like Peter; indeed, somewhat extravagantly, Symeon mentions the possibility that a spiritual child may see his father crucified as a malefactor, in which case:

"If you can, die with him; but if you cannot, do not join yourself to the wicked and so become both wicked and a traitor, and do not be a partner of theirs in (shedding) innocent blood, but, although through being a coward and a faintheart you will for a short time have abandoned your pastor, preserve your faith in him".

This is interesting as revealing Symeon's awareness that the disciple may temporarily fail in his loyalty, without this being necessarily incompatible with his maintaining an underlying faith. Such a state of affairs is obviously not desirable, even if it may have to be tolerated, and what the disciple ought really to show is a

"sincere and unwavering (ἀσίστατος) faith"

in his father. This would be proof against any temptations which he might undergo on being rebuked, for Symeon could see that there was a danger that being corrected might lead a spiritual child to fall into distrust (ἀπιστία), a condition from which dreadful consequences might ensue. The possibility of such a result leads us to consider the next requirement.(4)

A Right Attitude When Rebuked.

Symeon, as we have just seen, felt it needful to warn disciples not to lose confidence in spiritual fathers who reproved them. The need for this warning stems from the fact that the training given by a father in regard to the matters discussed in the last chapter would be likely to give rise to more or less frequent occasions when rebukes

(4) Cat XXVI, 303f.; Cat XX, 78 - 160, with special reference to 139 - 141 and 144 - 149; "unhesitating faith", Ep 3, 213r; "distrust", Ch I, 59, 26 - 30.

were found necessary. Furthermore not all disciples would react in the proper spirit, exemplified in the account which Nicetas gives of Arsenius. Hence warnings had to be given about the dangerous possibility of wrong reactions in these circumstances.(5)

Dorotheus shows considerable psychological insight in one of his sayings:

"If one is disquieted when reproved or corrected with regard to some passion, that is a sign that one was engaged in it of one's own free will; accepting reproof or correction concerning it without any disquiet is a sign that when engaged in it one was carried away or ignorant of what was taking place".

Here we have implicit an invitation to self-understanding, but no explicit guidance or statement of what is required, when faced with reproof.

Climacus supplies the latter:

"When our superior bestows on us the dishonour which is honourable, and reproof and punishment, let us call to mind the dread sentence of the Judge, and so we shall altogether slay the unreasonable grief and bitterness that is sown in us, making use of the two-edged sword of gentleness and endurance (*ὑπομονή*)".

This suggests that the disciple who is corrected will be tempted not so much to manifest open rebellion, although "bitterness" might eventually lead to that, as to indulge in negative internal emotions. The "distrust", to which, as we have just seen, Symeon refers in Ch I, 59, is also of course in its initial stages an internal matter.(6)

Symeon, however, in the passage cited, actually places "gainsaying" before "distrust" as temptations, full of danger, which confront the disciple whom his father has had to admonish or reprove.

(5) Arsenius, Nicetas, Life. 47 - 51.

(6) Dorotheus, Sententiae 202, 18, 60 - 65; Climacus, Sc. Par. 7, 805B.

"Gainsaying" is clearly a matter of outward behaviour, the opposite of the respectful manner of address which ought to characterize a disciple with the right basic attitude to his father. Although Symeon does not specifically say this, it seems probable that by mentioning "gainsaying" first he contemplates the spiritual child, irritated by a rebuke, immediately answering back in an unseemly fashion, and later, when reflecting on the incident, justifying himself by abandoning his confidence in his father. The dangers involved were very clear to Symeon. A little earlier he had written:

"He who believes that his life and death rest in his pastor's hand, would never gainsay. Ignorance of this is what produces gainsaying, which itself brings about spiritual (ψυχῆς) and eternal death".

Not only then is gainsaying in itself a most serious matter, whether it is a rebuke or something else that has caused it, but it is also a symptom of a lack of understanding of the whole purpose of one's relationship with a spiritual father, namely the securing of salvation. Such behaviour would in any case be impossible, as Symeon had stated immediately beforehand, for any one who

"regards his teacher and guide as God. If he thinks and says he can adopt both attitudes, let him be assured that he has been misled, for he does not know the disposition which those who are God's have with respect to God".

The outcome of the wrong attitude is described when having spoken of "gainsaying and distrust with regard to one's spiritual father", Symeon insists that anyone guilty of this

"is miserably carried down while still alive into the snare and pit of Hades, and becomes a dwelling-place of Satan and of all his unclean power, being a son of disobedience and destruction".

By contrast, the right attitude is pointed out in another of the Chapters where he tells us that

"while the demons are given joy by anyone who gainsays his father, the angels marvel at anyone who humbles himself unto death, for such a one works the work of God".(7)

This willingness to receive a rebuke humbly is something one might expect to find in those, but only in those, who, whether monks or seculars, have sincerely subjected themselves to a spiritual father.

The emphasis, however, with which in his Chapters - intended, of course, primarily for monks - Symeon castigates gainsaying, suggests that in the monasteries there were not a few who were given to this practice, and the suggestion is confirmed by a passage in Cat III :

"If .. to put you to the test the hegumen causes you some slight sorrow, you repudiate your very habit, saying, as I have heard many say, 'Did I come here to be somebody's slave? Am I here to be insulted?' "

Although there is no explicit mention of a rebuke here, there is every likelihood that this would on occasion have caused the kind of outburst Symeon complains of from monks of this nature. They were, as he had stated a little earlier, men who had entered the monastery simply in order to better themselves materially.

"You received the tonsure simply in order to become a brother and have your share of goods and possessions which probably would never have been yours if you had remained in the world".

It is not difficult to imagine that monks with this kind of background would be amongst those who would need many reminders about the proper attitude to adopt when rebuked, as well as in fact being the ones whose conduct would render them most liable to be reprimanded.

(7) Symeon, Ch I, 59, 26 - 30; ibid., 56, 4 - 8; ibid., 55, 1 - 4; ibid., 59, 26 - 30, ibid., 62, 1 - 3, with reminiscence of St. John, 6, 28.

Whether or not this is a correct supposition, it is at least not unlikely that Symeon wrote the passage we have quoted from his Chapters with his own experience as hegumen and spiritual father in mind, something which Darrouzes has observed in other places in the same work.(8)

Refraining from Judging.

Not only should the disciple keep himself from speaking to his spiritual father in an unbecoming way, especially when tempted to retaliate after receiving a reprimand, but he is required also not even to entertain in the mind thoughts critical of him, whatever may have provoked them.

Climacus, it was pointed out, advocated cunning and prudence in the choice of a suitable spiritual father, but insisted that once chosen, he must not be subject to any further examination by his disciple.

In the same context, he elaborated this prohibition a little later on:

"When the thought of examining or of condemning your guide comes upon you, recoil from it as from fornication, and give that serpent no leave to speak, no place, no entry and no starting-point. Say to the dragon 'You deceiver, I have not been given the right to judge him who rules me, but his is the right to judge me; I have not been appointed his judge, but he has been appointed mine'."(9)

There is no question of pretending that all spiritual fathers are in themselves perfect, but what is at issue is the disciple's attitude, for

"the Lord makes the eyes of the obedient quick to see the virtues of their teacher, while blinding them to his defects".

But Climacus implies that at times the blindness may have to be deliberately cultivated by the disciple himself. Thus he recounts with approval an answer of John the Sabbaite, who when asked what one

(8) "monks", Ch I, 64, 11, ~~nov-X'~~; Cat III, 124 - 128, "I have heard" suggesting perhaps Symeon's experiences at St. Mamas before he became hegumen; ibid., 105 - 107, a passage discussed more fully in the next chapter; Darrouzes, Ch I, 16, SC 51 p. 49, n.1, and ibid., I, 22, p. 53, n.1.

(9) So. Par 4, 680CD, of Part Two, chapter I(c), p. 118 ; ibid. 681A.

should do if one's father were somewhat remiss, replied:

"Even if you should see him committing fornication, do not depart from him, but address yourself with the words, 'Friend, what are you here for?' Then you will find boastfulness disappearing from you, the fire of lust being put out".

In this extreme situation, Climacus would have a disciple, on the authority of "the great John", refrain from passing judgment on his father, for that is what would be involved in separating himself from him. This example is something of a topos, which Ware has traced back to the Desert Fathers, and which reappears in the Studite. Given what may seem to some to-day the rather obsessive preoccupation of many of the writers with physical chastity, it is not surprising that to inculcate the lesson that one should never presume to judge one's spiritual father they referred to the possibility of his being detected in an act of sexual misbehaviour.(10)

It is not, again, surprising that the same example recurs in Symeon to reinforce the requirement that the spiritual father should not be judged, nor, when we remember Symeon's devotion to Scripture, are we unprepared to find him quoting in support an obvious text.

"If you yourself with your own eyes see (your spiritual father) committing fornication, do not be scandalized and do not diminish your faith in him, but act in obedience to the One who said, 'Judge not, and you will not be judged'."

However, although following tradition Symeon includes this prohibition of judging one's spiritual father, he was, as we shall now see, more concerned to stress the requirement of remaining faithful to him, no doubt in consequence of experiences connected with the Studite. (11)

(10) Sc. Par. 4, 716D; ibid. 724B, cf. St. Matthew 25, 50; for John the Sabbaites, v. N. Russell, John Climacus - The Ladder of Divine Ascent, London, 1982, p. 115, n. 35; K. Ware, 'The Spiritual Father in Orthodox Christianity', Cross Currents XXIV, (1974), p. 306; Studite, Ch 36, Hausherr, Life, p. L.

(11) Cat XXVI, 304 - 307, quoting St. Luke 6, 37; Symeon uses the example again in Cat XVIII, 132 - 137, where he is forbidding a monk to set himself against the father who tonsured him; Graef, 'Spiritual Director' p. 609, makes far too much of what Symeon says in Cat XXVI, because she has failed to realise that he is simply employing a topos.

Faithfulness.

In practice the boundary is inevitably blurred between having or maintaining faith in a spiritual father, refraining from judging him, and continuing faithful to him. The last quotation given well illustrates this, because it follows, as part of the same sentence, the injunction to maintain one's faith which has been already cited, and in which, from the words

"even if the whole world reviles and abuses (your father)", we can see, as we recall other passages in Symeon, that "faith" is implying something of the sense of "faithfulness". (12)

Anyone who has once subjected himself to a spiritual father, regarding him as an icon of Christ and resisting any temptation ever to judge him, might naturally be expected to remain faithful. But in practice faithfulness was not always in evidence. as we can deduce from a warning given by the Studite:

"You must not abandon one (spiritual father) for another, paying heed to the Enemy's suggestions that .. you should go to someone else, for if we continue going to the first, we shall gain greater confidence in him... If we go to another spiritual (father) - something which indeed is not permitted - should he be one of our own monastery, all our brethren will accuse us of having lost the confidence we once had in the first (father) ... and even (he) to whom we shall go will suspect that the same is going to happen in his case. We shall acquire the habit of changing from one to another, and shall never give up seeking to become acquainted with stylites, anchorites or hesychasts so as to confess to them, and then by losing confidence in them all, end up making no progress, and, worst of all, bringing a curse upon ourselves".(13)

In this absolute and total prohibition of changing from one spiritual father to another, the Studite was not followed literally by Symeon, who could envisage the possibility that, after prayer for guidance, a disciple at an early stage might be sent by the Holy Spirit to a

(12) Cat XXVI, 303f., cf. p.281 above.

(13) Ch 36, Hausherr, Life, p. L, cf. also Climacus, Sc. Par. 4, 709D - 712A, "Do not flee away from the hands of him who brought you to the Lord"; "hesychasts", not of course used by the Studite in its later 'technical' sense.

new director. However, when he enjoined faithfulness or loyalty and spoke of maintaining

"your faith in (your spiritual father) .. even if the whole world reviles him and abuses him",

what he had in mind was a temptation to be disloyal to a father, a temptation which he, like the Studite, was trying to combat. In Symeon's case an examination of his words suggests that this temptation was one which he had had himself to face and that it resulted from the critical comments to which the Studite's behaviour gave occasion.(14)

In addition to the passage in Cat XXXVI already mentioned, there is a significant paragraph in Cat XX, from which we must now quote.

"If (your spiritual father) bids you follow him, go about the cities with him boldly"

The language is influenced by St. Matthew 9, 35, for we are in the section where the relationship of Christ and his disciples is being taken as a pattern for that between spiritual father and disciple.

Symeon thus adds:

"If you see him eating with harlots and tax-collectors and sinners, entertain no passion-filled or merely human thought; rather in your mind entertain only what is dispassionate and holy and (the words) 'I became all things to all men, that I might win all', when you see him condescending to human passions. Indeed do not put your faith in your eyes at all, even as regards what you see with them, for they can be deceived, as I have learnt by experience".

Here it is natural to see a connection not only with Cat XVI, where the Studite is accompanied by his disciple when visiting spiritual children in the city, but also with that behaviour of his which enables him to be classed as a "holy fool", and which Nicetas says that he deliberately adopted for evangelistic purposes. Even if Nicetas is in fact relying on some such passage as this in Symeon's works, there is no reason for

(14) "envisage the possibility", Cat XX, 54f., of. Part Two, chapter I (d), p.125; Cat XXVI, 303f.

refusing to credit him with the correct interpretation. On this basis it is justifiable to claim that the teaching Symeon gives about the necessity of remaining loyal to one's spiritual father even though he may be reviled and abused by many people, reflects his own experience and his determination to continue faithful in the face of the temptation to desert the Studite on account of the obloquy which resulted from his activities as a "holy fool". (15)

A slightly different interpretation might be called for in the light of a few lines in Cat VI:

"They called (Christ) .. demon-possessed, a charlatan, a glutton and a wine-bibber .. And our blessed father, I mean the holy Symeon, had that said of him for our sake or rather on our account (ὁ πᾶσι ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἡμῶν)".

