# Augustinian Immediacy and Dionysian Mediation in John Colet, Edmund Spenser, Richard Hooker and the Cardinal de Bérulle[•]

To acquire a sense for large scale transformations, this paper encompasses pre, intra and counter Reformation theologians and a "Protestant poet." As if this were not enough, in order to explain my title, I must revert to the millennium before any of them. It is not, however, to Augustine and to Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite that I go at first, but to John Scotus Eriugena, who stands temporally between the period we are treating and theirs. Eriugena is on our side, so to speak, in that he depends on what is Apostolic and Patristic, but is conscious of its belonging to a previous age.

It is not, however, for his Carolingian attempt to reestablish a broken continuity[1] that I bring him to our attention, but because he will help define Augustinian immediacy and Dionysian mediation as they began to be united for Latin thinkers. It is through these categories, and especially in relation to their union, that I propose to look at these four Renaissance and Reformation figures in England and France. It is my view, but one which I cannot establish in this paper, that it is this union, not a self-sufficient Augustinian thinking, which is normative for the Latin Medieval systems and which gives them their powerful humanistic and world embracing characteristics.[2] For this reason, I judge it useful to see what happens to these Augustinian and Dionysian elements in relation to one another in the period we are considering.

## B. (1) Eriugena's unification of the poles

To observe that Eriugena's *Periphyseon* is the first complete system in Latin is to state the obvious. For my purposes, we must attend for a moment to a reconciliation of opposites required for its stunning unification of logic, theology, psychology, cosmology and soteriology. This unification is assumed and imitated by the High Medieval Scholastic builders of *summae*, and by Renaissance Neoplatonists like Ficino and Pico della Mirandolla. Their great

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[•] I acknowledge with pleasure and thanks the contributions to the writing of this paper made by Professor James Doull, Professeur Bruno Neveu, Dr. W.J.T. Kirby and Mr. Ian Stewart.

[1] On Medieval attempts of this kind, see Édouard Jeauneau, "*Translatio studii.*" *The Transmission of Learning*: *A Gilsonian Theme,* The Étienne Gilson Series 18 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1995).

[2] See W.J. Hankey, "'Ad intellectum ratiocinatio': Three Procline logics, *The Divine Names* of Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena's *Periphyseon* and Boethius' *Consolatio philosophiae*," *Studia Patristica* XXIX, edited Elizabeth A. Livingstone, (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 249-51 and idem, "The Postmodern Retrieval of Neoplatonism in Jean-Luc Marion and John Milbank and the Origins of Western Subjectivity in Augustine and Eriugena," a lecture for the Faculty of Theology, University of Durham, and the Philosophy Seminar at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, May, 1996, to be published in *Hermathena*.

edifices were, in turn, assumed, even though diversely valued, by my subjects, who themselves attempted no such encompassing creations. It is the joining of the opposed, but complementary, Augustinian immediacy and Dionysian mediation in Eriugena, and in the western systematizers who follow him, that I propose to consider in the 15th, 16th and 17th century figures my title names.

Indubitably, there were endeavours, in his own time, in the Middle Ages, and "in der Neuzeit" to organize, to unify logically, or to systematize, the occasional and diverse (or even opposed) positions within Augustine's overwhelmingly vast *opera* without moving outside his own ideas. I need only mention Prosper of Aquitaine, and the succeeding compilers of *florilegia,*[3] Anselm,[4] Peter Lombard and the builders of Augustinian *summae,*[5] and, finally, Jansenius to bring such efforts to mind. I shall ignore efforts of this kind, and indeed the question as to whether they were successful at remaining within Augustinian categories. Other papers in this volume take up that problem. I attend, rather, to the efforts of those who find the systematic structure which emerged from the Iamblichan, Procline, and Dionysian tradition of Neoplatonism to be the necessary framework in which to place Augustine's more Plotinian and Porphyrian approaches. Such a one was Eriugena.

His *Periphyseon* is a vast circular system of procession and return which situates an Augustinian human psychology within an Iamblichan, Procline, Dionysian completely mediated ontology, or, better, henology. The absolute origin, beyond being, is an ineffable one and three. Historians of Neoplatonism now explain the particular logical form of the divine Trinity in Eriugena, Augustine, and Dionysius, by reference to Porphyry.[6] His modification, by a

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[3] See W.J. Hankey, "'Magis ... pro nostra sentencia': John Wyclif, his mediaeval Predecessors and reformed Successors, and a pseudo-Augustinian Eucharistic Decretal," *Augustiniana*, 45, fasc. 3-4 (1995), 213-245.

[4] See W.J. Hankey, "Dionysius becomes an Augustinian. Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* vi," in *Studia Patristica* XXIX, edited Elizabeth A. Livingstone, (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 252-59.

[5] See W.J. Hankey, "The *De Trinitate* of St. Boethius and the Structure of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*," in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Boeziani*, edited L. Obertello, (Roma: Herder, 1981), 367-375 and idem, *God in Himself, Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 19-35.

[6] Salvatore R.C. Lilla, "Un dubbio di S. Agostino su Porfirio," *Nuovi Annali della Facoltà di Magistero dell'Università di Messina* [Roma: Herder] 5 (1987), 319-331; idem, "Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite, Porphyre et Damascius," in *Actes du Colloque sur Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident*, éd. Ysabel de Andia, série Antiquité 151 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 117-35; idem, "Neoplatonic Hypostases and the Christian Trinity," *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition. Essays Presented to John Whittaker*, ed. M. Joyal, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1997), 157; Werner Beierwaltes, "Unity and Trinity in East and West," *Eriugena: East and West. Papers of the Eighth International Colloquium of the Society for the Promotion of Eriugenian Studies, Chicago and Notre Dame, 18-20 October 1991*, edited B. McGinn and W. Otten, Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies V (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 209-231; idem, "Unity and Trinity in Dionysius and Eriugena," *Hermathena* 157 (1994), n. 10 and 13-14. These studies rely upon the earlier work of Pierre Hadot and others.

flattening or telescoping of the Plotinian hierarchically organized and subordinated spiritual hypostases, is the crucial logical step these Christian developments require. Eriugena's Uncreated Creating explicates and moves upon itself, and to itself, as Uncreated and Uncreating. Within this self-relation and self-unfolding, creation and redemption occur. The Procline and Dionysian mediating hierarchies provide the underlying structure of reality. The Augustinian side provides the medium of creation. In a thoroughly Augustinian way, the psychological powers gathered in the human *mens*, stand in immediate proximity to the First Principle, and in Eriugena they comprise the actual means of creation.[7] Thus logic, theology, ontology, psychology, anthropology and soteriology are unified. Ineffable non-being, before all definition, being and multiplicity, comes into definite, varied, perceptible, and predicable being by passing dialectically, or "running through," intellect, reason, imagination and sense, the powers of the human *anima.* So, "in homine ... universaliter creatae sunt."[8]

By unifying these two very different pagan and Christian Neoplatonisms, incompatibles are not only juxtaposed but function together, as Donald Duclow explains:

> Eriugena places the human being among the primordial causes within the divine Word. He further describes humanity as created in God's image and likeness, with two basic features: (1) a self-ignorance whereby humanity knows only that it is, not what it is; and (2) a self-knowledge that embraces all creation, visible and invisible. In the first, the human being reflects God's unknowable transcendence. In the second, the human being becomes --in Maximus's phrase-- "the workshop of all things, officina omnium," and faithfully mirrors God's creative Wisdom. Simultaneously transcending and embracing the whole created order, humanity thus becomes a precise image of its divine exemplar. ... This anthropology significantly alters Dionysius's view of our relationship to the angels, since Eriugena presents a direct, unmediated relation between humanity and God. As Édouard Jeauneau has noted, a passage from Augustine highlights this theme: "Between our mind, by which we know the Father, and the Truth, that is to say, the inward light through which we know Him, no creature intervenes." Eriugena often uses Augustine's phrase, *nulla interposita creatura*, to describe the human mind as God's image and its contemplative vision.[9]

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[7] See R.D. Crouse, "*Primordiales Causae* in Eriugena's Interpretation of Genesis: Sources and Significance," *Iohannes Scottus Eriugena. The Bible and Hermeneutics,* edited Gerd van Riel, Carlos Steel, James McEvoy, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 209-220.

[8] *Periphyseon* iv, 8 (PL 122, 774a); see Hankey, *God in Himself,* 53-55.

[9] Donald F. Duclow, "Isaiah Meets the Seraph: Breaking Ranks in Dionysius and Eriugena?" in *Eriugena: East and West. Papers of the Eighth International Colloquium of the Society for the Promotion of Eriugenian Studies, Chicago and Notre Dame, 18-20 October 1991,* edited B. McGinn and W. Otten,

## B. (2) Augustinian Immediacy

Augustinian immediacy and Dionysian mediation are essential, then, to Eriugena's system, and to most of those which follow it in the Latin West. In order to explain these terms themselves, we must look briefly at Augustine and then at the contrasting Neoplatonic tradition initiated by Iamblichus.

For its cosmic role, the Augustinian human mind must contain all the forms of knowing, for these are all the ways in which unity and division meet. Eriugena inverts Boethius. Boethius sought only to move toward unity and to rest in it. He does so by discovering how dividing mind creates the divided forms of reality. In Eriugena, the forms of perspective in the Augustinian mind make the kinds of created being coming forth from the Superessential.[10] The immediate connection of the human *mens* with the divine is crucial. Something of the Plotinian soul which never descends remains in Augustine and in his heirs.

Intellectual knowledge, the necessary ground of communication, is possible only by the turn inward and upward to intuition of the divine ideas, which the access to God of our *acies mentis* always enables. For Augustine, reason (*ratio*) characterizes the human, and it, or mind (*mens*), is the best part of soul.[11] Human reason proceeds and ends by self-knowledge and the knowledge of God, which are inescapably intertwined, and include the knowledge of all else.[12] So Augustine can say that he wants to know only God and the soul.[13] Participating in the divine wisdom according to the interiority essential to reason, makes the human so close to God that it is the divine image. Between God and the rational soul, nothing intervenes. Nothing is closer to the divine, nor better among creatures.[14]

## B. (3) Iamblichan - Procline Mediation. The *Lex Divinitatis*

Essential to the Iamblichan systematizing is the opposed view. The human soul, understood as part of soul, is altogether descended into *genesis,* the world of becoming. None of it remains above. So Proclus tells us in a proposition placed significantly as the very last, number 211, in his *Elements of Theology*. The return of such a soul toward the absolute Principle is enabled

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Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies V (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 241; see also idem, "Dialectic and Christology in Eriugena's *Periphyseon,*" *Dionysius* 4 (1980), 99-118, especially 110 where Duclow answers "John's basic question [which] seems to be: what kind of being must man be for the Word's Incarnation to occur and to have cosmic significance."

[10] On this see Hankey, "'Ad intellectum ratiocinatio'," 251.

[11] *Contra academicos* I,2,5; *Retractationes* I,1,2.

[12] *De vera religione* 39,72; *Confessiones* VII,1-2 & X; *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 41,6-8;145,5; *De trinitate* XIV,12,15f.

[13] *Soliloquiorum* I,2,7.

[14] *De animae quantitate* 34,77; *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* 51,2; *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus* 16,60; *De civitate dei* XI,26; X,2.

because the domination and presence of the One is more complete in Proclus than in Plotinus.

The cause of substantial being at every level, the formlessness of the Henadic fullness, is mirrored in the opposed formlessness of material emptiness at the extreme other end of reality. The divine *eros* connects all, pulling it into a triadic structure by which each thing exists because it remains within, proceeds from, and returns relatively, or absolutely, with respect to the One.[15] Here, we encounter the *lex divinitatis,* the Divine Law of total mediation to which grace and nature both will be submitted by theologians at least up to the 17th century.[16] All extremes are mediated. There is no movement from the bottom to the top except through a middle term. By this law of vertical integration, the flattened Augustinian self-reflexive human subjectivity, which immediately mirrors and touches God, is cosmically placed and stabilized.

For the Iamblichan Procline thinking, everything is, by necessity, related: the place of the human soul, the total system, its law of mediation. The human has no immediate access to intellection, the knowing in which the whole is seen. Theurgy bridges reality for the human being, which both finds itself in the

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[15] See Hankey, *God In Himself*, 122, note 18 quoting S. Gersh, *KINHSIS 'AKINATOS: A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*, (Leiden; Brill, 1973), 124 "love manifests itself in two forms: (i) as the complete cycle of remaining, procession and reversion ..."

[16] See W.J. Hankey, "'Dionysius dixit', Lex divinitatis est ultima per media reducere': Aquinas, hierocracy and the 'augustinisme politique'," *Tommaso D'Aquino: proposte nuove di letture. Festscrift Antonio Tognolo,* edited Ilario Tolomio, *Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale*, 18 (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1992), 119-150; idem, "Dionysian Hierarchy in St. Thomas Aquinas: Tradition and Transformation," *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident, Actes du Colloque International Paris, 21-24 septembre 1994*, éd. Ysabel de Andia, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 151 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 416-24, 426-38; idem, "Aquinas, Pseudo-Denys, Proclus and Isaiah VI.6," *AHDLMA,* 64 (1997), 60-3, 76-93; and David E. Luscombe, "The *Lex divinitatis* in the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Pope Boniface VIII," in *Church and State in the Middle Ages: essays presented to C. R. Cheney on his 70th birthday,* edited C.N. Brooke, D.E. Luscombe, G.H. Martin and Dorothy Owen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 205-221; idem, "Some Examples of the Use made of the Works of the Pseudo-Dionysius by University Teachers in the Later Middle Ages," in *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages,* eds. Josef Ijsewijn and Jacques Paquet, Mediaevalia Louaniensia i/vi (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1978), 228-241; idem, "Conceptions of Hierarchy before the Thirteenth Century," in *Sociale Ordnungen im Selbstverstandis des Mittelalters*, edited Albert Zimmerman, Miscellanea Mediaevalia 12/1 (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 1-19; idem, "Wyclif and Hierarchy," in Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks, eds., *From Ockham to Wyclif,* Studies in Church History, subsidia 5 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 233-244; idem, "Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite in the Middle Ages from Hilduin to Lorenzo Valla," in *Kongressdaten und Festvortrage Literatur und Falschung*, vol. 1 of *Falschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongress der Monumenta Germaniae Historica Munchen, 16-19. September 1986*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Schriften 33, i (Hannover: Hahnsche, 1988), 133-152; idem, "François de Meyronnes and Hierarchy," in Diana Wood, edited *The Church and Sovereignty c. 590-1918. Essays in Honour of Michael Wilks,* Studies in Church History, Subsidia 9 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 225-232; idem, "Thomas Aquinas and Conceptions of Hierarchy in the Thirteenth Century," in *Thomas von Aquin. Werk un Wirkung im Licht Neuerer Forschungen*, edited Albert Zimmerman, Miscellanea Mediaevalia 19 (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 261-277.

