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THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD AS FOUND IN THE WRITINGS OF RUFUS M. JONES

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N.Y.
April, 1949

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PREFACE

The reasons of the writer for choosing the subject of this study are as follows:

1. Upon returning to the United States after an absence of seven years in India, I find a need to get into touch with recent thinking and to rehabilitate my own spiritual powers. The Seminar in Devotional Classics at the Biblical Seminary in New York under the guidance of the Reverend Ralph William Key provided to opportunity to begin such a study as this.

2. A study of the experience of God in the human soul offers a challenge to the worker among India's vast population, for India is known as the home of religions. Bishop Brenton Thoburn Badley, out of his long experience in India, has often said that until India writes her Commentary on the Gospel of Christ it will not be complete. Both Hinduism and Buddhism with over 330 million adherents had their rise in India. There are more than ninety million Mohammedans in the sub-continent of Southern Asia which comprises the Union of India and the newly formed Pakistan. There are vigorous minorities of whom the Christians number about eight million; however, it is generally said that the influence of Christianity far outweighs what its numbers would indicate.

3. There has never been such a challenge to any community of Christians to clarify their religious convictions and explain their unique experience as at the present time with the new regime in India, and perhaps also in Pakistan. The new constitution of India guarantees to every citizen the following: "All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.² (Article 19, passed on December 6, 1948).

4. It is recognized that in the writings of Rufus M. Jones much is found that will contribute to such purposes. Coming out of the splendid Quaker background of quiet search for the Infinite and being schooled in the best traditions of Western learning and being himself a teacher for many years, and sharing constantly his inner life with others, he affords a rich deposit of garnered truths in his writings which will continue to contribute to the knowledge of men concerning the "experience of God". Moreover, his writings are of special interest for the comparison of his positive or affirmative type of mysticism with the type found in India and the consequent different outcomes in the life of the mystic.

Biographical Sketch of Rufus M. Jones

Rufus Matthew Jones was born in South China, Maine, January 25, 1863. He was the son of Edwin and Marie Hoxie Jones.

He received the Degree of Bachelor of Arts from Haverford College in 1885; he studied at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, in 1887; and also at the University of Pennsylvania from 1893 to 1895. He received the degree of Master of Arts from Harvard in 1901 and the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1920. He also studied at Oxford, England, in 1908, and at Marburg in 1911. He had doctor's degrees from at least ten other colleges and universities in America and abroad.

Mr. Jones was married twice. His home for many years was at Haverford, Pennsylvania, where he taught in the Friends' College, and for much of that time he edited the Friends' Review and the American Friend. He was also active in the American Friends' Service Committee for European and Far Eastern Relief, and he received many honours.

Of him Bernard Meland writes: "He may undoubtedly be considered the most eminent American mystic of recent times, if, in fact, he is not the American mystic par excellence. "

Rufus M. Jones died June 16, 1947.

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD AS FOUND IN
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

A few years ago the culture and literature of the United States were marked by emphasis on material values and science; religious values and writings were marked by confusion and lack of direction and a sense of not being wanted in the thought life of the day. One of the interesting commentaries on the valence of abstractions in giving satisfaction to people is the change that has taken place within the space of a generation.

In the field of psychology this change is marked by the appearance in America of Gestalt theory and field theory both of which emphasize the purposive nature of human life, the importance of the background against which an experience takes place, and the pregnant nature of the field in which all interactions take place.

In the field of physics this change came with quantum theory and relativity.

In the field of religion the change has been marked by a new interest in experimental evidence of the validity of experience which has meaning and value for life but which lies in a different field of interpretation than science.

Because of this interest in religion that works and in the way it works, a new interest has been awakened in the study of the mystics.

Rufus M. Jones, as a great Christian mystic and as a Quaker, affords an excellent subject for study in the field of mysticism and its meaning in the Christian "field". Bernard Meland writes of him, "He may undoubtedly be considered the most eminent American mystic of recent times, if, in fact, he is not the American mystic par excellence."¹

The compiler of The Fellowship of the Saints says of Jones: "No contemporary scholar has done more in his writings to explain and evaluate the saints than Jones. Born of Quaker parents in Maine, and educated at Haverford, Heidelberg, Oxford, and Harvard, he taught philosophy at his alma mater, Haverford, from 1893 until he became professor emeritus in 1934. During this half century he wrote more than forty books, many of them dealing with mysticism. He stands as the leading American exponent of Christian mysticism, viewed from the angle of a Quaker philosopher."²

From a study of the writings of Rufus Jones then it may be hoped that a clearer understanding of the meaning of the experience of God to a mystic may be ascertained.

Delineation of the Problem

The meaning of the experience of God will be considered in this study from the standpoint of a Christian mystic, but it will be highlighted by comparison with the experience of a Hindu mystic; and the essential elements of the general experience and the specific Christian manifestation of it will be studied.

To the extent that it is necessary for the development of the experience, the life of Rufus M. Jones will be portrayed from some of his own accounts of experiences at various periods.

1. Meland, Bernard. Quoted in "The Fellowship of the Saints", compiled by T. S. Kepler. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. 1948. p. 652.
2. Kepler, T.S. Compiler, "The Fellowship of the Saints, p. 652.

Sources and Method of Treatment

The study will include a general discussion of the nature of religious experience and the special meaning of mystical experience as explained by Rufus Jones from the Christian standpoint and Swami Akhilananda from the Hindu standpoint. Brief explanations or comparisons will be quoted from a number of other writers.

Following this the study will develop through the biographical method Rufus Jones' own religious experience as a boy and his conversion, his feelings at the time of his mother's death, and then his development through college and later study and his contact with some of the great men of his day. An account too will be given of his experience in an automobile accident which in a way formed another major turning point in his religious experience.

In the next chapter the elements of religious experience will be discussed from Rufus Jones' explanations and from other writers.

The concluding chapter is really the climax of the study as it is Rufus Jones' treatment of the mystic's experience of God and its outcome in the life of the mystic.

A bibliography follows.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

There are various uses of the word, "experience". Webster defines it as "The actual living through an event, or events; actual enjoyment or suffering; hence the effect upon the judgment or feelings produced by personal and direct impressions; as, to know by experience."

As there is no suitable substitute for this word it will necessarily be used constantly in this thesis, with added definition where it requires different shading of meaning.

Experience and Consciousness

Rufus Jones explains his concepts of experience and the essential requirement of a subject and object for an experience to happen in the following words:

"..... All knowledge that reaches beyond the momentary and particular and actually apprehends truth and reality implies the existence of a much wider range of spiritual life than that of the finite knower. There must be a spiritual Environment in cooperative accord with the mind that is able to say, I know. Finite human experience always presupposes more than consciously appears in the experience itself. To know that a truth is universally and eternally true implies much more than the temporary state of mind in which the knowledge occurs. The consciousness of the moment, to begin with, must have its place in a wider setting of before and after. There must be an accumulation of past experience, preserved in the present, with, at the same time, a reference to an anticipated future. Only a mind inclusive enough to look back upon the original experience, to hold it in comparison and contrast with the facts that give it verification, and to acknowledge its coherence with permanent reality can demonstrate and maintain a knowledge of truth. It is not an animal function; it belongs only to beings that possess what the Greeks called nous, spiritual capacity. Something more than a mind of the thin knife-edge type of momentary experience is necessary before one can talk, except in parrot fashion, of truth, or of beauty or of goodness.

" But still more than that is involved in this mighty business. Minds that know cannot operate in a vacuum. They cannot spin experiences like a spider out of their own substance. The reality of the object is just as essential as the reality of the subject. At every step the mind that knows and interprets truth is embedded in and correlated with something more than itself. It is in cooperative response with objective reality of some sort. Experience of our type at every point is dealing with reality."¹

1. Jones. Pathways to the Reality of God, Pp.190-192.

Knudson in discussing the nature of religious experience says:
"The first thing to be determined in the analysis of experience is its relation to consciousness."¹ Consciousness makes a distinction between subject and object. It is not a metaphysical distinction, however. The subject may make itself or its own mental states its object. But, so far as psychological form is concerned, there must be in consciousness a distinction between subject and object. In other words, "Consciousness must be a consciousness of something by some one."²

The Indian thinkers have been concerned with these fine distinctions for centuries and have analyzed experience perhaps more than western thinkers are inclined to do. Swami Akhilananda explains the Indian understanding of experience as follows:

"According to Indian psychologists, it is the mind that reaches out to the objective world through the sense organs and nervous system, drawing its sensations and impressions through them and unifying the experiences gathered into coherent information or knowledge. The word 'mind' corresponds to the Vedantic word antahkarana (inner instrument) which has four functions: (1) manas, the oscillating or indecisive faculty of mind; (2) buddhi, the decisive state which determines that 'this is a tree and not a man'; (3) ahamkara, the state which ascertains that 'I know'; (4) chitta, the storehouse of mental states which makes remembrance and reference possible. We can call this the 'mind-stuff.' According to the Hindu system of thought (Vedanta), antahkarana stands between the Self and the object and receives the object of perception, assuming its form as a whole. Antahkarana is the inner instrument through which the subject knows the object by identification. It is not the Self. Self is consciousness and not the product of the relationship between subject and object...."

While American writers do not tend to analyze experience to the deep extent that the above quotation indicates Hindu mystics do, yet they do postulate concepts regarding the dualism of experience. Knudson indicates that experience is dualistic; that is, it implies both an experient and an object experienced. Since it is an experience of something by someone, it must be conscious experience.

1. Knudson, A.C. The Validity of Religious Experience. p. 11

2. Ibid. p. 12

3. Akhilananda, Swami. Hindu Psychology. p. 29.

A. N. Whitehead says that consciousness presupposes experience and not experience consciousness. Even more distinctly John Dewey says that experience does not mean experiencing and has no immediate connection with consciousness. Experience includes all history on this earth, both objective conditions, forces, events, and also the human record and estimates of these events. Indeed, experience "denotes the whole wide range (universe) of fact and dream, of event, act, desire, fancy, and meanings valid and invalid."¹

Rufus Jones explains this connectional concept of experience as follows:

"The most fruitful outcome of the study of inner, personal life has been the revelation of inherent relationship. Early psychology was individualistic. The individual was treated as though he could be absolutely insulated from all other lives and from the outside world and studied as a discrete entity. Still worse, his inner life was cut up into little independent 'faculties', which, too, were studied as though they existed in isolation. This is a dead conception. There are no independent 'faculties'. Perception, conception, memory, imagination, are all interrelated, and are simply varying functions of one common process. More than that, every mental function must be explained by reference to something, or somebody, outside the inner life of the person who has the mental state--it cannot be understood apart from an environment. Treat a person as an independent 'discrete entity', and no explanation can be given for anything that occurs ~~within~~ within him. The clearest fact about him is his relationship. He is a social being. All the laws of his life are, in the ultimate analysis, social laws."²

The fact readily becomes apparent from this discussion that the word experience itself varies in meaning with the configuration in which it is used. In this study it is to be used in the sense of religious experience and so will take on the special connotations of that field.

1. Dewey, John. Experience and Nature. pp. 8-10.

2. Jones, Rufus. Social Law in the Spiritual World. pp. 16-17.

Contributing Causes of Its Impersonal Use

The first contributing cause is the continuing influence of Absolute or Hegelian influence. According to Hegel the universe as a whole is in its essential nature Thought or Experience. The experience is that of the Absolute; but no sharp distinction is drawn between human and divine experience. Hence, the whole objective world is spoken of as objective "experience", without distinct reference to a conscious subject. Formerly this use of the word had an idealistic and more or less pantheistic background and would have been regarded as meaningless apart from it. But such thinkers as John Dewey, who began as neo-Hegelian and later took a naturalistic or realistic position, continued to use the word in its objective and universal sense after they had renounced their idealism. In doing so completely, they detached the word from its earlier meaning.

Another cause of the change of the use of the word is the revolt against dualism that has characterized much of Anglo-Saxon philosophy during the present century.¹ This revolt has to some extent been connected with absolute idealism. The absolute idealist sought to overcome the dualism of thought and thing or idea and object by reducing things or objects to thoughts or ideas and merging them all in one comprehensive experience. This type of monism is sometimes called pan-subjectivism. More recently another type of monism has arisen, known as "neo-realism", and at times referred to as "pan-objectivism."

1. Lovejoy, Arthur O. The Revolt Against Dualism.

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What neo-realism aims to do is to reduce thought to things. Ideas, we are told, are identical with things. Things enter the mind and when they do so become ideas. Ideas therefore are simply things in a certain relation, the relation of being known. But by "things" the neo-realist does not understand the substantial things of common sense; he means aggregates of qualities; indeed, he goes beyond that and ascribes a kind of thinghood to concepts and relations. He objectifies what we have been accustomed to regard as subjective elements in experience, and attributes to the "psychological" objects of consciousness a sort of independent metaphysical existence. In this way he has created an intellectual atmosphere favorable to the conception of experience as essentially objective in nature and independent of consciousness.

A third factor, according to Knudson, that has contributed to what some would regard as the emancipation of "experience" from "consciousness" is the psychological doctrine of the "subconscious" or "unconscious" mind. Such a consciousness is supposed to coexist with our ordinary consciousness, and hence it is often spoken of as a "co-consciousness". Freud and others take the words "subconscious" and "unconscious" literally and understand them as referring to psychic states or experiences that are wholly devoid of consciousness. In this way a cleavage is established between experience and consciousness. Experience is thought of as broader than consciousness and inclusive of it, but also as prior to it and its essential nature independent of it.

The one way to escape from this confusion, says Knudson, is to interpret experience exclusively in terms of consciousness and to restrict the word to conscious experience. Clear and concrete thinking requires us to hold that a strictly impersonal or unconscious experience is a contradiction in terms.

Individual or concrete experience requires a duality of subject and object. Efforts have been and are being made to revive the Aristotelian standpoint of objectivity and to eliminate the subject as a necessary element in experience, but the result has been in each instance a false and confusing abstractionism. All concrete experience is owned. It has a conscious subject. It is an experience of something by someone. Recognition of this fact is a precondition of any profitable inquiry into the psychological nature of experience.

THE SUBJECTIVE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

The deduction one makes from the foregoing is that by religious experience one is to understand conscious experience. A strictly unconscious religious experience would be neither "experience" nor "religious", according to Knudson.

Rufus Jones says: "Once more we must call attention especially to the fact that religious experience, peculiarly so where it is vital and first-hand, rolls up and accumulates, step by step, a central stock of spiritual insight and wisdom. Just as we gather our "apperceiving mass" for the interpretation of new sense data, and as we build up our expert wisdom in matters of aesthetic taste and judgment, so, too, we form within ourselves a spiritual core of life that is rich with the gathered wisdom of years of correspondence with God. Single flashes of insight may be illusory, sudden 'inrushes' may be due to a temporary subjective state, a sporadic ecstasy may be a sign of some abnormal trait, but the slow sifting and testing processes of a life of correspondence with a wider and deeper environment than the physical one, gradually build up within the soul a pretty reliable body of expert wisdom which gives the mind of the religious man confidence that he is dealing with a More of reality kindred to and not utterly unlike his own essential nature--'a Beyond that is akin'.

Knudson further explains this concept by saying that religious experience and the religious consciousness are virtually synonymous terms. This means that religious experience is not to be identified with any one aspect of our mental life. It is not merely feeling, merely willing, or merely doing. It embraces all three. It is necessary to emphasize this fact because there has been a tendency since the time of Schleiermacher to restrict religious experience to a special form of feeling, the feeling, for instance of absolute dependence.

The original motive underlying this conception of religion was commendable. It was a needed reaction against the one-sided intellectualism and moralism of eighteenth-century rationalism. Wesley represented this tendency, and much good resulted from it.

Rufus Jones pictures the situation in his own day as follows:

"Our generation has grown weary of ancient traditions and accumulated systems. We have discovered new worlds in all directions by following the sure path of experience, and we can never again settle down with a naive and childlike trust in the house which the past has builded. Our first question in any field is, not What do the scribes and schoolmen say? not What is the unbroken tradition? but, What are the facts? What data does experience furnish? This shifting of centre from 'authority' to 'experience' runs through all the pursuits of the human spirit in the modern world, and, as would be expected, religion has been profoundly affected by it." ¹

However, as there are evils in a one-sided intellectualism and a one-sided moralism, so there are evils in a one-sided emotionalism, according to Knudson. This became evident in the course of time, and hence there arose a tendency to emphasize the moral and to some extent the intellectual elements in religion. The result has been a better balanced type of religious life.