Here, while there is no doubt concerning the behaviour of the Studite and what was said of him as a result of it, the supposition of Symeon's being tempted to abandon him in consequence of this can only be upheld if the plural ("our") can be understood as referring to contemporaries of the speaker in general, rather than to him alone. Certainty is impossible, for although in this same Catechesis Symeon speaks of "my holy father", using the singular, he also, in an undoubted reference to himself, has a few lines earlier used the plural also. It may then be that, so far from his having been tempted to abandon the Studite because of the latter's activities as a "holy fool", Symeon in the passages we are considering is tacitly admitting that he himself had been converted at least in part by means of these activities. In either case, however, the fact remains that he recognised

(15) Cat XXXVI, 99 - 125, cf. p. 2. 81 above; Cat XX, 78 - 98, cf. Part One, chapter II, p. 98, n. 38, and cf. also Cat XX, 132 - 139. In the passage cited in the text, Symeon has reminiscences of St. Matthew 9, 11, St. Mark 2, 16 and St. Luke 15, 2 and quotes loosely I Corinthians 9, 19 and 22; Cat XVI, 31 - 35; Nicetas, Life, 81, 8 - 10, cf. Part One, chapter II, pp. 97f., and Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 236f.

the possible temptation to a disciple to desert a father who incurred reproach for being a "holy fool", and was therefore concerned to teach the requirement of faithfulness in such circumstances.(16)

Outward Expressions of Reverence.

We have seen what is demanded of the spiritual child with regard to his inward attitude towards his father, and it is natural that he should be expected, in a society given to ceremonial, to manifest his obedience and submission in terms of outward reverence. Thus Climacus requires of the disciple coming to confession that he

"have his head bowed to the ground, and if possible that he shed tears on the feet of his judge and physician, as though they were Christ's feet".

Similarly, a few lines later the penitent is told:

"Do not be too proud to make your confession to your helper in a manner betokening submission, as if to God".

Here then the inward dispositions which have been examined earlier in this chapter are to be manifested outwardly by suitable physical attitudes. (17)

Nicetas records that Symeon showed his respect for the Studite in many such ways, even

"venerating as a holy of holies every place where he had seen him standing in prayer".

Unfortunately these particulars cannot be completely relied on since, as Hausherr observed, they seem to be drawn from admonitions which Symeon himself gave to others. We do, however, possess some firsthand evidence in Symeon's thanking God that he was

(16) Cat VI, 303 - 308 (extracts); ibid., 244, ibid., 226 - 232, where Symeon uses plurals referring to himself as the unworthy recipient of God's gift "through our father".

(17) Sc. Par. 4, 708D - 709A; ibid., 709B.

"counted worthy to prostrate himself at (the Studite's) holy feet", and it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that Nicetas was correct when he described him as displaying those outward expressions of reverence for a spiritual father which he enjoined on others. Indeed, since Symeon was convinced that the Studite was a saint, it is impossible to envisage his neglecting thus to honour him.(18)

The statement upon which Nicetas drew and which gives the fullest details concerning the reverential behaviour that Symeon demanded, runs as follows:

"Faith is clearly shown by one who reverences as holy the spot on which his guide and father stands; who fervently takes with his hands the dust from his father's feet and then puts it on his own head and spreads it on (his chest, close to) his heart, to act as a remedy for his passions and to purge away his sins; who does not dare to come near his father or even to touch one of his tunics or of his garments, unless bidden to do so; who, if he handles anything that belongs to his father, does so with fear and respect, counting himself unworthy not only to look at and attend to such things, but unworthy even to remain in the same cell as his father".

Here it is tempting to try to see a conscious autobiographical reference in the light of Nicetas' statement about Symeon's being lodged in the Studite's cell, but it is safer to understand what is said simply as an allusion to the custom of a spiritual father's disciple acting as his servant.(19)

Another indication of the kind of respect which Symeon required spiritual children to exhibit in their behaviour can be found in the passage in which he portrayed the relation between spiritual child and father in terms of that between the disciples and Christ:

(18) Nicetas, Life, 12, 19 - 26; Hausherr, note ad loc., Life, p. 21, n.1, cf. Darrouzes, Ch I, 30, SC 51, p. 188, supplementary note referring to p. 57; Cat XXXV, 119, cf. the prayer he recommends in Ch I, 60, 10f.

(19) Ch I, 30, 14 - 24; Nicetas, Life, 11, 4 - 11, cf. Rousseau, Ascetics, p. 50, "It was often taken for granted that a holy man's disciples would also be in some sense his servants".

"If (your father) instructs you to sit at table, and if (he assigns you a place) near himself, accept it thankfully, but maintain silence and continue to reverence and honour him.."

A little later this is followed by an explicit warning against any attempt to imitate one facet of the behaviour of the Beloved Disciple in St. John's Gospel:

"It is not expedient for you to lean on your father's breast".

This definite exception to the general injunctions to copy the behaviour of Christ's disciples reveals Symeon's over-riding concern for the maintenance of due respect for the person of the spiritual father.(20)

Symeon's fondness for comparisons relating to, and images drawn from, the imperial court, has attracted some attention, and Darrouzes has suggested that it is connected with his having been in the emperor's service before becoming a monk. We may conjecture, then, that when he insisted on great outward reverence being paid to a spiritual father, he was not unmindful of court ceremonial and of the respect shown to the emperor's sacred person. Although his instructions no doubt sprang chiefly from the traditional teachings which he had inherited, one can well imagine that, given his devotion to the Studite, he would have been most unwilling to allow a genuine spiritual father to receive less outward respect from his disciples than an emperor from his courtiers.(21)

In a recent review, Gendle uses the words,

"awkward questions about Symeon's controversial views concerning.. the cult of the spiritual father",

(20) Cat XX, 99 - 101; ibid., 125f., alluding to St. John 13, 23.

(21) Darrouzes, Tr Eth VII, SC 129, p. 166, n.1, cf. A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, People and Power in Byzantium, Dumbarton Oaks, 1982, p. 171; cf. Part One, Chapter I, pp. 38f., n. 6.

and it is true that both with regard to his own veneration of the Studite and his requirements from spiritual children in the matter of outward reverence, Symeon can appear to be distinctly lacking in moderation. But it is not difficult to put forward a defence with regard to his stress on the duty of expressing reverence:

Symeon made his demands for the sake of the disciple, not of the father, for - as we shall see in the next chapter - he believed that it was disastrous when the proper attitude of respect was not maintained, and that in such circumstances the spiritual child's salvation could in fact be endangered. Furthermore, we have seen that Symeon was ready in his Catecheses to accuse himself of being unworthy to guide others, and this demonstrates that when he required respect to be paid to a spiritual father, he was not seeking personal gratification but - apart from his concern for the disciple-desirous that the office, not the person holding it, should be honoured.(22)

We have now examined the main areas in which a disciple can be regarded as having duties to fulfil towards his father. In aggregate the obligations are demanding, indeed in their own way no less so than those which we saw earlier to belong to the spiritual father. In both cases it is the ideal which has been considered, and in actual life the ideal is seldom fully realised - even though Symeon insisted that it had been in the case of the Studite as a father, and was not far from claiming to have been himself an ideal disciple.

(22) N. Gendle, Sobornost, 7: 1, 1985, p. 61, in a review of Symeon the New Theologian: The Practical and Theological Chapters and the Three Theological Discourses tr. Paul McGuckin (Cistercian Studies Series 41), Kalamazoo, 1982; "salvation endangered," to the quotations given in Part Two, chapter V(c), pp. 320f, may be added from Ep 3, 218v, "If (his father) does not go along with him, or rather does not fall with him and perish with him.." an indication of the danger which Symeon could see threatening the disciple.

But in practice, just as he recognised that ideal fathers were few in number, so he was well aware of the many difficulties caused by disciples who fell far short of accomplishing, or even of attempting to accomplish, all that their duty prescribed to them. In the next chapter, therefore, consideration must be given to the problems encountered by a spiritual father.(23)

(23) "an ideal disciple", v. Hym LV, 95 - 97, where he sets down what he believed he had heard God say to him: "I understand .. your faith, your humility with regard to your father and your entire renunciation of your own will" ; "ideal fathers few in number", Cat XX, 197 - 199.

V THE DIFFICULTIES OF SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD.

(a) Background.

In their introduction to Dorotheus, Regnault and de Préville give a brief résumé of his correspondence with his spiritual fathers, Barsanuphius and John, prefacing this by the statement that through these letters

"we are able in a sense to be present at the 'formation' of a young monk who was destined to become one of the greatest teachers of spirituality".

Dorotheus, it is clear, did not find his apprenticeship easy, and the task of sustaining him must have weighed heavily on Barsanuphius and John, but nevertheless his perseverance in attempting to fulfil his duty as a disciple resulted in rendering any difficulties able in the end to be overcome, and prevented their being of the nature which would have frustrated the relationship. It is more serious difficulties for a spiritual father which we are to consider in this chapter.(1)

It will be helpful to classify spiritual fathers roughly into two categories, "lax" or "conscientious", Symeon himself being, of course, numbered amongst the latter. Disciples similarly can be classified as "sincere" or "uncommitted". A "lax" father, although likely to present problems for a "sincere" disciple, may not himself be conscious of difficulties in the relationship, and while he may doubtless be annoyed if he is abandoned by a disciple who is "uncommitted", in the nature of the case he is unlikely to leave to posterity any record of his vexation. With a "conscientious" father and a "sincere" disciple, difficulties other than those of a passing nature, will not arise unless there happens to exist between them a vast difference in spiritual

(1) Dorotheus SC 92 intr. pp. 17 - 26, cf. similarly D.J. Chitty, The Desert a City, Oxford, 1966, p. 136.

temperament, of which the father is unaware. In such a case, a "sincere" disciple on coming to recognise the source of the trouble may in his father's eyes become a real difficulty by reluctance or refusal to follow a path which for him is not the right one. As in the case of St. Teresa of Avila, however, any account of the trouble that reaches us will probably come from the disciple. Our concern in this chapter will be restricted to the difficulties encountered by a "conscientious" father who is faced by an "uncommitted" disciple, in other words to the troubles suffered by one who is truly qualified for spiritual fatherhood and striving to discharge his obligations, when he meets with a disciple who is unwilling to persevere in his attempts/fulfil the duties pertaining to his side of the relationship.(2)

While in some cases the difficulties and their causes can be found spelled out, at other times it is only by implication that it is possible to perceive them. This is especially the case when a complaint is primarily being made not about disciples but about spiritual fathers. Thus in pseudo-Basil we find:

"If to spare thy body thou seekest a teacher ready to connive at thy passions.....",

contrasted with:

"If by God's grace thou hast found ... a teacher of good works,"

Now for our present purpose the important matter is not the quality of the two fathers, but the legitimate deduction from the first clause that the writer knew of disciples who caused, or would have caused,

(2) "lax father", cf. what was said about refraining from judging and being faithful to a spiritual father, Part Two, chapter IV(c), pp. 286-291; "difference in spiritual temperament", cf. "It cannot have been a rare occurrence for a monk to find himself not getting from his hegumen the spiritual help and guidance he required", E. Herman, 'La 'stabilitas loci' nel monachismo Bizantino' O.C.P., 21, (1955), p. 124; "St. Teresa", "It was the fate of this remarkable woman to struggle all her life with incompetent confessors", G. Cunningham Graham, Santa Teresa, London, 1907, p. 119.

grave difficulties to any "conscientious" father on account of their unwillingness to subject their bodies to the admittedly rigorous asceticism demanded of them. No doubt such people would be unlikely in the first instance to attach themselves to men of this type, but whenever and for whatever reasons one of them might happen to do so, the father would be confronted by the dilemma of either feeling himself forced to relax his standards in order to retain the disciple, or allowing him to depart to a "lax" director or to none at all, while believing that such departure was an act of self-surrender to Satan on the disciple's part. As pseudo-Basil says in the same context,

"Whenever our wicked foe is unable to persuade us to abide in the tumult and destruction of the world, he hastens to persuade us ... to give ourselves ... to some man greedy of reputation, who justifies his own faults by a pretence of sympathy towards those that dwell with him ..."

It requires little imagination to conceive of the inner conflict that would take place in the mind of a father who feared that he would endanger an immortal soul if he were "lax", and yet found himself in charge of a disciple who showed signs of being "uncommitted". Such are the implications of pseudo-Basil's warning.(3)

It is, not surprisingly, in the Liber ad Pastorem that Climacus indicates most clearly that he is aware of the difficulties which may face a spiritual father. In the first chapter he mentions

"sheep who through loitering and greed go astray" and whom therefore

"the pastor should 'throw a stone at' by means of a word (of reproof)".

Significantly also the tenth chapter, which deals with the receiving of novices concludes:

(3) pseudo-Basil, De renuntiatioe saeculi, PG 31, 632 CD, translation as given by W.K. Lowther Clarke, The Ascetic Works of St. Basil, London, 1925, pp. 63f.; "pretence of sympathy", cf. Part Two, chapter I(c), passim, but particularly the quotation from Cat XXXVI, 102 - 116 on p. 121.

"Often he who is (spiritually) more infirm, is found to be in heart more humble, for which reason he ought to be treated more gently by spiritual assessors. And the opposite is clearly true also".

Although Climacus thus envisages the necessity for stern measures on occasion, he is in general optimistic about the prospects of success if his prescriptions are followed by the hegumen or spiritual father. However towards the end of the second chapter, in which he speaks of the father's work as a spiritual physician, he mentions the possibility of amputation becoming necessary as a last resort lest a diseased member "communicate its own scurvy to the rest".

Here Climacus shows himself conscious of the fact that a hegumen, as spiritual father, must sometimes be prepared to suffer the sadness of knowing that he has failed with one individual, and must therefore expel him out of regard for the health of the community as a whole. In the Scala Paradisi he refers to a spiritual child who

"at one time obeys and at another disobeys the father", which testifies to his knowledge of another kind of frustration, a disciple who fails to make progress because his obedience is only occasional, but yet - one might presume - cannot be sent away for the very reason that he does not persist in disobeying. As might be expected, then, it is possible to discover in Climacus a realistic appreciation of the fact that a spiritual father should expect to meet with problems and occasionally with failure in the work he attempts, because amongst his disciples there will be some of the type which we have called "uncommitted". (4)

(4) ad Pastorem, 1168A; ibid., 1165C; ibid., 1169B; Sc. Par. 4, 708C.