middle, and also needing mediation. Mediation is the law and necessity of its nature. I quote Gregory Shaw:

> Dodds noted that Iamblichus introduced the "law of mean terms" to the Platonists which allowed him to bridge the gap between the intransigent unity of the One and the dividedness of the Many.[17] By postulating a middle term, or, as it turns out, middle terms, Iamblichus established a continuity between irreconcilable extremes, a principle of mediation that became one of the most important elements in post-Iamblichan Platonism. ... Theurgy, then, was the dynamic and embodied expression of the mathematical mean, for, in theurgic ritual an unbroken continuity was established between mortal and immortal realms, allowing embodied souls to enter divine energies through rites that were both divine and human.[18]

In Eriugena, an Augustinian human subjectivity is situated in an Iamblichan middle between the divine non being and creaturely existence, a humanity in which the world is made, and to which it belongs. The road from Iamblichus to Eriugena passes through the Pseudo-Dionysius.[19]

### B. (4)  Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite

The whole Dionysian *corpus* is a spiritual anagogy whose goal is the union to which the *Mystical Theology* is dedicated. That this treatise, and the *henosis* it describes, is the sum and reason for the whole is made clear by its references to the rest of the *corpus*. All the Dionysian reasoning, both that which is clearly traceable to pagan philosophical sources, and his meditation on and theological reflection about Sacred Scripture, as well as the moral purification and prayer necessary for all ascent, are directed to one end. Reason, purification and prayer are integrated with activities, theophanic, angelic and ecclesiastical, which are hierarchical, communal, liturgical, and sacramental. All lead to the soul's union with God. That union is immediate, requiring a stripping from the self of all its activities so that it shares the simplicity of its absolute goal. While such a conception of our final purpose may be traced at least to Plotinus, and while its

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[17] E.R. Dodds, Proclus, *The Elements of Theology,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), xxi-xxii.
[18] Gregory Shaw, "Theurgy as Demiurgy: Iamblichus' Solution to the Problem of Embodiment," *Dionysius* 12 (1988), 39-40; see also idem, "Theurgy: Rituals of Unification in the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus," *Traditio* 41 (1985), 1-28 [which emphases that theurgy must be divine work toward humanity to be in any useful sense human work]; idem, "The Geometry of Grace. A Pythagorean Approach to Theurgy,"*The Divine Iamblichus. Philosopher and Man of Gods*, ed. H.J. Blumental & E.G. Clark, (London: Duckworth, 1993), 116-37, idem, *Theurgy and the Soul: the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus,* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1996).
[19] See Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*, Studien zur Problemgeschichte der Antiken und Mittelalterlichen Philosophie VIII (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

fundamental features are common to Dionysius and Augustine, at this point, in the end itself, the differences between the two poles of Latin Christian Neoplatonism are almost reversed.

On our way back to the Principle, hierarchical triadic mediation is more suggested than developed in Augustine. In contrast, such mediation is worked out as completely as possible in Dionysius. However, when the goal is reached, rational self-relation and self-certainty in the human, and its mirroring of the divine Trinity of being, understanding and loving, remain in Augustine. They are not just features of the *Contra Academicos,* and other early "philosophic" dialogues. They are referred to again and again in the last books of the *De Trinitate* and in other places,[20] where union with the divine is being considered. The rational image in the human *mens* is clearly the place of union, and is its medium, in the sense that human triadic rational activity is sustained not only in the presence of God, but is even the form of union with the Divine.

In sharp contrast to this Augustinian 'mediated immediacy'[21] stands Dionysius' 'immediate' union. The overwhelming theme of the *Mystical Theology* is the darkness of the Divine simplicity and the negation of every movement of the human in respect to it. This is true even as Dionysius addresses the divine goal as *Τριας*, the word with which the treatise opens. Bonaventure's union of the two approaches in his *Itinerarium mentis in deum* is, then, an extraordinary accomplishment. It deserves mention, because, in contrast to both Eriugena, before him, and John Colet and the Cardinal de Bérulle, after him, the Seraphic Doctor gives place to Augustine's mental trinity of self-related being, knowing and loving at least on the way to union.[22]

### B. (5) The Problem of Christ's Mediation in Dionysius

This difference between the ways Augustine and Dionysius treat the final union brings us to the point where the theologian of mediation is most criticized. Ironically, it is in regard to mediation that Dionysius is found most inadequate. That criticism carries us to the period to which this Kolloquium is devoted.

In a recent paper, Professor Paul Rorem has extended his consideration of the Pseudo-Dionysian tradition in the Medieval period to Martin Luther and his criticism of Pseudo-Dionysius. [23] Dr. Rorem does not find Luther striking out

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[20] In Augustine, the self-certainty of our existence as reasoning life remains essential to us, belonging to the nature of immortal mind, even when our being, understanding and loving are directed to God, and act in and by God's own trinitarian life (*Confessiones* IX,10,24-25; *De trinitate* XIV,14,18; XIV,19,26; XV,15,25). See Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader. Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation,* (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 273-78.

[21] Ian Stewart suggested this phrase.

[22] See *Itinerarium mentis in deum,* cap. 3 and Hankey, "Dionysius becomes an Augustinian," 254-9.

[23] Paul Rorem, "Martin Luther's Christocentric Critique of Pseudo-Dionysian Spirituality," unpublished manuscript; idem, *Pseudo-Dionysius. A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to their Influence*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 216-222; for new work on the

alone in new territory. Rather, the Reformer is continuing an aspect of the reception by the Orthodox tradition of the Dionysian *corpus*. Luther rages against a lack in the Pseudo-Dionysian spirituality which also will be noticed and corrected by the Cardinal de Bérulle. Dr. Rorem believes that the Orthodox tradition had noticed this deficiency from the beginning of its reception of the Dionysian writings. It was silently corrected both by the first Byzantine commentators on the *corpus,* and also by the amalgamation of Dionysian theology with Augustinian Christianity in the Medieval Latin West. This lack is the minimal reference to the mediation of Christ in human salvation and the almost total absence of reference to "Him crucified."

I tend to the view that Dionysius not only thinks that the God-man is the principle of each of the mediating hierarchies, being, as he says, the principle and perfection of all of them,[24] but also that Dionysius understands the whole activity of the hierarchies as the work of Christ. Christ is the ladder on which the angels ascend and descend.[25] The author of the Dionysian *corpus* included the κενωσις in his Christology, and, by his use of the word, clearly has Paul in mind.[26] It must be admitted, however, that neither Christological mediation, generally, nor "Christ crucified," is in the Dionysian foreground. Augustine, in contrast, judging what Christianity has in common with Platonism, and wherein the differences between the two lie, maintains emphatically that Platonism altogether lacks the power to mediate to humans the Divine goal it sets before them. Augustine looks to the incarnate Christ, not to angels, nor to a divine hierarch for that.[27]

### B. (6) The Foundations of a Christian Humanism?

Dionysius altogether lacks an explicit anthropology and his cosmos is primarily inhabited by angels.[28] They so dominate Christ's mediating work that the ecclesiastical hierarchy is modeled on the celestial. In later figures, of whom John Colet is one, the angelic hierarchy will determine the structure for everything below it from the planetary spheres to the material elements. In this regard, there is no basis for a humanism here and, as we shall see, John Colet found none.

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Dionysian Christology, see István Perczel, "La bibliothèque du pseudo-Denys l'Arèopagite," *Annuaire, École pratique des hautes études, Section des science religieuses*, 104 (1995-96), 395-402.

[24] *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* I, 2.

[25] With real insight, Professor Marion sees hierarchy as solving the problem at the heart of the Dionysian theology, the problem of how to reconcile the absolute distinction between creature and creator, on the one hand, with the creation's reversion to participation in the creator, union, on the other. See Jean-Luc Marion, *L'idole et la distance. Cinq études*, (Paris: Grasset, 1977), 196 ff. and W.J. Hankey, "Denys and Aquinas: Antimodern Cold and Postmodern Hot,"*Christian Origins : Theology, rhetoric and community*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones, Studies in Christian Origins (London: Routledge, 1998), 155-57.

[26] *Divine Names* II,10.

[27] *Confessiones* VII,11 and X,42,67; *De civitate dei* X.

[28] *Celestial Hierarchy* XIV.

In contrast, Augustine speaks more clearly about the absolute necessity of the humanity of the God-man for human salvation, has a very developed anthropology, and he places the human mind immediately in contact with the divine Truth.  He is not, however, on that account unambiguously a humanist.  Although Augustine preserves a Platonist superiority of the intelligible to the sensible, our problem with him lies more in his doctrines of the Fall and Predestination.  This we shall also have reason to observe in reflecting on Colet.  Fall and Predestination may be understood so as to exclude even "une certain suffisance de l'humaine nature."[29]

It seems that the high Medieval metaphysical and theological "humanism," of which Sir Richard Southern has written, and is now describing more extensively, may not be found in the sources of either of the two greatest Christian spiritualities which shape the Latin West.[30]  It is, instead, a result of the union, after the manner of Eriugena, of Procline total systemization, transformed and Christianized by Dionysius, with a Plotinian understanding of mind and the place of the human soul, reworked by Augustine to form his view of the human.  In this amalgam, the human, with its special relation both to God and to the creation, because of the inclusive nature of our reason, because the human is the unique *complexum* of soul and body, and because of its mediation in the God-man, stands at the center of the whole of reality.  Its mediating centrality enables and requires a positive embrace of the rationality and sensuality which are essential to the human position.  The striking retreat from this view in John Colet brings us to the period we are considering.

### C. John Colet

Despite his friendship with Erasmus, and Erasmus' posthumous praise of him, John Colet (1466?-1519), the Henrician Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, was not an influential intellectual figure after his death.[31]  Partly owing

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[29] Julien-Eymard D'Angers, *L'Humanisme Chrétien au XVIIe Siècle:  St. François de Sales et Yves de Paris*, International Archive of the History of Ideas 31 (La Haye:  Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 136.  He is seeking "l'humanisme chrétien" in the period and employs this expression of M.H. Gouhier.  D'Angers goes on: "Cette suffisance suppose que dans le naufrage du péché original a été sauvegardée une inclination soit à aimer Dieu par dessus toutes choses, soit à voir Dieu face à face dans un bonheur qui n'a pas de fin ... [et] la predestination *post praevisa merita*."

[30] See R.W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies,* (Oxford:  Blackwell, 1970), 50 as quoted in Hankey, *God in Himself,* 29;  the new more extensive work is *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe, Volume I, Foundations*, (Oxford:  Blackwell, 1995), three volumes are projected.

[31] For texts, see *Ioannis Coleti Opuscula quaedam theologica* (*Letters to Radulphus on the Mosaic account of creation, together with other treastises,* by John Colet, M.A.) published, trans., and intro., J.H. Lupton, (London: George Bell, 1876); *Ioannis Colet Opus de Sacramentis Ecclesiae* (*A Treatise on the Sacraments of the Church,* by John Colet, D.D.)*,* published, trans., and intro., J.H. Lupton, (London:  Bell and Daldy, 1867);  *Ioannes Coletus Super Opera Dionysii* (*Two Treatises on the Hierarchies of Dionysius,* by John Colet, D.D.), published, trans., and intro., J.H. Lupton, (London: Bell and Daldy, 1869); [Colet, CH = Colet's commentary on *The Celestial Hierarchy*;  Colet, EH = Colet's commentary on the *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*];  *Ioannis Coleti Enarratio in Epistolam S. Pauli ad*

to the misleading posthumous praise, both English Protestants in the 16th century, and those who rediscovered him in the 19th century, tried to turn him into a proto-Protestant, and the latter tried also to make him into a humanist Biblical scholar, bringing the new learning to Scripture so that its literal sense would replace allegory.  However, Dean Colet's major works were not, in fact, published until the 19th century.  He was so little read in the 16th that Bishop John Jewel maintained that he had written nothing.[32] If one does read him, it is quickly manifest that neither what was made of him in 16th century Protestant propaganda, nor in 19th century attempts to give inevitability to the Anglican Reformation and to conform its Biblical exegesis to 19th century notions, have any basis at all in Dean Colet's writing, just the opposite.[33]  His writing is conservative even reactionary.

Most of what Dean Colet left behind him was in manuscript: commentaries on Paul's epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians (the first), a commentary on each of the treatises concerning the celestial and the ecclesiastical hierarchies by the pseudo-Dionysius, and two treatises:  *On the Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church* and *De sacramentis.*  All of them involve a thorough blending of Dionysian and Augustinian elements.  Though he commented on Dionysius, and remained committed to his authentic apostolicity until the end of his life, the best recent author on Colet, John Gleason claims "Colet's favorite Latin Father [was] St. Augustine,"[34] and is reminded of Bonaventure.[35]  In fact,

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*Romanos* (*An Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans,* by John Colet, M.A.), published, trans., and intro., J.H. Lupton, (London: Bell and Daldy, 1873) [= Colet, R];  *Ioannis Coleti Enarratio in primam Epistolam S. Pauli ad Corinthios* (*An Exposition of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians,* by John Colet, M.A.), published, trans., and intro., J.H. Lupton, (London: George Bell, 1874) [= Colet, C];  Bernard O'Kelly and Catherine A.L. Jarrott, *John Colet's Commentary on First Corinthians.  A New Edition of the Latin Text, with Translation, Annotations, and Introduction,* (Binghamton, New York:  Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1985).  The *De Sacramentis* is now reedited in the watershed John B. Gleason, *John Colet,* (Berkeley/ Los Angelos/ London:  University of California Press, 1989), [= Gleason] Appendix 1, 270-333.  It is Gleason's edition I cite below.
[32] Gleason, 341.
[33] Gleason's main accomplishment is showing how the misrepresentation involved in the rediscovery arose and why it is mistaken.  The most important 19th century book was *The Oxford Reformers* by Frederic Seebohm (they were Colet, Erasmus, and More by his account).  It appeared in the same year, 1867, as John Lupton's publication of Colet's *De sacramentis.*  On the role of Erasmus, see Gleason, 4-5:  "Erasmus had deliberately emphasized the reformist element in Colet."  The "picture of Colet as proto-Protestant naturally passed into John Foxe's vast *Book of Martyrs* ... where Colet has six pages."  J. B. Trapp, "John Colet and the *heirarchies* of the Pseudo-Dionysius," *Religion and Humanism. Papers read at the Eigthteenth Summer Meeting and the Nineteenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society,* edited Keith Robbins, Studies in Church History 17 (Oxford:  Ecclesiastical History Society/ Basil Blackwell, 1981), 130: the "'Protestant', 'heretic' Colet; .. is the invention of William Tyndale, fostered by John Bale and by Matthew Parker."
[34] Gleason, 70;  see J.B. Trapp, *Erasmus, Colet and More:  The early Tudor Humanists and their books,* The Panizzi Lectures 1990 (London:  The British Library, 1991), 129: "Augustine is, on Gleason's count, the most frequently cited, together with Origen.  ... Concerning Augustine, it needs to be

though a melding of the two Fathers is common to Colet and Bonaventure, Augustine's immediate image of God in man, the mind's triad of being, understanding and loving, so essential to the Seraphic Doctor, is almost absent from Colet.[36]  This Colet shares with Eriugena, who never uses it in the *Periphyseon*, and with the Cardinal de Bérulle.[37]  This omission, and its enormous consequences, make Colet of interest.