Experience, according to Knudson, is the emotional accompaniment of religious belief and practice, or the emotional cause or effect of either or both. Wesley had this idea of religious experience in mind when he said of the doctrine of Christian Perfection that "it remains

1. Jones, Rufus M. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. xiv.

only to experience what we believe". Religious experience ~~une~~ identifies with the whole personal religious life, with its beliefs and activities as well as its feelings.

THE OBJECTIVE REFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

For the unique element in religious experience, according to Knudson, one must turn to its objective reference. The object of religious faith is unique and because of this fact the human response is such also. The response is made up of emotional, volitional, and intellectual elements as are other mental states, but the divine object toward which it is directed gives to these elements a distinctive character.

All genuine religious experience involves reference to a more-than-human Object. But the Object may be conceived in pantheistic or impersonal terms, as in Hinduism, or ~~in~~theistic or personal terms. The latter represents the predominant and more characteristic tendency in Christian thought.

Akhilananda explains how the Hindu mind, however, feels that the highest concept of the object must be impersonal and the adoption of a personal object is a crutch for a weak imagination and mental state.

Moreover, to substitute humanity for the Object or social aspiration for the living God is to miss the true genius of religion. Religion cannot be limited to the purely human or social plane without ceasing to be religion. It is sometimes contended that experiences quite as remarkable as those of religious conversion have resulted from devotion to "social work". This probably has been true, says Knudson, in individual cases, but from this one is hardly warranted in concluding that there is nothing distinctive in religious experience and that a purely humanistic preaching would bring about such marvelous moral transformations as have attended the great revivals of religion. Religious

experience will continue an experience of God.

In answer to the objection that God is an infinite Being and as such cannot be the object of human experience, Knudson explains that experience is the result of creative activity on the part of the mind; the mind builds up its own objects on the occasion of external stimuli and in accordance with principles immanent within itself, and among these principles is an innate capacity to experience and to think the Infinite. Imagination may require a spatial limitation of its objects but this does not hold true of thought and experience.

Akhilananda has to say in this connection: "It is possible to have a conception of the Absolute as attributeless and beyond time-space relationship, but the bodily aspect of God is the highest understanding of the Impersonal by the human mind. That is to say, when the human mind tries to understand God, it necessarily thinks of Him in terms of its experiences. At present, our minds are in a state in which we cannot conceive or think of a thing that has no name, form, and attributes and that has no time-space relationship."¹

1. Akhilananda, Swami. Hindu Psychology. p. 114-5.

THE NATURE OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Thus far we have been considering aspects of any religious experience but this study has to do specifically with mystical experience, and so some indication of the meaning of this type should be given. Rufus Jones says of the reason for interest in mystical experience in the modern world: "In religion as in other fields of inquiry, the questions of moment have come to be those which deal with life. We take slender interest in dogmatic constructions; we turn from these with impatience, and ask for the testimony of the soul, for the basis of religion in the nature of man as man. This profound tendency of the modern world has brought strongly into prominence a mystical type of religion, that is to say, a type of religion which is primarily grounded in experience, and with the tendency has come a corresponding interest in the mystics of the past." ¹

The meaning of mysticism must be made clear at the outset as it must delimit our study. Rufus Jones says: "I shall use the word mysticism to express the type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine Presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense, and living stage." ²

Akhilananda says this of the practice of meditation and concentration: "It seems to us that it is impossible for a man to experience God without some form or practice of meditation. There may be divergence in the practices, yet one has to control the mind in order to have direct experience of the Ultimate Reality. One must remove the ego and selfishness to reach the goal of religion, whatever system one may choose." ³

1. Jones, Rufus. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. xv.

2. Ibid. p. xv.

3. Akhilananda, Swami. Hindu Psychology. p. 128-9.

Rufus Jones explains mysticism in the following words:

"I shall first consider mysticism in its normal aspect, as a type of religion which is characterized by an immediate consciousness of personal relationship with the Divine. Something of this sort is familiar to the sanest and most matter-of-fact person among us. There is a mystical aspect in our highest moral moments. We never rise to any high level of moral action without feeling that the 'call' of duty comes from beyond our isolated self. There is an augustness in conscience which has made men in all ages name it the voice of God; but however it is named, everybody in these high moments of obedience has an experience which is essentially mystical--an experience which cannot be analysed and reduced to 'explanation' in terms of anything else."¹

The elements or steps in mystical experience and manifestations and results of it will all be considered in detail in a later chapter; we are here concerned primarily with defining the mystical field in such terms that the emphasis of this study may become clear.

The justification for including in this study highlighting contrasts from a Hindu psychologist and a Muslim Sufi may be understood from the following quotation from Rufus Jones:

"Religion of this mystical type is not confined to Christianity, but belongs, in some degree, to all forms of religion, for first-hand experiences of a Divine and Higher Presence are as old as human personality. Dr. Brinton is undoubtedly right in his contention that 'all religions depend for their origin and continuance directly upon inspiration,' that is to say, upon direct intercourse. The men who have made religion a living power for any people are, as he says, 'persons who have been face to face with God, who have heard His voice and felt His presence.'" ²

In the eleventh century Islam seemed to have lost its vitality and the pious were praying for some new leader to give new energy to the faith, according to Davis³; in this state of affairs a remarkable man appeared. As he reveals a great deal of the meaning of mysticism in Sufism the following notes about him are included:

"The crisis produced the man in the personage of Abul Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali, born at Tus in Khurasan in the middle of the eleventh century and dying there in 1111 A.D. When yet a

1. Jones, Rufus. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. Xviii-xix

2. Ibid. pp. xv-xvi.

3. Davis, George W. Sufism: From Its Origins to Al-Ghazzali.

The Muslim World Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4, October 1948, pp. 254 ff.

lad his father died and he was entrusted to a Sufi friend who reared him. As a young man he studied Canon Law and Theology because he felt that wealth and reputation lay in their pursuit. His foresight seemed not to be without cause for in the year 484 A.H. he was appointed by the wazir Nizam al-Mulk to teach in the Nizamite Academy which had just been opened in Baghdad. While his dreams of worldly position seemed here to be realized, al-Ghazzali found that he was not contented. The religious doubt and skepticism which he had known earlier as a youth reasserted themselves. So alarmingly did religious turmoil and utter unbelief affect his mental life that the doctors told him he had a disease of the mind which only peace could heal.

"..... To make a long story short, al-Ghazzali investigated, but did not find a basis for knowledge in scholastic hairsplitting, in an infallible human leader, since such could not be found, nor in the proofs of philosophy. As a last resort he turned to Sufism.

"Al-Ghazzali was sharp enough to know that he could never discover the truth the Sufis claimed to possess unless he abandoned himself to their way of life, renouncing the world and seeking truth through ecstatic union with God. For six months he fought against such a step until, worn-out nervously from the strain, he yielded himself completely to God. Disguised as a pilgrim bound for Mecca he left all and went forth from Baghdad to live as a Sufi, spending his time in the mosques of Damascus and Jerusalem. His decision to make this experiment and the subsequent discovery 'marked the greatest epoch in the church of Islam after the return of al-Ash'ari.' After two years in Syria, al-Ghazzali made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, then to the tomb of Abraham at Hebron, and finally to Mecca and Medina. With this pilgrimage his strict seclusion as a Sufi ascetic ended. Fortunately, he returned to the world.

"During the next ten years of his religious experience al-Ghazzali learned that the Sufis were on the right road to the knowledge of God. He became convinced that truth finally comes not through logical proofs and mental processes, but through revelation. He wrote of his own experience:

I was forced to return to the admission of intellectual notions as the bases of all certitude. This, however, was not by systematic reasoning and accumulation of proofs, but by a flash of light which God sent into my soul! For whoever imagines that truth can only be rendered evident by proofs, places narrow limits to the wide compassion of the Creator

"When al-Ghazzali was through, the ultimate basis for life and knowledge was revelation." ¹

The above description would not distinguish a Muslim mystic from a Christian for example; yet it is evident that there are differences as the following will show:

1. Davis. p. 255

" "Yet we must not be so hasty as to believe that al-Ghazzali accepted Sufism in any hook, line, and sinker fashion. Far too discriminating for that, he condemned the absorptionist view, stressing instead the Neo-Platonic position of union with deity ending in ethical and spiritual fulfillment. Thus he kept his spiritual feet on the ground, never losing sight of the fact that God is God and man is man.

"Standing firmly on that spiritual ground al-Ghazzali had no use for those who, both among the educated and ignorant classes alike, claimed that the wall of separation between man and God had been broken down, allowing them to be fused and absorbed into His being. He knew that such wild claims would quickly cause the creature to lift himself to the level of God as Hallaj had done. With that extreme emphasis, destructive of the God of Muhammad, al-Ghazzali would have nothing to do."¹

Just as al-Ghazzali experienced mysticism within the framework of his own thought concepts about God and bent the experiences to conform to that, so the other mystics experienced within their own fields or frames of reference. The contrast is perhaps most decided between what was said of al-Ghazzali and the following explanation of Hindu thought about mysticism:

"Hindus tell us that our individual minds are part of the universal mind. As such, we are all basically connected with one another. Just as our individualized souls are part of the cosmic soul, so are our minds. Swami Vivekananda says:

..... There is a continuity of mind, as the Yogis call it. The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little minds, are fragments of that universal mind, little waves in the ocean; and on account of this continuity, we can convey our thoughts directly to one another.

When a mind becomes active in its entirety by the development of will, it becomes connected with the cosmic existence. If there is a thought wave in a particular person, the vibrations of that thought will affect others."²

Rufus Jones quotes Canon Moberly to explain what Christian mysticism is:

"Canon R. C. Moberly says that 'Christian mysticism is the doctrine, or rather the experience, of the Holy Spirit--the realization of human personality as characterized by and consummated in the indwelling reality of the Spirit of Christ, which is God.' 'It is Christ,' he says, 'who is the true mystic; or if the mode of expression be preferred, it is He who alone has

1. Davis. p. 256

2. Akhilananda. p. 97.

realized all that mysticism and mystics have aimed at --with more, or with less, whether of disproportion of of success. And in Him that perfect realization evidently means a harmony, a sanity, a fitly proportioned completeness. It is an inward light which makes itself manifest as character; a direct communion of love which is also, to the fullest extent, wholly rational at once and wholly practical; it is as much knowledge as love, and love as knowledge; it is as truly contemplation as activity, and activity as contemplation. In being the ideal of mysticism, it is also the ideal of general, and of practical, and of all, Christian experience. " 1

Rufus Jones explains that elements of a mystical experience may come during prayer: "There are moments of prayer when the soul feels itself face to face with ultimate Reality and in joyous fellowship with perfect Personality. This latter experience is as normal as the lower form of prayer is, but they are worlds apart in significance and value. It is because prayer does rise to the height of actual fellowship with a Divine Companion that men who accept the conclusions of modern science go on praying, undisturbed by the reign of law. They are not concerned about the superficial question, whether prayers are answered or not; for prayer is its own reward, is an end in itself and carries the person who truly prays into a joyous state which transcends explanation. "2

In common worship too this kind of experience may take hold of an entire group: "These mystical experiences in a perfectly sane and normal fashion often come over whole groups of persons in times of worship. low breathings of a diviner life are clearly felt and the entire group is fused and baptized into one spirit. There comes the experience of a great refreshing, a release of energy, as though a hidden circuit had been closed."3

Rufus Jones explains how faith may become a "way of corresponding with Realities which transcend sense-experience. It is an inward power by which the soul lives above the seen and temporal, and 'overcomes' the world of the causal, mechanical order."4

1. Jones, Rufus. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. xvi.
2. Ibid. p. xix. 3. Ibid. p. xx.
4. Ibid. p. xxi

Rufus Jones also speaks of the pathological evidences of mysticism as follows:

"I have spoken of various types of experience which are in some degree mystical, and which yet are well within the line of normal healthy life. There are other types of mystical experience which may, and often do, pass over the border-line of normality and occasionally, at least, exhibit pathological phenomena. Among all peoples that have left any annals there have been persons of extraordinary powers; soothsayers, magicians, wizards, witches, medicine-men, sibyls, clairvoyants, seers, prophets, persons 'possessed' by superhuman spirits. Such persons, sometimes called 'divine', and sometimes called 'demoniac', have played an enormous role in human history. "1

Akhilananda also discusses this troublesome question:

"A few years ago, a man from India, Khoda Box, demonstrated the power of not being burnt in the presence of the Medical Association in London. It was, no doubt, an amazing and interesting display. We know personally some individuals in India who have extraordinary powers which seem to overcome what we call 'laws of nature'. But we frankly admit that they have not succeeded in the integration of their personalities, in spite of this unusual display of power. They cannot be regarded as spiritual persons.....

"The Raja Yogis, the great Indian psychologists, warn people against the display of such powers. Buddha turned out one of his followers who unconsciously developed some extraordinary powers which are known commonly as miracles. Other Hindu authorities also tell us that extraordinary powers (siddhis) are obstacles to higher mental and spiritual evolution. Patanjali describes the methods of developing these powers and then warns that a sincere seeker of truth must not indulge in such practices. Sri Rama Krishna emphatically discourages the manifestation of these extraordinary occult and psychic powers. .. "2

Rufus Jones speaks of the ways of ascertaining the validity of occult experiences when people claim that they are real:

"The literature of mysticism abounds with cases of ecstasy, of vision of 'light', audition of voices, and there are well-authenticated instances of automatisms and even of 'stigmata'. Again and again there have come to men and women sudden 'incursions' or 'invasions' from beyond the margin of personal consciousness, and these persons have felt themselves environed with God or even united in one life with Him. Are these unusual and more or less abnormal experiences instances of pathology, cases of hysteria, or are they evidences of Divine Influence and Divine Presence? The mystic himself believes that he has

1. Jones. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. xxv
2. Akhilananda. p. 111-2.

an experience of God because (1) these experiences of his come from beyond the margin of his individual me; (2) there is something in the content of his experience which transcends anything that normally belongs to him in his finiteness; and (3) these experiences possess an impelling, coercive power, a higher unification of life than he ordinarily knows.

"But does this sort of subjective experience furnish empirical evidence of God? May not what, in his own personal vision, the mystic calls 'an experience of God' be only the result of an unconscious 'suggestion' and no more a proof of God than everyday, common experience is? Recent studies of hysteria and hypnotism have revolutionized all our ideas of the psychological range and scope and the subtle power of suggestion.

"..... Some aspects of the experience of mystics undoubtedly are due to suggestion. There have been mystics who have possessed abnormal constitutions, who were subject to strange psychical disturbances. It is certain that many of the abnormal phenomena reported in the lives of mystics are in no way distinguishable from similar phenomena in hysterical cases. Trances, losses of consciousness, automatisms, vision of lights, audition of voices, 'stigmata', and such-like experiences, are evidences of hysteria, and they are not in themselves evidences of Divine Influence or of Divine Presence.. In fact, many mystics have practised methods of asceticism which were adapted to turn them into abnormal persons and to produce in them hysterical constitutions. They have 'worked themselves up' to abnormal states. In the light of these facts it has been contended that even those striking experiences of expansion, enlargement, absorption in the Infinite, freedom from all limits, ecstatic joy, which mystics exhibit, may be instances of auto-suggestion. It is quite possible to be so absorbed in a single thought that all consciousness of body sensations, all awareness of an external world, all things of time and space, shall be unnoticed and be as though they were not, and when all strain and muscular tension are absent, peace and joy and fulness of life are the natural result. It is easy to produce such a state through hypnotic suggestion, and it seems plainly within the range of auto-suggestion."¹

One may ask then what tests are there to determine whether the outcome of a mystical experience is valid: Jones says it is valid for the person having it but not necessarily for anyone else:

"We cannot, therefore, with implicit confidence, leap to the conclusion that every instance of so-called mystical experience furnishes us with a sure clue to the God Whom our eager souls seek. To the mystic himself the experience is evidence enough. It lights his lamp and girds his loins for action; it floods him with new power; it banishes doubt and despair as the sunrise banishes darkness. He no more wants

1. Jones. Studies in Mystical Religion. pp. xxvi-xxviii

arguments now to prove God's existence than the artist wants arguments to prove the reality of beauty or the lover does to prove the worth of love.

"But it is useless to claim that mystical experiences have such ontological bearing that they settle for everybody the reality of God. No empirical experience of any sort can ever answer that question, and to the end of the world men will be called upon to walk by faith, to make their venture in the light of what ought to be true, and to live by that faith.