The Studite, in the passage already quoted in which he forbids the abandoning of one father for another, testifies by implication to his knowledge of the difficulty which "uncommitted" disciples cause, and it is reasonable to suppose, although naturally neither Symeon nor Nicetas mentions the fact, that as a "conscientious" spiritual father he had himself had experience of the sorrow which must result from such awareness of failure. In his case, of course, there was also a difficulty of the opposite kind, when his hegumen tried to detach Symeon from him. It is unfortunate that we have no record of this incident from the Studite's own pen, but the fact that it resulted in Symeon's being compelled to migrate to St. Mamas indicates that considerable bitterness and hostility were aroused, by which the Studite no less than his disciple will have been affected. However, if we look at the matter from the point of view of Symeon, whom we must now proceed to investigate, it may be assumed that his enduring of this conflict contributed later to some of his own troubles as a spiritual father, for his consciousness of having been loyal will have made him lacking in sympathy towards any whom he felt inclined to be "uncommitted". If he created difficulties for himself and his spiritual children by asking too much of them, he was probably tempted to do so because of the knowledge of what he himself as a "sincere" disciple had undergone.(5)

(5) Studite, Ch 36, Hausherr, Life, p. L; Symeon, "asking too much", of. Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 213 - 215.

V (b) Symeon in St. Mamas.

Symeon as hegumen started with high hopes of his monks. Cat I, apparently delivered on the very day of his installation, culminates in an appeal to his "beloved brethren in Christ" to dedicate themselves to spiritual advancement:

"Let us beseege through our love for one another to serve God and the one whom you have chosen for the position of spiritual father, utterly unworthy though I be. So may God rejoice at your harmony and your perfection, and so may I, humble as I am, rejoice as I see the progress of your godly life continually reaching out towards higher attainments in faith, chastity, the fear of God, devoutness, compunction and tears, through which things the inner man is purified, is filled with divine light and comes entirely to belong to the Holy Spirit"

This might be discounted as no more than the rhetoric of an inaugural address, but an examination of other Catechases shows that Symeon genuinely hoped, at least for some time, to inspire his whole community with his own lofty ideals. His hopes are illustrated by the quotations given earlier from Cat XX, which it is to be noted, was ab initio a written document, circulated among his monks and composed - as Symeon states - for the purpose of

"benefiting the soul and assisting it in its flight from the world, in freeing itself from the passions and in acquiring love for God and perfect dispassion" (1).

There is, however, plenty of evidence that many of the monks whose spiritual father Symeon became by virtue of his office, were far from anxious to admit even the possibility of real spiritual progress. A significant example is found in Cat XXXII when Symeon thought himself obliged to complain of

"blasphemy against the Holy Spirit".

(1) Cat I, 14, cf. Krivocheine's note, Cat I SC 96, p. 225, n.2; Cat I, 171 - 180, where "reaching out (skhizesthai)" is a reminiscence of Philippians 3, 13 and the concept a favourite theme of St. Gregory of Nyssa; "for some time", v. below, p. 304 for his later being forced to abandon this hope; Cat XX, cf. Part Two, chapter I (e) pp. 132 f., and chapter III (d), pp. 254 - 256; "written document", Cat XX, 14f.; "benefiting the soul", ibid., 17 - 20.

This, he said, citing the authority of St. Basil, was committed

"when anyone sees wonders being brought about by the Holy Spirit or some divine gift bestowed on one of his brethren - I mean compunction, or tears, or humility, or divine knowledge, or a word (full) of the wisdom which is from above, or anything else bestowed by the divine Spirit on those who love God - (when anyone sees this and) says that it is the result of a deceitful trick performed by the devil".

Here is a virtual admission by Symeon that one, or more than one, of his monks was asserting that anything which might appear to be a sign of spiritual progress was in fact a Satanic fraud. Having to preside over men who said such things because they were so blind or so determined not to follow him, Symeon inevitably learnt of the difficulties inherent in spiritual fatherhood not only from the authorities of the past and from the Studite, but also from his own sad experiences as hegumen. As Krivocheine expresses it,

"instead of leading all his spiritual children, united in spirit and in heart, along the way of Christ's love, he had to struggle resolutely against the violent opposition of a party of his monks"(2).

In order to understand the reason for Symeon's difficulties, it is necessary to consider the kinds of men who will have been members of his community. Doubtless, as Nicetas tells us, there were some who had a real vocation and were eagerly striving for holiness, but if St. Mamas was much the same as many other contemporary Byzantine monasteries, it is not really surprising that some of its monks proved unresponsive. Charanis has demonstrated that the monasteries contained men drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds and that they sometimes included peasants who had sought admission simply in order to better their lot. Such people naturally had no real

(2) Cat XXXII, 12 - 20; Basil, Reg. brev. tract. 273, PG 31, 1272BC; Krivocheine Cats SC 96, intr. p. 53.

vocation, and their presence in St. Mamas is attested by the indignant question which Symeon in Cat III addressed to an imaginary monk of this type:

"Tell me ... did you deceitfully pretend that you wanted the bond of union with the brotherhood .. when the whole object you had in mind was never to go short of enough to satisfy your hunger and your gluttony, while enjoying a carefree and painless existence?".

This is followed a little later by the direct accusation,

"You received the tonsure simply in order to become a brother and have your share of goods and possessions which probably would never have been yours, if you had remained in the world".

While we from our perspective might be inclined to sympathize with men who were forced to become monks because they could see no other way of escaping destitution, for Symeon they were bound to present a problem because their ears would be unlikely ever to be open to his appeals and they would have no intention of cultivating the virtues which he ardently commended. Faced with recalcitrant spiritual children of this type, monks for whose salvation he felt himself responsible, it is easy to see how liable he might be to lose patience, in spite of all his knowledge of the human heart and of the difficulties of cenobitic life. In fact, confronted by men who were more or less incapable of sharing his understanding of the Christian life, Symeon re-iterated appeals and rebukes, but to little or no effect. It is, indeed, very probable that it was this refusal on his part to compromise that provoked some of his monks to rebel.(3).

(3) P. Charanis, 'The Monk in Byzantine Society', Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 25, (1971), pp. 76 - 79 - some, of course, whose original motives for entering a monastery may have been questionable, ended by becoming saints, for instance Paul of Latros, whom Charanis cites, with his brother Basil; Cat III, 78 - 88 (extracts); ibid., 105 - 107; cf. P. Magdalino, 'The Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century', The Byzantine Saint, London, 1981, p. 57, "Denunciation of monks who did not sincerely renounce the world was probably in effect denunciation of those who had started out with little or nothing to renounce"; for references to Symeon's appeals and denunciations, v. Part Two, chapter III (c), p. 205, n.31.

It would seem, then, that Symeon failed to manifest a spirit of sympathetic understanding as far as certain of his monks were concerned, and it is clear that he was oppressed by a sense of failure. He was comforted, however, by his belief that Christ understood the situation, supported him and was willing to allow him to lay down this part of his burden. Amongst the words which Christ, he felt, addressed to him, we find:

"If you are absolutely unwilling to become like (the unresponsive monks), and if you do not consent to be seduced by their counsels or to become their partner in wicked deeds, you will have revolt, strife and unceasing war ... It is better to be shepherded than in any way to shepherd such men. You should rather pay heed to what is your own, while praying for them and for all men that all may be converted and attain to knowledge, but (yourself) teaching and instructing (only) those of them who are willing (to listen to you)."

Thus it was borne in on Symeon that he would have to accept the fact that as spiritual father he could and should only hope to succeed with those of his monks who were prepared to listen to him(4).

Nevertheless Symeon was bound to suffer when monks, for whatever reason, expressed opinions ascribing to the influence of Satan what he held to be manifestations of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. For his part he was convinced that through the Studite he had indeed received the Spirit of God, that this qualified him for spiritual fatherhood and that therefore he ought to be regarded by his children as an icon of Christ. But instead of being accepted in this way, he was in fact automatically included in their charge that anyone who claimed to have received gifts "bestowed by the divine Spirit" was being duped by the devil. Those who said such things were from

(4) Hym XLIII, 96 - 99, 111 - 115; Dorotheus shows himself conscious of difficulties of this kind being encountered by a hegumen, Ep 2, 185, 186.

Symeon's point of view "uncommitted" in the deepest possible sense, and he who as hegumen regarded himself as their father could not but feel wounded when faced with this rejection of everything that he was hoping to achieve for all the members of his community (5).

At this point it is worth recalling that these recalcitrant monks were not alone in adopting opinions of the kind we have been discussing. Symeon had to assert the Studite's sanctity in the vigorous way he did partly, at least, because many of his contemporaries questioned the possibility, perhaps even the desirability, of a person's actually becoming a saint in the present age. The Menologion of Symeon Metaphrastes may well have contributed something to this state of mind, for as Lemerle puts it,

"it has been remarked that (his) saints almost all belong to ancient times and that there are only a very few of them who date from the period of iconoclasm or of the wars with the Arabs. Is not this an instance of the same 'antiquarianizing' spirit which inspires Constantine VII's undertakings?"

Magdalino goes further and specifically refers to Symeon:

"The compilation of the Metaphrastic corpus and the Synaxarion of Constantinople, and the opposition aroused by Symeon the New Theologian in his attempt to establish a cult of his spiritual father Symeon the Studite, indicate that the official Church was tending, from the end of the tenth century, to conceive of the communion of saints as a closed society, whose numbers were now more or less complete".

It can readily be appreciated that views of this nature would be extremely congenial to monks of the type we have just been describing, as providing justification for their unwillingness to be led by Symeon along the path to sanctity.(6)

(5) "through the Studite", cf. Cat VI, 261 - 267, also Cat XXXV, 255 - 257, where again the Studite as "mediator, pastor and ambassador" is brought into connection with Symeon's reception of the Holy Spirit; "qualified him", cf. Part Two, chapter II (f), p.164.

(6) Lemerle, Premier Humanisme, p. 293, n.77; Magdalino, op. cit., p.60, cf. Symeon's discovery that no one believed in the existence of contemporary saints, Cat XXXV, 78 - 80 quoted Part Two, chapter I (d), p.127.

All this provides the background to the frustration evident in the language which Symeon used in some of the Catecheses:

"It is heresy to swerve from any one of the dogmas laid down to define our orthodox faith, but it is totally to subvert the incarnation of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ .. if one denies that there exist at the present time some who love God, who are deemed worthy of (receiving) the Holy Spirit, and who by him are baptized as sons of God, so as to become gods by knowledge, experience and contemplation".

His personal dilemma was whether to make such a claim for himself and be taxed with pride, or to follow the path of humility and thus be unable to use his experience to refute monks infected by what he considered worse than heresy. Thus he complained:

"If instead of speaking openly we make an effort to conceal the gift (bestowed on us), those people take what we are saying as the literal truth; but if we do disclose the truth by what we say, they immediately accuse us of being arrogant, because they are themselves ignorant of the sayings of the holy apostles. What are these sayings? 'We have the mind of Christ!'"

For Symeon ultimately it was a matter of accepting or rejecting Holy Scripture, as he made clear a little further on:

"If then you say that this is impossible even for someone who desires it, what are we to do with (the text) ... 'Be holy (ἁγίος), for I am holy'? But if it is impossible to be (a saint) without desiring to be one, then, look you, you have condemned yourself, because you do not desire nor choose (this); if you want to be (a saint), you can be one". (7)

Whatever their motives or their excuses, those of his monks who resisted Symeon and his efforts to lead them to holiness inflicted on him a wound which he did not attempt to hide. Hausherr cites a passage from Tr Eth IX, a work composed for a wider public and not simply for his monks, in which however he clearly refers to what he had suffered at the hands of some of them.

(7) Cat XXXII, 49 - 56; Cat XXXIV, 197 - 202, 220 - 227 (extracts) quoting I Corinthians 2, 16; "be holy", cited from I Peter 1, 16 (Leviticus 11, 44) but with ἁγίος for ἁγιος.

"If they hear it said of someone that he has striven lawfully according to the Lord's commandments and become humble in heart and thought, that he is purifying himself from passions of every kind and is proclaiming to all the mighty works of God, in other words all that God has done for him in accordance with his trustworthy promises; if that person, speaking for the benefit of his hearers, (tells of) how he was counted worthy to behold the light of God and God in the light of glory, and also of how he had conscious knowledge in himself of the coming and the working of the Holy Spirit, and of how in the Holy Spirit he has himself become holy (ἁγίος) - (if they hear this,) they at once bay at him like angry hounds, and hasten to devour, if they can, the one who speaks in this way".

The above lines, a part of the passage quoted by Hausherr, have an obvious autobiographical reference and clearly reveal something of Symeon's grief when he was confronted by men who rejected the claims to sanctity and spiritual experience which he felt bound to make

"for the benefit of his hearers". If a modern reader is perhaps tempted to sympathize more with the hearers than with Symeon at this point, he should recall the reasons which, as we have seen, impelled Symeon to adopt and maintain his apparently arrogant stance: he passionately desired to fulfil what he considered to be his duty, to lead his spiritual children to become holy (ἁγίοι), and he believed that this was impossible unless he, their father, was holy himself, while at the same time he was convinced that, in spite of his innate unworthiness, he had inherited from his father, the Studite, this essential qualification. He thus met with an insurmountable obstacle so long as some of his monks insisted on denying the possibility of sanctity in the contemporary world, and his troubled indignation can still be felt as we read his writings.(8)

(8) Hausherr, *Life*, pp.LXX (sic - really LXXI) - LXXII; *Tr Eth IX*, 359 - 370, in which it is interesting to note Symeon's instinctive use of Biblical phraseology: "lawfully" recalls II *Timothy* 5, 11. "mighty works", *Acts* 2, 11, "benefit of his hearers" presents a contrast with "subverting of the hearers", II *Timothy* 2, 14; "inherited" as well as *Cat VI*, 261 - 267 referred to in n.5 above, of. *Cat XXXII*, 79 - 91, where Symeon speaks of "the Studite .. and some .. of his disciples" who "through his supplications and prayers" have received the Spirit; "indignation", for example in the first lines of *Cat XXXIV*, especially 11 - 13, "Did you reproach us secretly as having spoken bombastically? did you condemn us as vainglorious?".

It is quite possible that not all those monks whose unresponsiveness brought sorrow to Symeon went as far as the men we have just been considering. But he was vulnerable because his temperament made him unable to rest content with anything less than a total response. Thus although he believed that in some cases he was permitted by Christ to abandon active efforts to win over hardened opponents, he felt at another time that Christ was bidding him.

"Do not cease admonishing, do not cease wailing, and do not cease seeking after their salvation, so that, if they become obedient, if they are converted, you will have them as your brethren ..."

In Cat XIX he lays bare the strength of his emotions when he appeals to his monks,

"Render to me, brethren, a love equal to mine for you, (render it) to me who am under the sway of a tyrannical love".