The works are useful reading, not because of their intellectual or spiritual power - I think an Oxford friend is right[38] that Colet was a thoroughly second class mind - but because all of them show just the opposite characteristics from those ascribed to them, and expected of them, in the 19th century rediscovery of Colet, and because they show what a conservative English churchman, on the very cusp of the Anglican Reformation, made of Augustine and Dionysius.

Colet's assimilation of Augustine and the pseudo-Dionysius takes place, I judge, because, as his contemporary Polydore Vergil put it, "For his preceptor he chose Paul, and both at Oxford and Cambridge, and then later in Italy, became deeply versed in him."[39]  Perhaps useful are Heiko Obermann's notions of a late Medieval Augustinianism which is "linked in a manner as yet unexplained with English proto-humanism and early Italian humanism respectively,"[40] and of an endeavor to transcend scholastic controversy by reducing Augustine to Paul as far as possible.[41]  I think we might account for Colet's Augustinianism in this way, *provided* that we recognize all that is implied in his acceptance of the Pseudo-Dionysius as the most privileged interpreter of Paul.

In consequence of reading Paul through Dionysius, whose Platonism he finds equally in Augustine, Colet can strongly oppose, on the one hand, the

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said that there is a great deal more of him in Colet than appears on the surface, especially if one is speaking in terms of diffused influence."

[35] Gleason, 202.

[36] Colet, CH 193 has, as one triad in a large list, "mens ratio voluntas."  On his endeavour to work this Augustinian triad into Dionysian ones, see Sears Jayne, *John Colet and Marsilio Ficino*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 65.

[37] L. Cognet, *La Spiritualité moderne,* vol.3 of *Histoire de la Spiritualité chrètienne*, (Paris:  Aubier, 1966), 334.  The same is true of Calvin.

[38] Francis Warner, Fellow of St. Peter's College, to whom I owe thanks for many useful suggestions and wise judgments.

[39] Gleason, 39.

[40] Heiko Augustinus Obermann, *Masters of the Reformation. The Emergence of a new Intellectual Climate in Europe*, trans. Dennis Martin, (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 65.

[41] Ibid., 46 and 98.  See very usefully, Peter Iver Kaufman, *Augustinian Piety and Catholic Reform. Augustine, Colet and Erasmus* (Macon:  Mercer University Press, 1982), on the character of a new Augustinianism shared by Colet and Erasmus, 145:  "Christianity was identified with the life of righteousness, with what might be called the 'lived knowledge' of the mystery of divine collaboration in personal righteousness and, derivatively, in church reform."  At 146, he uses "moral knowledge" as a category:  "the spiritual are identical with the ethical demands of life." At 147, he writes:  "Colet was eager to clear the 'forest' in order to find St. Paul and to establish a closer relationship between doctrine and experience and  .. he stumbled across a favorite theme of Augustine's."

mixing of philosophy with Christianity,[42] and, on the other, simultaneously embrace, even magnify, after the manner of Ficino, the Platonism of Augustine and Dionysius. For Colet, such Platonism is simply Paul's philosophy.

> He had been led by St. Paul to Ficino and to Pico, in whatever order, as authorities, like the ps-Dionysius and like St. Paul himself, on Platonism. ... The pagans had their philosophers, he allowed, who took their knowledge from created things, the Jews had their prophets, angelically inspired, both may have got it right.[43]

This Jewish wisdom reaches its highest level in the Cabala, for Colet, initially a secret unwritten tradition, which he integrates with the teaching of Dionysius. There must be hidden interpretation of Scripture because the things signified are beyond reason. So, the apostolic tradition also conveys a secret wisdom. That originating in Paul both Dionysius and Colet are explaining.[44] For John Colet, *Sensus .. ille spiritalis, qui ut intelligatur eget spiritu prophetali, sapiencia et racio est totius fabricatae ecclesiae nostrae Christianae.*[45]

Colet's is another Augustinianism than that of Erasmus. As Gleason notes,

> Erasmus was not particularly interested in Neoplatonic philosophy, and he does not bring out how intensely Colet admired Ficino ... Along with Erasmus himself and Pico della Mirandola, Ficino is the only contemporary whom Colet quotes in his writings.[46]

There is much in Colet which one finds in Pico and Ficino (and, in good measure, in Eriugena) but not at all in Dionysius. Absent, or less systematically developed and integrated in Augustine also, is the cosmology, with its astrological, physico-magical aspects subordinated to the angelic hierarchy and coordinated with the ecclesiastical. The attached diagrams in Colet's hand from one of his

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[42] Gleason, 138: for understanding the Bible, "Colet repudiates the aid of secular learning in terms that are violent."

[43] Trapp, *Erasmus, Colet and More*, 137.

[44] See Gleason, 148-9, on the Cabala. On the Cabala, there is for example, Colet, EH, 238-39: *hanc spiritalem sapientibus solum, qui erant septuaginta, communiscasse, quos ex praecepto Dei elegerat Moyses [ad] legem custodiendam, quibus praecepit ne eam scribere[nt], sed successoribus suis viva voce revelarent, et illi deinde aliis ... quae scientia postea in scripta venit, qui libri aperte continent omnia secreta et mysteria quae in lege litterali velantur. Quae secreta, ut sentit Origenes, vocat Paulus eloquia Dei ... Cabala anagogicum sensum persequitur, qui erat traditus Moysi ab ore Dei; qui est sublimior et divinior, sursum nos trahens et ducens a terrenis ad celestia, a sensibilibus ad intelligibilia, a temporalibus ad eterna, ab infimis ad suprema, ab humanis ad divina, a corporalibus ad spiritualia.* Note the Augustinian elevation ascribed to the Calaba.

[45] Colet, EH, 197, speaking of the wisdom conveyed to the Apostles by Christ after his resurrection.

[46] Gleason, 46.

manuscripts sketch this total vision.[47]  But, strikingly, as J.B. Trapp reports: "Typically, Colet has [from Pico] eliminated the world of man, the mortal, corruptible world, and added the divine world."[48]

In fact, this early older friend of Erasmus, who had visited, admired and studied Ficino, and read and used Pico della Mirandola, had in him little of the new humanism in any form.  Some of Colet's positions are atavistic when compared to the Medieval scholastic treatments of the same matters.  It was not just that he found, after several attempts, that he could not learn Greek, so that he could not contribute, even had he wished, to the new historical study of the Biblical text.  However, Colet's continuing attachment to the allegorical and Neoplatonic interpretation of Scripture, both on the models of Augustine's four fold sense, and of Dionysius, ought not to astonish us, for the rejection of allegorical and philosophical interpretation even among Protestants in this period has been grossly exaggerated.  *Sicut enim apud nos est quadruplex [ratio] exponendi bibliae, quadruplexque sensus, literalis, Misticus Allegoricusque, Tropologicus et Anagogicus ... .*[49]

Colet remained a faithful disciple of "Blessed" Dionysius as the heir of St. Paul, when some scholars in his intellectual world had recognized the historical problems with this.  However, even those subsequently committed to Protestantism in England will revert to Colet's position when the Dionysian arguments suit them.  With this future in view, it is not surprising to find his thinking hierarchical, as the accompanying plates also overwhelming demonstrate.  For, as Richard Hooker, who will also preserve the "Blessed" for Dionysius when he wishes his authority,[50] makes evident, the ecclesiastical polity of the Anglican Reformation is not anti hierarchical.

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[47] I reproduce pages from Cambridge University Library MS Gg.iv.26, containing the commentary on Romans, 2ʳ-61ᵛ, the letter to the Abbot of Winchcombe printed in Knight's *Life of Colet*, 62ʳ-66ᵛ, "De compositione sancti corporis Xristi que est ecclesia," 67ʳ-73ᵛ, "Summaria quaedam commemoratio eorum [ad Corinthios]," 75ʳ-75ᵛ, the actual Commentary on the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, 76ʳ-153ᵛ.  The commentary on the *De caelesti hierarchia,* begins at 153ᵛ with a free essay on the subject which continues at 171ʳ with a table.  After this, "Ut sunt nonem angelos ordinet,"171ᵛ has a table of 42 triads into which the actual commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* is inserted.  The *Commentary* begins formally at 157ʳ with "Cognotio tuam sublimem et angelicam mentem" and ends formally at 170ᵛ.  In the manuscript, Colet has overwritten and corrected the text produced by his scribe.  Lupton's printed texts inadequately represent the diagrams, also the chapter divisions and capitalization have often been introduced by Lupton.  Gleason writes, "The manuscripts he left behind reveal his preoccupation with hierarchy not only in their text but in the diagrams, tables of correspondences, and bracketed pairs and triplets in which they abound ... . [D]iagrams and tables are considerably more prominent a feature of Colet's writing, and also his thinking, than the reader of the printed page might suppose" (38).
[48] Trapp, *Erasmus, Colet and More,* 135.
[49]  Colet, EH, 238, this is in the midst of the passage quoted in note 44 above.  Gleason notes at 138:  "His .. references to the four senses ... make it clear that he accepted them fully."
[50] The same was true of Hooker's mentor, and official apologist of the English Reformation, Bishop John Jewel;  see Hankey, "'Magis... Pro Nostra Sentencia'," 241.  Dionysius appeared to

Those who imagined that Colet was helping to inaugurate a new sense for the historical understanding of the Bible should, however, have been surprised to find him so deeply attached to strict hierarchical order that he followed Dionysius when he contradicted the text of Scripture, Isaiah VI, 6. There, a seraph is asserted to have flown to the prophet Isaiah, an immediate contact between the top and the bottom of the spiritual world which would contradict the *lex divinitatis*.[51] Colet thinks entirely in terms of that law; notice that even the inner relations of the divine Trinity are subject to it and are mediated.[52] But, in wanting to keep the highest orders tightly clustered round the divine throne, Colet is not exceptional. This is, after all, only a continuation of the common position of 12th and 13th century theologians like Aquinas and Bonaventure who embraced Dionysian systematization more completely than their Latin predecessors.

We approach, at last, what is special in Colet's position when we find him teaching Augustinian double predestination, even while he tries to resist entering scholastic disputes and subtleties and when he is trying to restrict himself to Paul's argument.

> *Est enim quodque ut is qui recipit; et odoriferum Christi evangelium tale sentitur, ut is qui audit divina voluntate vel eligitur vel reprobatur.* [53]

Consistent with this is a position of Colet in his commentary on the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*.

Dionysius balances the liturgical work of the Hierarch as efficacious petitioner for the Departed, on the one hand, with a conception of the Bishop as a discerner and declarer of the Divine will, on the other hand. As declarer, his prayer is only that God's will be done. In contrast, Colet comes down wholly on the side of mere declaration, manifestation and execution of the Divine will. There is no human action toward God.

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the Protestants to support their understanding of the sacraments and was used for that purpose even when his false self-identification was employed to reject his authority in other contexts.

[51] See Hankey, "Aquinas, Pseudo-Denys, Proclus and Isaiah VI.6."

[52] Colet, CH, 191 as represented in the Ms full page diagram: Beneath *Deus* are arranged, at the same level*: Principium*, and under it, *Pater, Medium*, and under it, *Filius, Finis*, and under it, *Spiritus Sanctus.*

[53] Colet, C 178 (English 28): "For everything is as he that receives it [for this Neoplatonic principle see also Colet, C 13 and Colet, R 43]; and the sweet-smelling gospel of Christ is received with different sensations, according as the hearer is elect or reprobate by the Divine will." It is essential to Colet's thought that the effect of elect or reprobation is a warmly felt love of divine things or the opposite. A actual divine will for reprobation is also found at Colet, R 166 discussed below. Usually Colet's formulae involve only predestination to salvation e.g. Colet, R 142; Colet, R 143: *gracia nichil est aliud quam Dei amor erga homines; eos videlicet quos vult amare, amandoque spiritu suo sancto; ... eciam nullo amore dignos, siquidem impios et iniquos, jure ad sempiternum interitum destinatos.* Colet, R 158: *ex proposito Dei et voluntaria predestinacione, et quasi decreto immobili, qui credant et confidant Deo ab ipso Deo vocatos esse.*

*Deprecatio illa pontificis super defunctum, ut is in gloria sit, non tam est peticio ut ita fait, quam indicacio ita esse. ... Est ille, ut ait Dionysius, angelus et interpres voluntatis Dei, et loquitur agitque omnia, uti monetus a Deo; et quorum vult Deus misereri, eorum pontifex in Deo, illius voluntatis divinator, miseretur. Quorum non miseretur pontifex, argumentum spiritum Dei non monere eos ut misereatur, taliumque Deum ipsum in celis non misereri ... . A celo enim et a Deo dirivantur omnia; et ille est qui agit in omnibus; et homines veri in illo sunt ministri voluntatis illius a quo habent spiritum; ut quasi instrumenta sint actionis Dei; non agant quidem ipsi aliquid, sed Deus in eis agat omnia.*[54]

In this context, Dionysius considers the Hierarch's power of excommunication. Here, Colet identifies the Bishop and God.

*Hi certe non agunt ipsi, sed Deus in eis, nec authores sunt ipsi cujuspiam facti, sed Deus; qui quicquid fecerint, id a Deo factum esse credendum est: qui sunt sane loco Dei habendi et colendi, ut ipse Deus ... .* [55]

Colet intrudes a warning to bishops, and particularly to the Pope, lest they imagine that they have any power of their own. They must discern God's will and thus, and only thus, their action is God's.

*Quod si non procedant ex revelacione, acti spiritu Dei in omnibus quae agant dicantve, delirant stulti tunc necessario ex seipsis, et potestate data tum in blasphemiam Dei tum in perniciem ecclesiae abutuntur. Ex quibus licet cernere, quam altus, quam sublimis, quam totus in celo positus debet esse pontifex; maxime ille quidem qui summus est, quem nos papam vocitamus ... .*[56]

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[54] Colet, EH, 262 (English 147): "The prayer of the Bishop over the departed, that he may be in glory, is not so much a petition that it may be so, as a declaration that it is so. ... He, as Dionysius says, is the messenger and interpreter of the will of God, and says and does all things as he is counselled by God. Those whom God would have compassion on, the Bishop in God, as the diviner of His will, has compassion on. As for those on whom the Bishop has not compassion, it is a sign that the Spirit of God counsels him not to have compassion on them; and that on such God himself in heaven has not compassion ... . For all things are derived from heaven and from God; and he it is who works in all; and men are true ministers in him of his will from whom they have the Spirit, so as to be instruments, as it were, of the operation of God, and not to do anything of themselves, but God to do all things in them."