"But while these inward mystical experiences cannot be pushed to the extreme of being turned into compelling ontological proofs, they nevertheless do offer a very weighty ground for believing that there is a More of Consciousness continuous with our own-- a co-consciousness with which our own is bound up, and that constructive influences do come into us from beyond ourselves...."¹

The real test of the validity and reality of mystical experiences of God would appear to be from the writing of Rufus Jones to be the outcome in the life and service of the mystics. The Hindu mystic who seeks samadhi for a sense of personal satisfaction and the religious man who seeks an experience of God in order that he may serve mankind better are worlds apart in motive. One can infer from the description of "Udayji" in such a book as Huxley's *Son of the Moon* what the outcome of attaining the experience of losing one's self in the total life of the universe will be for that person. After each experience he seeks to "attain" by going on to a deeper one, no matter at what cost to his body and mind. There is no thought in "Udayji's" mind of any help or responsibility to his family; in fact, he fails to appear at a time when he could have been of special help. In contrast to this, Jones has this to say:

"We cannot lightly pass over the spiritual service of mystics. Far from being the impractical, dreamy persons they are too often conceived to have been, they have weathered storms, endured conflicts, and lived through water-spouts which would have overwhelmed souls whose anchor did not reach beyond the veil. They have led great reforms, championed movements of great moment to humanity, and they have saved Christianity from being submerged under scholastic formalism and ecclesiastical systems, which were alien to man's essential nature and need. They have been spiritual leaders, they are the persons who shifted the levels of life for the race.

1. Jones. p. xxix-xxx.

They have been able to render these services because they felt themselves allied inwardly with a larger personal Power than themselves, and they have been aware that they were in immediate correspondence with Someone--A Holy Spirit, a Great Companion--who was working with them and through them.
....."1

The interesting aspect of Rufus Jones' concept of mysticism which differs from the usual one attributed to mystics by the ordinary person lies in this emphasis on the social significance of the mystical experience. In the treatment of Social Law in the Spiritual World this thesis runs throughout; it may be summed up in these words:

"No man can be holy unto himself. If he sanctifies himself it is for somebody's sake. As there could be no gravitation in a universe which had only one 'particle of matter', so there could be nothing properly called 'spiritual' in a world which contained only one solitary person. Spiritaul facts are bound up with social facts, spiritual laws with social laws....."2

1. Jones. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. xxx-xxxi
2. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 20.

CHAPTER III

THE QUEST OF A CHRISTIAN MYSTIC IN A QUAKER ENVIRONMENT

As the life of Rufus M. Jones has in it many illuminating experiences of the growth of religious understanding and consciousness of God, a treatment of it is felt to be of central importance to this study.

The title for this chapter is suggested from the following discussion in "Why I Enroll With the Mystics" by Rufus Jones. He says:

"I was born with a large strain of Celtic stock and my racial inheritance links me up with the men who in the dim past went on eager quests for the Holy Grail. That spirit of quest is as much a part of my elemental nature as is the color of my eyes and hair. It was a force to be reckoned with as soon as I began to live. I have never been able to confine my interests or my activities to things in space. I was the kind of child that had no more difficulty in seeing Jacob's ladders going up from earth to heaven than I had in seeing where the best apples grew. ...

"The environment into which I came ministered in happy harmony to the natural bent of disposition. The beauty of the lake on whose shores I lived, the mystery of distant mountains seen on days of good visibility, the lure of the surrounding forests, rich in the suggestions of the unexplored, quickened my imagination and fed the poetic side of my nature. But by far the most important factor was the unnamed and unconscious mystical propensity of my family. The word 'mystical' was never spoken and of course had never been heard in our circle. It was implicit practice and not explicit theory that counted. I was immersed in a group mystical life from the very birth of consciousness and memory."¹

The author speaks further of the effect the family worship each morning after breakfast had on his young mind and the feelings he had during this time. As will be seen from the above Rufus Jones developed from birth the consciousness of God as a presence to be felt and his life is indeed a quest to understand and feel better.

¹ L. Ferm, Vergilius. Contemporary American Theology. Vol. 1. p. 191ff.

At the birth of this baby at the height of a cold winter in a plainly furnished house some miles from any city there were spiritual influences at work, for as the author tells the incident in "A Boy's Religion":

"The only real fact I can relate about these first hours is one which shows what the highest ambition of the family was, and it will also illustrate a characteristic trait in the person who did much to shape my life in those years when I was plastic to the touch. As soon as I came into the arms of my aunt, who was and is one of God's saints, she had an 'opening', such as have often come to her. 'This child will one day bear the message of the Gospel to distant lands to people across the sea.'"¹

It might be well to include here the customary details of dates; Rufus M. Jones was born January 25, 1863, at South China, Maine, the son of Edwin and Marie Hoxie Jones. But these facts are illuminated by Rufus Jones in his accounts of the influence of the home on his early perceptions:

"I was not 'christened' in a church, but I was sprinkled from morning till night with the dew of religion. We never ate a meal which did not begin with a hush of thanksgiving; we never began a day without a family gathering' at which mother read a chapter of the Bible, and after a long silence some one would generally bow and talk with God so simply and quietly that He never seemed very far away. In fact, when I first began to think of God, I did not think of Him as very far off. At meeting some of the Friends shouted loud and strong when they called upon Him, but at home He always heard easily."²

Another description of the fellowship in which the author whom this study is discovering tells of the Quaker meeting is revealing of his response to it:

"By the time I was four years old I had formed the habit of using corporate silence in a heightening and effective way. It brought with it, even for the child, a sense of Presence. Not much later than that early period of four I began to be taken to Quaker meeting for worship. It involved a ride of three miles through marvelous woods, and even now they stir me with indescribable emotions, and that was a moving preparation for the main event. We sat together nearly two hours, a large part of the time in silence. Some of the speaking was marked by unmistakable inspiration, for two of the leading Quakers in America belonged in that group,

1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. p. 21-22.
2. ~~Rufus~~ Ibid. p. 23.

and some of it was extremely 'dull', when it was not 'queer', as it often was. But once more there was something contagious about the silence. It caught us all into its living fold. The persons who composed the group were, for the most part, simple, rustic people who came from their farms and their kitchens, but one felt that they knew God and found Him there. There was a touch of awe and majesty, of surprise and wonder and while there was very little 'thinking' or 'thought-content' there was a gleam of eternal reality breaking on the humble group which put a kind of spell on the little boy in the midst."¹

Rufus Jones tells of two stories from his childhood days which ~~ixt~~ illustrate how much this experience was a part of his thinking even in play. He says that their home was the headquarters of traveling Friends and his father used to drive through the community and "appoint meetings" for them. The little boy heard a great deal about "pointed meetings", and so while playing with some other tots he gathered them in a row on the floor and told them to sit still "for we are going to have a 'pointed meeting". Then he stood up in front and pointed with great solemnity to each one of them.

The other had to do with the aunt who influenced the little boy a great deal and of whom he said: " She saw what she ought to do with vividness and clarity. In periods of silent communion her face was radiant and she appeared to be having direct intercourse with a great Companion. She had frequent insights, or 'openings' as to my course of life and I became impressed very early that she knew everything about me." But this aunt went on an extensive religious visit through Ohio and Iowa to attend Yearly Meetings. She brought the boy gifts which were wonderful to him but the most important part of her adventure for him was that it was his first realization that the world was so big. "Before that it seemed to me that it came to an end where the sky touched the hills. But now my aunt had been out beyond the place where the sky came down, and she had found the earth still going on out there." 2

1. Ferm. p. 192.

2. Jones. A Boy's Religion. pp. 23-25.

As the boy grew his concepts about life grew. He had his shocks too, as when the Baptist Church in the neighborhood burned down and he heard that his father was accused of having hired some one to burn it because he was taking the part of a drunkard persecuted by the Baptists, or so the boy heard the story. He could not solve this problem of evil but he began to think about it.

When four years old Rufus Jones began to go to school, walking a half mile and taking dinner in a pail. He says, "I learned something in the school, but I learned a good deal more at noon and before school; only it was a very different kind of thing I learned outside! This is not the place to describe a country school as it used to be and probably still is. It is a wonder how any boy can come through such influences without being injured for life. The boys and girls I played with were probably just like others--but they knew a lot of things I never heard about at home! I learned these lessons very fast, and by the time I could read I had the small country boy's stock of information, and I had a new side of life altogether."¹

As the most important influence of these early years for this study is the religious one it may be well to consider the boy's ideas of God.

"I cannot remember when I did not think about God and wonder about Him. It was very hard, however, to make things go together in my thoughts about Him. I knew that He really lived in a beautiful city up above the blue dome of the sky, which always appeared to be exactly over the top of our house..... But then, too, He was everywhere else. He made the flowers grow. He brought me a little brother when I was four years old. He was near enough to hear people talk to Him. He could see every bad thing I did. When we had 'silence' after morning 'reading' I always thought He was somewhere near, telling mother or my aunt what to pray for, and then hearing them when they spoke. They often asked Him to make me a good boy, and I believed that He was always looking after me.

"I was dreadfully afraid of the dark through my entire boyhood Nobody ever told me that there were 'beings' in the dark, but it was a deep-seated conviction.

L. Jones. A Boy's Religion. p. 34-35.

"Now I thought God lived in the light, just as these 'beings' lived in the dark. Good things always came in the daylight. I had to go to bed as soon as it grew dark, and I had a feeling almost anything might happen before morning came. I always used to whisper after I got in bed, 'Oh, God, please do not let the house burn down to-night. Do not let anybody get me, and do not let any bad things happen.' But I never felt as sure of the result as I did when I asked Him to do things for me in the daytime. All this time I found it difficult to understand how God could be up there in His beautiful city and still down here too, looking after so many things--taking care of a little boy like me. It seemed as though He must have a host of troubles. We always told Him all about ours, and I supposed everybody else did the same, which I felt would make His days full of trying things. I thought, too, that He had to decide on the kind of punishment for every person who was bad. That seemed like a very heavy task--because mother had a good deal of trouble doing it for three of us. It was thus a never-ending puzzle how He could be in so many places at once, and how He could be happy when He had so many hard things to do."¹

It is an interesting thing to note how much thoughts of God occupied the thoughts of the little boy, probably because they occupied the thoughts of his elders too and he heard a good deal about it in the home. This is an incidental reflection that touches on the present trend of not hearing anything about God in many homes; one wonders what kinds of thoughts the little child in that kind of home has. At any rate Rufus Jones received his bent to think in religious terms and to "feel" the closeness of God from his own home.

Moreover, he imbibed a certain sense of spiritual pride and felt that people who did not say "Thee" and "Thou" as he very self-righteously did, would not go to heaven. At times he pitied the poor neighbors who would never be let in and wondered why everybody did not join the "meeting".

This spiritual pride was coupled with another idea which he got from listening to what went on in the home. He says: "Everybody at home, as well as many of our visitors, believed implicitly in immediate

1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. p. 33-34.

divine guidance. Those who went out from our meeting to do extended religious service--and there were many such visits undertaken--always seemed as directly selected for these momentous missions as were the prophets of an earlier time. As far back as I can remember I can see Friends sitting talking with my grandmother of some 'concern' which was heavy upon them, and the whole matter seemed as important as though they had been called by an earthly king to carry on the affairs of an empire. It was partly these cases of divine selection and the constant impression that God was using these persons whom I knew to be His messengers that made me so sure of the fact that we were His chosen people. At any rate I grew up with this idea firmly fixed, and the events deepened the feeling."¹

The other important thought field of the child's early life was the Bible. He tells how he began to go to Bible School at six and how the man who taught the class of little boys in a public hall's upper story was better informed about farming than about boys. He sometimes made them laugh and he taught them by making them learn by heart passages from the Bible. But the real acquaintance with the Bible came from his mother's teaching. He says:

"The Bible was our one book at home, and we used it as the scholar uses his library. We literally fed ourselves on it. We began the day with reading it. We read out of it in the evening, and we read it on First-day as part of the business of the day. I really felt the power of this Hebrew poetry, and I soon got to know the Psalms so that at morning reading I used to call for my favorite ones when mother asked if any one had a 'selection'."²

But the deepest knowledge of the Bible came as the result of an accident to his foot when Jones was ten years old. He was not able to take a step for nine months, and during that time his mother or grandmother sat by him constantly to ease the pain with their love. When the pain eased he had much time on his hands and it was then that his grandmother was appointed to entertain him. He decided to read the Bible to her while she knit.

1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. p. 37-8.
2. Ibid. pp. 41-2.

When he faced problems of interpretation he and his grandmother fixed up their own explanations. When he came to the "begat" chapters and needed help with pronunciation his grandmother was suddenly very busy with her knitting, to hide her own lack of knowledge of how to pronounce them. Because he believed that one line was as inspired as another he never skipped anything. The story of Abraham gripped his imagination; he finished the story of Joseph with tears running down his face. He lived through the experiences of the characters and even came to fear eating pork; nor could his grandmother help him with any explanation of why people ate in contravention of a strict law of the scriptures. "Wherever the narrative grew vivid and great events were done I felt my pulses throb, and, on the other hand, I always suffered over Israel's defeats and sins. Daniel and Esther were two of my best books and I knew intimately all the details of their experiences. The prophets, however, were far above me. Elijah and Elisha were all right, but the ones who wrote did not speak to my condition. I knew it must all be wonderful, and I believed that they were speaking for God, but I did not understand what they meant. It was all a puzzle which nobody could solve for me, and it was only much later, when I knew the history which called forth these messages, that I learned to love and appreciate them."¹

The wound healed and he was able to go out before the New Testament was begun and it was much later that he got "deeply hold of the message of the Master." He says, "The Old Testament was the book of my boyhood. My heroes and heroines were there. It gave me my first poetry and my first history, and I got my growing ideas of God from it. The idea of choice, the fact that God chose a people and that He chose individuals for his missions, was rooted in my thought."²

1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. p. 46-7/

2. Ibid. p. 50.

To show how well the Old Testament had become his the following incident is quoted:

"It was during this year that a large company of the neighbors met at our house to study the Bible one evening in the week, and I offered to let them question me as long as they wished on any events of the Old Testament, and I did not fail. It was a boyish confidence, which I should not show now, but it will make clear that this Book had been made my own."¹

Jones' feeling about the importance of the Bible for a boy is made clear in the following quotation: "Boys nowadays read so many stories, and such highly-spiced ones, full of dramatic situations, that they do not perhaps feel the power of this wonderful picture of the patriarchal life. It is a sad loss to miss it. It more than made up for my lack of other books "²

Another influence of these early years came in the words of the visitors who came to their home. He mentions his great uncle who drove in his carriage twice at least to Indiana from Maine on religious visits, visiting families and attending meetings as he went. Others came to the Jones home and told of strange happenings. They always came with a "concern", an unmistakable and irresistible call to go out and speak what was given them. "This was no ordinary visit. Here was a man under our roof who had come because God sent him." The boy put these people in a very high class though he did not know what it was inside that made them go. He watched while one stood a man and a woman up in the room and then with deep reverence and ~~earnest~~ solemnity said. "I think that will do, and I believe it has the divine approval." This couple was married shortly after that. Another time he heard of a Friend who convinced a skeptic with a reference to the fact that he had let his horse bring him there, without the man's having told of it at all. Another Friend had astonished everybody at monthly meeting by preaching a sermon which unfolded the condition of a prominent member
1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. p. 50-51
2. Ibid. p. 47.

of the meeting"so plainly that it seemed as though God had sent a direct message."

These experiences worked on the boy and impressed him as the visitors sat about the hearth and told of strange experiences in other places, now their needs had been met in seemingly miraculous ways, how once a dear, saintly man put his hands on the boy's head and slowly announced his prophecy about the boy. One Friend went to sleep on one such visit and in her sleep suddenly began to preach. All listened for more than a half hour as she poured forth a remarkable gospel message.

Jones says of these visitors: "They interested us with their narratives, and in our narrow life they performed somewhat the same service as the wandering minstrel in the days of the old castles. They gave us new experiences, a touch of wider life and farther-reaching associations, and for me, at least, they made the connection with God more real. I got from them a clearer sense of what I might be, and it was largely because I believed that men and women had been sent from remote lands to visit us that I was so sure that we were a chosen people."¹

"Not infrequently I heard my own name spoken as the minister raised his voice in prayer, and God was asked by this special servant of His to help me. I knew that such a prayer would count, and I always felt more confidence in myself after this kind of an 'opportunity' was over.

"But I half feared, too, that some of these penetrating souls would see how very bad I was, and how impossible it was for me to keep good very long. ..." 2

This consciousness of being bad introduces the next crisis of the boy's life which will be dealt with in the next section of this chapter. This material has illustrated in a deep way how the child caught and kept the consciousness of God and all that it meant to him.

1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. pp. 66-7.

2. Ibid. p. 64.

The experiences of Rufus Jones' childhood remind the writer of his own home life and influence. While his was a Methodist home and that of Rufus Jones was a Quaker home, still the atmosphere of religious reality in every aspect of the daily round was similar. The day was begun with prayers and each meal too was the occasion for a prayer and reading from the Bible. The church fellowship was close and many of the writer's relatives made up the little group and there was much talk of religion in the home. God was real through experience. The influence on the lives of the children lasted into adult life as it did in the case of Jones.