Unresponsiveness was thus something which hurt him and which he found hard to understand, for in the same Catechesis, addressing in the singular

"each one of you who cleaves to the vanity of things present", he asked:

"If you know what is better, how is it that you do what is worse, like one who has no knowledge? If you know that all is shadow and that everything visible passes away, are you not ashamed to be trifling with a shadow and treasuring up what is fleeting?"

Here we have no absolute rejection of Symeon as spiritual father, but it is easy to sense his impatience with the monks he loves who, instead of eagerly responding to his attempts to lead them upwards along the paths of the spiritual life, dally with worthless trifles. Although less fundamental than what we were earlier examining, this also is a mark of an "uncommitted" disciple which cannot but be a cause of suffering to a "conscientious" father.(9)

(9) Hym XII, 148 - 151; Cat XIX, 80f.; ibid., 132f., 139 - 142; "monks he loves", cf. Cat XII, 257 - 259, where he speaks of his willingness to die on their behalf.

Probably even more painful for a man of Symeon's disposition was unresponsiveness to teaching which came more directly from his own spiritual father, the Studite. Thus Cat IV, extolling the value of tears, begins by Symeon's describing what he had noticed during the reading in church of some words of his father's,

"Brother, never communicate without shedding tears".

On hearing this, many in the congregation, including monks, were observed to be sneering and were overheard remarking that on those terms they would have to pass their whole lives deprived of the sacrament of the Eucharist. This incident formed, as it were, the text for Cat IV, and although we cannot be sure whether or not amongst the monks whose mockery had attracted Symeon's attention there were any of his own spiritual children, the emphasis given here and elsewhere in the Catecheses to the divine inspiration of the Studite suggests that by no means all at St. Mamas showed themselves disposed to accept promptly any and every teaching which emanated from this source. As a loyal disciple Symeon was concerned to defend his father against attacks from whatever quarter they arose, but it is not fanciful to detect at some points the special grief caused by the unresponsiveness of some of his own spiritual children to the teaching and example provided by the Studite.

"Do you take the blessed Symeon for a fool, and are you ashamed to imitate his actions?"

he asks in Cat VI, addressing in the singular, as he frequently does, an imagined single member of his monastic congregation. Since indeed he felt himself to be the Studite's heir, and since in any case he was convinced that both the Studite and himself were inspired by God in the teaching they gave, it was only to be expected that he

would react sharply to the "uncommitted", whether they manifested a failure to respond to his own teaching or to that which was derived more immediately from his spiritual father.(10)

As we have seen, the difficulties which Symeon had to face were in part the consequences of his temperament, but it must now be added that they were also partly caused by his combining in himself the two roles of hegumen and spiritual father. Christophorides, when discussing whether in monasteries the two functions were always intended to be carried out by the same person, points out that the hegumen was the natural person to be the monks' spiritual father, since he was after all the "head" of the "body". Christophorides indicates also that there was no absolute and inflexible rule to this effect, and remarks at the same time that provided that the hegumen was a genuinely spiritual man the monks would suffer no hardship from his also being the only person authorised to act as father. Hausherr shows himself more conscious of the possible unsatisfactory results of the combination of the two roles.

"When one reads the Typika, one gets the impression that in coenobia in which the hegumen keeps all authority in his own hands, the revealing of thoughts comes more to be a mere confession of sins ... In place of the primitive system in which the initiative rested with the disciple and he resorted to the spiritual guide who inspired him with confidence, little by little regulation and control by authority were established The spiritual father is now no more than a purveyor of absolution and calculator of penances".

(10) Cat IV, 11 - 18; "divine inspiration", ibid., 5 - 8, cf. Cat VI, 188 - 195; Cat VI, 300f.; for Symeon's consciousness of divine inspiration cf. Cat IX, 9 - 25, where he compares himself with an organ, through playing on which God causes his melody to be heard; for Symeon's linking himself with his spiritual father, cf. Cats XII, 17f., XXXIV, 48 - 50.

It is particularly interesting to note that, from a rather different angle, the Studite himself was also aware of the problems resulting from one and the same person's being both hegumen and spiritual father.

"It would be right for all to go to the hegumen for confession (of thoughts), but .. some are unwilling to reveal their thoughts to the hegumen, because of their great frailty and their lack of trust in him .."

In spite, however, of this statement by his spiritual father, and in spite of his own refusal to abandon that father at the hegumen's behest, there is nothing to suggest that Symeon was willing to allow his monks at St. Mamas to have a spiritual father other than himself during the time that he held the position of hegumen. He may, as was suggested, have insisted on this partly because he did not believe that any members of the community were in fact qualified for the work, but it is not surprising that his dual role caused difficulties for Symeon, a "conscientious" father presiding over monks many of whom had become accustomed to low ideals and were thus definitely "uncommitted". As Hausherr puts it in the same context from which we have just quoted, "confidence cannot be had to order". Symeon's very zeal as a reforming hegumen militated against his success as the spiritual father of his monastery.(11)

A further difficulty which Symeon appears to have encountered must now be briefly mentioned. It comes to light in his complaint:

"Friends easily become enemies, if they find the smallest excuse".

This apparently general statement is found in a Hymn in which he is bemoaning the troubles which beset him at St. Mamas, and it therefore suggests that amongst these troubles was the disloyalty after a time of some monks whom he had reckoned to be genuine disciples and well-disposed towards him. (12)

(11) Christophorides, op. cit., pp. 58 - 63; Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, pp. 227f.; Studite, Ch 36, Hausherr, Life, p. XLIX; Symeon, cf. Part Two, chapter II(a), pp. 137f. ; "reforming hegumen", cf. Nicetas, Life, 34 & 35.

(12) Hym XLIII, 79f.

Considerable anxiety was caused to Symeon by some who, in his opinion, were quite ignorant of their own true condition, and wished to act as spiritual fathers to others while in fact they were still far from qualified to do so. Such monks not surprisingly seem to have objected to being addressed as spiritual children or treated as such by Symeon, and of them he wrote in one of his Hymns:

"If someone speaks thus to them: 'Listen to me, my children, and remove the veil from over your heart', they become furious at these very words, because they were not called 'fathers' but were addressed as 'children', and their hatred of the speaker is increased by his language. They are unable to recognise the passion which besets them, or rather the (many) passions which darken their mind and their thoughts, and which separate from God those whom they take captive".

It is easy to imagine an attitude of this kind being adopted by monks who were themselves perhaps acting as spiritual fathers to men and women living in the world. It is not improbable that several who belonged to St. Mamas regarded themselves as at least potential fathers, for as Russey says,

"Monks frequently acted as spiritual directors, both as confessor and as more informal consultant ... The range of Theodore the Studite's correspondence shows how widely he was consulted outside monastic circles, and the same is true of John Mauropous, monk and archbishop of Euchaita in Asia Minor in the 11th century".(13)

Obviously it would be difficult to persuade men over-anxious to be treated as fathers to become teachable disciples. In a work which has a wider reference, it would appear, than the Hymn, but which nevertheless deals with monks and in which one may therefore conclude him to have been at least influenced by his experiences in St. Mamas, Symeon approaches the problem from a slightly different point of view. He speaks of the difficulty of getting those who are spiritually sick to acknowledge the truth of their condition.

(13) Hym LII, 127 - 134, "the veil" being a reminiscence of II Corinthians 3, 14f., and "separate from God" recalling Wisdom 1, 31; J.M. Russey, 'Byzantine Monasticism', Cambridge Medieval History, Cambridge, 1967, IV (ii), 183.

"The health they imagine (they possess) is to fulfil the desires of the flesh and do everything which is suggested by covetousness and appetite .. They are blind, but do not believe that anybody else can see, and so they live deprived of sight and are persuaded that there is no question of its being possible for them to see once more".

After analysing this condition at some length, Symeon adopts his usual device of addressing as an individual one person of the class he is castigating.

In the course of this rebuke he says:

"If you confess - and you do well to do so - that you have not received a share in God's gift .. why do you not embrace the good state of silence and seek in repentance and tears to gain and learn these matters, instead of wanting to speak in empty fashion about things of which you have no genuine knowledge, wishing to be called a saint because of what you say? Why do you consider yourself already saved, boldly listening to the disclosure of thoughts (λογισμοί) by others and teaching others? ... Are you not afraid to be your brethren's pastor (παιστήρ), you who sit in darkness and have not even acquired the eye which beholds, the true light? Are you not ashamed to act as physician (ἰατρός) to others, while you yourself are sick and not even capable of perceiving your own wounds?" (14)

Here, then, are men very eager to act as spiritual fathers, receiving the disclosure of thoughts, exercising pastoral care and functioning as spiritual physicians, essential aspects, as we have seen, of the father's work. But while, as we also saw, a spiritual father might employ some of his disciples as apprentices under his supervision, Symeon is here - if we may suppose that he has in mind some of his own monks - faced with the difficulty that men whom he considered far from fit for this role were intent on fulfilling it. This eagerness of theirs meant also that they were blinding themselves to the truth of their own condition and therefore refusing to seek by means of Symeon for the healing and enlightenment of which in reality they were in sore need. Alternatively, if it be held that, because he is here

(14) Tr Eth VI, 334 - 344 (extracts); ibid., 383 - 401 (extracts); unlike the Catecheses, the Treatises were not directly addressed to the monks of St. Mamas, and unlike the Hymns, they do not directly treat of Symeon's personal experience, cf. Darrouzes, Trs SC 122 intr. p. 13.

generalising in the sense of seeking to reach a wide public through a written work, Symeon is not necessarily concerned with a difficulty he had himself encountered in St. Mamas, the extracts quoted still demonstrate his awareness of this as a problem which some spiritual fathers had to face. The role of father, after all, is when superficially considered much more attractive than that of disciple, and it would be strange if there were no examples known to Symeon of immature spiritual children anxious to act as fathers while still unqualified to do so, indeed by this very anxiety of theirs¹ laying claim to a false and premature independence from their own pastor and spiritual physician.⁽¹⁵⁾

If fully carried out, the work of a father demands, as we have seen, much labour and much expenditure of time, and Symeon thus felt that it was liable to conflict with his own need to devote himself to God in prayer. This can be seen in a passage in Hym XLIX, where indeed he goes to the length of expressing doubt as to his own salvation, which he feels he has imperilled by his concern for his recalcitrant brethren.

"I exulted while I enjoyed to the full that ineffable light; I rejoiced with thee who hast made and fashioned me, as I beheld the unimaginable beauty of thy countenance .. At first I had nothing to do with the wickednesses of men, but as I lived longer among them, I was set over the affairs of others and was carried away, Master, by men in their contentiousness. In hopes of amending them, I became involved in wickedness, and in my folly, alas! I came to share in the darkness of the passions .. But do thou, Lover of men, make haste to have pity on me and speedily deliver me who have fallen for thy sake into this plight .. Yes, I know that thou, my all-pitying God, hast ordained that we ought by all means to deliver our brother from death and from sin's sting, yet not through sin to perish with him - but I, poor wretch, suffered this fate and fell through negligence and through trusting in myself. Yet (thou didst ordain) that I should deliver him and myself together, but if (I could) not, I should remain above, lament for him who fell, and strive with all my power to avoid falling with him". (16)

(15) "as we have seen": receiving the disclosure of thoughts, Part Two, chapter III (c) pp. 190-199, being a pastor, Part Two, chapter II(d), being a spiritual physician, Part Two, chapter II (c); "apprentices", Part Two, chapter II(a).

(16) Hym XLIX, 27 - 65 (extracts).

In all this there is much of interest, but Symeon, as so often, speaks allusively and to interpret him a certain amount of conjecture is needed. The contrast between having "nothing to do with" the wickedness of men and being "set over the affairs of others" seems naturally to refer to his early days as a simple monk in St. Mamas as opposed to the time after he had been chosen as hegumen. The trouble of which he complains appears to have two aspects: not only has he lost his dispassion through involvement in human contentiousness - one may assume that he was not very patient when confronted by monks quarrelling with one another or even with him himself - but as well as this, and in a sense because of it, he has ceased to

"enjoy to the full that ineffable light", in other words the quality of his spiritual life has been impaired. The result of it all is that, unless Christ will "speedily deliver" him, he fears that he may "perish with" the brothers whom he has been attempting to save. The difficulties he encounters without, from troublesome or unsatisfactory monastic disciples, in these ways have repercussions on the interior life of a "conscientious" spiritual father such as Symeon.

The primary concern of a hegumen/spiritual father ought to be the salvation of the monks for whom he is responsible, and it is thus in connection with their progress or lack of it that he might be expected to be most conscious of success or failure. So far, indeed, as he is "conscientious", it is of failure that he is likely to be the more aware, and Symeon in fact has little, if anything, to record about his

own successes in St. Mamas. But the total picture cannot, in fact, have been as gloomy as this section might suggest, for Symeon's influence did persist, and Nicetas is worthy of at least some credit when he extols the virtues and achievements of some of those monks who were his "sincere" disciples.(17)

(17) "successes", in Cat XII, 66 - 80, he congratulates his monks on keeping the first week of Lent in an exemplary manner; Nicetas, Life, chapters 45 to 58, referring to Arsenius, a bishop from the West and others, cf. Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 205-208.

v (c) Symeon and Seculars.

As we move on to examine the difficulties, from Symeon's point of view, of a spiritual father attempting to care for disciples living in the world, we must expect to have to take account of a basically different relationship from that which was under consideration in the preceding section. Unlike a monk, a secular was at liberty to remain without a spiritual father, or if he decided to seek one, to choose whom he would, provided the father would accept him as a disciple. Since, then, the relationship was voluntary, there would be no reason for the existence of those continuing tensions which were noticed as occurring when a "conscientious" father met with "uncommitted" disciples in his monastic flock.

The freedom of the secular spiritual child to abandon a father who displeased him might be expected not infrequently to result in precisely this being done by the "uncommitted". Human nature being what it is, this is quite natural, but it is interesting that we have evidence that in Constantinople it was not only spiritual fathers who had cause to complain of fickleness. Lemerle writes of the impression gained from his study of the letters of a tenth-century Byzantine school-master:

"The very frequent movement of pupils who come and go from one (school) to another arouses fierce competition between (the masters), competition which is not always fair".

Symeon's letters reveal a somewhat similar state of affairs with regard to spiritual fathers and their non-monastic children.⁽¹⁾

(1) Lemerle, Premier Humanisme, p.279.

