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**THE SOURCES OF THE MYSTICISM OF
JONATHAN EDWARDS AS SET FORTH IN HIS WRITINGS.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I.	
Introduction	1
A. The Subject Defined	1
B. The Method of Treatment	1
C. The Source of Material	2
D. Mysticism Defined	3
E. The Significance of the Thesis	5
II. Edwards and the Bible.	
A. The Bible the Final Authority in His Theology	9
B. The Bible the Major Source of His Theology	14
C. Summary of the Chapter	16
III. The Divine Light	
A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers	19
B. The Doctrine in Edwards	26
1. Edwards' Definition of the Divine Light	26
2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of the Divine Light	30
3. Edwards' Treatment of the Fruit or Work of the Divine Light	46
4. Edwards' Treatment of the Mystery of the Divine Light	57
5. Edwards' Treatment of the Uniqueness of the Divine Light	58

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C. Summary of the Chapter	62
D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Divine Light is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings	64

IV. The Doctrine of Purgation

A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers	67
B. The Doctrine in Edwards	72
1. Edwards' Definition of Purgation	72
2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of Purgation	75
3. Edwards' Treatment of the Fruits of Purgation	77
4. Edwards' Treatment of Holiness of Life	79
5. Edwards' Treatment of the Practice of Charity	82
C. Summary of the Chapter	85
D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Doctrine of Purgation is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings	87

V. The Eternal Source of Life

A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers	90
B. The Doctrine in Edwards	93
1. Edwards' God-Consciousness	93
2. Edwards' Treatment of the Glory of God	100
C. Summary of the Chapter	104
D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Doctrine of God as the Eternal Source of Life is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings	106.

VI. The Doctrine of Faith

A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers	109
B. The Doctrine in Edwards	112
1. Edwards' Definition of Faith	112
2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of Faith	117
3. Edwards' Treatment of Faith in Relation to Other Doctrines	123
C. Summary of the Chapter	126
D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Mystical Emphasis on Faith is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings	128

VII. The Doctrine of Love

A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers	131
B. The Doctrine in Edwards	133
1. Edwards' Definition of Love	133
2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of Love	135
3. Edwards' Treatment of the Fruits of Love	140
C. Summary of the Chapter	142
D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Mystical Emphasis on Love is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings	144

VIII. Union With God

A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers	146
---	-----

B.	The Doctrine in Edwards	152
1.	Edwards' Definition of Union	152
2.	Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of Union	155
3.	Edwards' Treatment of the Basis of Union . . .	160
4.	Edwards' Treatment of the Fruits of Union . . .	163
5.	Edwards' Treatment of Freedom in Union	164
6.	Edwards' Treatment of Obedience in Union . . .	165
7.	Edwards' Treatment of Peace in Union	167
8.	Edwards' Treatment of Salvation in Union . . .	170
C.	Summary of the Chapter	172
D.	Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Mystical Union with God is Found in the Johanne and Pauline Writings	174
IX.	Conclusion	177
X.	Bibliography	
A.	The Works of Edwards	188
B.	General Works on Edwards	189
C.	Works of Representative Mystical Writers	191
D.	General Works on Mysticism	193
E.	The Biblical Text of John and Paul	195
F.	Works on the Mystical Element in John and Paul . . .	196.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE SOURCES OF THE MYSTICISM OF
JONATHAN EDWARDS AS SET FORTH IN HIS WRITINGS

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject Defined.

It might be well to follow a favorite method of Jonathan Edwards in setting forth the field of this thesis. That is, first to state what it does not purpose to do; and then from the negative statements arrive at a positive statement of its purpose.

The thesis is, then, not a study of the theology of Edwards as a system of thought; such a study has already had volumes written upon it. It is not a study of mysticism as a system of theology; this subject has had a full and scholarly treatment by such writers as Evelyn Underhill, W. R. Inge, Baron von Hugel and others. It is not a treatment of the mystical element which is found in the writings of Saint John and Saint Paul; a treatment of this can be found in the works of the authors listed above and in other writers as listed in the bibliography of this thesis.

The purpose of the thesis is to show that the Johannine and Pauline writings were the dominant sources of the mystical element in the theology of Jonathan Edwards, rather than other mystical sources.

B. The Method of Treatment.

The method of treatment followed in the thesis shall be, first to identify the selected doctrines of Edwards as mystical

from the works of representative writers in that field; and secondly, to discover to what extent Edwards makes use of the writings of John and Paul in his treatment of these doctrines. At the end of each chapter, which deals with the various mystical doctrines, there is added a brief chapter summary and also a table which sets forth the extent to which that particular doctrine is found in the works of John and Paul. These tables are added to show the amount of mystical material in these writings from which Edwards could have drawn - and did draw - in the development of the mystical element in his theology.