The Turning Point

Rufus Jones says that his life outwardly seemed to others to be that of a careless boy but that inwardly he was very conscious of many sins. He says: "My whole upbringing had given me a quick, sensitive and tender heart, a most exalted idea of duty, a keen vision of the good life, and, as I have said, a certainty that God was entering all my acts and doings in His great books. In my good moments no boy was ever better, and the casual visitor put me down as a model boy,--perhaps as almost too good to grow up.

"But in reality I was a typical sinner. I did precisely the things I knew I ought not to"

The conflict in his life was heightened by his love of the boys in the crowd he played with. As Jones puts it: "As soon as I got with 'the other boys' I let the din of their suggestions of attractive things drown out the low whispers of the tender heart, and we did the things which boys usually do. I went all right while the excitement lasted, and, at a pinch, I easily became the leader in some desperate undertaking, but on the way home alone I became uncomfortable and low-spirited.

It was not so much that I disliked the sure questioning which would come, and that I should find difficulty in showing that my day had been spent in an edifying way, but it was rather a deep, dull feeling that I had gone back on my true self, and that I had broken faith with the one Person who knew me altogether. Almost every time I opened the Bible I opened to some passage which just hit my case. But any slight, easy temptation would break every fence I had so painfully builded, and I would find myself off again in the enemy's pasture.

"My outside life was just like that of any healthy, growing boy. I played boys' games, learned to swim and dive, sail and fish, hunt and skate, and in the times between I went to school and worked on the farm. It looked from the outside as though this made up the whole of my life. But looked at from within, my life was mostly an invisible battle."¹

The battles went on until a truce was caused by an incident the boy never forgot; he himself called it the turning point.

"The turning point, though by no means the attainment, came for me in a very simple incident--of blessed memory. I had gone a step farther than usual, and had done something which grieved everybody at home, and I expected a severe punishment, which was administered with extreme infrequency in our home. To my surprise my mother took me by the hand and led me to my room; then she solemnly kneeled down by me, and offered a prayer which reached the very inmost soul of me, and reached also the real Helper. No holy of holies could ever have seemed to the pious Jew more awful with the presence of God than that chamber seemed to me. It was one thing to hear prayer in the meeting-house, or in the assembled family, but quite another thing to hear my own case laid before God in words which made me see just what I was, and no less clearly what I ought to be, and what with His help I might be. I learned that day what a mother was for! And though I was still far from won, I was at least where I could more distinctly feel the thread between my soul and the Father quiver and draw me."²

1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. p. 100-102.

2. Ibid. p. 103-4.

After this experience Jones found he could no longer be a careless, happy-go-lucky boy but that at every path there was trouble. He said that no one understood him and he did not understand himself. Finally he gave up all hope of growing good. Yet his conscience was ever more sensitive at every deviation. He says: "I was in very truth a double personality, for I hated sin. I loved goodness. I knew how awful it was to waste my life, and yet I went to bed night after night with the heavy feeling upon me that I was farther than ever from any goodness, and frightened at my day's failures..... This whole situation, now so hard to describe clearly, would hardly be worth telling about, and would certainly not here come to light, if it were not for the fact that it is an experience which is well-nigh universal, and one which needs more attention than it usually gets."¹

The psychologist might describe it as the adolescent's need to find himself in relation to the world but the one who feels it knows that words are utterly inadequate to describe the feelings of the time.

Jones says that in life there is a series of buddings and at this time there is a still more critical budding period when the individual begins to discover his incompleteness and to yearn for that Life in which he can find fulfillment. "His real hunger for God has dawned, and he makes at the same time the painful discovery of his own littleness. The more passionate his longing for the Infinite Companionship is, the more keen is the conviction of weakness and sin which settles upon him, until he believes he is lost"²

Moreover, people know so little of how to deal with this crisis of helping a soul make his adjustment with the Infinite.

1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. pp.108-9.

2. Ibid. p. 110-1.

There is here a cause for conjecture in the contrast one cannot help noting between youth in the Christian tradition and in the Hindu tradition. The Hindu is taught to expect to complete his student ashrama and his householder's ashrama when he fulfills his duty to society by raising a family. Then when his first grandchild is born he is told that he may lay aside worldly duty and retire to the forest to meditate and seek God. Moreover, many of the Hindu sadhus are older men who have followed this course; in a few noted cases it has been a young man who has refused to marry and has devoted himself to the search for truth. To the Freudian the question might occur if early marriage and the avoidance of tension or guilt feeling due to sex frustration leaves the Indian youth free from this period of adolescent storm. It is impossible to answer that question without some way of experimentation which would yield comparisons which would be valid. Yet one cannot help but note that it is in the Christian tradition where the phenomenon of adolescent inner rebellion and conversion occurs to the greatest extent.

The description of the experience which came to Jones, which follows is similar in elements to those which have come to the writer and to others. Jones says:

"While I was in this crisis--with an old self not dead and a new self not born, and ignorant of what these sunrise streaks on my chaos really meant--we had a new kind of meeting in our little community. It was in the old schoolhouse The minister came from a distant town He was a plain, simple, straightforward, good man, who knew a few clear truths of Christianity, and he told them impressively.

"At first we boys, who filled a large corner, went for fun, and because we liked to sing the new hymns which he introduced--the Sankey hymns, which were then all fresh from the writer's pen, and 'singing in meeting' was a most wonderful innovation. It, however, soon ceased to be fun; and grew most serious, for I saw that I was approaching an unescapable decision. Each night it became clearer that there were only two kinds of lives--with two distinct issues. What had been dim and vague in my long struggle had suddenly become sharp and clearly defined. I was a poor, sick soul, unable to cure myself, and here the remedy was described. I was drifting hopelessly down the stream. Now I heard what lay at the end of such a course. I knew I wanted

something which I had always just missed, now I heard how a life gets completed and saved.

"But here I was a boy among a great group of boys who had followed my lead in a hundred boyish pranks. I could not take a step without breaking a thousand threads which wove my life into the past and bound me up with this society of my fellows. There were days of this seething struggle, during which I felt that my entire future was at stake. At length one night there came a bursting point, and I rose with every artery in me throbbing and my heart pounding so hard that I thought everybody must hear it. With a tremendous effort I made my tongue say, 'I want to be a Christian.' Nobody laughed; it was still and solemn. I knew I had won my first great spiritual victory."¹

After this great experience Rufus Jones shared the idea many of us have somehow held that there would be perpetual joy and no more of difficulty or temptation; he did find he had definitely crossed a line and made a beginning but that was about as far as he had gone. A few days later he faced another test; namely, he felt that he must pray before the whole meeting. When the time came he got down and made his lips go but not a sound came. All saw him but none heard him.

Of the temptations afterward Jones says: "In spite of times of swelling joy, when I knew that I had really passed a crisis in the incubation of a new life, I still found that the old self was far from dead, and that I often slipped back into the ways I had left. The new land was in sight, and yet the cables which bound me to the old shores were not entirely cut. But this much must be said, that after that first memorable day in the schoolhouse I never had any doubt that God was for me, or any permanent sense that He would let go of me."²

The interesting effect this experience had on the boy's mind was to allay a fear that had been giving him great trouble about going to heaven or not. He says: "It is impossible for any one who has not had this experience to realize in any degree what it means. There are few moments in one's life which give any joy to compare with it. To be sud-

1. Jones. A Boy's Religion. pp. 113-114.

2. Ibid. p. 115.

denly assured in your own soul that heaven--all you have ever imagined or dreamed of peace and joy--is to be yours, that the celestial gate will open at your knock when you come to it, -- this is certainly a supreme experience, and I had the thrill of it."¹

The preoccupation with this joy of being sure of heaven, about which Jones says children think a great deal more than parents or any others realize, changed to the realization that religion was concerned with something more than getting to heaven. He came to the realization that he must be a new person every day and in every place and in all sorts of conditions. He began to be depressed with the feeling that he could never measure up and at this time an uncle was a great help to him. This uncle was growing white and bent over with years; yet he preached and was always at some task of doing good for someone. Jones says, "In all his work for the betterment of man at home and abroad, I never saw him discouraged or in doubt about the final issue. He was always full of hope and courage, and radiantly happy to be able to work at human problems. But the thing which impressed me most, as a thoughtful boy, was that in all this perplexing and wearying work, he was becoming more and more like my ideal of a saint. His face was sunny; his smile was always ready to break out. We were all happier when he came, and he himself seemed to have a kind of inward peace which was very much like what I supposed the heavenly beings had. It had been his preaching which had so influenced my very early life, but it was much more his victorious life, which spoke with an unanswerable power like that of a sunset or the starry sky, that influenced me now in this critical time. I felt that the way to become

1. Op. Cit. p. 121, 122.

good was to go to work in the power of God to help make others good, and to help solve the problems of those among whom we live."¹

The learning of this pre-eminently important lesson which has so distinguished the Quakers was further strengthened for Rufus Jones by the misfortune of a storm which blew down the barn on the livestock. As the farmer-neighbors came to the place to help they seemed to take stock of the situation and then quietly began to plan to build another barn for the family, though none of them was well-to-do or even had enough of this world's goods. This simple spirit of service to others in need deeply impressed Rufus Jones. He says: "During those days that I worked in the cold of a Maine winter, among those men with their rough clothes and hard hands, I was helping build more than a barn; I was forming a wider view of the religion which such men as these were living by."²

How often in life in retrospect one is able to see how deep experiences of religion came to one almost in preparation for some great testing of strength. So it seemed anyhow in the life of Rufus Jones for now there was to come to him an experience which he would have been ill prepared to face without the warm, growing religion which had brought him to a close fellowship with God. Jones says:

"There is one event which can never be repeated in this world, let it come when it will. It stands all alone, and it leaves a touch on one's entire self which all the passing years fail to remove. That is the death of a mother. This came to me while I was still in the stress of this outward-smooth, inward-rough period, so difficult to describe, so real in experience. I had often wondered whether I should go on living if mother should die, whether it would be possible to eat and drink, work and sleep, if she were gone. I thought about it because she was extremely frail, and steadily grew more saintly-spiritual and less equal to the burden of the work she wanted to do. I had, however, endless faith that either the doctor would make her better, or that some change would come to make her strong again.

"But on one memorable day all my hopes were shattered. The stroke fell. I had to face the reality. I stood confronted with that

1. Op Cit. p. 122-4

2. Ibid. p. 127

most stubborn, inexorable fact. It seemed impossible and yet there it was. I thought of all the cases I had ever heard in which persons had been mistaken in calling some one dead. I clung like a drowning man to the vague hope that it might be a prolonged sleep, and that she would awaken and surprise us all. I strangely felt myself in the great company of sufferers all over the world, as though we belonged in one common fellowship.

"Then followed my great rebellion--the worst I have ever known. Could a good God take away my mother? Could there be any Heart of Love in a universe where such things happened? I had never had the slightest doubt of an immortal life after this one. ... Now I felt the ground going out from under this entire faith.

"The issue was determined, not by any one thing, not by any one sharply-defined experience, but rather by the trend of my entire previous life. My religion had been forming from babyhood up. It was as much a part of me as the color of my eyes or my sense of space and time. I could not remember a time when I had not loved God and felt sure of His love. I had had my stages of development and of inward contest, but I had been perfectly sure of God all the time. Now my faith was suffering eclipse because I could not square this terrible event with my idea of a God of love.

"But little by little the memories of fifteen years came over this dark event with their trial of light. God had given me my mother, and through her I had learned of Him. There were hundreds of bright points in our lives together when her love and patience had helped me rise to my consciousness of God. I could not forget how I had heard her in her prayers talk quietly with Him about me, as though she knew Him perfectly and wanted to make me acquainted with Him. I knew, too, that she fully expected to go on living with Him after death should come to her. It had apparently never occurred to her that death would do more than separate her from us. My trouble had come largely because I could not get my thoughts above the earth over her coffin. She seemed there to me, and if she was there, then God was not good.

"But as her faith in a new and larger life came over me and quickened my own, and as I settled back on all the sure evidences that all my life had been in the love of God, I began to realize that I had not lost my mother, that she was nearer to God than ever, and that I was more than ever bound to live her kind of life. But I came out of this struggle no longer a child. I had wrestled with an angel in the dark, and when I emerged with the blessing, I had passed a crisis.

"With this event came also the uprooting of my life from its old environment. I passed from the education which home and the free country life had to give to the more exact discipline and training of an old, well-established institution"¹

1. Op. Cit. pp. 135-139.

The Quest in Personalities

Rufus Jones went out from his home to come into contact with certain great personalities which influenced his quest for God and helped him understand the experiences he had felt so deeply in the years at home. The first of these mentioned by Dr. Ferm is Dr. Pliny E. Chase who was his guide in philosophy and religion during college. Because of the importance of this teacher to the development of his pupil the following remarks about him are quoted:

"The next momentous stage in my journey was made during my college years at Haverford, though the intervening period between home-life and college was by no means an empty time-gap. Professor Pliny E. Chase, my guide in philosophy and religion during that creative period of college was another radiant life of a profoundly mystical type. His scholarship was of outstanding quality which gave him prestige in our eyes and lent added lustre to the consummate beauty of his life. He not only led me on by just the steps of intellectual approach to the problems and issues of life that I needed, but he gave me from the first the privilege of an intimate friendship of the richest sort, and there are few higher privileges on earth than a mutual friendship between a professor and a student. In silent and subtle ways and, once more, with a Franciscan simplicity, he transmitted to me some of the fruits out of the rich spiritual harvest of his life. His torch was a kindling one and by it my life was lighted. He encouraged me to read and study Emerson and at his suggestion I read practically all of Emerson's prose and poetry during my college period. What was even more important, he led me to choose Mysticism and the Mystics for my graduating thesis and thus set me on an unending trail of research. The thesis itself was no great matter, but the commitment to a life task that was involved in it was like receiving sealed orders at the beginning of a voyage."¹

The importance of this suggestion in the life of Rufus Jones is unmistakable and will be revealed in the further unfolding of the quest. The reading Professor Chase suggested too led this young mind further and further along the way. Emerson led to Carlyle and both of these men "planted in me a new idea in reference to the significance of the Quakerism in which I had been nurtured. They both treated it not as the religion of a small Protestant sect, but rather as a

1. Ferm, Vergilius. Contemporary American Theology. p. 194.

spiritual movement of the mystical type."

Continuing the opening up of the meaning of the Quakers to religious thought Rufus Jones describes what he found in his reading as follows:

"During my senior year in college I carefully read Bancroft's History of the United States and there in his extensive treatment of the Quakers as the Founders of Pennsylvania, the famous historian took the position which I had found vividly expressed in Emerson and Carlyle, namely, that Fox was the prophet of a new and living way and that instead of being, at least in intention, the founder of a denomination of a 'peculiar people', he was the inaugurator of a fresh movement essentially aiming to realize a universal religion of the Spirit. That idea which was planted in my youthful mind as a mustard-seed has grown to a full sized tree in my later life, and is abundantly verified by historical facts."¹

Study in Europe gave Rufus Jones further development and the scope of its influence is best shown by his own account:

"After a year of teaching, I went to Europe for a year of study, primarily in the University of Heidelberg where I carried on my philosophical studies under the stimulating guidance of that remarkable man, Professor Kuno Fischer. The year abroad furthered my interests in mysticism quite as much as it did my work in philosophy. I visited Professor Carl Schmidt in the University of Strasbourg, then the foremost authority on the German mystics of the fourteenth century, and I planned with his advice a line of historical study in mysticism. On this visit in Strasbourg I became acquainted with a distinguished living mystic, Paul Sabatier, who was just then completing the work for his doctor's degree and was beginning his illuminating studies on the life and spirit of Saint Francis. These influences and still deeper influences operating in me, (for I might almost say that 'bond unknown to me was given') carried me forward in the line of what had now come to be my major interest. I came back from Europe settled in my mind that the interpretation of mystical religion was henceforth to be a controlling interest of my life, though I saw as clearly that a background of sound philosophical and psychological study and historical research was an essential preparation. Some years of teaching followed my return to America, but I was throughout the period working quietly on the history and the problems of philosophy and mysticism."²

Thus was the pattern of thought and life of the young man fixed on study and interpretation of mysticism. While these contacts were extremely important in deciding the bent, other personalities helped direct the future trends. Some appraisal of them must now be given.