It would, of course, be wrong to exaggerate the difference between conditions inside monasteries and outside them. Thus Climacus, although writing for monks, thought it necessary to utter the warning:

"Deserving of every punishment at God's hands are the sick who make trial of a physician and receive some benefit from him, but before being completely cured abandon him because they prefer someone else".

Presumably, in spite of what was laid down in many typika, namely that all monks should have the hegumen and no other as spiritual father, such regulations, especially in the larger monasteries, were often difficult or impossible to enforce. Hence, as we have seen, the Studite while permitting a novice to choose someone other than the hegumen as his director, found it necessary to speak in the strongest terms against the practice of leaving one in favour of another, once a choice had been made. Moreover, we have found indications that in some monasteries that essential activity in the relationship, the revealing of one's thoughts, might be reduced to a mere formality or even virtually given up altogether. (2)

To some extent, therefore a "conscientious" father might expect to meet with similar difficulties whether dealing with monastic or non-monastic spiritual children, but it is obvious that there are basic differences between how a monk relates to his hegumen (or to someone deputising for the hegumen) and how a secular person relates to his self-chosen spiritual guide. To illustrate the difficulties which Symeon found or knew about in connection with secular disciples, we

(2) Sc. Par. 4, 709D: "many typika", e.g., 'Le typikon de la Théotokos Evergetis' (ed. P. Gautier), R.E.B. 40, (1980), p. 57, and based on this, that of St. Mamas after its restoration in 1159 (ed. S. Eustratiades) 'Ελληνικά', I, (1928), p. 284; Studite, cf. (b) above, p. 311; "reduced or given up", cf. Part Two, chapter III (c) pp. 192, 194f., inc. n.20.

shall draw on his Ep 3 which throws a good deal of light on the subject and also at times reveals him in an extremely pessimistic mood. (3)

In this letter Symeon is writing to someone living in the world, whom he is exhorting to find a spiritual father of the right kind for himself, and the words, "how one can recognise a man who is undefiled ..", occur in the title prefixed to it by a scribe. Amongst the various matters on which Symeon touches, we must first notice his complaint that many who have been baptized as infants and brought up with some knowledge of the Bible imagine that this will suffice for their salvation, provided it is supplemented by a purely formal practice of confession which falls far short of a genuine relationship with a spiritual father.

"Because from a child they have learnt the holy Scriptures, they think that is piety enough for them, and are of the opinion that for salvation it is sufficient simply to tell and confess their sins and receive pardon from their fathers, even if they have acquired no faith (in them) and even if they fail to accord them honour and respect as apostles of God, mediators and leaders".

Such people must in fact have had an attitude not unlike that of Symeon himself in his early days, with the important distinction that whereas he was willing to be led by the Studite to move into the class of disciples whom we have styled "sincere", those described in Ep 3 apparently saw no reason for not remaining perpetually "uncommitted" and thus causing much anxiety to any "conscientious" spiritual father.(4)

It is naturally impossible to know how far Symeon had personal experience of unsatisfactory disciples of this type, but in view of the fact that his reputation as an enthusiast and perfectionist is likely to have become known in Constantinople fairly soon after he was installed as hegumen, one might conjecture that not many resolutely

(3) Krivochéine in Lumière (especially pp. 99 - 101) has used excerpts from Ep 3 to exemplify Symeon's teaching about the need to seek out a spiritual father, and having found one to submit to him.

(4) Ep 3, 208r; ibid. 219r; "from a child", cf. II Timothy, 3, 15; "Symeon in his early days", v. Part One chapter I(a), pp. 107, I(b), p. 111.

"uncommitted" seculars would have been attracted to him. If so, we must suppose either that he is drawing on the experience of other spiritual fathers, including perhaps the Studite, who seems to have been in some respects less demanding, or alternatively that he is indulging in a general lament about the wickedness of the age, but without reference to specific instances. The latter ~~case~~ is perhaps the more probable, to judge from the tone of many parts of Ep.3. (5)

On the basis, presumably, of his knowledge of the tendency of some not to pay due respect to their spiritual father, Symeon in this letter more than once stresses the necessity of their doing this. He implies that some were too restrictive in their understanding of Christ's words,

"He who receives you, receives me",
and therefore utters the warning:

"Do not think to say within yourself that these words were spoken only to the apostles, and that it is they only to whom we are bound to give heed".

Elsewhere in the letter Symeon complains that in the present age no one, whether layman, monk, priest or bishop honours or receives anyone else as an apostle of God or disciple of Christ. On the contrary,

"we monks speak evil of other monks, priests of bishops, and laymen of everybody and of one another".

The situation as Symeon sees it is so gloomy that he keeps reverting to it, while emphasising also the honour which should be accorded to spiritual fathers. Thus he asks indignantly how we can be said to love our neighbours or our brethren,

"when we neither love, nor honour, nor glorify as we should, our fathers who have been responsible for our obtaining so many good things, and through whose agency God makes us his sons..."

(5) Studite, cf. Part One, chapter II(d), pp.155 .

The troubles he had willingly suffered because of his loyalty and devotion to the Studite in all likelihood rendered Symeon particularly sensitive to the failings of those who, when there was no question of any personal sacrifice on their part, refused to respect their spiritual fathers and thus actually subverted the whole relationship. (6)

Moreover, although as has been remarked tradition forbade disciples under any circumstances to presume to judge their fathers, there were now some, according to Symeon, who excused their lack of respect by saying:

"I do not observe him keeping God's commandments, and that is why I do not glorify him".

Such an objection Symeon dismisses as "a vain excuse" and turns on the imaginary objector with the indignant question:

"Do you keep them any better than he does? Is it on that basis that you are judging him?"

One must suppose that, writing to a person who may become the spiritual child either of himself or of some other father, Symeon is determined at the very outset to warn this potential disciple against the abuses he may come to hear of, or will perhaps already have heard of, in the circles in which he moves. Since the letter is written in Symeon's normal Greek style, the recipient will have been an educated man, and therefore a member of a restricted social class. It is not surprising if some members of this class, conscious of their status as persons at least on an equality with their spiritual fathers socially and so far as education went, were prone to adopt a rather unsubmitive attitude towards them. For the same reason, perhaps, as well as for natural human motives, though it is the latter which Symeon remarks on, a man

(6) Ep 3, 210r; "Christ's words" St. Matthew 10, 40; Ep 3, 218r; ibid., 219v; "troubles he willingly suffered", cf. (a) above, p. 300.

of this kind would claim the right to tell his director how he should direct him, and our conjecture that spiritual fathers found it at times difficult to deal with educated seculars finds some confirmation a few lines further on.

"As you can see and understand for yourself", Symeon writes,

"everything is in confusion, and all order and every divine tradition stemming from the apostles has been abolished, and there is a total rejection of the commandments of Christ. And this whole terrible and deadly state of affairs has come upon this generation because all men suppose that they have been initiated into divine matters and understand God's commandments and are capable of making proof of, and discerning, what is for their benefit". (7)

If we assume that he is guilty of some exaggeration, and that by "all men" he actually means "all those who have been educated", that is all of the class to which he and the person to whom he was writing belonged, we have in these lines valuable testimony to the independent attitude which many of them displayed and of which Symeon, as a spiritual father, absolutely disapproved. Moreover, even if his "all men" does include others beside the educated, these at least would be prominent amongst the people who laid claim to knowledge of "divine matters" and of "God's commandments".

Furthermore, a "conscientious" father, such as Symeon, might have to contend with competitors who in his opinion were "lax", and who, as it seemed to him, were unscrupulous in their attempts to attach disciples to themselves. The evidence to be adduced needs to be looked at in the light of Lemerle's remarks about Byzantine school-masters meeting what they felt to be unfair competition from one another.

(7) "tradition", cf. Part Two, Chapter IV(c), pp. 286f; Ep 3, 220r, cf. what was said Part Two, chapter IV(c), p. 294; "restricted social class", cf. Lemerle, Premier humanisme, p. 260, Mango, Byzantium, p. 236; "unsubmissive attitude", Indian clergy have faced similar difficulties with members of their congregations of a higher caste, or better educated, than themselves; Ep 3, 218v.

Symeon was in no doubt about this difficulty: the recipient of Ep 3 is warned of the danger of falling into the hands of a

"false apostle and false Christ",

for such from the beginning have been raised up by the devil, with the result that those who

"hide themselves beneath the darkness of their own passions, lusts and wills, and walk therein as in the depth of night, find teachers of their own kind".

These, of course, are the "lax" competitors who by pandering to their disciples or potential disciples create difficulties for spiritual fathers who are more demanding because they are of the "conscientious" type. (8)

"When therefore," Symeon advises,

"you see that someone is engaged in any of all these (wicked practices), that he is seeking the glory that comes from men, and that in order to please men he is relaxing the commandments of God, you must recognise him for a charlatan and not genuine".

It would appear that he knew of questionable means employed by such persons in their desire to attract disciples, for elsewhere he writes of some who

"before they are (spiritually) born, and while they still do not know themselves, let alone God, simply and boldly declare themselves fathers of others and teachers, and make every effort to draw to themselves, by all kinds of means and devices, everyone who is just abandoning the world and, as I have said, is looking for a spiritual father".

This agrees with what Magdalino has noticed in an author of the 12th century, Eustathios, who,

"thought that hypocritical holy men were motivated largely by the desire to acquire spiritual children".

Symeon's fury was poured out against such men, whom he accused of being hypocrites and lovers of luxury, implying of course that they were

(8) "Lemerle's remarks", v. above, p.317; Ep 3, 211r, previously cited Part Two, chapter I(d), p.125; Ep 3, 212v, cf. in this connection Ch I, 49, 24f., where even the monastic disciple is warned that "in these days there are many charlatans and false teachers".

guilty of "unfair competition" because for the sake of material gain they unscrupulously made everything easy for wealthy secular disciples.(9)

It is interesting to observe in this connection that Symeon was aware that spiritual children of this kind sometimes had no illusions about the moral stature of those whom they selected as fathers. This, indeed, was a fact which elicited from him a further complaint:

"Because, as I have said, they consider and hold all men to be sinners, but are persuaded that the grace of God is operative even through (the ministrations of) the unworthy; they imagine that they are receiving those (benefits) which are wrought in us by the Holy Spirit and the foretastes of the good things of eternity which are given to us. But the priest, through whom these things are bestowed upon them, they turn away from as a sinner, and they have similar ideas with regard to monks".

Symeon's indignation was thus aroused because he was confronted by a purely mechanical view of how forgiveness could be obtained and salvation secured, and he saw that this was leading some people deliberately to resort to "lax" spiritual fathers whom they more or less openly despised as unworthy. Such an emphasis on the ex opere operato efficacy of the sacraments ran counter to the deeply held convictions which are apparent at various places in his writings. But in an age when the possibility of contemporary sanctity was being called into question, it is not surprising that what was emphasised was the official, rather than the personal, qualifications of a spiritual father. The vigour of Symeon's reaction against such an outlook is manifested in Ep 1, written to defend the right of unordained monks to receive confessions, and to assert that it is the unworthiness of bishops and priests which caused "the gift of the Spirit" to be handed on to monks, who themselves were frequently not priests.

(9) Ep 3, 214v.; Ep 4, 165 - 170; Magdalino, op. cit., p. 58, n. 42, referring to Eustathios of Thessalonica (T.L.F. Tafel, ed. : Eustathii Opuscula, 96) ; "hypocrites and lovers of luxury", Ep 3, 215r.

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At the same time Symeon was constrained to add characteristically that the devil had been at work in the monasteries also, and that many "monks" were in reality "not monks at all". (10)

As Symeon saw it, then, a spiritual father must expect to encounter difficulties in his dealings with non-monastic disciples because of the existence of monks eager, for the wrong reasons, to become spiritual fathers, and prepared to be unscrupulous in their attempts to reach their goal. The existence of such men would no doubt make it hard in some cases for a "conscientious" father to bring to "sincere" discipleship a secular spiritual child, who began by being somewhat "uncommitted". In a monastery, the hegumen, for good or ill, might expect to have power to prevent a monk from abandoning him in favour of some other self-chosen spiritual father; over those living in the world neither Symeon nor any other "conscientious" father could exercise any control except through force of character and pastoral skill. It is for this reason that in this section, but not in the previous one, we have met with denunciations of "lax" fathers and "unfair competition". (11)

It would, however, be a mistake so to dwell on difficulties as to forget that just because of its entirely voluntary nature the relationship of a spiritual father with a secular disciple might be a very satisfactory one. In spite of the gloomy tone so apparent in Ep. 3.

(10) Ep. 3, 218v; "deeply held convictions", v. Ep. 1, passim, and cf. Cat. XXVIII 190 - 300 for a vehement expression of the need for sanctity as well as ordination if a priest is to be a true minister of absolution; "contemporary sanctity", cf. (b) above, pp. 305f.; Ep. 1, p. 124, 1 - 11, ending μοναχοι; πᾶσιν ἀμόναχοι.

(11) "monks eager to become spiritual fathers", cf. (b) above, pp. 312 - 314.

Symeon in Ep 2 gives no hint that the disciple whom he is addressing is anything other than obedient and submissive. It must be assumed also that the secular disciples of Symeon mentioned by Nicetas were not of the kind who caused him anxieties of the sort we have been looking at. Men such as the patrician Genesios, the "prominent personage" Christopher Phagura, and others of similar standing were proud to be numbered amongst Symeon's spiritual children, and while doubtless Nicetas records their names as a method of honouring his hero, he would scarcely have done so had he known that they had proved "uncommitted" or unsatisfactory in some other way. (12)

(12) Nicetas, Life, 54, 6, 55, 1f., 100, 1f. (where Christopher Phagura is described as *ὁ τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἀρχιερέων*), 102, 8f.

V (d) Symeon's Consequent Reluctance.

"If true directors are rare, true spiritual children are none the less so, because there are very few persons who aspire to sanctity through the way of the cross and continually dying to themselves".