[55] Colet, EH 263 (English 148-49): "These assuredly do not act of themselves, but God in them; nor are they themselves the authors of any work, but God; and whatever they have done, we must believe to have been done by God. These are to be esteemed and reverenced in the place of God, as God himself."

[56] Colet, EH 264 (English 150): "And if they do not proceed according to revelation, moved by the Spirit of God in all things that they do or say, then are they of necessity foolish and mad of themselves, and abuse the power given them, both to the blaspheming of God and the destruction

The effect of such a unification of an Augustinian sense for the impotence of the independent human will, with the Dionysian hierarchy, is both to exalt the ecclesiastical order as divine, and to subject it to the highest spiritual standards. Thus, Augustine's sense of the Church, as primarily the heavenly community of the elect, is added by Colet to the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Dionysius.  As a result, the church is, both, in true reality only a spiritual invisible community, existent in the Divine will, and, at the same time, is also a rigidly clerical, ecclesiastical hierarchy.[57]  Colet drew the practical inference that the canonical rights of the church must be protected from all secular interference.

John Colet's thinking of Dionysian hierarchical operation within an Augustinian logic of grace and predestination is given an opportunity for clear exposition when, in the *Celestial Hierarchy,* Colet comes upon the discussion of freedom and illumination in respect to God's scandalous particularity in restricting his saving illumination to the Hebrew people.  Dionysius asks if the failure of others to see is the fault of their guardian angels.  Roughly, Dionysius answers that our way of life is not predetermined and that the free will of those who either benefit or not from the divine light does not detract from its character of being a source of enlightenment.[58]  Certainly, the rejection of the universal and always benevolent shining of the Good is the fault of those who refuse it.  What Colet makes of this is summed up in his phrase "mente divina predestinati ut illuminentur" from his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 8.[59]  Illumination is reduced to predestination, the Dionysian (and characteristically Greek) ambiguity is eliminated.

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of the Church.  Hence may we see how high, how exalted, how wholly conversant in heaven the Bishop should be, he especially who is the highest, whom he call the Pope ... ."

[57] J. B. Trapp, "John Colet and the *heirarchies* of the Pseudo-Dionysius," 141-142 maintains that Colet's undertanding of the hierarchies involves an opposition to limiting "the power of the Church and the church courts."  For Colet, "The purificatory remedy of canon law in his hands was the remedy of celestial flame, not earthly, ecclesiastical fire."  Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations:  Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors,* (Oxford:  Oxford University Press, 1993), maintains correctly that Colet was not a proto-Protestant, he was a high clericalist, anxious to maintain the privileges of priests by raising their prestige.  I judge Peter Iver Kaufman, "*The Polytyque Churche*"  *Religion and Early Tudor Political Culture, 1485-1516*, (Macon: Mercer/ Peeters, 1986), 70-74 to be mistaken in representing Colet's *De Sacramentis* as if it were moving toward a priesthood of all believers in the Protestant sense.

[58] See *Celestial Hierarchy* IX, 3.

[59] Colet, R, 154:  *spiritum Dei, qui Deus est ipse, ubique esse, adesse, non tamen inesse illuminareque omnes, sed eos duntaxat qui sunt mente divina predestinati ut illuminentur.*  Gleason's comment at 162 that Colet is "Uninterested in Dionysius's speculations concerning the compatibility of free will in man with God's omnipotence" is just wrong.  We may take at face value Colet's reiterated assertions that he does not like the discussions of grace and freewill which he knows take him beyond Paul, but he knows that Paul necessitates them, e.g. at Colet, R 143, concluding chapter 5, where he has discussed these convoluted questions,  *Sed redeamus ad Paulum; a quo tamen his verbis non multum discessimus.*

The essence of spiritual life for Dionysius is illumination.  The angelic hierarchy, for him, for his High Scholastic followers, and for Colet, is a step by step downward mediation.[60]  Behind everything which Colet says is the conception of the first principle as simple incorporeal unity.  In itself it is simple light.  Angels, because of their own simple natures are capable of seeing such light.  Human souls have got themselves so mixed up with body as not to be capable of looking at this kind of light.

> *In qua unitate lucis omnino et identitate est varietas rerum luxque eadem manet una et simplex in variis rebus. ... Rationales .. creaturas, divinae ipsius naturae capaces, ... spiritales illae omnes naturae, quas uno nomine angelos vocamus;  in quos mera ipsa et nuda lux infusa est.  Nam propter simplicitatem naturae eorum ut aperta et pura veritate perfundantur non inidonii.  Homines ... quique ipsi simplices et unius naturae non sunt ... in qua anima, degenerans a sua simplicitate, nonnihil evadit corporea, ut nunc ad aspicienda mera spiritalia inepta sit ... . [P]er se ipsa nuda veritas mentibus hominum non potuit sese insinuare ...  utpote per opportuna media, attemptavit ad animas se introducere ... .[61]*

By God's gracious providence, what is known simply in God is gradually transformed within the celestial hierarchy by being handed on to ever lower intellects so as to become something comprehensible by weak, discursive and fundamentally inadequate human reason.

> *Nam creator ille, et omnis ordinis ineffabilis causa, gloriosum et efficax exemplar est primae hierarchiae, et sacro illi principatui, qui tanto amore ardet, qui conatur totis viribus referre Deum, et quae sub se sunt deinceps ut referant impellere. Itaque, ut Deus primam hierarchiam, ita illa secundam, st secunda terciam edocet.  Tertia vero deinde hierarchia angelorum, videns hominum ruditatem in terris, qui in quarto sunt loco, et ad divina agenda quam inepti erant. [62]*

The gradual descent is likened to the move from white to colored light.[63]

The position and necessity of the human Hierarch lies in his secret and inward contemplation of what is done ritually and spoken publicly in the church. Divine illumination is also essential to all real and, certainly, all saving, knowledge for Augustine.  The intellectual vision of the eternal ideas, which are the reasons of all things, brings beatitude to the human, or rational, soul.  God

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[60] For the medievals see Hankey, "Aquinas, Pseudo-Denys, Proclus and Isaiah VI.6," 76ff.

[61] Colet, CH 166.

[62] Colet, CH 167.

[63] Colet, CH 168: *Qui spiritus non descendit in homines, dum homines sensibiles sint, nisi adhibitis signis sensilibus.*  At 168-9, in summing up Dionysius, he is very clear about the need, for the salvation of humans, to diminish the light which is simple in God and known in the angels.  This doctrine is explained again and again by Colet.

enables this vision by the infusion of an intelligible light given so far as the purified soul adheres to the uncreated divine ideas by love. So, effective knowledge is proportional to love, and the power of loving is a gift of the divine will ultimately reducible to God's election.[64] There are, in fact, great differences between Augustine and Dionysius here, but the similarities give opportunities for Colet's assimilation.

For Colet, the divine light only effectively illumines when, by the divine grace, there is a concurrence between the Divine and the human will. He writes:

> *Sed haec cogita adjumentum Dei cum vi voluntatis concurrere, in graciaque homines libere posse, ut ex utrisque simul nascatur libertas ad bonum; ut, nisi velit homo, non admittat lucem; et, nisi illuminetur, non velit admittere. Est voluntas in causa cur animus admittit; et est lux simul in causa cur animus velit. Anima calens gracia suapte libertate elegit bonum, quod eadem libertate potest recusare. Sine gracia vero nulla libertas, et in gracia quidem nihil nisi libertas.*[65]

Colet finds such thoughts too hard, "*Sed mittamus haec: hebetescit enim acies retusa sane rei et questionis duritate. Ad Dionysium revertamur ...* .[66] And, indeed, uniting Augustine and the Greek Fathers on this point is difficult, if not impossible, which is why, having moved to Augustinian language about grace and the freedom of the will, the result is double predestination.

Consistent with this mentality, which unites an Augustinian reduction of human freedom to the divine predestinating will with the Dionysian sense of the superiority of the realm of pure spirits, is an extreme opposition to any embrace of human corporeality or sensuality. Colet's only substantial work which is not a commentary depicts a sacramental universe understood through marriage. But marriage is conceived entirely and exclusively as spiritual union. In Colet's universe, the angelic hierarchy certainly provides the system through which all else is understood. But, in addition, the angelic nature is so much the highest and best that humans exist for the sake of the angels and with the hope of being transformed into their nature.

A remarkable passage in Colet's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans argues that, despite the human eternal end being a matter of the divine election or reprobation, humans have no basis of complaint about what God gives. He

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[64] *Soliloquorum.* I,4-8; *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* 46,1 & 3; *De trinitate* X,5,7.

[65] Colet, CH 183 (my translation): "But consider thus, that God's assistance concurs with the force of our own will; and in grace men are able to be free; so, from both together, our freedom towards good is borne. Thus, unless a man wills it, he does not admit the light, and unless he be illumined, he wills not to receive it. Man's will is the cause why his soul receives it; and, at the same time, the light is the cause why the spirit wills. The spirit when warmed by grace out of its own proper freedom chooses the good, which, by the same freedom, it is able to refuse. Without grace there is no liberty, and in grace there is nothing but liberty."

[66] Colet, CH 183.

reasons that some humans have been given the dignity of supplementing the number of the angels, thus raising the elect even above the state of Adam in the Garden.

> [*V*]*era et bona et justa et Deo digna, et hominibus congrua, et denique toti universo conveniencia et conquadrancia ea omnia ... ad revocacionem eorum ad se et restitucionem ad pristinum statum; immo eciam supra illum statum qui fuit Adae in paradiso; longe in altius tractionem quos inscrutabilis illa mens ex omni hominum genere ad tantam dignitatem et graciam prescripsit, eciam ... ante mundi constitucionem, esse attrahendos et secum copulandos:* [note marriage language] *... ac preterea in eo hominum delectu qui sunt prefiniti ad supplementum angelorum, quam simul est Deus, vel eligens vel repudians, mirabiliter et justus et misericors, ut sine querela cujusquam sit multorum gaudium.* [67]

In his commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, he proposes that Christ's redemption consists in making humans into a fourth angelic hierarchy.  The Cambridge University Library MS shows that Colet revised his text to this state:

> *ut ex hominibus (quoad fieri possit) in Christo quarta hierarchia sit bene spiritalis, qui aliquando veri spiritus erunt et angeli, spiritificacione eorum a Deo in Christo, per angelos et angelicos homines continuata.* [68]

Such statements might be multiplied at length from Colet's writings.[69]  But he was not the first to utter them.

Augustine and his followers, Gregory the Great, Boethius, Anselm and Peter Lombard, viewed humanity as replacing the number of angels which were lost by the fall of Satan with his hosts.  Indeed, Anselm and Gregory give this as the reason for the creation of the human.  In this framework, man is valued only because of his intellectual soul, which would replace lost intellectual beings.[70]  In

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[67] Colet, R 166 :  "How true and good and worthy of God and suitable for men, and in short how fitting and well-adjusted to the whole universe ... for the recalling of them to himself and their restitution to the pristine state;  indeed above that  state which Adam had in Paradise, a drawing to far greater height of those, whom that inscrutable mind has marked out, even ... before the foundation of the world to be drawn and united with Himself. ... and, moreover how marvellously just and merciful at once is God in the choice of those men who are fore-ordained to complete the number of the angels, so that, whether he elects or repudiates, there is no basis for quarrel from any and there is the rejoicing of many."

[68] Colet, CH 176.

[69] E.g.:  Colet, *De Sacramentis* 278, that the angelic and priestly part functions in the universe in order to raise it "in esse spiritali";  again, *De Sacramentis* 294, "spiritales omnino esse oportere;" *De Sacramentis* 316, *expurgetur illud intimum indiuiduum vt in se redeat et extet nudum, purum, et simplex ... . Simplicitas huius indiuidui hominis et anime unitas et esse in deo .*  We are to return to naked singleness, an angelic simplicity and intellectuality.

[70] *God in Himself,* 33-34.

Eriugena's blending of Augustine and the Greek Fathers, including Dionysius, this has altogether disappeared and man is valued because he is a *complexum.* The Thomistic, and other, anthropologies of the high Middle Ages follow Eriugena and Greeks like John of Damascus.

Colet's position is archaic. By his association with Erasmus, Thomas More and others, he was quite reasonably regarded as a friend of the new learning, generally. But he is not only a misogynist, a fact not itself remarkable, but also a real misanthrope, in no sense a humanist. Indeed, he is said have annihilated the natural.[71] He adheres to only one side of Augustine, leaving out the trinitarian image of God in the human mind, that by which the human immediately mirrors God. It would also be inconceivable to him that the human should be the place of the Divine self-creation.

### Edmund Spenser

With Queen Elizabeth's allegorizing poet, Edmund Spenser (c.1552-1599), we cross the divide between theology and poetry, between the church which looked to the Roman Pontiff for its earthly head to one which recognized the English Monarch as its Supreme Governor, and we pass from a figure only rediscovered in the 19th century to one of enormous influence in his own time and beyond.[72] We shall ignore *The Faerie Queene,* his great allegory of the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth, who in her own chaste person united a Reformed Church to the state,[73] and, indeed, all his other writings except those he entitled *An Hymne of Heavenly Love* and *An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie*. With Colet in mind, we notice above all that, despite their common "heavenly" direction, these celestial hymns do not reduce humanity to the angelic hierarchy. Instead, there is a reversal of celestial hierarchy in the human cause and for the Divine honor which Christ unites.

The Patristic sources of Edmund Spenser's, so called, "Platonized Protestantism"[74] are the subject of a recently published monograph, Harold L. Weatherby, *Mirrors of Celestial Grace: Patristic Theology in Spenser's Allegory,*[75] which confirms that the Greek Fathers were well known and authoritative for

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[71] "This antihumanistic denial of value to human realities has been well called his annihilation of the natural" Gleason, 105.

[72] See *Spenser. The Critical Heritage,* edited by R.M. Cummings (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).

[73] See above all Frances A. Yates, *Astraea, The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 1-120

[74] For example, William Nelson, *The Poetry of Edmund Spenser,* (New York, 1973) in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry, Authoritative Texts and Criticism,* Second Edition, edited Hugh MacLean (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 736: "It is idle to ask whether Spenser was a Christian Platonist or a Platonic Christian." Recent treatments of his Protestantism are Anthea Hume, *Edmund Spenser: Protestant Poet,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and John N. King, *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[75] Harold L. Weatherby, *Mirrors of Celestial Grace: Patristic Theology in Spenser's Allegory,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

those choosing the religious path of Queen Elizabeth in England.  But, by Spenser's time, criticism of the claims of the pseudo-Dionysius and of his doctrines, was beginning to be generally effective among Protestants.  Their theologians were often glad, in this instance, to believe what philology discovered.  Thus, the decline of the Dionysian tradition outlined 35 years ago by C.A. Patrides is evident.[76]  Still, that decline in influence and authority must not be overstated.