¹ L. Ferm. p. 195

² L. Ferm. p. 195-6

William James was one of these. Rufus Jones discovered that William James was preparing his Edinburgh Gifford lectures on the nature of mystical experience; so Jones went to him and began to consult with him about his work and plans. Of the influence of James upon him, Rufus Jones says: "He saw more capacities in a person than the person himself did. He interpreted a man's potentialities to the man himself and awakened his expectation until one came to believe in the belief of the great professor and to act upon his estimate. Though never a disciple of his and though never able to accept in anything like fullness his central positions, I always felt that he gave me the stimulus of his friendship and I acknowledge now, with joy and loyalty, the immense debt I owe him."¹

Josiah Royce exerted a great influence on Jones' intellectual development; in fact, in Jones' own estimate, more than any other one person. Of him Jones says: "I had already become deeply interested in the Neo-Hegelian position especially as interpreted by Edward and John Caird, and I had already visited Edward Caird at Oxford. During my graduate work at Harvard I thoroughly studied Thomas Hill Green and thus was sympathetically prepared for Royce's leadership. Once more, I did not become a disciple, but I did become a deeply appreciative friend and learner and I have always felt that Royce gave me inspiration as well as depth and solidity of thought. He took a group of us through his Aberdeen Gifford lectures--The World and the Individual--and in that process we came to grips with his profound treatment of mysticism as one of the major pathways to reality. His treatment of mystical experience has always seemed to me of unusual value and I have greatly profited by his searching criticism. Very few American

1. Ferm. p. 196.

writers have dealt more wisely or appreciatively with that gigantic mystical figure, Meister Eckhart, than he did in his essay in Studies of Good and Evil, while he wrote the best study of the Psychology of George Fox that any one has written".¹

Another unusual personality with whom Jones had the good fortune to come in contact was George Santayana. Of him Rufus Jones says: "There may be better lecturers than he was then and there may be wiser guides for the journey through that spiritual realm, Plato's demesne, but I have never seen any person whom I should prefer to have as pilot for that difficult crossing. There was a fine mystical quality in the Santayana of that period which made him an admirable interpreter of Platonic love and beauty, and which splendidly fitted him to appreciate the important contribution of Plotinus. Plato, Plotinus, Dante and Goethe have been throughout my life four personalities of outstanding importance."²

Others of these influential teachers are important for this study and so Jones' evaluation of them should be included:

"In a course with that fine New Testament scholar, Joseph Henry Thayer, I made an extensive study of the mystical element in Saint Paul and Saint John. My other important Harvard teacher was George Herbert Palmer. He helped me to lay the foundations of my ethical theories. He took me through the ethical systems of Kant, Fichte and Hegel, and it was through him that I discovered in my formative stage of thought the significance of the intrinsic values of life. He was then and always critical of mysticism, and in his friendly way reminded me in his old age what a mistake it was to run after will o' the wisp and wandering fires when there are such solid foundations in ethics to build structure on!

"Even before my Harvard days I had become very intimate with a remarkable young Quaker leader, John Wilhelm Rowntree of York, England. He was essentially a mystic both through his own direct experiences and by the native bent of his mind. Our lives came together like two kindred spirits and we greatly ministered in mutual and reciprocal fashion, the one to the other, and I should hardly be myself with his contribution to my life omitted. He died in 1905 when he was on tip-toe with great projects, and I

1. Ferm. p. 197

2. Ferm. p. 197.

undertook to carry on as far as another person could do his plans for producing a history of the Quaker Movement, from its birth in the seventeenth century to the present time. William Charles Braithwaite, a noble English scholar, joined me in this undertaking and wrote two of the seven volumes. As my studies progressed I became convinced that the Quaker movement was part of a vastly larger movement which lay behind it and around it. I went vigorously to work to explore this background. My Studies in Mystical Religion (1909) and my Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (1914) were the fruit of long years of research and they present the historical evidence that there has been an unbroken line of mystical life and thought flowing on underneath the ecclesiasticism and ritual and dogma of the Church, and my six Introductions to the Quaker History Series undertake to show how close is the connection between the mystical background and the Quaker movement.

"My historical studies of the various periods of mysticism overwhelmingly convinced me that it was impossible to confine mysticism to a single traditional type. The so-called via negativa type of mystical contemplation has undoubtedly been the characteristic form of mysticism in the Roman Catholic Church, as it also was the characteristic form of Indian mysticism for at least three thousand years. One of the reasons why New Testament scholars have so often denied that Saint John or Saint Paul or any other New Testament writers were mystics has been the long-standing assumption that the mystic way is essentially withdrawal from all that is finite and temporal, in order for the seeker to arrive at an experience of a Reality, freed from the imperfection of the temporal and finite. Aristotle pushed this method of negation so far that God becomes for him only a pure Thinker of His own Thought. He is utterly beyond the world and all its moving spheres. He is completely free from emotion, or passion, or preference, or will, or wish. Here we have in principle the glorification of the everlasting Nay. Plotinus carried the method of negation to its legitimate implications and thought of the ultimate Source as a Godhead beyond God, a One beyond multiplicity, an Infinite beyond the finite, and Eternal beyond temporalities. He is absolutely ineffable. No utterance about Him can convey any truth unless it negates. He is not this; He is not that. By an ecstatic leap beyond ideas, beyond thought, beyond mind, the soul might arrive, but obviously it could bring nothing back with it. It could not hint to human ears what it had heard, nor could it suggest to minds like ours what it had seen.

"This basic conception of ultimate Reality, inherited from classical sources, became a substantial aspect of the stream of Christian thought. 'Dionysius,' who claimed to be Saint Paul's convert on the Areopagus in Athens, gathered up at the close of the fifth century the ripest form of Neo-Platonism, and translated it into a model type of Christian mysticism. Saint Augustine, who antedated 'Dionysius' also drew his structural system of thought from Neo-Platonism, but he was so powerfully influenced by Saint Paul and Saint John that his mysticism is not quite so excessively negative as is that of 'Dionysius,' from whom the main European current came.

"Even Saint Augustine's greatest account of a mystical experience, the one that occurred when he was with his mother, Monica, at

Ostia, described in the Ninth Book of the Confessions, is characteristically Plotinian. He climbed up to the apex of his mind and then passed beyond his mind and beyond thought itself and 'in one trembling flash' reached That which Is.¹

This lengthy quotation has had to be given to show the critical nature of Rufus Jones' approach to the type of mysticism represented by the Indian mystics. In the next chapter there will be more comparison of the processes and the results but it may not be out of place here to indicate that this concept of the impersonal God (Brahman) who cannot be experienced of the Hindus is very much like the Plotinian concept of a God who is so beyond finitude that He can be explained only by negatives; in fact, for the Hindus the concept of God loses the "He" even and becomes neuter. Moreover, this concept leads men to seek for the distinction of having at last made that leap beyond thought, and so, utterly impossible of description.

An example of this in a novel is to be found in "Son of the Moon", by Hitrec; in one place Vijay, the young man, asked Udayji, the sadhu uncle, to tell him something about the new achievement he was reputed to have made in attaining samadhi (the state of union with the divine). The sadhu's reply is that it cannot be told as it is beyond words!

Rufus Jones has this further to say regarding this important question of valid types of mysticism, as he himself studied them and came to an understanding of them:

"After years of diligent study of the accounts of the supreme mystics of this type, I have gradually come to see that their highest moments of attainments are undoubtedly rich and fruitful--too concentrated and unified for a divided part of consciousness to remain separated as a spectator and reporter of the high event that is taking place within. I feel a reverent attitude toward those adventurers in the high latitudes of the Spirit and I am convinced that they come back empowered and fortified for the tasks here on the lower level.

1. Ferm. p. 199-200

"But I am just as certainly convinced that there is no good reason for limiting mystical experience to that one exclusive type any more than there would be for confining the experience of beauty to the enjoyment of musical harmonies alone, while denying the validity of beauty when it is manifested in visual creations, or in the forms of poetry and drama. The historical emphasis on negation, mental blank, the dark night, unknowing, ecstatic gaze, etc., has been due to two main causes. In the first place mystics of the classical line have been dominated by an intellectual theory--the theory of the abstract infinite. The perfect reality, according to this theory, must be above and beyond all limitations of the imperfect and finite. Any definition or determination in terms of specific qualities or characteristics seemed to make it impossible for the absolutely perfect to be anything else than what had been predicated of it, and consequently by applying positive characteristics to God as perfect being, He at once became limited, and, thus, became imperfect. The long struggle of man's mind with the stern compulsions of this abstract infinite is, I think, one of the major intellectual tragedies of human life It is easy to see how that theory of the abstract (i.e. characterless) infinite would lead the mind of a mystic to expect his experience of God to terminate on a mental blank, an everlasting Nay--'He is not this,' 'He is not that,' 'He is absolute Other'. And it may, of course, be taken for granted that mystical experience in every age will be colored and dominated by the prevailing mental climate of the time.

"The other main reason for the emphasis on the blank and incommunicable state of mind was the fact that ecstasy was assumed to be the mystic goal. I need not stop to discuss the question whether or not ecstasy always betokens abnormality. Without question it often does indicate an abnormal degree of auto-suggestibility and it is a well-known trait of hysteria. On the other hand persons of the soundest mental constitution often attain an intensity of concentration which transcends any specific consciousness of what is happening. The very richness, intensity and voluminousness of the experience makes it impossible for the mind to light or perch upon a single focus point. It is a totum simul state. Sometimes the mystical ecstasy of the great classical mystics has been of the former type and sometimes almost certainly of the latter type. But in either case, so long as the mystic expectation was levelled toward ecstasy as the goal, there was sure to exist a straining for a blank state, transcending consciousness. That became the pattern and model of mystical experience. There is obviously no sound reason why this pattern, fixed largely by the demands of an ancient theory should forever continue to be held sacred in its own right, unless it can be shown to be psychologically essential to any experience that transcends sense-experience, or that brings with it the conviction of contact with God."1

Having examined the common ideas of mysticism and the root-causes of these ideas, Rufus Jones satisfies his mind and the writer's with the explanation that the type of concept of God the mystic holds determines the type of mystical experience he will seek and find. So it is possible then to postulate a different type of mystical experience if the concept of God is different. Accordingly, Rufus Jones develops a Christian type of mysticism which he describes as follows:

"With the Renaissance and the recovery of older models, especially New Testament models, there came into birth a new type of mysticism, much more characteristically Pauline and Johannine than the medieval type had been. The strong humanist emphasis on life and the realization of life as the goal tended to strengthen this affirmative emphasis. In this altered mental climate a milder form of mysticism burst forth and flourished. The old dogma of the Fall and of the ruin of man quietly dropped into the background and a more optimistic view of man's relations with God came into play. A new faith arose that Christianity should be essentially a lay-religion and that the new spiritual kingdom was to be built by persons who had direct divine ordination--'the ordination of the pierced hands'--rather than ordination through priestly hands. The centre of religion was no longer thought of as being an external imperial organization; it was felt to be the inner life of the individual man. This shift of attitude was like the coming of a vernal equinox and with it came a new outburst of mystical life.

"The spiritual reformers, who fused together the strand of mysticism which had come from 'the Friends of God,' the humanism of Erasmus, the inward religion of Luther's early insight and withal the glowing message of the New Testament became the most vital purveyors of this fresh affirmative mysticism. Every country in Europe had its exponents of this movement. They left the mazes of theology behind. They dropped all interest in ecclesiasticism and ritual and concentrated their attention upon building an invisible Church of the Spirit. They revived the earlier view of the mystics that there is a Divine Spark, or Synteresis, in the structure of man's soul. They called this the inward Light and they boldly assumed that the spirit of man could actually be 'a candle of the Lord'.

"The new mysticism, like the old, made much of withdrawal from the strain and stress of life. It emphasized the need of hush and quiet. Concentration, contemplation, recollection were as much stressed in the affirmation type as they had ever been in the negation type. If man's tiny, fragmentary self is to complete itself in the larger whole of God's surrounding Life a man must cease to focus on the 'things' he wants and he must open from within the windows and the doors of his soul for the More than himself to come in and enlarge him. Hans Denck, one of the early spiritual reformers, finely expressed the divine-human relationship of life when he said in words that anticipated Pascal: 'Apart from God no one can seek or find God, for he who seeks God

in truth already has Him.' Peter Sterry, who was Cromwell's chaplain in the English Commonwealth period, taught that there is a spiritual centre in us, a spire-top of Spirit, he called it, where in an unfathomed Depth of Life we meet Eternal Reality. In like manner Thomas Traherne called our human spirits 'centres of Eternity' and he seems to have felt all his life, as he put it, that 'God is ever more near to us than we are to ourselves,' so that we cannot find our own souls without finding Him. 'You are never your true self,' Traherne declared, 'till you live by your soul more than by your body and you never live by your soul until you feel its incomparable excellence.' (Centuries of Meditation, II, 81, 92) This affirmative type of mystical life found a great exponent in the German Protestant mystic, Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), who was brought over by translation into the stream of English religious thought as 'Jacob Behmen' and who became one of the main influences in shaping the thought of William Law and William Blake, and also the German Philosophers, Schelling and Hegel, and our American mystic, Ralph Waldo Emerson."¹

Rufus Jones has traced this interesting history of mysticism and the rise of the newer type of mysticism and in the course of development has come now to the Quaker movement which he characterizes as an interesting experiment in group mystical life which unquestionably owed its birth in the seventeenth century to the complex environment of spiritual forces of the time. Foremost among them was the popular mystical striving of the new born democratic sects of the Commonwealth. These sects went back for origin to the spiritual reformers of the century before. Rufus Jones has given the history of the Quaker movement in brief in the following:

"The founder of the Quakers, George Fox, though largely ignorant of the literary story of man's mystical quests and not a reader of books, somehow absorbed the spirit and passion of the age-long search for God and experienced in his own soul in a profound degree the reality of God as a living present fact. Few men have ever lived who have been more certain of intimate inward correspondence with a divine Companion, and out of his own experience there emerged the conviction that there is 'something of God in every man'. He drew together many of the scattered mystical forces of the time and inaugurated a Society which he believed would grow into a universal Church of the Spirit. He was obviously over-optimistic, but it is to his credit that he refused to found another 'sect' and dedicated himself instead to the propagation of a mystical-social way of life. Here once more in Fox's experiment, there appeared a type of mysticism

1. Ferm. p. 204-5.

which was and is essentially affirmative. He thought of man, raised to his full spiritual height, as an organ of the Life of God. His followers in the eighteenth century became quietists with no faith in man as man, and they labored to create and preserve 'a peculiar people', withdrawn from the world, timorous of action, ascetically-minded, though sensitive and saintly, but not thus were Fox and the first generation of Quakers. They somehow had discovered--these undaunted Quakers--that this was God's world, not Satan's and that they belonged. The ocean of darkness and death which they saw with their eyes was to their spirits enveloped in an overflowing Ocean of Light and Love. They knew of no limits to what God could do through a man or a woman, raised by His power to stand and live in the same Spirit that the prophets and apostles were in who gave forth the Scriptures. They made conquest of their fears, they were released from a sense of danger, they became concentrated and unified spirits dedicated to the task of building the Kingdom of God according to the pattern in the Mount. They were plainly enough mystics and they were plainly enough affirmative."¹

Rufus Jones said that his historical studies brought him to conclusions like that. He felt two further points were essential: 1) the nature and validity of mystical experience and 2) the formulation of a concrete interpretation of God, "to break the strangle hold of the negative abstract infinite. He described certain mystical experiences of his own in the following to illustrate what he meant by a type of mystic experience which does not reach the stage of ecstasy and which seems affirmative rather than negative.

"Once at sea, in the middle of the night, when all unknown to me my little boy, left behind in America, was dying with no father by him to hold his hand, I suddenly felt myself surrounded by an enfolding Presence and held as though by invisible Arms. My entire being was fortified and I was inwardly prepared to meet the message of sorrow which was awaiting me next day at the dock.

"Another experience came much earlier in my life when I was spending a year abroad after graduation from college; it was at Dieu-le-fit in France, near the foot-hills of the Alps. I was walking alone in a forest, trying to map out my plan of life and confronted with issues which seemed too complex and difficult for my mind to solve. Suddenly I felt the walls between the visible and the invisible grow thin and the Eternal seemed to break through into the world where I was. I saw no flood of light, I heard no voice, but I felt as though I were face to face with a higher order of reality than that of the trees or mountains. I went down on my knees there in the woods with that same feeling of awe which compelled men in earlier times to take off their shoes from their feet. A sense of

1. Ferm. pp. 205-6.

mission broke in on me and I felt that I was being called to a well-defined task of life to which I then and there dedicated myself."¹

In speaking of this experience Jones said there was no excitement, no unusual emotion, no trance or ecstasy. But in both instances he felt an emergence of power and fortification. He was brought to a new level of life and has never quite lost the effect of the experiences. He then mentions examples of this kind of experience coming to a group of people; something it would seem like group therapy only very deep and religious.