C. The Source of Material.

The sources of material for this thesis are as follows: The works of such representative writers as Saint John of the Cross, Saint Teresa, Saint Bernard, Meister Eckhart, Paschal, Lady Julian of Norwich, Thomas a Kempis and William Law; also such works on Christian mysticism as those of Evelyn Underhill, W. R. Inge, Baron von Hugel, Rufus Jones, Nicholson and others: The works of Jonathan Edwards, including his letters, diary, unpublished essays, etc.; also various works on Edwards, such as biography, theological treatises, criticisms, etc.: The Gospel of John and his three epistles and the Revelation¹, and the epistles of Paul which include Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus and Philemon.² The

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1. Edwards makes wide use of the Revelation but only a comparatively few of his citations are upon the mystical doctrines.
2. The traditional attitude of the Church in accepting the Johannine and Pauline authorship of these writings is accepted in this

quotations are taken from the King James version of the English Bible as that was the text used by Edwards.

D. Mysticism Defined.

Before applying the term "mystic" to Edwards, it is necessary to define the term as it is used in this thesis. For the words mystic and mysticism have received so many and so varied interpretations that to apply them, without first defining them, to the system of theology of an individual might be misleading or even prejudicial to the individual in the minds of some readers.

The majority of the great mystics of history have been devoted members of the church. "I desire", writes Ruysbroeck, "to be by the grace of God, a life-giving member of the Holy Church." The church has become persecutor only when it has feared for her own authority in matters of doctrine, as against the claim of a "direct experience of God" by the mystic.¹ Many of the great doctrines of Christianity are included in the mystical theology, not because they are unique to that system of thought, but rather because they have there a major emphasis.

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thesis. Edwards uses the epistle to the Hebrews to a large extent and attributes its authorship to Paul, as in such statements as "The Apostle Paul declares in Hebrews", etc. Since this letter is not generally credited to Paul it is not included in this thesis. Edwards' use of it, however, does reflect the great esteem in which he held Paul.

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1. Cf. Underhill, *Mystics of the Church*, p. 12.

The Christian mystic places the origin of his theology in Christ and not in any heathen mysteries; which Augustine described as a system which "saw from a wooded height the land of peace, but not the road thereto". In Jesus, the system found its "perfect thoroughfare" and classic expression. Through the life which he revealed, man has attained to fullness of life.¹

The mystical conception of religion is that of a way of life, or a becoming. The mystic is one who has a direct intuition or experience of God which gives to him the power and the burning desire to travel in this way. He is one whose religion and life are founded not merely upon intellectual belief or beautiful ritual or ceremony, but upon what, he regards, as an infinitely higher plane of direct personal communion with God. The Deity, to him, is a reality, both seen and known.²

The mystical theology is not exclusive of other systems of thought. It recognizes in natural theology a source of knowledge of God which is derived from the natural world; from dogmatic theology it gains a knowledge of God from history and especially in the Christian revelation. However, to these it would add the soul's secret and direct experience of God. It claims that it is only in the cultivation of this direct experience or "inner life" that the believer can fully hope to enter into the other two. It gives reality to life or as expressed by Saint Augustine, "My life

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1. Cf. Underhill, *Mystic Way*, p. 35.

2. Cf. Underhill, *Mystics of the Church*, p. 10.

shall be real life, being wholly full of Thee".¹

From a study of the works of representative writers we would list the following as a general statement of the characteristic mystical doctrines. From the very nature of the case, it is evident that any such statement must be of a very general character and would not apply, as a whole, to all writers. These principles are as follows:

(1) God is the eternal source of all life.

(2) God's life within man gives to man the capacity to know and experience God in a direct manner. This inner life of man differs from the natural life of man's soul. It makes him a partaker of the nature of God.

(3) The goal of all life is union with God.

(4) The attainment of this goal is reached by a definite "Way".²

In the study of Edwards, the following doctrines were found to make up the mystical element in his theology; we only list them here as they are treated in detail in the following chapters of this thesis. These doctrines are, The Divine Light; God, the eternal source of life; Purgation; Faith; Love and Union.

E. The Significance of this Thesis.

Whether one is in sympathy with the mystical type of thinker or not, it is necessary to recognize the fact that this

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1. Confessions, Book 10, ch. 28.