There is no reason to contradict Patrides' evidence that the refusal from Spenser, through Hooker, to Milton, to use the specific description of the ranks of the celestial hierarchy given in the Dionysian corpus shows these authors to have departed from the kind of following of the Areopagite which we found as a key to all order in Colet.  However, refusal of the specific features of the Dionysian arrangement need not, and does not in Edmund Spenser and Richard Hooker, imply that the systematic mentality to which the ninefold angelic order belongs is unknown.  Indeed, it may even, finally be embraced - with different figures filling the places in the hierarchical order.  Spenser is certainly still thinking in terms altogether hierarchical and symbolic, as a moment's glance at *The Faerie Queene,* or our two "hymnes," confirms.

Once again, however, so as to understand the character of the spiritual hierarchy, we must take account of Augustine's role.  Robert Ellrodt's authoritative, *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser*[77] maintains that "the best way to read the *Hymnes of Heavenly Love* and *Heavenly Beautie* in the spirit in which they were written, that is, in a Christian spirit, would be to read first some chapters of the *De Trinitate.*"[78]  And, by looking at "Augustinian manuals or works of Augustinian inspiration" in contemporary use, Ellrodt believed himself to have

> once more brought to light the essentially traditional, conservative, Christian of Spenser's *Hymnes,* both in spirit and substance.  Apart from occasional decorative "motifs," he borrowed nothing from the more characteristic Neoplatonic doctrines [like those of Pico or Ficino], abiding by earlier themes, undoubtedly of Platonic descent, but fully christianized from the days of Augustine.[79]

Professor Ellrodt exaggerates the Augustinian character of Spenser's poetry here because the likenesses and differences between the two most influential Patristic Christian Platonisms is not fully enough appreciated.  In

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[76]See C.A. Patrides, "Renaissance Thought on the Celestial Hierarchy:  The Decline of a Tradition," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20, #2 (1959), 155-166 with its modifying second thought "Renaissance Views on the 'Unconfused Orders Angellick'," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 23 (1962), 265-67.

[77] Genève:  Librairè E Droz, 1960 reprinted by Norwood in 1977.

[78] Ellrodt, 179.

[79] Ellrodt, 181.

consequence, the opposition between Christianity and Platonism is also overstated.[80] But Professor Ellrodt points us in the right direction - even though I would advise a reading of the *Confessions*[81] as well as the *De Trinitate* in order to see Augustine describe his ascent to "heavenly beautie." Let us consider, then, how the Dionysian-Augustinian synthesis operates here.

The "hymnes" of "Heavenly Love" and "Heavenly Beautie"[82] are the inverse of one another. "Heavenly Love" begins in the Divine Trinity and moves toward creation in a series of self-motions, begettings and illuminations. The contemplation of "heavenly beautie" starts from the opposite end of the cosmos. It makes its:

Beginning then below, with th'easie vew
Of this base world, subject to fleshly eye,
From thence to mount aloft by order dew,
To contemplation of th'immortall sky ... .[83]

When taken together, the two hymns have, then, a Neoplatonic *exitus-reditus* circular movement, which originates in the movement of the divine love upon itself.

The divine self-movement brings forth, first, the Trinity of divine persons and, then, brings to birth, and encompasses, the creation in a way systematically described by Eriugena.

Before this worlds great frame, in which al things
Are now contain'd, found any being place
Ere flitting Time could wag his eyas wings ...
That high eternall powre, which now doth move
In all these things, moved in it selfe by love.

It lou'd it selfe, because it selfe was faire;
(For faire is loved;) and of it selfe begot
Like to it selfe his eldest sonne and heire,
Eternall, pure, and voide of sinfull blot ... .[84]

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[80] Literary studies remain tied to Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea, The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University, 1933,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), which, though remarkable when compared to what philosophers tended to write about Neoplatonism at the time, never mentions either Iamblichus or Proclus, seems not to know the *Lex divinitatis,* which one might call the law of "the great chain."

[81] Especially IX,10,24-25 and XI,4,6.

[82] I use the text in in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry* with the commentary in *Spenser. Fowre Hymnes. Epithalmion. A Study of Edmund Spenser's Doctrine of Love,* by Enid Welsford, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967). In my citations the numbers refer to lines.

[83] "Heavenly Beautie," 22-25.

The notion of spiritual activity as self-motion is Platonic.  The opposed Aristotelian notion of intellectual acts as complete activities, "of a different kind from motion" was assimilated to it by the Neoplatonists.  So, the Christian heirs of their conceptions, like Thomas Aquinas, conceived the divine substance, and indeed the divine Trinity, through "motionless motion."[85]  The divine motion was "a different kind of motion," the act of the perfect.  Spenser continues this conceptual tradition.

After the persons of the Trinity, the second divine "brood" of this "fruitful love, that loves to get/ Things like himselfe, and to enlarge his race," is the angels.  Significantly, the birth of the divine persons and of the first creatures is equated rather than contrasted.  With the angels, at this stage in Spenser's poetic vision, we remain within the same "race."  The difference of the angels from God is only that they are "not in powre so great."  That the division between creator and creature becomes more important than that between grades of spirit, is often represented as the primary difference between Christian and pagan Neoplatonisms.[86]  If this were so, Spenser would lie on the pagan side.

Spenser's angels are organized in a Dionysian way:

His second brood though not in powre so great,
Yet full of beautie, next he did beget
An infinite increase of Angels bright,
All glistring glorious in their Makers light.

To them the heavens illimitable hight ...
There they in their trinall triplicities
About him wait, and on his will depend,
Either with nimble wings to cut the skies,
When he them on his messages doth send,
Or on his own dread presence to attend,
Where they behold the glorie of his light,
And caroll Hymnes of love both day and night.[87]

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[84] "Heavenly Love," 22-33.

[85] See W.J. Hankey, "The Place of the Proof for God's Existence in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 46, #3 (1982), 370-393;  idem, *God in Himself,* 54-56, and chapters 3, 5 and 6;  Gersh, *KINHSIS AKINATOS* and Beierwaltes, "Unity and Trinity in Dionysius and Eriugena," conclusion.   A note to line 28 of "An Hymne of Heavenly Love," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, 525, which sees the parallel structure of the two Hymnes and refers to both Aristotle and Plato is headed in the right direction.

[86] See, for example, Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena.*

[87] "Heavenly Love," 53-70.  Consonant with a pagan Neoplatonism is the strong contrast between the angels in "the heavens illimitable hight" and us who "behold" from this "round heaven."

Descending, thus effortlessly and blissfully, in a Dionysian way, from the power which is moved by love of its own beauty, we are startled by what we encounter when, instead, moved by the search for "beautie," humans "transported with celestiall desyre ... lift themselves up hyer." Surprisingly, the ascent seems to reverse itself near its pinnacle.

Beginning "below" with the "base world, subject to fleshly eye," passing through sea and air to the firy "Skye," the desire of "heavenly beautie" draws us step by step through the celestial movers of this Ptolemaic cosmos until we reach the "faire .. heaven ... where happy soules have place,"

In full enjoyment of felicitie,
Whence they doe still behold, the glorious face,
Of the divine eternall Majestie ... .[88]

Next, we reach another heaven still

"More faire ... where those *Idees* on hie,
Enraunged be, which Plato so admyred,
And pure *Intelligences* from God inspyred.[89]"

Though Spenser's is an inclusive account of the heavens, what constitutes them and their order, it is understandable within the Christian Neoplatonic tradition. Its structure derives from the intellectually demythologized and then remythologized pagan cosmology of the Procline sort. That is, having (with Dante in the *Convivio*) added the Platonic ideas to the Aristotelian intellectual movers, these are then identified with the mythological gods, e.g. Juno equals power. This demythologized paganism, whose gods have become concepts, persuaded Dionysius. [90] Indeed, at this point, Dionysius becomes our guide.

From the Intelligences, we begin to pass upward through the Dionysian angelic hierarchy. All goes as we might expect. Our poet continues:

Yet fairer is that heaven, in which doe raine,
The soveraine *Powres* and mightie *Potentates,*
Which in their high protections doe containe
All mortall Princes, and imperiall States;

And fayrer yet, whereas the royall Seates

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[88] "Heavenly Beautie," 78-80.
[89] "Heavenly Beautie," 83-84.
[90] See H.-D. Saffrey, "Les débuts de la théologie comme science (IIIe-VIe)," *Rev. sc. phil. theo.*, 80, # 2 (Avril, 1996), 216-20, English translation, by W.J. Hankey: "Theology as science (3rd-6th centuries)," *Studia Patristica,* vol. XXIX, edited by Elizabeth A. Livingstone, (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 335-39.

And heavenly *Dominations* are set,
From whom all earthly governance is fet.

Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins,
Which all with golden wings are overdight,
And those eternall burning Seraphins,
Which from their faces dart out fierie light ... .[91]

  The account is a little telescoped, but otherwise this is Dionysian orthodoxy. The Dominations are higher than the Powers because they are free from care for the earth. But, suddenly, all is reversed! Spenser next finds that

Yet fairer then they both, and much more bright
Be th'Angels and Archangels, which attend
On Gods owne person, without rest or end.

The principle is Dionysian, i.e. the highest are those who without rest or end attend "Gods owne person." This principle is formally and properly stated in the next stanza:

These thus in faire each other farre excelling,
As to the Highest they approch more neare ... .

But the actual spirits given this highest place by Spenser could not be more wrong by Dionysian standards. Angels and Archangels, the lowest members of the Dionysian hierarchy, those sent to humans, are raised above the two other triads. The highest spirits are no longer the Cherubim and Seraphim, rather, instead, the highest are mere Angels and Archangels! What could be the reason for this startling reversal?

  The standard literature is not very helpful. Spenser's reversal of the hierarchy is put down to confusion, carelessness or ignorance.[92] This is not very likely, since the Dionysian order was still well known in Spenser's time. If,

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[91] "Heavenly Beautie," 85-95.

[92] Enid Welsford, *Spenser. Fowre Hymnes*, 169: "If Spenser knew Dante's *Convivio,* the identification of the angels, Platonic ideas and Arirstotelian intelligences may well have confused him ... The insertion of the Intelligences and Ideas into the angelic hierarchies is more excusable than the exalting of the Angels and Archangels above the Cherubim and Seraphim. Again, *if* he knew the *Convivio,* he might have been mislead by an overhasty reading or imperfect recollection of Treatise 2, chapter vi." That chapter speaks, indeed, of the Angels and Archangels as first and second but makes clear that this is *quoad nos.* C. A. Patrides, "Renaissance Thought on the Celestial Hierarchy," 163, speaks of "his haphazard list of the angelic orders on a third instance." See also *The Minor Poems,* 2 vols. in *The Works of Edmund Spenser,* edited E. Greenlaw (and others), (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), i, 553 & 554 where Dodge and Bennett likewise allege error and confusion, Winstanley asserts that Spenser follows the tradition only as far as he wishes but gives no reason why Spenser might have preferred another order.

indeed, Dante is a source for Spenser, as the experts maintain, Dante certainly knew all the details of the Dionysian order and its alternatives. The high Medieval schemes differ only slightly; all place the Seraphim and Cherubim at the top and Angels and Archangels at the bottom.[93]

In fact, the reason for Spenser's reversal of the common pattern is not far to find, being suggested by what follows immediately in the text. It teaches that no nature is capable of the Divine. All natural order presuming an ascending power Godwards must ultimately be canceled. Speech, with its built in hierarchies, requires the use of categories which truth must contradict. Thus, after speaking of the beauty of the angels as proportionate to the nearness of their approach to God, Spenser goes on:

Yet is that Highest farre beyond all telling,
Fairer than all the rest which there appeare,
Though all their beauties joyned together were:
How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse,
The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?[94]

God is not only fairer than any order, but, is far more fair than all of them together, and his beauty is beyond telling. Reasonably, given this impossible situation for speech, the poet bids his tongue to cease while he asks leave to "bethinke how great that beautie is." God's parts show him as if in a looking glass; in these he is seen by all:

How much more those essentiall parts of his,
His truth, his love, his wisedome, and his blis,
His grace, his doome, his mercy and his might,
By which he lends vs of himselfe a sight

Those unto all he daily doth display,
And shew himselfe in th'image of his grace,
As in a looking glasse, through which he may
Be seene, of all his creatures vile and base,
That are unable else to see his face,
His glorious face which glistereth else so bright,
That th'Angels selves can not endure his sight.[95]

Here, we have just witnessed another reversal. Having, in verse, ascended a ladder of vision to its pinnacle, God Himself and those who see Him, we discover that what we spoke of there was only talk. No speech is adequate to

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[93] See *Divina Commedia, Paradiso,* xxviii, 88 ff.
[94] "Heavenly Beautie," 101-5.
[95] "Heavenly Beautie," 109-19.

that sight, and the angels cannot in fact endure to gaze on God directly.  Rather his "parts" are reflected by grace.  In them by grace, He is **ordinarily** seen by **all**.  No hierarchy of vision applies.  In case we should miss Spenser's point about the failure of natural power and about the wrong headedness of any hierarchy of natures which would make creatures apt for the vision of God, Spenser replays the reversal once again.

He asks how "we fraile wights" who cannot even look on the physical sun,

how can we see with feeble eyne,
The glory of that Maiestie divine,
In sight of whom both Sun and Moone are darke ... .[96]

He answers that, by looking on God's works, "plumes of perfect speculation" might be gathered:

To impe the wings of .. high flying mynd [and]
Mount up alofte through heauenly contemplation, [thus] ...
On that bright Sunne of glorie fixe thine eyes ... .[97]

But, once there, you would, in fact, be

Humbled with feare and awfull reverence,
Before the footestoole of his Majestie ... .

You would be compelled to

Throw thy selfe downe with trembling innocence
Ne dare looke up with corruptible eye,
On the dred face of that great Deity,
For feare ... .

Grace, not nature, is our hope.

Spenser's pattern of contradicting the hierarchical pattern he asserts is again repeated.  The one who ascends must:

lowly fall before his mercie seate,
Close covered with the Lambes integrity ... .[98]

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[96] "Heavenly Beautie," 120-26.
[97] "Heavenly Beautie," 133-39.
[98] "Heavenly Beautie," 141-49.

When considering this Lamb, there is another reversal, much discussed by the experts, for, in the midst of the Lamb, a female "Sapience doth sit." The movement from the Lamb, who is clearly the eternal λογος and Son, to female wisdom appears as one more reversal of images when we are face to face with Deity.[99]

A detection of the subversive Spenser is undertaken in a recent book, Linda Gregerson's *The Reformation of the subject. Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic.*[100] It suggests a useful approach for understanding what is happening in the Hymnes, with which it does not deal. We are forced to conclude that Spenser's reversal of the Dionysian hierarchy at its pinnacle is very far from being a matter of confusion, carelessness or ignorance. It is an artful and self-conscious subversion and reversal of all pretense to any natural power or right to vision of God.