"This is not the place to review in detail those multitudinous experiences of communal worship in which the two worlds-- the temporal and eternal--seem to fuse into one single world. I have been present in many gatherings where this has happened and these occasions have confirmed and strengthened my faith and expectation that God is near at hand. Genuine worship of the highest type feels like 'divine mutual and reciprocal correspondence.'" ²

The author related an automobile accident which happened to him and in which he was seriously hurt and through it a miracle happened to him:

"This time there was no single moment of invasion or of uprush. I discovered that a new life and power had come to me without my knowing precisely when it came. I was hit by an automobile one night while away from home. It happened without any preparation for it. No sound, no light, no consciousness of danger, preceded the startling event. Suddenly I felt my chest break and cave in. At the same time there was a powerful impact on my leg and then my body was hurled through space with tremendous force. The odd thing was that I did no thinking. I just felt. I was vaguely aware that an irresistible force was crushing the life out of my body, but I had not a touch of fear. There was a huge boulder of undifferentiated experience, undisturbed by reflection and without the emergence of any overwhelming emotions. I was as near neighbor to death as I shall ever be while actually living, as close to the border of our world here as one ever can be and return again to the fullness of life, and yet there was not the least sense of fear or terror. When the doctor arrived a few minutes after the accident, my heart was beating regularly and my pulse was normal. In a few days I was brought home, carried to my spacious library and settled into a high modern hospital bed. I was strapped tight to protect my broken ribs. My leg was fastened in a 'fracture case' so that I could not turn, for the

1. Ferm. p. 207

2. Ferm. p. 207-8

slightest movement hurt me. My students brought moveable chairs, filling the room, and I went on with my college lectures and finished all my courses, lying thus flat on my back, feeling all the time an unusual élan. Gradually I began to discover the amazing power of regeneration which living tissue reveals. Forces as gentle as the fall of snow flakes began to operate as though miracles had not ceased. The split and broken bones were woven together again. The ligaments were stretched back and fastened in their old places. The lacerated muscles were healed by some hidden alchemy. The torn skin and contused flesh were made whole by unseen processes. Every broken fibre was regenerated as though nature's whole business were restoration and renewal.

"It was a long time before I realized that a still deeper miracle had been taking place within me. I cannot quite date the discovery. But it began to dawn upon me that a 'restoration' of another sort had gone on. I seemed in a new way to be liberated from fears and anxieties and worries. I had entered into an unexpected tranquillity and peace. More than that I had gained an immense increase of vitality and vis viva. Life had become a more joyous and radiant affair than I had ever known. I no longer cared anything about arguments to prove the reality of God, any more than I did to prove the incomparable worth of the human love which surrounded my life as I lay quietly recovering. I do not know how I reached the new level of conviction or how I got from one stage of life to the higher one on which I found myself. It has always seemed to me to be a case of quiet mystical receptivity. Spiritual energies of a more or less permanent order flowed in and operated, as though God at my fountains far off had been raining. The infallible-minded psychologists can no doubt easily explain it by naturalistic processes, but to one who has lived through it and lived in it and not yet outlived it, it seems too rich and wonderful and eternally good to be just the flushing of a gland! A learned man could give it a clumsy name, but when all is said such things can be truly appreciated and appraised only from within."¹

With regard to the question of the objective validity of mystical experience, Rufus Jones wrote:

"I have discussed the question of the objective validity of mystical experience in a number of my former books, notably in Spiritual Energies in Fundamental Ends of Life, and in Paths to the Reality of God. Nothing that can be said on this topic will be likely to convince the extreme subjectivists, and, it must be admitted, that the arguments by which one endeavors to leap from an experience occurring within one's own soul to a transcendent reality beyond the soul will always find many deaf ears. But those who have felt the buoyant Life surge in with transforming effects and have been carried up from one level of life to a higher one do not care very much to press arguments. Life seems so much greater than rationalistic logic that one inclines to fall back upon the demonstration of the

1. *Ferm.* pp. 208-9.

spirit, the heightened quality of living, as the best evidence that is available. It belongs, no doubt, in the category of faith rather than in that of epistemology, but it is none the worse for that. Our highest values of life are to be found in that same region, and they rest securely on adamant foundations."¹

With regard to an interpretation of God which fits this affirmative type of mysticism, Rufus Jones says that in both Plato and Plotinus that suggestion of a way to a positive and concrete interpretation was to be found but the natural and easy line of direction in Platonism was toward the abstract, removed Deity. Moreover, regardless of what Plato and Plotinus themselves believed, their followers glorified the Eternal Yonder until it was almost a maya of unreality. The position of Rufus Jones is summed up in the following:

"I have been endeavoring through all my writings, from Social Law in the Spiritual World to my last book, Pathways to the Reality of God, to leave that abstract Infinite behind where it belongs and to pass over to an interpretation of God which brings 'the two worlds' together into a single unity and which finds Him actually revealed in the moral demonstrations of history, in the highest reaches of humanity, above all in a divine-human Person, in the validity of truth and beauty and love and goodness as we know them, and in the finite-infinite nature of our own self-consciousness as persons. The line between a defeative dualism of a two-world theory and an equally dangerous pantheism, which blurs all moral distinctions and which names the All 'God', is a difficult line to draw, but there is no peace or salvation to be had in either of those extreme views. If our world falls apart into completely sundered halves, to be joined only by miracle, or if it is so absolutely One that there is no 'other', and the One swallows up all differences and all tracks lead up but none come down, then in neither case can an intelligible interpretation be found. Our narrow path of affirmation must lie somewhere between these two poles of difficulty and of danger. What I am saying in very brief form here will no doubt sound abrupt and dogmatic. It has, however, been carefully thought through in more persuasive ways and in more expanded form in my recent books"²

With this we come to end of this quest for truth of a great Christian mystic, who died in 1947, but whose writings continue to attract those who would seek the deeper experiences of God.

1. Ferm. p. 209-210

2. Ibid. p. 211-2

CHAPTER IV

ELEMENTS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

The Concept of God

In the last chapter the idea has evolved through Jones' thought and study of the importance of the concept of God for the nature of the mystical experience of God which will be sought by any individual. So it is necessary here to analyze a bit further his ideas and compare them with others in order to probe the special relationships between concept and effect in life. The interesting revelation of this quest in Rufus Jones' writings is that it brings one at once to the next element in human personality. In Pathways to the Reality of God, Rufus Jones says:

"Where are we to turn to find our clue that will lead us back to the reality of God? How shall we think of Him so that He has for us the warmth and intimacy of a real Being? We can probably never find any imagery in any other domain that will be as vivid and impressive as the sky-imagery has been. The blue dome itself seems to the child's mind as it did to the primitive man's to be a perfect paradise for God. The rainbow, rising from earth to heaven, is a glorious sign of loving promise, or a bridge of many colors which links earth and heaven. The lightning in primitive pictorial imagery easily seems to be His stern messenger and the thunder, quite naturally, becomes His warning voice. But all the time this imagery is carrying the mind over unconsciously to a spatializing of God. He is all too easily and naturally thought of as a great man sitting on a throne at the apex of the sky-dome and acting as a man of might would act. With this imagery one is almost forced to think of Him as an absentee God. If he ever wants to reach the earth with a message of His will He must send someone across to bring it to us from the sky yonder. He is up there; we are down here. One has only to run through the theological thinking of the past to see how child-minded its imagery is, and what a large role this spatial-concept of God has played.

"Our new imagery, as I have said, will perhaps be less vivid, but perhaps also it may succeed in making God real to us without at the same time making Him to quite the same extent foreign to our world and so completely a space-occupying Being. Of course we shall never get altogether free from the relations and necessities of space and time, for if we succeeded in doing that it would carry with it the futility of all our imaginative and visualizing capacity. God would be relegated to an order of reality wholly unlike the one in which we feel at home. We need a spiritual order that means something real to us, and we must consequently succeed in finding some way of ~~of~~ thinking of God that is not incommensurable with our own central forms and ideals of life.

"Space and time are not unreal and untrue, they are only-- particularly space--inadequate for any order of spiritual reality. A reality to be spiritual must be more than a space-time reality. A spiritual being is a being that can expand itself in ideal directions and that lives essentially in the experience and the achievement of beauty, goodness, love and truth, all of them timeless realities, rather than in movements from place to place or in changes on a clock-dial."¹

At this point in this book and at this same point in others of Rufus Jones' writings appeared the concept of the continuity of the human spirit with the Divine spirit.

"That type of spiritual achievement is possible for all of us who have reached the level of personal life, for to be a person is to have an inner life which cannot be adequately spread out or expressed in parts or space forms, and which binds time--past, present and future--as only a unifying mind can bind it, into a super-temporal experience that is charged with the intrinsic values of a cumulative life. Those traits and characteristics of life, at the very least, we may be sure belong to the nature of God as Spirit..... He is more truly like the deepest reality in us than like anything else in the universe and we are nearest Him when we rise to the fullest height of our spiritual possibilities as men. At the heart and center of our being we as beings capable of moral autonomy partake of Him and open out inwardly into His Life."²

Again in Social Law in the Spiritual World, Rufus Jones says:

"The world of order and law and beauty is not something which exists apart, something which is there before consciousness. It has being and reality only because consciousness has being and reality. The outer and the inner are as much one unity as the convex and concave sides of the sky are one sky. There is no approach to the world at all except through consciousness. We have discovered, however, that our own consciousness is but a fragment. It has its being and reality in a larger whole, without which it could not be. " 3

A passage in "Why I Enroll With the Mystics" expresses again this idea of Rufus Jones:

"We must begin our interpretation of the nature of reality not with a dogmatic assumption, but with the actual verifiable fact of an inner spiritual nature of our own, which reveals certain specific rational and moral capacities which are basic for any theory of life. From the first, and all the time, as long as we remain sane, the outside world and the inside world fit like a glove to a hand. It is through these permanent and as it seems universal and necessary forms of ours that we get one unified world, our

1. Jones. Pathways to the Reality of God. Quoted in The Fellowship of the Saints. p. 656-7

2. Ibid. p. 653-7

3. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 64-5.

cosmos--a universe and not a multiverse.
There is something belonging to our rational nature as persons which makes all those unique and higher forms of experience possible.

"In any case, there is plain evidence of a time and space transcendence belonging to our type of inner being; there is a Beyond, a More yet, within us, and it appears to be akin to us. We are finite-infinite and temporal-eternal beings in our very constitution. There is a central rational-Spiritual nucleus in us which could have no other adequate origin than from the Spiritual Depths of a World-Mind, or World-Reason out of which we emerged into individual form and struck our being into personal bounds. At our best we seem to be inwardly conjunct with the Life that is our Source. We find ourselves in intimate reciprocal relations with the ultimate Spiritual Reality of the universe and we can in some degree become sensitized organs of that Life. We are, nevertheless, our own very selves and we have autonomous sway over our own acts and wills. We are not swallowed up and lost in a Lone. In an august sense we control our own destiny and 'we build up the being that we are'. The genuine spiritual universe seems to be a spiritual Society-- 'a blessed community' -- which includes God and the cooperative souls, who with Him form the growing Kingdom of the spiritual Life.

"He finds His complete Life in and through us as we find ours in and through Him and through each other in love and joy and cooperation. He needs us and we need Him, as a vine needs its branches and as the branches need the vine. The Spiritual Universe is thus a concrete reality, not an abstract one, and the Life of God can be revealed and has been actually revealed in a temporal life set in the midst of time, in the Christ of Galilee and Judea and in and through Christian History, in raised and transformed lives, lived through His power, and, as I have said, in the moral victories and demonstrations of the historical process."¹

Also, from Studies in Mystical Religion, one may quote only this sentence to show the recurrence of the same idea:

"But while these inward mystical experiences cannot be pushed to the extreme of being turned into compelling ontological proofs, they nevertheless do offer a very weighty ground for believing that there is a More of Consciousness continuous with our own-- a co-consciousness with which our own is bound up, and that constructive influences do come into us from beyond ourselves."²

The same idea may be found in Akhilananda in passages quoted in earlier pages in this study and in the following:

"All the religious teachers, the great men of God, admit that there is an inseparable connection between the individual soul and 'over soul' or God."³

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1. Ferm. pp. 212-3
 2. Jones. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. xxix
 3. Akhilananda. p. 119.

The Human Personality

Having led up to this element of the study through consideration of Jones' concept of God which involves a type of human personality which can be continuous with the Divine Spirit, it now becomes necessary to see clearly what Rufus Jones thinks of the human personality. In Social Law in the Spiritual World there is an entire chapter on the Meaning of Personality and from it brief quotations follow:

"But for all practical purposes the contrast between a person and a thing--between a self and a not-self--is clear enough. The fundamental contrast is the possession of self-consciousness by the person and the absence of it in the thing. Nobody ever was a person without knowing it! The 'marks' of personality are 1) power to forecast an end or purpose and to direct action toward it, 2) ability to remember past experiences and to make these memories determine present action, and 3) the power of selecting from among the multitude of objects presented to consciousness that which is of worth for the individual. But wherever we discover these 'marks' we infer that there is self-consciousness, such as we have ourselves. If we found an individual who could forecast, and remember, and direct action and make selections, and who yet did not know that he knew and did not think that he thought, we should decline to call him a person. However important these outer marks or 'signs' are, the essential characteristic is a unified self-consciousness.

"..... How out of the mass of subjective states, 'common sensations', as they are sometimes called, which mark the twilight period of consciousness, does clear self-consciousness arise? It never would arise apart from social influence. It would be as impossible to develop a personality without human society as it would be to convey sound in a vacuum, or to maintain life without atmosphere.

"Already it is clear enough that the 'self' and the 'other' are born together, that personal selfhood is organic with the society in which it is formed, but the moment we touch any of the spiritual qualities--even the simplest--which belong to personality it becomes clearer still. You cannot sympathize without 'another'--another whose inner life you can appreciate and with whom in some real sense you can share. Take away this power of contrasting a self and another with the power of identifying this self and its other, and you have removed all possibility of sympathy.Pride and self-esteem and the rest of the list of egoisms go when the contrast of self and other is removed. If I have self-esteem it is because I read myself off as important in the eyes of others. There is now truth at all in any view which makes egoism more primitive or fundamental than altruism. They are born together and neither can claim the birthright, however much one may get the blessing over the other. Take away the other and there would never be an ego.

"The point, then, which these facts out of the life of early childhood establish is this: there is no such thing as bare individuality, nor could society be the result of a 'social contract'. Individuality does not come first and society next as a product. Society is fundamental, and it is an essential condition for self-consciousness and personality. However contradictory it may sound, it is nevertheless a fact that there could be no self without many selves. Self-consciousness is a possible attainment only in a world where it already exists. Personality at every stage involves interrelation..... Every effort to discover the meaning of personality carries us straight over into the problems of the social life."¹

This theory of personality reminds one of the writings of the social psychologists of the present day too, who have taught that the idea of interaction is fundamental in developing human personality. No longer is there any respectability to the belief that elements of personality are inherited exclusively; they are the product of interaction of a biological human structure with an environment. Some further development of Jones' idea by illustrations may be given:

"It hardly need be said that one person alone in a world would have no laws. Succession of phenomena--if we could grant him phenomena--would be the most he could get. He would have no way of distinguishing the reality of dreams, hallucinations, imaginations and real objects. They would all stand for him on the same level of objectivity. A fact is a fact for us only because it is there for every sane man.

"Destroy the social fabric and all that we now call 'nature' would vanish as the shadow vanishes when the object which cast it is gone. But note well the world of nature is not the product of my consciousness or your consciousness, but of the total whole of consciousness, and that proves finally to include God."²

In discussing the possibility of the end of personality Jones again introduces the idea of continuity and purpose:

"It is impossible to see what end there could be to personality. As far as ever we can follow it out we discover only increasing possibilities. It seems like a number system, in which however far you have counted, you can always add one more number! There could no more be a terminal limit to personality. To be a person is to see something beyond the present attainment. If we were as persons, nothing but curious functions of bodies, then of course we should cease with the dissolution of the body, as the iridescent colors vanish when the bubble bursts. But if rather the body is

1. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p.57-8

2. Ibid. p. 61

only a medium for giving temporal manifestation to that which is essentially spirit, the falling away of the body may be only a stage in the process, like the bursting of the chrysalis by the insect which was meant to have wings and to live on flowers. The fact is personality gets no sufficient origin in the phenomenal world; nothing here explains it. From the first it trails clouds of glory. Even the budding personality betrays an infinite foreground. What we really have, when the person appears, is the self-consciousness of the world manifest at a focus point-- a unique expression of the eternal self-- set free to make his individual contribution to the world of spiritual Being. He may submerge himself in the show-world of sense and time, or he may live for the eternal which is constantly hinted to him in the spiritual ideals of life. As he pursues the path of increasing life, he finds himself drawing upon an unseen source and he discovers that his life is enwrapped and enfolded in a limitless Life."¹

Akhilananda approaches this phenomena from another angle when he says that individuality makes us limited while personality causes us to expand and gradually become universal. He says further that personality makes us unified. The great emphasis of Akhilananda is upon integration through the psychology he explains in order to attain maturity of personality.