2. For an authoritative treatment of these principles see Underhill, *Mysticism, The Mystics of the Church, The Mystic Way*; Inge, *Christian Mysticism*; von Hugel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*.

type of thinker has always been a factor of no small importance in the history of the Christian church. On account of what has been described as the "expulsive power" of this type of thinking it has always, more or less, been held in suspicion by a church that was jealous of its own supremacy. This system has produced such characters as Augustine, Anselm, Boehme, Bernard, Eckhart, John of the Cross, Catherine of Siena, Joan of Arc, William Law, Francis of Assisi and a host of others. Again we see its influence in such world-wide movements as Quietism, the Society of Friends, etc., and in the revival of interest in mystical religion of the present day. Through the works of such men and women and in such religious movements as these, mysticism has quietly but no less certainly exerted, and is now exerting, a vital influence upon human society.

If it is discovered that Jonathan Edwards was also a follower of this Way, then his name can be added to the list mentioned above.¹ The revival of religion which he started in his

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1. It is generally recognized by students of Edwards' writings that he had a strong mystical trend in his thinking. For instance, in his book on Edwards, Dr. Allen writes as follows: "We must go back to the mystics of the Middle Ages, or to the fathers of the ancient church, to find a predecessor to Edwards.... It is true that Fox and Barclay among the Quakers had taught the same essential doctrine.... While his doctrine is that of the 'inner light', it assumes a different form.... He is something of a seer or prophet who beholds by direct vision what others know only by report." (Jonathan Edwards, Allen, pp. 137, 386.) Or as expressed by another author: "He came from the same mould as the great princes of the mediaeval church; and nothing suggests that he would have found uncongenial the role of an Anselm or a St. Bernard." (Jonathan Edwards, Parks, p. 24.)

parish not only molded the religious thought of America for over a century but was also felt in Europe.¹ Both friend and foe recognize his influence. A study of the mystical element in Edwards will also promote a better understanding of the noble character of one who has been described as the "most misunderstood man of America".

Finally, if it is discovered that Edwards, along with so many of the great mystics, has received his inspiration direct from a first-hand study of the Scripture, and especially from the writings of John and Paul, then this thesis but adds another testimony to the vital influence which the Scripture, and these two Apostles in particular, have exerted upon the centuries which have elapsed since their death.

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1. For a statement of the influence of Edwards upon America and Europe see Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 365 sec.

CHAPTER II

EDWARDS AND THE BIBLE

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EDWARDS AND THE BIBLE

A. The Bible as the Final Authority in Edwards' Theology.

The ascertainment of the place which Edwards gave to the Bible is important to this thesis. If his theology is largely the product of reason, as one writer suggests,¹ then the influence of Scripture, and of the Johannean and Pauline writings, could not have been the dominant influence in his thinking. Or again if the Institutes of Calvin were the chief source of his theology, as has also been suggested, then the place of the Scripture would be likewise minimized.²

It appears, however, from a study of his works that Edwards gives to the Bible the supreme place in all of his thinking. He refers to it as the final authority in the establishing of his theological statements and the number of citations which he makes from the Bible is voluminous. For instance, in the reprint of the Worcester edition of his works, approximately seven thousand and seven hundred direct quotations from the Bible are listed. Something over twenty-eight hundred of these citations are from the works of John and Paul. These figures do not include a very large number of indirect references to Scripture which he so often made.

The Bible was for Edwards an entirely sufficient source

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1. Cf. Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 58.
2. Cf. Parks, Jonathan Edwards, The Fiery Puritan, p. 64.

of truth for the formulation of his system of theology. While scarcely twenty years of age we find him formally resolving, "to study the Scripture so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same".¹ Somewhat later he writes that his growth in the knowledge of the Scripture had been a means of grace in his life², he had come to delight in the Scripture and had learned to love the Book³. In the Scripture he found the distinguishing characteristics of true piety⁴, and the excellency of the Gospel was ever a source of wonder to him.⁵ In the Scripture he found a light by which to guide his life, and what was more important, he found in it a power that enabled him to withstand the temptations of Satan.⁶

Edwards felt that there was a very different effect upon the reader in the use of the Bible from that which came from the reading of any other book, or even a commentary upon the Bible.⁷ This was the case because the Bible was an infallible rule, given directly by God for the guidance of his people.⁸ In it there is abundant light to guide the seeker in his search after the nature

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1. Vol. I, p. 4. All references to Edwards' works in this thesis are to the reprint of the Worcester Edition, N. Y., 1881. The Roman numerals refer to the volume and the Arabic numerals to the page of that volume.
2. Vol. I, p. 12.
3. Vol. I, p. 20.
4. Vol. I, p. 74.
5. Vol. I, p. 23.
6. Vol. I, p. 526.
7. Vol. III, p. 16.
8. Vol. III, p. 24.