As will thus have become clear from the preceding sections, there is no inducement for a "conscientious" person to seek to become a spiritual father. If he undertakes the role, he will do so because he sees it as a duty laid on him by God, a duty which may well in itself be unwelcome. This was certainly Symeon's attitude, for we have seen him conscious of being beset by many difficulties in his attempts to perform the work. Moreover, as Völker has observed, he not only regarded it as inevitable that a "conscientious" father would meet with hatred on the part of those who accounted themselves wise on the basis of their worldly wisdom, but also envisaged the possibility of his suffering a fate similar to that of Christ. It was Symeon's understanding of the evil involved in burying one's talent in the earth that impelled him, in spite of everything, to minister in this way. (1)

There is ample evidence of his reluctance. Thus in Cat III he says to his monks:

"I exhort you, but I am not listened to, I rebuke you and am rejected, I reprove you and am hated, I chasten you and am chastened and indeed hunted down as an enemy - and yet I can obtain no remission from doing all this. I should like to give up, and attend only to my own faults, but whenever I decide to cease from (doing) this (work for you), my heart is set alight like a flame, and I, poor wretch, am once again condemned to the same weary round... I am amazed at how we .. rejoice to bind ourselves to our sins and devour those who are trying to free us from such bonds".

Symeon here lays bare his misery at the rejection of his efforts to fulfil his duty as hegumen and spiritual father, a duty which he would dearly like to abandon, but from which he can not escape. Against his

(1) J.N. Grou, Manual for Interior Souls, (English translation) London, 1892, (reprinted 1952), p. 129; Völker, Praxis, pp. 114 - 116, cf. Cat XV, 26 - 36, Cat XX, 130 - 160; "burying one's talent", a reference to St. Matthew 25, 18 (cf. St. Luke 19, 20), an image to which Symeon several times recurs, v. Cat VI, 223f., Cat XXXIV, 24f., 61 - 67, Hym XLIII, 122f., and Hym XXVIII, 109f. in which he acknowledges a fear that he may have been guilty of behaving like this because of his "daily negligence".

will, he is constrained to continue the work, and the language he uses about the flame in his heart echoes that of the psalmist and of the prophet Jeremiah, and makes it clear that the constraint is, as he understands it, of divine origin. Nothing less would be strong enough to overcome his natural shrinking from being devoured by the very men whom he is attempting to set free from their bondage to sin. In Cat XIX he is found appealing to his flock concerning the burden which as spiritual father he has to bear.

"If you truly love me, reveal to me the purposes of your hearts. Let me know, not merely by your words, but by your deeds, that God is with you and that I have not laboured in vain. But if you will not do this, why do you come to me, lay this burden upon me and then by departing burden me the more? It is a burden, which - most paradoxically - produces in me both unspeakable joy and boundless grief: joy because I pray for you and rejoice in the hope of recovering you (for God), but grief because I am afraid of your being stifled by the world, being deceived and becoming false to Christ - and this thought makes me tremble and puts me out of my wits".

Here it is true that there is a certain ambivalence, in that the "burden" is capable of giving Symeon joy as well as grief. But the word he uses, *βαρος*, is that which St. Paul employs when he bids the Galatians to "bear one another's burdens", and this, in the light of the fact that Symeon affirms that he is being left to bear it alone, suggests that the predominating image is one of something he would prefer not to have to carry. This impression is confirmed by the fact that in the last sentence quoted he lays much less emphasis upon his hopes than upon his fears. As spiritual father, he feels himself responsible for the salvation of the monks who are his spiritual children, and this sense of responsibility gives rise to the fear that he may "have .. laboured in vain", if in the end they prove to have been

"false to Christ". The passage thus suggests that in spite of his recognising the possibility of spiritual fatherhood being a source of joy, Symeon is much more concerned with the unwelcome nature of the burden it imposes, and that it is far from being a role which he was eager to adopt. (2)

Furthermore, since as pastor the father ought to lead his flock to

"the spiritual mountains of mystical contemplations",

it is inevitable that he should speak of his own spiritual experiences in his efforts to guide and inspire his disciples. Symeon at times attempted to conceal himself by describing visions and revelations granted him as though they had been told to him by someone else.

He did not, however, escape the obvious criticism, from those of his monks who were unsympathetic, that he was in fact depicting himself in a conceited and boastful fashion. Symeon was naturally sensitive to such suggestions and felt the need to answer them. On one occasion when he did this, he used language which again indicates that he was reluctant to undertake his duty and did so only because he felt compelled by God. Part of his answer to an imaginary objector runs as follows:

"The Apostles and the Fathers have spoken in terms not different from my words and even going beyond them. However, (in their case) the speakers appear worthy to be believed, which renders what they say acceptable and credible, whereas our pitiful personality causes even what is admitted by all to seem false and abominable to you".

He then adds that he has a further reason, the need to combat a prevalent error, which has led him, albeit unwillingly, to make public what he has revealed to them. Aware, then, of the reaction he was

(2) Cat III, 48 - 62 (extracts), reminiscent of Psalm 38, 4 (39, 3), and Jeremiah 20, 9; Cat XIX 82 - 92, with reminiscences of I Corinthians 4, 5, Philippians 2, 16 and more remotely of St. Matthew 13, 22 (cf. St. Mark 4, 19); "βάρβαρος", v. Galatians 6, 2 and cf. Part Two, chapter II(a), p. 160, n. 3; "responsible", cf. Part Two, chapter III(b).

inevitably provoking in some of the monks who heard him. Symeon insists that this part of his work as pastor is one which he would much rather not undertake, for to these critics he was conscious of appearing not in the guise of an "apostle" but of a "pitiful personality". Doubtless he felt differently when he was sure that he was speaking to sympathetic disciples, who would be willing to regard him, as he had regarded the Studite, as Christ's "holy disciple and apostle". Since, however, he was compelled as hegumen to minister to many who did not so regard their pastor, his distaste for the task laid on him is fully comprehensible.(3)

At the beginning of Ep 4 we have an expression of Symeon's reluctance to be involved in any task which would bring him into relations with others. This must be understood as including spiritual fatherhood, especially since he goes on to explain that his reluctance is overcome by his knowledge of his duty to help his neighbour.

"I could wish", he writes,

"to be so utterly dead to the world, my beloved brother, as that no-one on earth should be acquainted with me but I should indeed pass my life-time like a dead man, and, without revealing myself, live the life which is hidden in Christ..That is the life I longed for and am even now longing for, but since - as Paul says - we are not our own, for we were bought with a price, we ought not only to have regard to our own interests or to ourselves, but each ought (to be concerned) to please his neighbour for his good, and there is thus laid on me the absolute necessity to perform with all eagerness the injunctions of my Master and Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed me".

Here there is no question of specific difficulties caused by

"uncommitted" disciples; it might perhaps be thought that, as these are the opening sentences of his letter, Symeon is indulging in merely

(3) "spiritual mountains ...", v. Part Two, chapter II(a), p.157, where Hym XLIII, 70 - 73 is quoted; "by someone else", as in Cat VI, 121 - 131, and Cat XVI and Cat XXII and cf. the biographical note PG 120, 685D - 688A, where he is said to have spoken "as if about some other person, trying to conceal himself in order to escape the glory that comes from men .."; "criticism", cf. (b) above, pp.306f; notes 7 and 8, and as well as the passages there mentioned, Cat VI, 225 - 235 and Cat XXXIV, 97f.; "his answer", Cat XXXIV, 188 - 196 (translated or summarised); "prevalent error", the idea that there were no contemporary saints, v. (b) above, pp.305f.; "holy disciple...", Cat XXVI, 160f.

conventional expressions, which are in reality devoid of meaning. But as against this interpretation, it must be insisted that to tax him with artifice of this kind is a gratuitous accusation, since as we have already seen he felt at times that the work he undertook as spiritual father might even endanger his own salvation. Here he writes of his reluctance being overcome by his understanding that he has a duty to fulfil towards his neighbour, whereas at other times he was conscious of being impelled by the Scriptural warning against burying one's talent in the earth. But although Symeon's reluctance to act as a spiritual father might be overcome, it did not, of course, disappear.(4)

We should not be surprised at his shrinking from this work. Clearly Symeon belonged to the class of "conscientious" spiritual fathers, and it is self-evident that these are the very men who will find themselves confronted by difficulties and anxieties of the kind we have been considering, but which will not trouble their "lax" counterparts. Furthermore, as the passage quoted from Ep 4 suggests, the better fitted a person is to function as a spiritual guide to others because of his personal experience (πείρα) of divine realities, the more unwilling he will probably be to undertake a duty which is so demanding and so likely to appear to him as threatening to interrupt his own converse with God. Symeon clearly felt this way, and therefore he needed a force as powerful as "the injunctions of (his) Master and Lord" in order to overcome his reluctance.(5)

(4) Ep 4, 6 - 17 (extracts); "hidden in Christ", a reminiscence of Colossians 3, 3, and cf. the Studite's remark about the monk in his monastery, Cat VI, 172 - 179; "as Paul says", cf. I Corinthians 6, 19f., Philippians 2, 4, Romans 15, 2; "endanger his own salvation", cf. (b) above, pp. 314; "burying one's talent", cf. p. 327n.1 above, and references given there.

(5) "One does not become a Spiritual Father because he seeks it or wants it or desires it .. In spiritual paternity, it is the son who seeks, and the Father comes into the role of paternity only with anguish and fear", M.B. Pennington, O Holy Mountain, London, 1979, p. 98, reporting the words of a modern hegumen; for the importance of πείρα cf. Part Two, chapter II(f)

Although, as we have had occasion to notice, it would be going too far to claim Symeon as the embodiment of all that a spiritual father should be, the very fact that he was reluctant is a testimony to his having been genuinely called to, and fitted for, the task. Spiritual fatherhood is best exercised not by those who for higher or lower motives put themselves forward as volunteers, but rather by men such as Symeon who would much rather

"live the life which is hidden in Christ",
but who are nevertheless convinced that Christ has called them to this ministry and therefore accept the vocation in obedience to him.

CONCLUSION

SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD: SYMEON AND THE PRESENT DAY

We have now, through Symeon, been introduced to a great variety of material illustrating spiritual fatherhood. It is necessary, therefore, to try to draw some conclusions from this study, relating them to contemporary Western Christianity and its growing interest in matters of this kind. First, however, it will be appropriate to say something about Symeon's Church and its attitude to him.

Völker believes that after his death little circles of faithful devotees kept Symeon's teaching alive, with the result that the hesychast movement was later profoundly influenced by it. Krivochéine in addition states that he has always had disciples and fervent admirers, and that the manuscripts of his works were copied particularly in the fourteenth century and especially on Mount Athos. On the other hand, Krivochéine has also to admit that his place in the Church's calendar has been minimal, that the office for his commemoration was only composed in the eighteenth century, and that no church has ever been dedicated in his honour. The reason for this is that

"his unique kind of personality, mystical and pugnacious at the same time, his apostolic zeal in preaching the vision of God for all Christians - all this upset faint-hearted temperaments, and they preferred to forget Symeon".

Krivochéine, of course, in this judgement mainly has in mind Symeon's work as a mystic, but we have seen reasons for supposing that much the same would hold good if he were being assessed from the point of view of his teaching about spiritual fatherhood: a great deal that he wrote on this subject would be readily accepted as valuable, but

because of his strictures on unworthy bishops, priests and hegumens, together with his insistence on the spiritual but unordained monk's possessing the right to absolve, he would scarcely be popular in "official" Church circles. (1)

It was noted in the Introduction that there has of late been a revival of interest in Symeon, but this has concentrated on the mystical aspect of his writings. There is here perhaps a danger that the real man whom Krivochéine depicts may be forgotten, and that he may become for some of his admirers little more than a precious exhibit, newly rediscovered, who deserves to be displayed in the gallery of mystics. This danger, at least, has been avoided in this thesis, for in attempting to study Symeon in connection with spiritual fatherhood, I have been conscious all the time of encountering a genuinely human personality, saintly indeed, yet not without faults, and one who while he has much of value to teach us, should not be regarded as having uttered the final and infallible word on the subject.

Concerning spiritual fatherhood there is indeed much which Christians of to-day might profitably learn from Symeon, both from his actual teachings and from the ways by which he was led to formulate and utter them. He was not an innovator, but the heir to a long-established tradition which to a considerable extent he revived in an age when its vigour had declined. At the same time, as there has repeatedly been occasion to notice, it was his personal discipleship

(1) Völker, Praxis, p. 489, of. F. Halkin, 'Deux Vies de S. Maxime le Kausokalybe, ermite au Mont Athos (XIVe S.)' Saints moines d'Orient, London (Variorum Reprints), 1973, XI, p. 38, n.1; Krivochéine, Lumière, pp. 421 - 424, quotation from p. 423; Hausherr, Life, p. VIII, n. 4, gives the full title and some extracts from the office, and Christophorides in his bibliography (op. cit., p. 150) mentions a new critical edition of it, prepared by S. Koutsas and published in Athens in 1975; Krivochéine, Lumière, p. 424, n.5, remarks that because the day of Symeon's death, 12 March, falls in Lent, his feast day has been transferred to 12 October, but that practically no notice is taken of it.

to the Studite that was by far the most potent influence upon him, leading him to a real understanding of spiritual fatherhood, and fitting him to become in turn a practitioner of the art. From this, a very obvious truth suggests itself, namely that if spiritual fatherhood is to come into its own in the West to-day, there is a need to explore the tradition of the whole Church and re-discover the treasures to be found in writings such as those of Symeon, while at the same time it is essential to encourage living spiritual fathers to emerge in increasing numbers, so that from them disciples and potential successors may gain that personal experience which in Symeon's case proved to be indispensable. (2)

If personal experience and 'apprenticeship' are held to be vitally important, it follows then that we should be wrong to expect to get from Symeon anything in the nature of a receipt for successful spiritual fatherhood in this or any other age. Where the qualities and temperaments of individuals are so much involved, the teaching of one man, however eminent, cannot be adopted tout court by others of the same place and age, let alone by those who live in a different century and a different land. Yet from Symeon we can receive many flashes of enlightenment, as well as the inspiration which can lead to attempts similar to his being made in parts of the Christian Church which at present are conscious of their need to develop the practice of spiritual fatherhood. Moreover, even that which strikes us as strange, questionable or unacceptable in what Symeon had to say deserves pondering, for from it we may at least gain fresh and valuable insights as we come to look at our religion in new ways. (3)

(2) "revivified", cf. Cat XXXIV, 261f., "If we are restoring the teachings of the Lord and the apostles, which some are perverting..."

(3) "apprenticeship", v. Part Two, chapter II (a), pp. 135-139.