Augustine was a source in the Medieval Latin tradition for Christocentric correction of Dionysian spirituality. He goes on subverting such hierarchy in Modern times. He is likely an inspiration for Spenser's subversion also. There is in Augustine a gracious Christocentric humanism which is able to invert the natural subordination of humans to angels, indeed to overthrow the hierarchy of creatures generally, and which certainly functions at some points in western intellectual and institutional history to reverse Dionysius.[101] I judge that we have an instance here.

By placing the Angels and Archangels, who are at the very bottom of the Dionysian celestial hierarchy, within the intimate divine presence itself, outrageously above and beyond the Cherubim and Seraphim, and by making these lowest spirits, because of this proximity, the fairest of all, Spenser is doing what all negative theology must. He is erecting a categorical structure which

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[99] E.g. by William Nelson, *op. cit.* and by Ellrodt. C.S. Lewis has telling remarks in his review of Ellrodt as reported in *Spenser's Images of Life,* edited by Alaister Fowler, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), note, p. 53 on the "break through" here. Harold L. Weatherby, *Mirrors of Celestial Grace* has useful remarks re the *Fairie Queene:* "the possibility which the baptismal symbolism of Book One and the Transfiguration simile of Seven introduce: that the divinity of all Spenser's royal virgins derives from a belief in deification which of course includes Mary's but is by no means limited to hers. ... That this belief is thoroughly Christocentric - the Incarnation being its basis and the Resurrection and the Transfiguration its principal manifestations - would presumably make it more appealing to a member and defender of Elizabeth's Church than a symbolism derived exclusively from Mary. To the extent that the poem does echo Marian devotion (and Wells is persuasive on this matter), Spenser may simply be influenced by the popular (and well-documented) adaptation of that devotion to Elizabeth" (92). This makes sense of the hymns: Christology assimilates Mariology and monarchy is substituted for papacy, as we shall also witness in Hooker.
[100] Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[101] Hankey, "'Dionysius dixit'," 134, idem, *God in Himself*, 32-4, 51-4; and M. Reeves and B. Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore,* Oxford Warburg Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 58-60, 201-4. The last both shows a Christocentric humanist reversal of Dionysius in Joachim of Fiore and gives references to relevant Patristic and Medieval texts.

will illuminate only by being denied.  But, this Protestant poet, like Luther and Calvin, is no longer thinking within that tradition, which uses negation as a device which maintains hierarchy.  Spenser's denial of the vision of God Himself by any highest natures in order that gracious knowledge of God's "essential parts" by all, ordinarily, be substituted, makes this apparent.  A reader of Calvin will recognize, in the knowledge of God's essential parts, the knowledge of *God for us* which the Reformer asserts is salvific.  Such knowledge is opposed, by Calvin, to the proud, and worse than useless, pretense to knowledge of God in Himself.[102]  What is characteristic of Augustine:  grace, immediate access of the human to God, Christ's mediation, indeed "him crucified," imaged in the "Lamb as it had been slain"[103] subverts and overthrows Dionysian celestial mediation.  The fate of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and its mediation we shall consider in Richard Hooker and the Cardinal de Bérulle.

### E. Richard Hooker[104]

The definitive Anglican theologian, Richard Hooker (c.1554-1600), defends the Tudor settlement of the ecclesiastical question in terms altogether hierarchical and symbolic.  He advocates a Christian regime whose heart is liturgy, not preaching, whose clergy are likened to angels, [105] and whose polity is a hierarchy, at once and coterminously, ecclesiastical and secular.  At the summit of that bipolar hierarchy sits regnant the consecrated monarch mirroring Christ, and, by his grace, communicating the freedom his kingdom gives. [106]  This Anglican culture unites a Lutheran and Calvinist interpretation and development of Augustine's doctrine of grace and of the sacraments, both with a hierarchical and hieratic polity, and also with a symbolical-liturgical understanding of the religious life of the nation derived from the Latin hermeneutic of Dionysius.  Richard Hooker loves much from Dionysius which

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[102] *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I, X, 2:  "in the enumeration of his perfections, he is described not as he is in himself, but in relation to us."  The attributes listed in this chapter are eternity, self-existence, compassion, goodness, mercy, justice, judgment, truth, power, etc;  I, xiv, 4 rejects as pretentious the Dionysian claim to knowledge of the celestial hierarchy.

[103] *Revelation* 5.6:  "And I beheld, and Lo, in the midst of the throne ... a Lamb as it had been slain."

[104] My treatment of Hooker is very much dependent on the work and kindness of Dr. J. W. Tory Kirby whom I heartily thank.

[105] See Peter Lake, *Anglicans & Puritans?  Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker,* (London:  Unwin, Hyman, 1988), 170-71 & 217.  Lake sees Hooker as engaged in "the reclamation of the whole realm of symbolic action and ritual practice" (165).  "Preaching he compared to angel messengers descending from God to man;  prayer to messengers passing from man to God" (169).

[106] See W.J. Torrance Kirby, "*Supremum Caput:*  Richard Hooker's Theology of Ecclesiastical Dominion," *Dionysius* 12 (1988), 69-110;  idem, *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy,* (Leiden:  Brill, 1990).  Dr. Kirby's great work is to situate Hooker within the Protestant orthodoxy of his time.

**Deleted:** *and Puritans?  Presbyterians*

Calvinists hate.  In consequence, he may, more directly than they, be usefully understood within the tradition of Latin Christian Neoplatonism.[107]

Nonetheless, in his treatment of the doctrine of justification, Hooker relies very much on the formulations of both Luther and Calvin.  His Augustinianism is, thus, filtered.[108]  For example, he does not accept the notion of sin as originating in concupiscence, but shares with the Reformers a radical sense of the derangement of the will.  Augustine is everywhere, looming very large in Hooker's account of the nature of the will, of grace, justification, predestination, the atonement, and the sacraments.[109]  He is less present in the ecclesiological discussion.  But Hooker, like Colet, seems to feel no opposition between Augustine and the pseudo-Dionysius.[110]

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[107] Lake, *Anglicans & Puritans?* 226, asks: "Was there also a platonist or rather a neo-platonist strand in Hooker's view or human nature and of the efficacy of symbol and ritual as means of communication and edification?  There is a tantalizing reference to Hermes Trismegistos in Book I of the *Polity* ... .  Perhaps Hooker can be located within the milieu of anti-ramist aristotelianizing platonism or platonizing aristotelianism ... ."  I judge these to be useful categories.  Useful, even if opposed to one another, on the relation between the outer realm and the underlying spiritual cosmos in Hooker are W.H. Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism and Politics: Two Traditions of English Political Thought 1500-1700* (London:  Oxford University Press, 1964), chapter 2, which looks at Hooker within the framework of Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*;  David Little, *Religion, Order, and Law.  A Study in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Oxford:  Basil Blackwell, 1970), 151-52;  Stephen L. Collins, *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State.  An Intellectual History of Consciousness and the Idea of Order in Renaissance England*, (Oxford:  Oxford University Press, 1989), 93 ff.

[108] On the character of that filtering see my "'Magis ... pro nostra sentencia'," and Robert Dodaro and Michael Questier, "Strategies in Jacobean Polemic:  The Use and Abuse of St Augustine in English Theological Controversy," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44,#3 (July, 1993), 432-449.

[109] This is not to say that English Protestant sacramental theology and that of Augustine are the same; see Hankey, "'Magis ... pro nostra sentencia'," 229-230.  What separates the Reformation from Augustine and the medievals lies in a difference between them on the relation of human subjectivity to God and to objective being.  In consequence, Cranmer and his followers seem incapable of understanding Augustine on the sacraments.  A. Sage in "L'Eucharistie dans la pensée de saint Augustin," *Revue des études augustiniennes,* XV (1969), 209 - 40, writes: *Le "secundum quemdam modum" ... n'élimine pas le réalisme de la formule ... Le corps et le sang du Christ sont 'in sacramento' aussi réellement present que foi dans le baptême* (219).  He is making the necessary point that, for Augustine, the subjective and objective sides are united by the λογος "*incréé*" (218) found in Scripture and understood both there and in Augustine's Neoplatonic philosophy as living and active, running through and uniting all things.  H. Chadwick, "*Ego Berengarius,*" *Journal of Theological Studies*, 40 (1989), 419, says acutely:  "Certainly, Augustine used much symbolist language about the eucharist... [but his] doctrine of Eucharistic presence is not merely symbolist."

[110] See "Notes toward a Fragment on Predestination," and "The Dublin Fragments.  *Grace and Free Will, the Sacraments, and Predestination*," in *The Folger Library Edition of The Works of Richard Hooker*, W. Speed Hill, General Editor, Volume 4 (of 6), (Cambridge, Massachusetts:  The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982), 81-167.  In the "Notes toward a Fragment," Hooker cites Augustine on "Gods good pleasure ... to save some" (83).  Regarding the will, Hooker refers to Augustine against the Manichees, on one hand, and against the Pelagians, on the other (93).  In "VI. *The cause of God's reprobation of the wicked*," part of "The Dublin Fragment," Augustine is the highest authority:  "St Augustin dyeth without any equall in the *Church of Christ from that day to this.*"  As such, he is cited throughout these works.  And he is linked explicitly with Calvin at 138.

Hooker teaches a more moderate - or at least a more nuanced and developed- form of double predestination than does Colet. In "The cause of God's reprobation of the wicked," he begins by asking, "Butt if God would have all men saved, and if Christ through such his Grace have died for all men, wherefore are they not all saved?" He goes on to distinguish "a secondarie kind of will" [111] from God's "generall will" (also "signified" or "principall will,") which is that all men might be saved. By the secondary or "consequent" will, there comes destruction and death, even though God's principal inclination towards man is the contrary.[112] God wishes sinners to be punished because he is just, though he does not create them for punishment. The secondary or "occasioned" will, which punishes rather than saves, is set in motion by sinful men. Hooker opposes the view that God eternally decreed condemnation without the foresight of sin as a cause. "The place of *Judas* was *locus suus* a place of his owne proper procurement. Divells were not ordeyned of God for Hell fyre, but Hell-fyre for them."[113] In the children of perdition we must always remember that "Thy destruction, o Israel, is of thyselfe."[114] Hooker concludes that "though grace therefore bee lost by desert, yet is not by desert given."[115] He follows this with a recapitulation of the Lambeth Articles on Predestination. All Christ's foreknown elect are predestined, called, justified. In his prayer that all men might be saved, Christ spoke according to his human nature, i.e. not having foreknowledge. By his divine nature, in contrast, he was able to except "those for whom his sufferings would be frustrate."[116]

From this it will be seen how much Hooker has in common with Calvin and the Puritans. This is generally his Augustinian side, though we discern a difference from the teaching of the Greek church more than he did. When we arrive at his political ecclesiology, the relation to Protestant reform is still dominant but, surprisingly, Dionysius also comes into his own. The Dionysian law of mediation appears and a comparison with the leader of the last great Dionysian school of *spiritualité*, a Cardinal of the Catholic Counter reform, becomes pertinent.

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Nonetheless, at 113 of "Grace and Freewill," Hooker quotes the *De Divinis Nominibus* (4.33; PG, 3:733) in Greek at length. The effect is the same as Colet's comment in Colet, CH 183, as quoted above.

[111] "On Predestination," in "The Dublin Fragments," Folger, vol. 4, 145.

[112] Again this does not mean that Hooker felt an opposition to the teachings of the Greek church. Throughout this discussion, he refers to John of Damascus, see, for example, ibid., 143, 146.

[113] Ibid., 148.

[114] Ibid., 152.

[115] Ibid., 165.

[116] Summary: "It followeth therefore, 1. that God hath predestinated certain men, not all men. 2. That the cause mooving him hereunto was not foresight of vertue in us att all; 3. That to him the number of his elect is definitly knowne. 4. That it cannot be butt their sinnes must condemne them to whome the purpose of his saving mercie doeth not extend. etc. 5. That to Gods foreknowne elect finall continuance of grace is given" (ibid., 167) There are 8 points in all.

Dr. W.J.T. Kirby, has overturned the 19th century Tractarian representation of Richard Hooker, which represented him as seeking a middle ground between Calvinism and Popery.  Dr. Kirby has shown that, on Hooker's left, so far as ecclesiology was concerned, stands the "Disciplinarian" interpretation of Calvinism, but that Hooker was attempting no compromise with Roman Catholicism, rather his categories were above all those of Protestant orthodoxy.  Dr. Kirby has pointed to a shift in the understanding of Chalcedon's Christology which is common to Hooker and to the continental reformers.  Christian subjectivity came into more direct relation to the divine side in the hypostatic union.  Here an unobserved community with Bérulle and his followers in France appears.

The Puritans, in order to prevent there being any other head of the church than Christ himself, distinguished the origin of civil power from the origin of spiritual authority.  Civil power is derived directly from the Father without mediation of the Son.  In contrast, spiritual authority, the relation to God which we have in the Church, is mediated through the priesthood of Christ.  Opposing such a distinction, Hooker's whole argument when justifying the royal headship of the Church is, like that of Bérulle, Christocentric.  There is no relation to the Father except through the Son.  Dr. Kirby has shown that the political question as to the royal headship of the Church of England is, at root, for Hooker, a soteriological question.  Hooker resolves it in terms of his understanding of the formula of Chalcedon on the union of the two natures in one divine person.  There is here, also, a likeness to Bérulle, the heart of whose spirituality is formed on an understanding of the sacrifice involved in the hypostatic union.  In that union, for Bérulle, Christ sacrifices his human personality in order to join humanity to the divinity with total intimacy.  With the French cardinal, as with the English Reformed theologian, the heart of the matter is a novel 17th century reflection on Chalcedon.

Richard Hooker's justification of the royal headship of the Church depends upon a furthering of what appears to him as the Protestant exaltation of Christ.  He stands against those who imagine themselves to be the proper defenders of the Reform but who derive one half of ordained power from God apart from Christ.  Instead, for Hooker, the power of government properly belonging to God is given in a different, diminished and derivative form to the monarch through the Kingship of Christ, who is at once prophet, priest and king.  His demand for mediation in all hierarchical communication accords with the *Lex,* deriving from Dionysius, which had already centuries of use in western disputes about the relation of papal and princely power.      Here is Hooker's version of what Aquinas and others called the very 'divine law':

> The *Apostle* [117]therefore giving instruction to publique societies requireth
> that all things be orderly done.  Order can have no place in thinges

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[117] Hooker here refers us to I Cor. 14:40.

unlesse it be setled amongst the persons that shall by office be conversant about them.  And if things or persons be ordered this doth implie that they be distinguished by degrees.  For order is a graduall disposition.  The whole world consisting of partes so manie so different is by this only thing upheld, he which framed them hath sett them in order.  Yea the very deitie it self both keepeth and requireth for ever this to be kept as a law, that wheresoever, there is a coagmentation of many, the lowest be knitt to the highest by that which being interjacent may cause each to cleave unto other and so all to continue one.[118]

Hooker goes on from this to assert the king's power under the law in religious matters.  It is supreme except for "*God* himself, the king of all the kinges of the earth."