Allport in his treatment of Personality says, "Integration, like differentiation, is sometimes considered to be the supreme principle of growth."

Gestalt psychology teaches that learning is by configurations and the personality grows by successively greater configurations or wholes. To quote Allport again in speaking of Gestalt Psychology and then of "field Theory":

"Proceeding inward we find more central regions, representing, it seems, the principal driving traits of personality, the deeper motives and interests, and more lasting sentiments and prejudices Finally, at the heart of the inner-personal region lies the very most intimate zone of all, elsewhere called by Lewin the 'core'. It is this intimate center that is aroused in states of acute self-conscious emotion and is always involved in aspiration and in fantasy. This core, more than any other single factor, guarantees the relative stability of the total structure."

1. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 84-5

"The principal advantage generally claimed for the topological treatment of personality has not as yet been mentioned. It brings the person within the domain of the so-called 'field theory', which endeavors to treat any psychological phenomenon in relation to its total setting. Roughly stated, the field theory of personality regards the total environmental setting as well as the inner structure of the person as decisive in the shaping of conduct"¹

With this we are back to Rufus Jones' concept of the personality as active in a field which links it with the Divine, and of the impossibility of there being any personality without the "field" of society.

The Bible

Rufus Jones has given consideration to the unique contribution of Christianity to experience of God in a number of places in his writings.

The following is taken from his *Studies in Mystical Religion*:

"The great epochs in religion, and particularly this greatest epoch, which we call the 'apostolic age', are marked off and characterized by a peculiarly rich and vivid consciousness of the Divine Presence. They are times when in new, fresh, and transforming ways persons have experienced the real presence of God. Life is always raised to new levels, and receives a new dynamic quality whenever God becomes real in personal and social experience. The battle has raged long and bitterly over the metaphysical relation of Christ to God; great rallying cries have grown out of these battles, and different communions have gathered about the various formulations of doctrine upon these and other difficult metaphysical questions, but the much more important questions are questions of fact; namely, what were the significant features of Christ's experience, what gave Him His extraordinary power over those who were in fellowship with Him, and what was it that made His disciples in such effective ways 'the salt of the earth, the light of the world'? and these questions have hardly been raised at all. The time is coming, however, when the emphasis will shift--it is already shifting--from questions of systematic theology to questions of religious experience, from metaphysics to psychology. It is a point of the first importance that the Gospels have given us little or no metaphysics; the language of theology is, too, quite foreign to them. They have given us instead the portrait of a Person who had a most extraordinary experience of God and of Oneness with Him."²

Having thus pointed out the warm, personal nature of the language of the Gospels, Rufus Jones proceeds to express the real genius of Christianity as it is recorded in the New Testament:

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1. Allport, ~~Gordon~~ W. L. *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*. p. 362-4.
 2. Jones. *Studies in Mystical Religion*. p. 3.

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"Christianity in the golden age was essentially a rich and vivid consciousness of God, rising to a perfect experience of union with God in mind and heart and will. It was a personal exhibition of the Divine in the human, the Eternal in the midst of time. When we get back to the head-waters of our religion we come ultimately to a Person who felt, and, in childlike simplicity, said that 'No man knows the Father save the Son', and 'I and the Father are one'.

"The direct impact and power of His life on His followers is the most extraordinary thing in the Gospels, and the continued power of His life over men is the most marvellous thing in human history. The source of this power is to be found in the fact that men have found through Him a direct way to God, that by His life and death they have been drawn themselves into a personal experience of God in some degree like His own. He always taught His disciples to expect this, and it was their attainment of this experience that made them the apostles of the new religion. Christianity is thus at its very heart a mystical religion-- a religion which lives and flourishes because its members experience what its Founder experienced, the actual presence of God as the formative Spirit of a new creation. As I have said, every disciple was summoned to expect a direct and conscious incoming of the Divine Life. 'Wherever two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst', was the announcement of a mystical fellowship which has cheered the hearts of little groups of worshippers in all ages and in all lands where the words of the Gospel have come. 'Lo, I am with you always' was a promise which fed and watered the faith of men in the hard days of cross and stake, and in the long, uneventful years when no 'sign' was given that the fellowship of the saints would finally overcome the world."¹

In a footnote Rufus Jones explains that the mysticism of the Gospels is very far removed from that type of religion historically known as "mysticism"; it is implicit and unconscious but it is an intense, first-hand experience of God which is mysticism at its best. The teaching of the Kingdom of God has a mystical aspect as a society or fellowship in heaven and on earth, and the church was a mystical fellowship of a little group of men and women brought into a personal experience of God by Christ. Rufus Jones says too that in the time of the first Christians the Holy Spirit was thought of as a power coming from without into the person. He says of this early group, "The atmosphere was charged with wonder, and men expected incursions from the unseen world into the sphere of their daily lives."²

1. Jones. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. 6-7.

2. Ibid. p. 8

The following quotation sums up the description of the early Church:

"The fellowship itself, with all things in common, the agape or love feast, the consciousness of Divine invasion, the expectation of the marvellous, the unconcern about the affairs of this life, the experiment to form a society governed from within and guided by ecstatic prophecy, have been in some degree repeated again and again."¹

Rufus Jones says that Paul was not exclusively a mystic but there was a marked mystical tendency in his nature and a strong mystical element in his writings. Paul was deeply grounded in an immediate, personal experience of the Divine Being. In *Studies in Mystical Religion* Rufus Jones has given a sketch of autobiographical passages from Paul's writings to show that he was subject to incursions from "beyond the circle and margin of his own self and that he attained a state of life in which he felt a unity of being with God, which made him 'able to do all things.'" The following summarize the discussion of the mystical element in Paul:

"It would be easy to multiply texts, but the mystical aspect of Paul's 'Gospel' does not rest on isolated texts. It is woven into the very structure of his message. He cares not at all for the shell of religion. The survival of ceremonial practices are to him 'nothing'. Circumcision, which stands in his thought for the whole class of religious performances, 'avails nothing'. Everything turns on a 'new creation'. His aim is always the creation of a 'new man', the formation of the 'inward man', and this 'inward man' is formed, not by the practice of rite or ritual, not by the laying on of hands, but by the actual incorporation of Christ--the Divine Life--into the life of the man, in such a way that he who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. Christ is resident within, and thereby produces a new spirit--a principle of power, a source of illumination, an earnest of unimagined glory.

"The proof of this inwardly formed self is not ecstasy, tongue, or miracle. It is victory over the lower passions,--the flesh--and a steady manifestation of love. There are ascending stages of 'spiritual gifts', i.e. of operations, which flow out from the new central self which Christ has formed within. Some are striking and spectacular, some seem extraordinary and 'supernatural', but the best gift of all, the goal of the entire process of the Spirit, is the manifestation of love. It is 'that which is perfect' and which supersedes knowledge, and tongues, and ecstatic prophecies which are 'in part', and only mirror-reflections. Nobody else has ever expressed in equal perfection and beauty the fervour and enthusiasm of the initiated mystic, inspired by union with God, as Paul has expressed them in his two hymns of love--the hymn on the love of God (Rom. viii.31f) and the hymn on the love of men (I Cor. xiii).
....."²

1. Jones. *Studies in Mystical Religion*. p. 8.

2. *Ibid.* p. 14-15.

Rufus Jones has compared the mysticism of Paul with that of John, "who has made the world at large familiar with the principles of mystical religion", and says that the term "mystic" more properly belongs to Paul than to John:

"Paul's Christianity takes its rise in an inward experience, and from beginning to end the stress is upon Christ inwardly experienced and re-lived. John's emphasis is upon the Life and Work of a historical Person whose teaching and commandments are dwelt upon and urged as words of life. An yet it is true that in the Fourth Gospel and the first Epistle of John we have a Christianity which is mystical, a religion, the central ideas of which are a Divine birth within, and the permanent presence of the Divine Spirit, imparting Himself to the human spirit... John's language is simpler than Paul's. "¹

After further discussion of mystical ideas in John's writings, Rufus Jones sums up the mysticism of John as follows:

"I shall speak of only one more aspect of John's mysticism, namely that of mystical union. It is now a well-known fact that 'isolated' personality is an abstraction. Nobody can live absolutely unto himself. He who is to enjoy the privileges of personality must be conjunct with others. He must be an organic member in a social group, and share himself with his fellows. Christ shows that this truth which we know as a human principle is also true of the Divine Life. God becomes conjunct with those who, by faith and love, and the practice of His will, abide in Him. The Divine-human conjunct Life is illustrated in the figure of the Vine and its branches. The branch is a branch because it is in the vine, and the vine is a vine because it has branches. They share a common sap, and live by a common circulation. It is a parable of an organic union of God and men, an interrelation by which believers live in God and God expresses Himself through them--the Divine Life circulating through all who are incorporate with the Central Stock.

"..... The very condition and basis of such a self-denying fellowship is incorporation in the Divine Life: 'I in them, thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' This is the Divine event towards which all true mystical Christianity moves."²

The high inspiration of the early Church and the presence of the Holy Spirit to guide their "house churches" continued for some time and then in the time of the Pastoral Epistles, according to Rufus Jones, the entire situation changed: "The prophet with his message freshly breathed by the Holy Spirit has wellnigh disappeared, and the writers of these Epistles are busy with problem of organization and discipline."³

1. Jones. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. 16

2. Ibid. p. 18-9

3. Ibid. p. 27

Moreover, in the affirmative mysticism of Rufus Jones in the Christian context, the Bible is a very real factor in mystical experience, as it inspires the person with thoughts of God as well as with its accounts of mystical experiences such as those of Paul and John.

Faith

Faith has a relationship to any such experience in the sense that the person has to have faith that there is a God to be experienced or he would not try to attain that experience. Rufus Jones has explained his concept of faith in the following passages:

"At first faith is an instinctive hunger for more than our present life realizes. We feel in some dim way our contact with a world of spiritual reality and we begin to appreciate it. There is an imperative demand of our being for a perfect to supplement our imperfection, and like the musician we venture our act of faith. We act on the faith that there is an absolute Being who will share His life with us and who will confirm our timid faith.

"Well, this venture of faith, which the soul's native hunger sets in action, gets its reward. It finds an object which meets its need. It appropriates into its own life some of that goodness which before seemed outside and foreign to it. It knows now of a Divine Being at least as much as its act of faith has appropriated. This act too has increased its spiritual energy for further effort of a similar sort. The validity of faith has stood a test. Thus the process goes on. Little by little a new self appears which this venture of faith builds up.

"The goodness which once seemed so remote and foreign begins to show its actuality in us. What we thus appreciate and appropriate into our own sphere of life comes to have the same reality that our own inner consciousness has.

"But all the time this tested faith is giving us suggestions and prophecies of infinite Life and Goodness yet unattained and unwon, beyond us, as that world of harmony is beyond any given attainment of the musician who knows that he has found the key to the realm."¹

The special concept of faith in the Christian context is explained by Rufus Jones as follows:

"The same thing is illustrated by our definitely Christian faith. At first we have a lot of pictorial images of Christ; then we learn from others the significance of His life in terms of doctrine, and little by little it begins to dawn upon us what this life really means in itself. We dwell no longer on this text or that, on this particular incident or that.

1. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 220-1.

"We come to estimate the Life as a Life. We begin to discover how it fits our need. We see how it would necessarily affect us if all this Gospel were actually true. We set to living in the light of it and under its mighty attraction, and lo! we see something new come into us.

"Once more the ancient miracle is worked anew--the love of Christ constraineth us to leave our old self and go to living for Him who loved us and give Himself for us. We go from the belief in a report to an experience of power at work upon us.

"Faith is thus a spiritual process which produces a religion as 'first-hand' as is the religion founded on mystical experiences.

"Our faith, then, is on its higher side an actual appropriation of the Divine Life, a positive realization of spiritual goodness, which steadily moves toward a conscious relationship of the soul to God. God is then no longer foreign and merely accepted on authority. He becomes the operative Life that organizes a spiritual life in us, and faith at this stage is the consciousness that our life is hid with Christ in God, that in Him we live and move and are.

"The God of our faith is forever linked in with our own lives. We believe in Him because we find Him. He is as close to us as is the ideal which moves us to action--all our spiritual gains reveal His presence.

"We know now as much as we have appreciated and realized in our own lives, and that gives us solid ground for the faith that we may eternally go on knowing the God whom our faith has revealed to us, and becoming more possessed of this Life which organizes our own. The isolation which first gave birth to our venture of faith is past. The foreignness of God is gone. We have found our life in the Source of it, as the branch does in the vine."¹

The importance of this translation of faith into experience which forever confirms the faith is made clearer from this observation of Swami Akhilananda:

"God and experiences of God are practically unknown to an average man. To him religion means following certain doctrines and rituals or believing in God and certain great spiritual personalities. God is still an intellectual conception or belief based on books and the words of others. He is not a fact of experience. Conceptual knowledge of God and actual experience of Him are quite different; in fact, there is a world of difference between them."²

The value of faith for the personality is brought out more specifically by Johnson, who emphasizes many of the same ideas that are to be found in Swami Akhilananda's discussion of disruptive and constructive forces:

"Emotions may be constructive or destructive. Fear spreads panic, and anxieties result in hesitation and inefficiency. Anger and despair, likewise, produce inaccurate fumbling and random responses. These dis-

1. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 222-3

2. Akhilananda. p. 172

tress emotions are destructive of poise, stability, and efficiency. They defeat the values sought by disorganizing the personality. And their effects are undesirable--indigestion, circulatory and nervous disorders, illness, weakness, and unhappiness. Other emotions are constructive in creating stability, joy, and success. Faith, hope, and love are the justly famous trilogy that serve as constructive forces in personality and society.

"..... Faith, hope, and love are more characteristic of the great religions than fear, despair, and rage. The typical religious object is a Sustainer of Values who works for good and is willing to co-operate with man. This essential hope that characterizes religious experience is a constructive emotional force, giving the worshiper more stability and integration for effective living. Trust and love cast out fear and despair, transforming destructive emotions into constructive energies of harmony, confidence, and peace."¹

It would be an easy matter to multiply examples of this fact that faith and confidence have tangible effects on the life of the person in whom they are effectively operative. However, these may suffice to illustrate the fact.

Other Elements

It is a matter of interest that for the more definite paths for attaining mystical experience one must turn to the analytical Hindu mind rather than to the appreciative western mind. In no western treatise are there to be found detailed instructions for the seeker to follow in such minute delineation as in Hindu treatises on yoga. In fact, one has the feeling in India that the steps in the process get so much attention that the end may be lost sight of or even not expected more than once at the end of a very long search. The spectacles one sees around any of the sacred places of the Hindus though touch one's mind with the things a man will train himself to endure for the coveted experience of samadhi, union with the Divine.

It is not our purpose here to describe these in detail as they do not figure in Rufus Jones' treatment of mystical experience except incidentally as notice, but it may be illuminating to mention some of these ways.

The sacred bath precedes all; in connection with this one may recall that this was definitely not a part of the seeking of some of the European mystics. Again this is evidence of cultural influence on even the mystic's search, for the bath is a very important part of any Hindu act.

1. Johnson, Paul E. Psychology of Religion. p. 55-6.

Next comes the assuming of a supposedly special position of merit; oftentimes this involves bizarre positions. Then comes the fixing of the gaze of the eyes on the midpoint of the brow or bridge of the nose as nearly as possible; there is supposed to be special connection with insight in this. Next comes the control of the breath on which whole books have been written. Akhilananda has this to say:

"There are two ways by which the nervous system can be helped. One is physical, by which certain foods or forms of vitamins are taken to strengthen the nervous system. This strengthening through physical means is temporary; for when the mind has emotional conflicts or unconscious disturbances, the nerves become weak and shattered in spite of dietetic regulations. You and I often observe that when we experience violent emotion the nerves are shaken. A man who is weak or nervous cannot expect to have a dynamic will, for the mind cannot function in its totality. Consequently, the will is split. Therefore, Hindus advise that the emotions first be integrated, purified, and unified, and inner conflicts be dissolved in order to strengthen the nerves. When the nerves become strong through mental purification, the will becomes dynamic.