In this connection, we may begin by recalling the fact that in the training of his spiritual children Symeon was shown to have been concerned not only with moral and devotional matters, but also with physical asceticism, diet, fasting and sleep, in regard to all of which each person had to be treated as an individual. To-day in the West, where many have a falsely over-spiritual conception of what religion means, it may appear somewhat surprising to suggest that the ability to assess the needs and capacities of spiritual children in these respects is a skill which a father needs to acquire. It should be, however, a natural feature of an incarnational religion such as Christianity, that it takes seriously the bodily as well as the intellectual, volitional and spiritual aspects of discipleship, and it would be a mistake ~~to~~ write off as outdated Symeon's evident concern with what must be classed as primarily physical. It goes without saying that his actual instructions require adapting to contemporary conditions, but the underlying principle is certainly one which has not ceased to be valid. (4)

A much greater difficulty for modern man who is very suspicious of authority will be found in the concept of the spiritual father as a living 'icon' of Christ, with all that this entails when worked out in practice. Symeon, for his part, was prepared to describe the relationship between the spiritual child and his father in terms which mirror that between the disciples and Christ, as recounted in the Gospels. To many to-day such an idea will be totally alien and indeed abhorrent. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact in the West the significance of icons is still frequently not understood. If, however,

(4) "physical asceticism", v. Part Two, chapter III (c), pp. 181-190.

what when dealing with this matter we called the sacramental function of an icon is properly grasped, we have the basis for assessing fairly what this concept demands both of the disciple and of the father. It is necessary to rid ourselves of the misunderstandings which would treat an icon as a representation of an absent figure or as a visual aid designed to assist the worshipper's imagination, and to accept that its purpose is to be a means by which one is as it were brought into the presence of the heavenly being which it depicts. Thus it has for centuries been understood that any honour paid to the icon is not paid to wood and paint but to the prototype which the icon signifies. Accordingly icons, like sacraments, will not be needed in heaven. Only when this is realised is it possible to appraise properly the requirement that a disciple should regard his spiritual father as an 'icon' of Christ. (5)

This is all linked, from the point of view of the spiritual child, with other requirements which we encountered elsewhere. Thus, first of all, he must prayerfully seek to be led to the right father, as Symeon emphasised, and must observe carefully any man to whom he thinks of attaching himself in order to see whether he is genuinely possessed of the Holy Spirit. It is not until he is satisfied about this that the intending disciple should actually commit himself to the spiritual father, whom from now on he is to regard as being for him an 'icon' of Christ. Acting thus, he will without question obey all his father's orders as if they came directly from God, and even though at times his obedience may be tested in painful ways, he will strive gladly to do all that he is bidden. For the same reason, however much he may be

(5) "living 'icon' of Christ", v. Part Two, chapter IV(a); "honour paid to the icon", cf. K. Ware, 'Man, Woman, and the Priesthood of Christ', Man, Woman and Priesthood (ed. P. Moore), London, 1978, p. 81, citing (p. 179, n.35) Basil (PG 32, 149C) and John of Damascus (On the Holy Icons 1.21; ed. Kotter, p. 108 - PG 94, 1252).

tempted to judge his father's behaviour, he will refrain from doing so, and will continue in all circumstances to be a faithful disciple. For the spiritual child such a programme, in spite of much that is daunting, will clearly have its attractions, for he will be set free from doubts as to whether he is on the right path, and will have confidence that if only he perseveres he will receive perfect spiritual health and be brought into that relationship with God which God wishes him to enjoy. The temptation to spiritual infantilism may beset some disciples who find it attractive to 'deify' their spiritual father, and this the father will have to combat; on the other hand, it is likely that those who need to be set free from

"gathering in the worthless fruits of (their) own will" are going to be helped to this end by consciously and deliberately regarding their spiritual father as an 'icon', and thus assuring themselves that it is Christ's will, not that of some fellow-human, however saintly, to which they are striving to be obedient.(6)

From the side of the spiritual father, the concept we are considering could obviously be the source of a temptation to a disastrous enhancing of his own self-esteem. But he will only succumb to this if he forgets what an icon's function really is, and - to use another concept of Symeon's to which we shall revert - fails to understand that his role is no more than that of a $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$: his task - to refer again to Symeon - is to prepare the disciple for a personal 'Pentecost' and then to stand aside, happy that one who had been a "babe in Christ" is now mature. In the same way, while the process of training is still continuing, he will not seek submissiveness

(6) "Symeon emphasised", v. Part Two, chapter I(d); "obey", v. Part Two, chapter IV (b); "refrain from judging", v. Part Two, chapter IV(c), pp.286f; "continue to be faithful", *ibid.*, pp.288 - 291; "spiritual infantilism", cf. Part Two, chapter III(d), p.254; "worthless fruits of (their) own will", *Cat XX*, 53f., cf. Part Two, chapter IV (b), pp.272 - 277.

from a spiritual child in order to gratify himself, but solely for the good of the other. (7)

The above is an attempt at a sympathetic presentation of something which obviously creates difficulty for present-day Christians in the West. To regard a spiritual father as an 'icon' of Christ may be a fine ideal, but the practically-minded can be excused for fearing that the potential dangers are overwhelming. Indeed, as we discovered particularly from Symeon's Ep 3, he himself was forced to complain that all too often the reality was very different, both as regards spiritual children and their fathers. It is therefore necessary to admit that one should expect that only in exceptional circumstances will such an ideal ever be realised. This is not to say that it should be abandoned, for it has indeed much to teach us, but it would militate against the development of spiritual fatherhood, were an attempt made to insist upon it as the only possible 'model'. While the authority of the spiritual father needs to be recognised and accepted, this iconic estimate of himself may expose a person who has not yet reached the heights of sanctity to temptations greater than he ought to be expected to cope with, while to impose it as a sine qua non of discipleship may put an initial stumbling-block in the way of many and prevent them from ever approaching the father they need. To learn from Symeon does not mean to follow him slavishly, and at present anyhow it would seem necessary

(7) "π α.δ. γ. λ. γ. ο. ι", v. Part Two, chapter III(d), pp.253f, chapter IV(a), p.262; "personal 'Pentecost'", v. Part Two, chapter III(d), pp.254 f.

to look for 'models' other than that of an 'icon' of Christ in order to secure a basis for the spiritual father's authority. (8)

For quite different reasons it might to-day be anticipated that a requirement that a disciple reveal so far as possible all his thoughts to his spiritual father would meet with some resistance. Indeed Symeon and other earlier fathers did not always find it easy to persuade their spiritual children to do this. Now, as then, skill is clearly needed to induce such disclosures, together of course with skill in discerning the meaning of what is disclosed. The whole subject is one of considerable importance for Western Christians in the present age, when counselling is on the increase and less use is being made of the confessional. The counsellor, however, is only interested in what relates to the specific problems or problem about which his help is being sought, while the teaching of Anglican and Roman Catholic theology insists that in confession only acknowledged sins, and therefore only thoughts recognised as sinful, are bound to be revealed. By contrast, the tradition into which Symeon entered, and to which he contributed so much, pre-supposes that the spiritual child ought to disclose all the thoughts that have come into his mind, evil, indifferent or good. If this is faithfully carried out, it must make great demands on the father's patience, as well as requiring that he have the ability to discern the significance of what he is told, and thus diagnose correctly the condition and needs of his disciple.

(8) Ep 3, v. Part Two, chapter V(c); for injunctions comparable with those of Symeon and to be found in the Roman Catholic tradition, cf. "When once we have sufficient proof .. that our director is a good and upright man, that he is learned and enlightened, and that he is guided by the Spirit of God, then we must obey him in all things as we would obey God Himself; we must never allow ourselves to judge him ...". J.N. Grou (1731 - 1803), Manual for Interior Souls, (English translation), London, 1892, pp. 176f.

We are, in fact, here quite close to the practice of the modern psycho-analyst who takes note of everything his patients can recall, although he of course, qua psycho -analyst, operates on a purely secular basis. But in this connection it is interesting to observe the importance which Symeon, like Climacus and others before him, did ascribe to the ther apeutic aspect of spiritual fatherhood, as well as the emphasis he gave to the need for psychological expertise. While we may readily concur with the stress on healing rather than judging the disciple, may recognise the utility of the latter's disclosing all his thoughts of whatever kind, and may agree that a spiritual father certainly needs to have some practical psychological skill, we cannot but be aware of potential difficulties and dangers involved in the practice we are discussing. Apart from possible reluctance on the part of the spiritual child, there is the obvious problem involved in the amount of time that might be required to deal with even a single disciple, and also the risk that someone who in respect of psychological knowledge is no more than an amateur might be led on into venturing into areas beyond his skill, and so perhaps causing very great damage. Yet, in spite of possible objections, it must be said that Symeon's teaching about this matter, deserves careful and sympathetic consideration.(9)

If there is a failure to differentiate between it and the *αἰσθητικὴ* of Stoicism, what Symeon taught about dispassion is also likely to arouse suspicion amongst Christians of the present age in Western countries. Because he was grounded in tradition, because of his opportunity to observe the Studite and because of his own experience, Symeon indeed

(9) v. Part Two, chapter III(c), pp. 190 - 199 concerning the disclosure of thoughts (λογισμοί); "ther apeutic aspect", v. Part Two, chapter II(c)

might be expected to do as he did and stress the great importance of this quality. But in a materialistic civilisation, and at a time when even many Christians are prepared not to apologize for, but to justify their failures in self-restraint, however carefully dispassion is defined, it is scarcely to be expected that any attempt to inculcate it will meet with much acceptance: it will more probably be dismissed as some kind of masochistic aberration, and if anyone observes the way in which it has had a particular connection with "holy fools" and their odd behaviour, suspicion will only be increased. In fact, however, the Western tradition of ascetic theology has always inculcated "detachment" from the things of this life, which, innocent though they may be in themselves, can all too easily engross the soul and keep it away from God. Although dispassion perhaps goes beyond this, since it could be described as freedom from "the tyranny of the instincts", the two concepts are far from dissimilar. Moreover, provided dispassion is kept uncontaminated by Stoicism, and provided that it is understood not to be an end in itself, but rather a means towards closer fellowship with God, there is no need for it to be regarded with suspicion, and it may well in fact be something greatly needed by the Church to-day. (10)

To demonstrate that dispassion really is far removed from Stoic ἀπάθεια, we have only to proceed to reflect on Symeon's stress on the importance of compunction and tears, again something which is

(10) "dispassion", v. Part Two, chapter III(c), pp. 234-244; "detachment". cf. H. Northcott, The Venture of Prayer, London, 1950, passim, especially pp. 181f.; "tyranny of the instincts", quoted Part Two, chapter III(c), p. 236, from J. Seward, Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality, Oxford, 1980, p. 30.

alien to the spirit of much modern Western Christianity. In teaching the importance of these things, Symeon was of course following a tradition which had its roots in the distant past and had been firmly upheld by the Studite. It is, moreover, only within the last hundred years or so that in Britain there has been a falling-of in manifestations of religious emotion in the form of weeping when convicted of sin by an evangelistic sermon, and indeed recently tears have begun to reappear in circles influenced by the charismatic movement. While it may well be held that the tradition, adopted by Symeon with perhaps excessive ardour, has in it the dangers of over-preoccupation with one's wretchedness and over-indulgence in what may be mere superficial emotionalism, at the same time it is worth considering whether we are justified in neglecting the importance of tears as the outward sign of sorrow for sin. We are perhaps suspicious of tears for the very reason that we are insufficiently concerned about sin. Christianity is impoverished because, so it appears, spiritual guides are often paying too little attention to matters such as the holiness of God and the deadly effects of sin, while at the same time ignoring the fact that in his religious practices man's emotional needs demand due recognition. The artificial inducing of compunction is indeed to be regarded with abhorrence, but with no less abhorrence ought we to regard a climate of opinion which suggests that there is something Christian in the suppression of those tears which are the outward signs of genuine religious emotion. That, indeed, is Stoicism and not Christianity.(11)

(11) "tears", v. Part Two, chapter III(o), pp.230f for a method taught by Symeon, by which one might hope to induce them.

The matters reviewed in the last few pages are examples of points at which Symeon's teaching, although not to be dismissed out of hand, is unlikely to find or deserve general and immediate assent as it stands. ⁽¹²⁾ Much more readily acceptable will be the insistence that the process of training is intended to lead to a conscious personal relationship with God, something demonstrated by our examination both of earlier writers and of Symeon himself. The latter, while not innovating when he speaks of a condition in which a spiritual child reaches the stage of no longer needing his father, nevertheless uses the image of Pentecost in a striking manner, in line with his habit of laying stress upon the Holy Spirit's activity. Taken in conjunction with his references to the Studite as his *πα.δ αγωγός*, this leads to the conclusion that vitally important as is the part which the spiritual father must play, it is yet in the last resort no more than a preparatory one. This is in one way not surprising in the light of Symeon's statement that at the very beginning of one's discipleship the Spirit might send one to a different father: the Holy Spirit is, for Symeon, the determining factor from start to finish. In another sense, however, the idea of the disciple's becoming somehow independent of his spiritual father is not what we should expect to find in Symeon, since his devotion to the Studite would not naturally lead us to anticipate discovering in him any suggestion of this kind. It is true that, as was pointed out, Symeon on the basis of his own experience held that the father has the vital and responsible duty of ensuring that his disciple is truly in touch with God and not the victim of diabolical illusions, but it is necessary to emphasise the unexpected yet spiritually mature way in which the human guide is by implication forbidden to hold on possessively to the one who has been

(12) In Part Two, chapter III (b) p. 176 we observed that he scarcely uses the *πα.δ αγωγός* concept, which therefore need not be discussed.

relying on his help. This lesson will be accepted as being in this and in every age important for those who have the function of directing others in their spiritual development. Since human nature is what it is, there is always the possibility that even those who genuinely possess the skill and experience which qualifies them to act as spiritual fathers may unconsciously wish to retain their children in an infantile condition, in order not to forfeit the self-esteem which results from having others dependent on them. (13)

In many respects the Byzantium of Symeon's time and Britain in the late twentieth century are poles apart. The inhabitants of the two would, however, be found largely in agreement, even if for different reasons, on one point: that sanctity is not a goal to be aimed at by contemporary Christians. Attention was drawn to the way in which his certainty that the Studite was a saint led Symeon to oppose vehemently the current assumption that it was impossible to be holy and that the attempt should not even be made; on the contrary, he insisted that it was not only possible since there were some actual living saints, but also that it was something at which all Christians were obliged to be aiming, with the duty of assisting them resting in consequence upon spiritual fathers. Such was the position he came to hold as he moved on from the immature outlook which at first he had shared with his contemporaries, and according to which the real function of a spiritual father was simply to ensure his children's ultimate salvation, something that Symeon had felt would be certainly guaranteed if only he could find a living saint to whom to attach himself.