The authorities cited here and the text of "Blessed" Dionysius quoted in Hooker's Autograph Notes are almost identical with those used by Pope Boniface VIII in *Unam Sanctam* to justify the absolute right of the Roman Pontiff in both church and state!  Indeed, we may truly say that the difference consists in a change of persons, the arguments remaining the same:

> *Si ordinem auferas confusio sequatur necesse est, a qua divisio oritur et ex Divisione destructio. Luc. 22.  Idcirco omnia cum ordine fieri oportere dixit Apost. I. Cor. 14.  Qui quidem ordo in gradum distinctione consistit ut in potestate alter ab altero differat et majoribus pareant inferiores, alioqui universitas cohaerere non posset.  Lex itaque divinitatis est infima per media ad suprema reduci, inquit B. Dionysius.  Unum itaque in Ecclesia esse oportet apud quem sit summa coertio, summum et amplissimum jus in universos.* [119]

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[118] *Lawes,* VIII,2,1, in Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity Books VI, VII, VIII*, in *The Folger Library Edition of The Works of Richard Hooker,* W. Speed Hill, General Editor, vol. 3, edited P.G. Stanwood, (Cambridge, Massachusetts:  The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 330-331.  See Kirby, *Richard Hooker's Doctrine,* 96, note 8.  Kirby remarks:  "Hooker's discussion of this distinction of "order" [of the divine and other powers] suggests the influence of a Neoplatonic cosmology."

[119] "Hooker's Autograph notes," in *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker* , W. Speed Hill, General Editor, vol. 3, edited P.G. Stanwood, (Cambridge, Massachusetts:  Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), Supplement II, 493-94.  The editors translate this thus: "If you take away order, of necessity confusion follows, whence arises division and from division destruction ... Therefore, the Apostle has said that all things should be done in order ... This order consists in distinction of degree, so that one differs from his fellow in power and the lesser obeys the greater, otherwise society cannot hold together.  And so it is a divine law, says St. Dionysius, for the lowest things to be led back to the highest by those that are intermediate. There should then be one in the Church who possesses supreme power, supreme and widest right over all."

It may be useful to explore the extent to which there is a reaction here in the representation of the king to transformations in the self-representation of the Roman Pontiff which were occurring in the Renaissance.[120]

A comparison of the text of the Divine Law used by Hooker with that used by Boniface VIII, and of both of these texts with the Latin texts of Dionysius used in the Middle Ages, shows:  a) that the exact formulation of the Law cannot be located in these Latin texts of Dionysius, b) that Boniface VIII is relying on some traditional rendering of the law which the editors of the canon law have not found, c) that Hooker is not reading Dionysius directly, but either some traditional source common to him and Pope Boniface, or he has slightly modified the text of *Unam Sanctam* known to him from the canon law (this is the most likely alternative).[121]

Dr. Kirby remarks, in respect to Hooker's treatment of the Supreme Headship of the monarch:

> So long as the distinction is preserved between an "infinite" power corresponding to an infinite substance or divine order on the one hand, and a finite power on the level of a finite, human order on the other, the title of headship may reasonably be applied to both levels simultaneously.[122]

Under these conditions, then, the mediation which belongs to Christ may also, and must also, belong to an earthly hierarch.  Thus the Dionysian mediating hierarch, who, at least since Hugh of St. Victor, had been identified with the Roman Pontiff in his possession of the two swords, makes another appearance. Here, in 17th century England, the hierarch unifies the sacred and the secular powers in the king, as previously in the Medieval Latin Church, he had united them in the pope.  Both western uses must be counterpoised to Deny's own text where the hierarch is a bishop seen functioning only in the cultic life of the Church.  Either way, a divine power becomes present on earth, and is mediated to humans through the hierarch's relation to Christ.  So,

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[120] On the Pope, see Paolo Prodi, *The Papal Prince:  One Body and Two Souls.  The Papal Monarchy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge:  Cambridge University Press, 1987), 253.

[121] See also the very useful note in Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Introductions; Commentary Books V-VIII*, in *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker* , W. Speed Hill, General Editor, vol. 6 pt 2, (Binghamton, New York:  Medieval & Renaissance texts and studies, 1993), 1080- 1081, which refers back to Boniface VIII's *Unam Sanctam*:  "This formulation of the principle of hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite is Boniface VIII's in the bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302), incorporated in the canon law in the *Extravagantes communes,* 1. 8. 1."  On the knownledge and use of Roman Canon Law by Protestant, even Puritan, divines under Elizabeth, see John Guy, "The Elizabethan establishment and the ecclesiastical polity," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I.  Court and Culture in the last decade*, edited John Guy, (Cambridge:  Cambridge University Press, 1995), 126-149 and R.H. Helmholz, *Roman Canon Law in Reformation England*, (Cambridge:  Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[122] Kirby, *Richard Hooker's Doctrine*, 97.

Christ as God *and* man is the source of authority in *both* Church and Commonwealth.  Civil authority is from God "mediately through Christ" ... and therefore dependent upon both his human and divine natures by the *communicatio idiomatum.*  Similarly, ecclesiastical jurisdiction is dependent upon Christ, although not as "inferior unto his Father", but as coequal in the divine nature. ... The two regiments are invisibly unified in Christ, their source, they are visibly unified through the Royal Supremacy.[123]

There is not space to draw out here the significance of the twofold relation of Christ's humanity to his divinity here, both relations meeting in, and both mediated by, the Christian monarch.  We must only note it as essential to what is created in this Protestant version of the western Dionysian hierarch.  It seems important to the constitution of Modern Christianity insofar as something parallel will be found with Bérulle on the other side of the English Channel and of the Reformation. Neither can I do more than note that the retained element of Dionysian hierarchical reasoning is strongly modified in both thinkers by the fact that their interlocutors in both cases are the Calvinists, either Puritan or Huguenot.  Here, I suppose, derives their strongly Augustinian, as opposed to Dionysian (who is, even by his most favorable interpreters, accused of at least tending to monophysitism), two nature Christology, and their Christocentrism. But, before moving from Hooker to Bérulle, I must note one more aspect of Hooker's doctrine.

Dr. Roger Beckwith asserts:

whereas, in Aquinas's eucharistic theology, we are united with Christ's divinity through his humanity, in Hooker's we are united with Christ's humanity through his divinity.  ... In Hooker's eucharistic theology, we are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit, but specifically with his humanity through its union of Person, co-operation and efficacy with his divinity.[124]

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[123] Ibid, 112-113.

[124] R.T. Beckwith, "The Doctrine of the Sacraments in the Thirty-Nine Articles," in *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, edited G. Richmond Bridge, (Charlottetown:  St. Peter Publications, 1990), 74 with note 14.  See also R.S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament,* (Edinburgh:  Oliver and Boyd, 1953), 207 and 231 which associates the Spirit with the divine Christ in effecting union with God in the Eucharist.  This "Spirit Christology" is connected with the Extra Calvinisticum in E. David Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology.  The Function of the so called Extra Calvinisticum in Calvin's Theology*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 2 (Leiden:  Brill, 1966), 82 ff. This book has useful references to Calvin's following of Augustine in his Christology, see 29-30, 44, 67-68, etc.

This is important as we turn to the Cardinal de Bérulle because, in his Counter-Reformation spirituality, there is also a sacramental union of the Christian with the divine nature in the hypostatic union.   In Catholic France, however, all is mediated through the priesthood of Christ and through the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

### Cardinal de Bérulle

The Cardinal de Bérulle (1575-1629), was "à l'origine de la spiritualité sacerdotale et de l'action réformatrice qui ont à peu donné au clergé français la physionomie particulière qu'il a conservée plusieurs siècles."[125]  Defining French Counter-Reformation *spiritualité,* this great director of souls was self-consciously the instrument of a Copernican revolution in theology and religious life, with enormous consequences.[126]  From now on, Christ would be the centre of both, the sun around which the universe moved.  His Christocentric revolution occurred in two circumstances.  To one of them I have already referred, namely an endeavour to defend the order and sacramental life of the Catholic Church against Huguenot attack, a defence undertaken in dialogue with their divines.  In this context, I judge that Bérulle was constantly reflecting on a Calvinistic Augustinianism.[127]

The other circumstance of the Cardinal's spiritual revolution was specifically the problem of the Rheno-Flemish Dionysian mysticism which, though strongly influential in the high circles in which Bérulle moved, and among the religious who were under his direction and patronage, had developed an abstract path to mystical union.  Bérulle himself had begun his spiritual life under Jesuit direction, but, he had moved away from that to this abstract mysticism.  In its development of the Medieval Dionysian tradition, the mediation of Christ was obscured.[128]  Pauline crucifixion mysticism took the

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[125] M. Dupuy, *Bérulle et le sacerdoce.  Étude historique et doctrinale.  Textes inedits*, Bibliothèque d'histoire et d'archéologie chrétienne (Paris:  Lethielleux, 1969), 7.

[126] For the relation to Copernicus, see *Bérulle and the French School, Selected Writings*, edited and introduced by W.M. Thompson, The Classics of Western Spirituality, (New York:  Paulist Press, 1990), 5-6 and *Discours de l'état et des grandeurs de Jésus*, [= *Les Grandeurs*] II,2(172).  For the consequences, see, generally, (and polemically) J. Milet, *Dieu ou le Christ?  Les conséquences de l'expansion du christocentisme dans l'Église catholique du XVIIème siecle à nos jours.  Étude de psychologie sociale,*  (Paris:  Polémique-Trévise 1980), 156-74.

[127] See M. Dupuy, "Bérulle et la grâce," *XVIIe Siècle*, 43, No 1 (1991), 39-43;  Dupuy notes how the controversy with the Protestants "l'oblige à dépasser les questions sur la grâce actuelle ... . L'attention se porte directement sur la gratuité du salut ..." (42).  In this context, Augustine's doctrine becomes prominant and there is a recognition of the inadequacy of the Dionysian formula, credited ultimately, in Dupuy, to Iamblichus:  prayer as "l'élévation de l'esprit vers Dieu."  Suggestive, though critical, polemical and problematic remarks, both on the specific character of Bérulle's understanding of the relation of the mystical and the eucharistic bodies, and on similarities with Calvinism, are found in Émile Mersch, *Le corps mystique du Christ.  Études de théologie historique*, 2nd éd., 2 vol. (Paris:  Desclée de Brouwer, 1936), 218 and 301-322.

[128] L. Cognet, *La Spiritualité Francaise au xviie siècle*, Culture Catholique 4 (Paris: La Colombe, 1949), 36 ff., idem, *La Spiritualité moderne*, 314-17, idem, *Crépuscule des mystiques: Bossuet - Fénelon*,

forms of ascetic practices and a negative theology, transcending all concepts and images, detached from "Christ crucified," in the sense that the humanity of Jesus was itself bypassed.  It was to this is that Martin Luther had also objected in Dionysius, and which the Orthodox tradition had corrected when transmitting the Dionysian teaching.  Among Medieval Latins, the use of Augustine was crucial to this correction.  It appears that this Augustinian correction must now be made once more in the 17th century.  Bérulle's form of doing it again, by yet another union of Dionysius and Augustine, a millennium after the Dionysian *corpus* appeared, and seven centuries after Eriugena first united them, will have long reaching consequences for the Modern church and Modern theology.

Meditating on the states of Jesus, on the dogma of the Trinity, and on Chalcedon's definition, Bérulle harvested new fruit from an old tree.  Bérulle contemplated with wonder and devotion what others see as an embarrassing logical consequence of Chalcedon's definition:  to be one with the person of the Divine Word, the humanity of Christ had to surrender its own proper human personality.  From the eternal origin of the Incarnation, as divine person, Christ is priest, a sacrifice and sacrificer, for the hypostatic union, as surrender of the human personality, is sacrifice,.  This doctrine has, of course, enormous consequences for the doctrine of the Eucharist and for the priest's relation to its sacrifice.  Indeed, the French School developed its own distinct tradition in Eucharistic theology and spirituality.[129]  But the doctrine has other consequences.

Through meditating on the servitude of the divine humanity in the very fact of the Incarnation itself, Bérulle came to see the whole life of Jesus as sacrifice.  He was astonished by the intimacy of the union revealed by this theological reality, humanity merged with divinity, maintaining no personality of its own. With the surrender of the human personality comes access to the divine subsistence itself.

> *Nous sommes au cour du bérullisme et pouvons mesurer l'acquis d'une longue et tenace méditation:  notre être, qui est un rapport à Dieu, libéré des liens qui retiennent en lui-même, a "l'honneur d'entrer dans la relation divine et adorable du Fils unique à son Père."* [130]

nouvelle édition par J.R. Armogathe (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991), 21-23;  and J. Orcibal, *Le cardinal de Bérulle.  Évolution d'une spiritualité*, (Paris:  Cerf, 1965).

[129] On its eucharistic theology, see J. Galy, *Le sacrifice dans l'école français*, (Paris:  Nouvelles éditions latines, 1951),  V. Calabrese, "Un interprete dell'*École Française de spiritualité* Riguardo alla teologia del sacrificio della messa:  Pierre Le Brun de l'Oratoire (1661-1729)," *Antonianum* LXVII/1 (1993), 22-44

[130] R. Bellemare,  *Le sens de la créature dans la doctrine de Bérulle*, (Paris:  Desclée de Brouwer, 1959), 61-62, quoting the *Oeuvres de piété* 87, 2,(1072).  See G. Yelle, *Le Mystère de la sainteté du Christ selon le cardinal Pierre de Bérulle*, Theologica Montis Regii 1 (Montréal, 1938), especially in respect to the effect this doctrine has on the understanding of the Trinity.  At 45, he quotes Bérulle, *Les Grandeurs* II,11(180): "Le secret de ce nouveau mystère ... le dénûment que l'humanité de Jésus a de sa subsistence propre et ordinaire, pour être revêtue d'une subsistence étrangère et extraordinaire à cette nature divisée et séparée" Using Aquinas as standard, Yelle and Bellemare

For the sake of such union, Christians are to imitate Christ's total abnegation. Jean Dagens describes the doctrine of an early work, the *Bref Discours de l'abnégation intérieure*. Bérulle seems to be consciously moving beyond Augustine toward Dionysius:

> *Il est un troisiéme degré de l'abnégation qui nous ouvrira la vraie pauvreté spirituelle. Au-dessus du cour qui règle les activités sensibles, au-dessus de l'intelligence et la volonté qui sont la partie supérieure de l'âme, il y a partie suprême de l'esprit l'"apex mentis" de certain théologiens: il faut que cette partie suprême .. .se renounce elle-même, qui réduite à une passivité absolue, elle laisse Dieu agir en elle.*[131]

In his later doctrine, Bérulle does not go back on this requirement for a total *dénuement* as the necessity of true union.[132] Rather, he advances by understanding the way to be through a total identification with the whole Jesus, in whom this self-negation is contained and whose humanity is thus identified with divinity. Moreover, if mystical ascent becomes concretely Christocentric, with a matching development in Christology, there is an equally concrete institutional development through which the new way becomes effective.