"Our vital force generally functions through two central nerve currents, ida and pingala according to Hindu terminology, or sensory and motor nerve currents according to modern physiological terms. When these two nerve currents, sensory and motor, are allowed to be dissipated, the will becomes weak. The nerve centers and currents can also be overstimulated and exhausted by extreme mental conflicts, frustrations, apprehensions, anxieties, and other such disturbances. The whole nervous system then becomes shattered, and the functioning of the vital force in the system becomes extremely weakened. According to Hindu psychologists, mental and physical energy can be conserved or dissipated as one allows the vital force to function either effectively or improperly. That is also one of the reasons that some of the Hindu teachers prescribe certain forms of rhythmic breathing. Proper breathing exercises relax the whole body, strengthen the nervous system, and conserve the vital force. After all, the subtlest form of the expression of vital force in human physiology is through the respiratory system. When the respiratory system is regulated, the vital force is conserved. As a result, the nerves become strengthened; and when the nerves are strong, the mind is also strong; the mind can function or remain active in its totality. Consequently, the will is dynamic."¹

Then there is the process of concentration in which the Hindus are much more practiced than most people in the west. Of concentration Akhilananda says:

"Hindus advise us to focus the mind on one thing for some time. The result is wonderful; the whole mind and all the mental forces are converged and integrated. To understand this concentration we can think of the rays of the sun. When the rays are diffused, we do not find intensity of heat or light; but when the rays are converged and focused upon one object, we can even set a fire thereby. Similarly, in concentration we focus the whole mind; all the functions of mind are made one-pointed. As a result, it develops into a unified state and the will is integrated."²

1. Akhilananda. p. 83-4

2. Ibid. p. 85

The next point concerns the object of concentration or the ideal. Upon this subject we have already noted that Rufus Jones has pointed out the results of concentrating on the living Christ. As a means of attaining spiritual experience Akhilananda says of the object:

"The result of the practice of concentration and meditation will depend upon the choice of the object. Sometimes, we are amused to note that people advocate focusing the mind on any object whatsoever in order to develop spiritually. Patanjali describes elaborately in Raja Yoga the various types of objects of concentration that are taken up by the pupil for different reasons. If we concentrate the mind on material particles or material entities, we can gain the power of concentration, no doubt; yet the result will be quite different from what we get in concentrating on an aspect of God. Man can develop occult, psychic, and other extraordinary mental powers like levitation, suspension of breath, emanation of light, thought reading, or thought transference. Control of some of the laws of nature can be developed through concentration on different material objects and other subtle objects. These types of concentration may satisfy the curiosity of certain individuals and may also give some kind of power over nature and people; yet, ultimately, they do not help the integration of the total personality of a man."¹

In discussing methods of concentration and meditation Akhilananda suggests that some psychologists advocate the practice of emptying the mind entirely, of making it a vacuum by eliminating or controlling all thoughts that try to arise. Some say that they can get the voice and direction of God by keeping the mind in a vacuum. But the majority of people prefer to adopt a personal aspect of God as the object of meditation. Some find it helpful to have a picture of the object before them and cultivate a feeling of love for it. Repetition of the name of God is a favorite Hindu device for concentrating thought on him. Akhilananda explains:

"All the religious teachers, the great men of God, admit that there is an inseparable connection between the individual soul and 'over soul' or God. Yet because our minds are so preoccupied by the objective experiences of the world and have divergent interests and conflicts, it is not so easy and natural for most people to feel the attraction for God. Consequently, the above practices become extremely helpful in calming the mind, unifying the emotions, and, ultimately, in establishing a person in meditation."²

The Hindus emphasize the importance of having a teacher in the process of learning meditation and also of a mystic initiation in which the novice is shown the object upon which the mind is to be concentrated.

1. Akhilananda. p.111
2. Ibid. p. 119

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The following passages may serve to complete the picture of the emphasis on the minutiae or details of meditation and concentration as practiced by the Hindus, in contrast to the emphasis on the outcome or experience of God itself as pictured by Rufus Jones and the consequent effect on the life. Akhilananda says:

"The best time for practice is the conjunction of day and night--that is, early in the morning or early in the evening. This may not always be practical for many Western people as their routine of life is full of activity. It will be more convenient for them to practice meditation immediately after awaking from sleep, as that is the time the mind generally remains quiet. One can practice in the early part of the evening or just before retiring. Midday is also considered a good period for meditation.

"One should first freshen one's self before sitting for meditation. Then a quiet corner and a special seat should be selected, if possible, for everyday practice. Regularity in the practice of meditation is of vital importance. When one practices regularly at a certain hour each day, it becomes a habit for the mind to be peaceful, particularly at that time. One can begin with ten-minute periods and gradually and steadily increase the duration. Irregularity both in time and in duration is an obstacle for the unification of mental life.

"The aspirant should relax the whole body at first and sit erect, keeping the upper part of the body and the spinal column straight.....

"After relaxing the body and sitting in a proper position, one should take an aspect or symbol of God..... and focus the mind on that, and that alone.

"It takes six months to a year to feel the effect of steady practice in the earlier days of psychological training, as the thought forms have to be changed He must continue the practice steadily for some time. Then he can feel the effect of meditation in mental and physical relaxation, restfulness, and also in the quality of the meditation itself. It is observed that higher ethical and spiritual qualities gradually become manifest in the person who practices concentration and meditation....."¹

Of the distinction between concentration and meditation this author says:

"When concentration is very deep and the mind does not waver but remains focused on the object of thought, that is meditation (dhyana). According to Hindu psychologists, meditation is not merely a nice thought, a poetic flight, or loose fancies of even pleasant experiences; it is the depth of concentration in which the mind flows continuously to an object without any cessation as 'oil poured from one vessel to another.' It is not a succession of many thoughts of the same object. The mind must not waver whatsoever. So a man is really meditating when his mind is freed from all other thoughts and is wholly focused on the object of his concentration."²

With regard to the external accompaniments of mystical experience Rufus Jones says, in connection with his treatment of Thomas à Kempis:

1. Akhilananda. p. 124-5

2. Ibid. p. 113.

"Poverty in itself is no sovereign remedy. Mere abandonment of earthly goods will not bring us to any goal. Self-mortification, even self-crucifixion, alone does not carry the soul anywhere. The soul must be kindled and burn with a holy passion of love which carries it above all dependence on and attachment to the fleeting, failing things of the world, and be 'inwardly united' to the Divine Fountain from which all good flows--then, in this union with God, everything becomes a mirror of life....."¹

The importance of self-sacrifice and suffering constructively, as opposed to the extreme mortification of the body of the negative mystic, is emphasized as something central in Christian mysticism by Rufus Jones. The following quotation illustrates his thinking which is tremendously significant as he interprets their relation to the highest level of love.

"We cannot live to ourselves, we cannot die to ourselves; we cannot sin to ourselves, or cleanse our hearts from sin all to ourselves. Life cannot escape the principle of vicariousness which is woven into all its strands. The higher the person in the scale of the spiritual life the more insistent will be the calls to self-sacrifice; the more striking becomes the significance of vicariousness.

"The deepest note of the Gospel,--namely, that God suffers with us and for us,--is also the deepest fact of all life. The prophet felt the truth, Christ revealed it in the culmination of His life, and now our social ethics has come upon the same truth by an independent path of scientific study. There can be no spiritual being, whether he be the immature and embryonic saint, or the Infinite Father, who does not go out of his isolated selfhood to win his life in others, who does not share his life to gain a spiritual fellowship, who does not endure suffering to produce a more universal joy.

"There is some affirmation in every act of sacrifice and no man can make a fine sacrifice until he has a true value of himself.

"..... Love and devotion are the tremendous facts of life. Wherever the person is they appear, as does gravitation where the particles of matter are. They show that spite of seeming independence and isolation our spiritual lives are conjunct. We find our joy in giving as God does, because after all the giver and receiver are all one in the deeper spiritual unity, and he that loveth is in very fact 'of God,' and well on the way home."¹

1. Jones. Studies in Mystical Religion. p. 329.

2. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. pp. 100-5

CHAPTER V

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

Rufus Jones describes the meaning of the mystic's experience of God as follows:

"The mystic finds religion, not in the institutions which history describes, not in the creeds which have been formulated to satisfy intellectual demands, not in organized forms through which men give expression to their religious activities-- he finds the heart of religion in his own consciousness of God. Primarily he believes in God for the same reason that he believes in himself.

"There are always men and women in the world who have this first-hand, irrefragable certainty of God--persons who know that the frontier of their consciousness lies close along the shining table-lands which God Himself illumines. They never trouble themselves over arguments to prove God's existence. Their souls have discovered Him and they as little want proof as the plain man of the street wants proof that he sees a house.

"The mystic who has this internal evidence is a person whose wall between the conscious self and the vast subliminal region is extremely thin. That which for most persons stays beyond the threshold surges in and makes its reality felt for him and exercises a sway over the whole life. His religion thus does not crystallize. It keeps grounded in actual inward experience, with its life-blood ever flowing. Some degree of this experience, which flowers up in the great mystic, is probably present in us all.

"Every human being has a double aspect. He has his sharply defined life above the threshold and a vague, haunting life below it. Even the most prosaic of us are haunted by a beyond. But most of us find it fairly easy to substitute bloodless symbols for these deeper felt realities, just as we do our thinking with words and give up visualizing the objects for which the words stand.

"The mystic, on the contrary, resists this tendency, but he is able to do it simply because his impressions of the divine intercourse are so vivid--- the springs that bubble within are so unmistakable to him. Incursions from beyond the known limits of the self come surging in. By some deeper principle of perception than that which gives us our sense-world these souls discover that their lives are in God. They feel that their being is but a cell in a larger whole of being."¹

Rufus Jones has given in his books accounts of various experiences of God from the great mystics, such as Jakob Boehme, St. Theresa, Thomas à Kempis, and a host of others and it is perhaps not necessary in the scope of this study to quote them here. It is valuable for the outcome of this study to note the emphasis on the validity through feeling the presency of God. Jones says, "The significant thing which the mystic has to give us is his testimony that he has an im-

1. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 140-1.

mediate consciousness of God."¹ Because mystical states are not knowledge-states but feeling-states it is impossible to describe them in the common language of thought and so there has been a tendency to make them even more mysterious as a bit of personal pride of attainment of something which should then be made all the harder for the uninitiated to attain or understand. However, the present-day emphasis on "field forces" in the experiences of anything bring us into the realm of feelings much more than the psychology of behaviorism or associationism. Present-day "field" psychologists emphasize the validity of feeling experiences. Moreover, the peculiar perception of unity of the universe that comes to the true mystic is another concept which is emphasized in "field theory". Consequently, it is probably true that when field theory becomes more widely known and studied it will be applied to the study of mysticism and reveal some extremely worthwhile learnings for anyone interested in empirical religion.

In writing of this sense of unity with the universe Rufus Jones says:

"The key to the unity of the universe is the unity of consciousness and to some rare souls it is granted to feel their oneness with the spiritual whole--to catch 'the deep pulsations of the world', to know that their 'tiny spark of being' is of the one universal light."²

Rufus Jones has explained the difference between the negative and affirmative mystics most clearly in connection with the experience of God and what each does with it. The negative mystic when he perceives that he is a partaker of the divine Life makes it his goal to become absorbed in God--swallowed up in the Godhead. When he is asked where God can be found he insists that no object in the world can show God because worldly things are finite and God is infinite. Nor can history reveal Him because events are finite facts. Inner states too are finite. "He proceeds therefore by process of negation. Everything finite must be transcended. He must slough off not only therags of his own righteousness, but the last vestige of his finitude. Union with God, absorption in His Being, so that 'self' and 'other' are unknown is the goal of his search. "

1. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 145

2. Ibid. p. 148.

3. Ibid. p. 150

This state of rejoicing in nothingness reminds one of the peculiar ability of the Hindu mind to conceive of all worldly experience and object as Maya, an illusion to be freed from when one attains unity with the reality of the world. Rufus Jones quotes Eckhart as glorying in calling his Absolute, "the nameless Nothing". The mystic of this type rejoices in states of consciousness which approach a blank. This type of mysticism has the tendency, if men followed it to its logical conclusion, of contracting and confusing, and of encouraging men to live for the rare moment of ecstasy and beatific vision, "to sacrifice the chance of winning spiritual victory for the hope of receiving an ineffable illumination which would quench all further search or desire."

Having thus summed up the effects of the negative attitude to experience of God, Rufus Jones then turns to the affirmation mystic, who feels that more important than vision is obedience to the vision. This mystic feels that there is work to be done, error to be attacked, service to be rendered, and he uses his experience of God to gird him for action.

"It is a primary fact for him that he partakes of God, that his personal life has come out of the life of God and that he is never beyond the reach of God who is his source. But his true being is to be wrought out in the world where he can know only finite and imperfect things. His mission on earth is to be a fellow worker with God--contributing in a normal daily life his human powers to the divine Spirit who works in him and about him, bringing to reality a kingdom of God."¹

The primary difference this experience makes in the life has been illustrated in the lives of such men as John Wesley, George Fox, and many others, but the peculiar contribution of the Quakers to this idea is its ongoing quality in the life in the form of the Inner Light. Rufus Jones says: "The Inner Light is the doctrine that there is something Divine, 'something of God', in the human soul."²

Because of the remarkable lives of Quaker leaders such as Rufus Jones, and because of the service Quakers have rendered in places of need, it seems worthwhile to give here a summary of this motivating experience in the words of Jones:

1. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 153.

2. Ibid. p. 168.

"Five words are used indiscriminately to name this Divine something: 'The Light,' 'The Seed', 'Christ within', 'The Spirit', 'That of God in you'. This Divine Seed is in every person good or bad.

"It follows secondly as a corollary of this principle that direct communications are possible from God to man. In other words, the Inner Light is a principle of revelation--it becomes possible for man to have 'openings of truth'.

"Quaker ministry is supposed to be the utterance of communications that are given by the Spirit. This Light within is also held to be an illumination which makes the path of duty plain through the conscience.

"There is still a third aspect to the doctrine of the Inner Light. It is used, perhaps most frequently, to indicate the truth that whatever is spiritual must be within the realm of personal experience, that is to say, the ground of religion is in the individual's own heart and not somewhere outside him.

"In this sense the Inner Light means that religious truth is capable of self-demonstration..... Men had always been looking for a criterion, or test, or seat of authority outside themselves. The Quaker fulfils the reformation idea that Christianity is to be spiritually apprehended by each man for himself; nothing is to come between the individual soul and God.

"Sin is a fact in consciousness; not a doctrine which logic establishes from Adam's sin. God's love and mercy, His free grace and forgiveness, are real not because they are declared in Scripture and in creeds, but because they are eternal facts of the Divine Nature, which any human soul may experience.

"Salvation from sin is not to be held as a comforting formula; it is to be witnessed as an actual experience.

"In a word, the soul itself possesses a ground of certitude in spiritual matters, and it sees what is essential to its life with the same directness as the mathematician sees his axioms. These are the three ways in which the primitive Quakers use the term Inner Light: As a Divine Life resident in the soul; as a source of guidance and illumination, and as a ground of spiritual certitude."¹

Rufus Jones then examines the three points from psychological knowledge and says with regard to the first that the criterion of truth is to be found in the nature of consciousness itself is an accepted psychological truth. The test of the guidance is tested by its effect in the lives of men. This then is the supreme fact that would emerge from this study of Rufus Jones' treatment of the experience of God:

"The true test is to be sought, not in the feeling-state, but in the

motor-effects, which the inner state produces. How much power does the particular insight give toward spiritualizing the actual world we live in, is the test question.

"No 'opening' shall be called a real heavenly vision unless it does more than produce an inward thrill, unless it does more too than win the 'amen' of the kindred spiritual group. It must be able to make the subject who experiences it a more dynamic person in the whole of society in which he lives.

"More than that. Our age is a social age. We have left a sharp individualism forever behind. The individual is an individual only as he is a contributing member in a social group. His openings, his calls, his spiritual tasks therefore will not be thrust in upon him out of the sky; they will rather rise out of the actual needs and condition of this social group of which he is a part."¹

This selection sums up in an admirable way both the concept of affirmative mysticism and the concept of the experience of God which is peculiar to Rufus Jones and the Quakers; namely, that the human soul experiences God because his self is continuous with the Divine Self and that Divine Self is continuous with every man. So the call to serve another's need is the call of God to the Quaker. As contrasted with the type of mysticism which seeks an experience of unity with God in order to lose one's self in samadhi and forget all about the world and the troubles of one's fellowmen, Rufus Jones and the Quakers illustrate a type of mysticism which uses the experience of God as a touch with Divine Power to send them out to serve needy men and be more sensitive to their needs.

1. Jones. Social Law in the Spiritual World. p. 198.

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