(13) "Pentecost", cf. above p. (4), n.(7); *Πεντηστήκαια*, *ibid*; "different spiritual father", v. Part Two, chapter I(d), p.125; "truly in touch with God", v. Part Two, chapter III(d), p. 345 .

To-day it is probably only the very rare Christian who would be prepared to say, as "a young French pastor" said to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, that his "real purpose in life" is "to become a saint". On the contrary, whether from a misunderstanding of what sanctity is, or from false humility or for some other reason, most Christians, at least most British Christians, would instinctively dissent from such an aspiration, as Bonhoeffer did, even though he was impressed by it. Thus even those who may feel an urge to find a spiritual father are unlikely to seek for him in order that they may attain to sanctity through his help; their motives are more likely to be expressed in terms of receiving a deeper religious experience or a greater degree of personal integration. As an American writer of this century has put it:

"Men shrink from the idea of living lives of holiness as though it were presumptuous. They regard it as the special privilege for the few, rather than as the normal life of grace for the many and as the vocation which is universal".

But the same writer has no difficulty in showing that in fact the vocation is universal, and this means that to help his spiritual children to become more saintly is indeed an inescapable part of the father's task, for the fulfilment of which he may receive from Symeon both inspiration and guidance. And if at times Symeon's demands are felt to be excessive, a spiritual father of to-day may wish to put alongside his teaching the words of a modern preacher:

"Saintliness means one thing only: some quality or aspect of Christ built up in a person through the creative work of the Holy Spirit"(14)

(14) "the Studite a saint", cf. Part Two, chapter V(b), p.305; "all Christians", Cat XXIX, for example, is intended to oppose the "heresy" of those who say that sanctity is impossible and refuse to try to attain it, v. also Cat X, 26 - 39; "immature outlook", cf. Part Two, chapter I(a); D. Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, 1st English edition, London, 1953, p. 168; "American writer", S.C. Hughson, With Christ in God, London, 1948, p. 12; ibid. pp. 6 - 10; "modern preacher", H.A. Williams, The True Wilderness, London, 1965, p. 166.

Our discussion has now led us to a point at which it is natural to reflect on what Symeon has to tell us about the motives which inspire people to seek a spiritual father. We have remarked that in this day the wish to become a saint was unlikely to have been one of them - something which is true of our own time also. But, for good or ill, it is also improbable that in this country there are many potential disciples who would, like the young Symeon, be concerned to find the right father in the belief that through him, and in particular through his effective intercession, they might in the end attain salvation. However here we must again remember that Symeon's actual experience with the Studite transformed his understanding of the purpose for which spiritual fatherhood is intended. When understood, as he came to understand it, as a means of reaching spiritual maturity through a living relationship with God into which one is progressively led by one's father, it is something which does in all likelihood correspond with what is wanted by many Christians, and indeed by many who would not wish to account themselves members of the Church, in whatever way that is defined. In fact, although we have now avoided the use of the words "saint" and "holiness", what has just been said might be accepted as at least a partial definition of sanctity. Paradoxically also, through the ministry of spiritual fatherhood, those searching for such maturity might well later come to a better and fuller understanding of what salvation means in the light of God's holiness. They would then set at least as much store by their father's prayers for them as by his guidance and training of them. (15)

(15) "came to understand it", of. Part Two, chapter I(b).

But whatever one's motives, and given that one is sincerely seeking the right kind of "conscientious" father, where is one to look for him? Symeon's answer, of course, was that he would not necessarily be found in the ranks of the priesthood, but would be one of the rather small number of genuinely holy monks, who whether priests or not, proved by their very existence that sanctity was possible even in Byzantium in the tenth or eleventh century. In respect of the formal pronouncing of absolution, Symeon's insistence that priesthood is unnecessary has not been accepted by his own Church, even if, as Krivocheine points out, it has never either been officially condemned by it. But, as this whole thesis will have made clear, spiritual fatherhood is in any case concerned with far more than the pronouncing of absolution, while even the Western Church, which is quite definite in restricting sacramental absolution to bishops and priests, allows anyone endowed with the necessary 'charisma' to undertake a ministry of spiritual direction. Symeon inevitably tended to assume as self-evident that really holy Christians were unlikely to be found outside monasteries, even though he well recognised that many monks were far from being living examples of holiness. In essence, of course, by insisting that spiritual fatherhood is a 'charismatic' ministry, the validity of which cannot be guaranteed by the mere holding of any position whatsoever in the Church, Symeon's message is that a spiritual father may be sought from amongst any and every category of Christians. In particular, in times and places such as our own in which it has come to be recognised that holiness is not at all the monopoly of the cloister, it may be anticipated that persons well qualified to undertake this ministry will be found unordained and very much in - though not of - the world. This is not, naturally, to go to the length of suggesting that it would be fruitless to seek such people among the clergy and the technically "religious", for indeed

one ought to expect that the 'charisma' would have been bestowed on many belonging to these classes; all that is being said is that, following Symeon's insight, there is no reason to consider Christians in any state of life as being ipso facto excluded from possessing the necessary qualifications. (16)

Here it must be added that, although there is nothing in Symeon's writings directly referring to the matter, it would seem to be entirely in accordance with his general line of thought to insist that women as well as men are capable of doing what we have seen to be required: tradition in fact knows of spiritual mothers, a few of whose sayings have been preserved, and indeed Hausherr states that the only thing a "spiritual mother" could not do was to pronounce absolution. In modern times in Britain, women such as Evelyn Underhill have become well-known as spiritual directors, and if it is accepted that - as Symeon insisted - spiritual fatherhood/motherhood is not necessarily restricted to those who have been ordained, there will be no need for the controversy concerning women and priesthood to extend into this area. (17)

Some consideration had to be given to the difficulties encountered by spiritual fathers, and in particular by Symeon. A number of these can be seen in his case to have been connected with his position as hegumen of St. Mamas or with conditions obtaining in the social milieu to which he belonged. With regard to the former point, it must be stated that Symeon's experience shows how desirable it is that the spiritual father of a community should be free from administrative and such-like concerns, and not placed in a position in which he is bound to be regarded as

(16) Krivochéine, Lumière, p. 147; Krivochéine, ibid., p. 161 asserts that Symeon's spirituality is not essentially monastic, in which case one wonders whether in theory he might have admitted the possibility of a holy secular's being a spiritual father.

(17) cf. K. Ware, 'Man, Woman, and the Priesthood of Christ', Man, Woman, and Priesthood (ed. P. Moore), London, 1978, p. 88; Hausherr, Direction spirituelle, p. 269; K. Leech, Soul Friend, London, 1977, p. 50, gives examples of women in Celtic Christianity acting as soul-friends.

primarily a disciplinary officer. As far as social conditions are concerned, it is impracticable to attempt to estimate here to what extent those of to-day might be expected to present difficulties for someone acting as spiritual father to Christians living in the world.(18)

What is, however, important is the fact that Symeon could not avoid recognising that the life of a "conscientious" spiritual father must inevitably be a far from easy one, and that in consequence he undertook the work only because he felt that to refuse would be to disobey Christ. This is something to which attention must be paid, if there is to be any move towards increasing the number of spiritual fathers (or mothers) in the West to-day. It will be necessary to be very cautious about those who come forward too eagerly to offer themselves as volunteers, for such people, apart from almost certainly having no real understanding of the difficulties involved in this vocation, may not improbably be seeking to undertake its duties mainly to enhance their own self-esteem, although not of course consciously aware of this fact. The right kind of person is one who, like Symeon, would much rather withdraw from the world and devote himself to contemplation, but who is persuaded by God that it is his duty to respond to the needs of his fellows.(19)

(18) cf. "The confounding of a spiritual director with a religious superior is fraught with specially pernicious consequences to our souls", F.W. Faber, Growth in Holiness, London, 3rd edition 1859 (reprinted 1928) p. 313, quoted by K. Leech Soul Friend, London, 1977, p. 70; even a parish priest might find it hard to deal with those members of his congregation, who hold some office in the Church, both as spiritual children and as persons responsible for carrying out agreed policy. The Church of England is wise when it prescribes that the priest shall tell those troubled in conscience to "come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word", Book of Common Prayer, Holy Communion, First Exhortation (my underlining).

(19) Symeon, v. Part Two, chapter V(d), and cf. in a report of a conversation with Athonite monks about "the Spiritual Father", "his own heart must be very pure - no human motivations or seeking of present gain or fame", M.B. Pennington, O Holy Mountain!, London, 1979, p. 42. It is noticeable that in this book about a visit to Mount Athos in 1976 themes found in Symeon frequently reappear.

It is evident, then, that a study of Symeon and spiritual fatherhood provides much that could be of great value, if at the present time the Churches in the West would give it proper consideration. An attempt slavishly to imitate him, or literally to apply his teaching would be foolish in the extreme, but this is not what has been suggested. Symeon himself, although genuinely in touch with tradition and striving to re-establish it, was never a mere follower of precedent, but a man who while receptive to the riches of the past, was equally or even more receptive to the riches he acquired through his own experience in the present. In relation to spiritual fatherhood he exemplifies some words of Iulia de Beausobre, a woman of our own day, who wrote:

"Whoever does such work must needs do it in his own way. Not that he interprets the tradition in his own individual manner but, applying the generally accepted interpretation to a unique case, he gives to it the colouring of his own personality. This colouring he is free to give, indeed cannot avoid giving; but this requires of him humility, courage and tact, if his guidance is to remain true to the spirit of the tradition".

It is hoped that this thesis has demonstrated that by and large such a description fits St. Symeon the New Theologian, so that we of the twentieth century, as we look back, can justifiably claim that in him we recognise a most significant contributor to the tradition of spiritual fatherhood, and one who can help us to renew it in accordance with our own needs.(20)

(20) C. Babington Smith, *Iulia de Beausobre - A Russian Christian in the West*, London, 1983, p. 69; Iulia de Beausobre herself fulfilled "the role of .. starets during the latter part of her life", *ibid.*, p. 69.

GLOSSARY.

A few Greek terms which are important in a study of Symeon, present difficulties for the translator, or seem to need some explanatory comment. A glossary of them is therefore being provided here, because it is considered convenient to have them collected together in one place, rather than appearing scattered here and there amongst the foot-notes. Words are not included here if their rendering is discussed in the text.

ἅγιος - 'holy', 'saint'. Difficulty arises because English has the two words, using the latter as a title, 'Saint Andrew', 'Saint Mary'. It must thus be remembered that when Symeon insisted that his spiritual father was ἅγιος, the word, which after all is also used in the case of the Holy Spirit (τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα), conveyed to him and his hearers or readers the idea of 'holy' as well as that of 'saint'.

ἀπαθία (ἀπαθής) - 'dispassion' ('dispassionate'). This rendering is taken from Luibhead and Russell, Climacus, and used in order to convey a meaning different from that of the 'passionlessness' of the Stoics.

ἐκκοπή βελήματος - 'elimination of one's own will'. In spite of its not being an exact translation of ἐκκοπή, this rendering seems well-fitted to convey the general meaning. βέλημα, however, requires further comment, which is provided by a quotation referring to St. Dorotheus of Gaza: "(He), like most of the holy fathers of Eastern monasticism, understands by one's own will not only, as do many

modern spiritual authorities, attachment to one's own will, but also the whole range of wills, or rather of desires, which spontaneously arise in the soul and are usually the result of a logismos".

(J.M. Ezymusiak and J. Leroy, Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, III, Paris, 1957, col. 1659).

ἡσυχία - has been left untranslated and untransliterated.

It denotes in this thesis a withdrawal from normal community life and accompanying responsibilities in order to be free to experience spiritual reality more directly and intensely.

ἡσυχία - the pejorative implications of living "without direction" are well brought out in a scholium to Climacus, Sc.Par. 27 which describes it as "having one's own life-style (ἡσυχία τῆς ψυχῆς) and accomplishing one's own will," PG 88, 1117BC. As a type of monasticism, idiorrhythmism "appeared on Mount Athos about the year 1374" (N.F. Robinson, Monasticism in the Orthodox Churches, London, 1916, p. 8), and from then onwards, at least by those who belong to idiorrhythmic monasteries, the word can be used in a good sense. cf. Hausherr, Direction Spirituelle, p. 122.

λογισμός - 'thought'. This rendering is inevitable, even though in some respects it is inadequate. Although Ware (Climacus, p. 38) rightly states that λογισμός "may be neutral or God-inspired as well as sinful", there is a distinct tendency in the writers quoted in this thesis to regard them with suspicion. "In the language of monasticism this term has almost always a pejorative sense". (Paramelle and Neyrand, Hym LI SC 196 p. 186 n.2)

μεσίτης - Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon, gives examples of the use of the word, with the meaning of 'mediator', not only in connection with Christ but also with others who may play a part in the reconciling of men to God, for example clergy, and holy men (saints) both living and departed. Thus, although 'mediator' may appear strange to those accustomed in religious language to apply the word only to Christ, it is deliberately used as a rendering of μεσίτης..

μετάνοια - 'repentance' or 'prostration'. The context alone can decide which is the correct rendering. γονυκλισία, 'genuflexion', is less reverential than μετάνοια used in the sense of 'prostration'.

νοῦς (νοερός, νοητός) - the rendering 'intellect' ('intellectual') is generally avoided, 'spirit' ('spiritual') being used instead. There is no one English word which gives the exact flavour of the Greek, relating as it does to that element in mankind "by origin or nature fitted to receive the knowledge of God". (Hausheer, 'Ignorance infinie', O.C.A., 176, (1966), p. 44)

TRANSLITERATION.

In the transliteration of Greek words, 'ου' has been represented by 'u' and 'ω' by 'y', but otherwise each Greek letter appears as the corresponding English one, with no attempt to differentiate between 'ε' and 'η', or 'ο' and 'ω'. Thus τυπικόν is written 'typikon'.

and ἡγούμενοι has been Anglicised as 'hegumen', without a case ending. Exceptions to this principle occur in cases where custom has dictated a different rendering, and in quotations where the author's method of transliteration has been followed.

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