Bérulle saw that the sorrows and joys of a perfectly intimate service and union were shared by Christ with us. This spirituality of intimate union with the sacrifice of Christ, at once divine and humanly concrete, he wished to make accessible to all Christians. Along with others in this period, Bérulle sought an everyday mysticism. To effect this, every priest must become both a mystic and a spiritual director. Here we touch the point where the influence of Dionysius, "the apostle of France," is strongest and where, in the form which the Dionysian hierarchy takes, the contrast with Richard Hooker appears.

M. Dupuy writes:

> *[L]e prête a pour office de "dispenser les mystères de Dieu, c'est-à-dire et la doctrine et les sacraments." C'est exactement ce que enseigne la <u>Hiérarchie ecclésiastique</u> ... .*[133]

But there is a difference between the doctrine of Bérulle and that of Dionysius. The Cardinal reads the Areopagite in a way typical in the Latin Church[134]:

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are both useful on the Late Medieval and early Modern developments which make Bérulle's position possible.

[131] J. Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique (1575-1611)*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), 141.

[132] *Bérulle and the French School,* 35, "As he undergoes his so-called Christocentric conversion his Christology deepens. He never disowns his early acceptance of the abstract Neoplatonic school of spirituality."

[133] Dupuy, *Bérulle et le sacerdoce*, 69.

*Pour Bérulle le prête est médiateur de la foi en raison de son "autorité", alors que pour Denys il "illume" grâce à sa science qui perçoit la signification des signes sacrés. ... Bérulle puisera très largement dans la <u>Hiérarchie ecclésiastique</u> ... il faut traiter de la transmission de l'autorité par succession dans l'histoire, alors que le Pseudo-Denys s'interesse surtout à la transmission de la "lumière" par diffusion, en faisant abstraction de la dimension temporelle.*[135]

Bérulle developed a strongly hierarchical spiritual system inspired by this understanding of the Pseudo-Dionysius. Beside the hierarchy itself, which is employed (and modified) in many ways, Dionysius' emphasis on the spiritual elevation of the hierarch is also crucial to Bérulle.

*L'utilisation de l'oeuvre du Pseudo-Denys permettra à Bérulle de mettre davantage en lumière cette relation entre la sainteté du prêtre et la sanctification des fidèles. L'état de prêtrise est "l'origine de toute la sainteté qui doit être en l'Église de Dieu."*[136]

However, the concentration on priesthood involves a deep modification of Dionysius, and this is not the only transformation of Dionysian hierarchy. In 1614, Bérulle

inaugurated the feast of Jesus' solemnity and proclaimed, against Dionysius the Areopagite, a 'reversal of the hierarchies' ... Henceforth, .. all the hierarchies of angels will adore Jesus, the God-man.[137]

At the head of the human hierarchy is, then, the priest, not the bishop, (at least not as other than high priest,) nor the prince.[138] Priesthood is at the apex, for priesthood has access to divinity. Priesthood has access to the sacrifice at the heart of divinity.

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[134] On this reading, see Hankey, "Dionysian Hierarchy in St. Thomas Aquinas."

[135] Dupuy, *Bérulle et le sacerdoce*, 70

[136] Ibid., 76. As well as changing the conception of the hierarch and the relation between bishop and priest, Bérulle alters the understanding of the relations between these orders and the monks; see 140 ff.

[137] *Bérulle and the French School*, 14; Milet, *Dieu ou le Christ?* 170: "la situation des Anges par rapport au Christ se trouve modifiée. Alors que Denys l'Aréopagite situe les Anges 'autour du trône de Dieu', et donc au-dessus des de l'humanité de Jesus, Bérulle met Jesus au-dessus des Anges."

[138] Y. Durand, "Mystique et politique au XVIIe siècle: l'influence du Pseudo-Denys," *XVIIe Siècle*, 43 (1991), 323-50 does not succeed in making Louis XIV a Dionysian hierarch, in part because the special knowledge which the king claims in his *Mémoires* is not in fact super terrestial, but rather the contrary: see *Mémoires pour les années 1661 et 1666*, éd. J. Longnon (Paris, 1979), 232.

The primary divine saving act is the sacrifice of Christ's human personality in the hypostatic union.[139]  Grace flows to us from our real access to that divine act of union.  In contrast, in Aquinas, for example, grace comes to us as a consequence of the hypostatic juncture, and its effect is communicated to us through the humanity of the God-man.  Rather, Trinity, Incarnation and Eucharist are radically connected for Bérulle through the Incarnation, "l'état suprême."[140]  "Bérulle parle de '... la Trinité et l'Incarnation:  les deux états du Verbe divin, son émanation éternelle et son émanation temporelle'."[141]  In his thought, the trinitarian self-return of God embraces the humanity so that the humanity itself has a trinitarian *exitus - reditus* within the divine unity.

In this way Bérulle both accepts and modifies the inherited  Christian Neoplatonism.

> [*L*]*'oeuvre divine est envisagée ... sous une forme cyclique ... l'Incarnation doit, en quelque mesure, répeter, retracer la Trinité.  Effectivement, Bérulle n'hésite point à considérer l'Incarnation comme une seconde Trinité ...  Il y a pour lui une première Trinité .. de subsistence en unité d'essence ... et une deuxième Trinité .. d'essence en unité de subsistence ... .*[142]

We are included in and subsist within this second, personal subsistence:

> *Dieu, qui produit les créatures hors de soi dans le néant, veut en l'Incarnation produire une nature créée dans soi-même, dans son être dans la personne de son Verbe, et lui donner la subsistence du Verbe pour sa subsistence.*[143]

This is a radical incorporation within the divine activity:

> *Je veux dire qu'il ne suffit pas de penser que l'union des natures s'est faite dans une personne divine.  Il faut en même temps considérer que cette personne est une relation subsistante, et cette relation, verbe. ...  Relation créée subsistant par un autre, restaurée par une relation incréée, subsistant par soi.*[144]

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[139] See Dupuy, *Bérulle et le sacerdoce*.

[140] F.G. Preckler, "*État*" chez le cardinal de Bérulle.  Theologie et spiritualité des "états" bérulliens, Analecta Gregoriana 197 (Rome:  Gregorian University, 1974), 76.  See *Les Grandeurs*, VI,1,(245) on the connection of the three mysteries.

[141] Preckler, "*État*", 67-68, quoting Bérulle; see also 41-43, 65-99, 100-111.  R. Bellemare, *Le sens de la créature*, 143, "Le schème de l'exitus et reditus se trouve donc inséré selon l'ordre de la grâce, en celui des processions-relations trinitaires."  See *Les Grandeurs*, III,10,(209) where Dionysius is quoted on the coming forth and return of all things to unity and how the humanity of Jesus is itself just such a process in the divine unity and *Les Grandeurs*, III,8,(205-7) on the two trinities.

[142] L. Cognet, *La Spiritualité Français,* 60, also 59 ff. are very useful on the connection between "hiérarchisme" and Incarnation.

[143] Bérulle, *Oeuvres de piété*, 15,2,(935), quoted by R. Bellemare, *Le sens de la créature*, 24.

[144] Bellemare, *Le sens de la créature*, 143; *Les Grandeurs*, VII,9,(275-78) explains how God communicates Himself to humans.

The Bérullian schema both is, then, at once, radically incarnational, with great concentration on the humanity of Christ communicated in the Eucharist through the act of the priest, and also, transcendentally deifying. For, by relation to the same priestly sacrifice, the Christian is carried into the mystery of the divinity itself.

The relation of the individual soul to all this must be worked out institutionally, as well as inwardly. The sacrifice of Christ demanded a life of servitude on his part and will demand an *anéantissement* in his followers.[145] Bérulle's way of working this out institutionally involved him in controversies in his own time. But, at the least, his revolution was enormously effective in transforming the conception, preparation, inward and practical life of the Catholic priest.

Bérulle's deep transformation of Dionysius, in many ways, involved, amongst much else, the way he united his thought with that of Augustine. It is important for our understanding of the Augustinian tradition to note that mostly they were read so as to emphasize what they have in common.

> *Ce n'est pas à Denys, c'est à Augustine ... que Bérulle se refère le plus souvent. ... Il lui emprunte la clef de voûte de son oeuvre, l'idée même de religion comme retour à Dieu et trouve chez lui, plutôt que chez Denys, le principe de son exemplarisme, le parallèle entre les processions divine et les missions ... .*[146]

There is much more which is Augustinian, including the sweeping view of universal history.[147] But, above all, there is the reorientation toward Christ and the humanity of the mediator.[148] There is, also, a fundamental division from Augustine which we must discuss in our conclusion.

This, then, is the Christocentric revolution, a revolution which will contain the angels within the divine-human unity. Bérulle praised Copernicus and his heliocentrism, urging an imitation of him in the science of salvation. We are reminded, equally, of what Bérulle's contemporaries, Kepler and Galileo, were doing at the same time in cosmology. This revolution occurs in Bérulle by the

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[145] See especially P. Cochois, "Bérulle, hiérarcque dionysien," *Rev. d'ascétique et de mystique*, 147 (1961), 314-353 and 151 (1962), 354-75; idem, "Bérulle, initiateur mystique: les voeux de servitude," *EPHE VI*, Annuaire 1959-60, 111-115 and Preckler, "*État*", 87 ff. See also, more generally, P. Cochois, "Bérulle et le pseudo-Denys," *Rev. de l'hist. des religions*, 129 (1961), 173-204.
[146] Dupuy, *Bérulle et le sacerdoce*, 70; see also J.L. Goré, "Neoplatonisme et Quietisme: Fenelon et L'Aréopagite," *Rev. d'hist lit. de la France*, 69 (1969), 583-602.
[147] See Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines*, 36.
[148] There is an endeavour in F. Cayré, "L'Augustinisme," *L'année théologique* 1941, 77-79 to specify in what ways Bérulle is Augustinian. Bellemare, *Le sens de la créature*, 102 maintains that Augustine is the source of Bérulle's understanding of the creature. His whole treatment of Bérulle's relation to his sources is important.

way Dionysius and Augustine meet in this Augustinian age.[149]  The revolution has formal similarities on both sides of the English Channel, even if the differences between them were at the time much more what appeared to the churches and the world.

### Conclusion

It is not possible to draw all the conclusions which are suggested by analyzing the material we have considered in terms of the categories with which we began.  But a few things are obvious.  First, the union of Dionysius and Augustine in the Latin West is important, perhaps even normal, in the Middle Ages and into the early Modern period.  Second, this union takes diverse, even opposed, forms.  These forms are crucial for the transformations which Christian culture, in the widest sense, undergoes, at least into the 17th century.  Third, the categories with which we began, Augustinian immediacy and Dionysian mediation, are only helpful, if it be recognized that they reverse themselves.

In John Colet, the union of Augustine and Dionysius stands against elevating the human in its relation to God, but nothing like this occurs again. Augustinian Christological mediation may subvert Dionysian mediation, as it does in Edmund Spenser, elevating the human when in Christ and "close covered with the Lambes integrity."[150]  It may be merged with it, as in Richard Hooker, or in the Cardinal de Bérulle.  In both of these last, the result is a new kind of union of the human and the divine in an "ecclesiastical polity" or in a priestly hierarchy.  But Bérulle is not Colet *redivivus*.

In Bérulle, the hierarchies are reversed.  So, while there is no human "sufficance,"[151] the result is something higher.  Humanity is divinized and the divine humanized.  Another unification of God and creature is put in the place of the self-relation of the Augustine's divine-human trinity of being, knowing and loving as both self-subsistence and medium of union.[152]  Bérulle substitutes an inclusion in the divine trinitarian *exitus - reditus*, itself become more radically inclusive of the creature.  The Cardinal de Bérulle encouraged Descartes.[153]

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[149] The assimilation continues to take place on both sides, see J. Lebrun, *La Spiritualité de Bossuet*, (Paris:  C. Klincksieck, 1972), 100-106 on Bossuet as following Bérulle in this.

[150] *Hymne of Heavenly Beautie,* 149.

[151] For a discussion within this category in relation to Bellemare, *Le sens de la créature*, and other Bérullian scholarship, see D'Angers, *L'Humanisme Chrétien au XVIIe Siècle*, viiff and 136-37.

[152] Cognet, *La Spiritualité moderne*, 334:  "il ne reprend pas l'idée si utilisée par les rhéno-flamands, que l'image de la Trinité est imprimée en homme par la distinction de ses trois facultés."  *Les Grandeurs*, IX,1,(309-10) on the difference between knowing and loving is revelant.

[153] On their meeting, see M. Houssaye, *Le cardinal de Bérulle et le cardinal de Richelieu, 1625-1629* (Paris:  E. Plon, 1875), 385.  Houssaye observes (391):  "Comme Descartes il croyait que 'par principes nez en nous-mesmes, nous re-cognoistrions le principe des principes, si nous n'estions tousiours hors de nous-mesmes."  [*Vie de Jésus*, Préamble, iv, p.4].  In the note he writes:  "M. de Bérulle imprimait ces lignes l'année même de sa rencontrer avec Descartes."  On the issues involved between the positions of Bérulle and Descartes, see Jean-Luc Marion, *Sur la théologie blanche de Descartes.  Analogie, création des vérites éternelles et fondement*, édition corrigée et

Perhaps he saw in him a next step which Christian, and Augustinian, thought might take, and perhaps he judged it not to be altogether opposed to his own revolution. Descartes' revolution might also be regarded as a step back to another relation of *subsistances*. Perhaps, again, the true future is the union of both 17th century French revolutions.

For those in the 17th century, the difference between the Protestant and Catholic alternatives was all important. For us, looking from a perspective which is no longer simply Modern, what is assumed by both Hooker and Bérulle is most impressive. Dionysian mediation taken within Augustinian Christology, produces an immediate union either through a profoundly sacerdotal mystical *spiritualité,* or through a confident and Protestant secularization. Understanding what these are will require looking to the elements from which they emerged. But, like our consideration of the Augustinian tradition, it will require more.

One thing seems clear from that consideration; if what emerges conforms to what we have examined, mediating hierarchy will remain. Spenser's poetic vision needs a structure to subvert. Hooker and Bérulle give new reason to old hierarchies, enabling their reformed strength. Dionysius remains, if, as always, more hidden, and has power to profoundly transform an ascendant Augustine. The structure of the Western mind will continue to embrace the greatest contrariety, but it shows no sign of collapsing one of its fundamental elements into the other.

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complétée, (Paris: Quadrige/ Presses Universitaires de France, 1991); especially 140-60 and Ed.B. Davis, "God, Man and Nature: The Problem of Creation in Cartesian Thought," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44, 3 (1991), 325-48.