of true religion.¹ It is, moreover, the only sacred rule which God has placed in the hands of men,² and so is the only safe directory.³ So nothing should be placed in the room of the word of God.⁴ The Bible is the "norm" by which all else is to be judged,⁵ for it is the supreme revelation of the way of life.⁶ If any doctrine is found in the Scripture that is sufficient evidence in itself for its acceptance; the fact that it is mysterious and cannot be fully understood is no adequate ground for its rejection.⁷

Edwards often contrasts the relative value of reason and the revelation of Scripture. He finds that the most that reason can do is to aid the understanding of revelation.⁸ Reason can make known secondary truths only; primary truths come only through revelation.⁹ There is a danger of being led into grave errors by trusting to reason rather than to Scripture.¹⁰ Some of his own critics had erred by trusting to their own reason rather than to the Scripture.¹¹ Thus ministers especially are under obligations to master the Scripture,¹² so as to avoid the evil of going beyond that which is revealed in the Word of God.¹³

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1. Vol. III (IX)
2. Vol. III, p. 299.
3. Vol. III, p. 32.
4. Vol. III, p. 377.
5. Vol. II, p. 640.
6. Vol. II, p. 641.
7. Vol. II, p. 546.
8. Vol. II, p. 221.
9. Vol. III, p. 545.
10. Vol. III, p. 28.
11. Vol. III, p. 288.
12. Vol. III, p. 591.
13. Vol. III, p. 338.

It is interesting to note that in his treatise on Religious Affections, Edwards selects the three "most eminent saints we have an account of in the Scripture" as authority for the truth of his statements. These three saints are David, Paul and John.

Of the Apostle Paul, he writes that he was a man

"who was in many respects, the chief of all the ministers of the New Testament; being above all others, a chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and made a chief instrument of propagating and establishing the Christian church in the world, and of distinctly revealing the glorious mysteries of the gospel, for the instruction of the church in all ages; and (as has not been improperly thought by some) the most eminent servant of Christ that ever lived, received to the highest rewards in the heavenly kingdom of his Master. By what is said of him in the Scripture, he appears to have been a person that was full of affection. And it is very manifest, that the religion he expresses in his epistles, consisted very much in holy affections. It appears by all his expressions of himself, that he was, in the course of his life, inflamed, actuated, and entirely swallowed up, by a most ardent love to his glorious Lord, esteeming all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and esteeming them but dung that he might win them. He represents himself, as over-powered by this holy affection, and as it were compelled by it to go forward in his service, through all difficulties and sufferings."¹

Edwards also held the Apostle John in no less esteem.

John's influence upon the church and his own writings, he is careful to emphasize. The following excerpt is taken from his description of the beloved Apostle:

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1. Vol. III, p. 12.

"The other instance I shall mention, is of the Apostle John, that beloved disciple, who was the nearest and dearest to his Master, of any of the twelve, and was by him admitted to the greatest privilege of any of them; being not only one of the three who were admitted to be present with him in the mount at his transfiguration, and at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and whom he took with him when he was in his agony, and one of the three spoken of by the Apostle Paul, as the three main pillars of the Christian church; but was favored above all, in being admitted to lean on his Master's bosom at his last supper, and in being chosen by Christ, as the disciple to whom he would reveal his wonderful dispensations towards his church, to the end of time; as we have an account in the Book of Revelation; and to shut up the canon of the New Testament, and of the whole Scripture; being preserved much longer than all the rest of the apostles, to set all things in order in the Christian church, after their death. It is evident by all his writings (as is generally observed by divines) that he was a person remarkably full of affection: his addresses to those to whom he wrote being inexpressibly tender and pathetic, wreathing nothing but the most fervent love; as though he were all made up of sweet and holy affection. The proofs of which cannot be given without disadvantage, unless we should transcribe his whole writings."¹

It would appear reasonable to conclude, from the statements of Edwards quoted above, that the Bible was his one authoritative source book; also that the development of his theology was biblical - at least as he interpreted the Bible. The Institutes of Calvin and the current thought of his day doubtless had a definite influence upon his writings but, by his own statement, they must take a secondary place.²

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1. Vol. III, p. 13.
2. It will be seen later on that Edwards' use of Scripture confirms his own statements here listed.

It would also appear that he gave the writings of John and Paul a conspicuous place in the Bible. With the Book of Psalms, all of which Edwards attributed to David, the writings of these two apostles make up his chief authority. He finds in the Psalms a rich source of illustrative material, while in John and Paul he finds an authoritative basis upon which to build his argument. Indeed when one considers the richness of the mystical element in the writings of John and Paul,¹ it would be surprising to find that these two writers did not have a prominent place in the thinking of such a scholar as Edwards.

B. The Bible as the Major Source
of Edwards' Theology.

The question naturally arises as to whether or not the Bible was the only source of Edwards' mysticism. A detailed discussion of this question is without the scope of this thesis but the following facts should be noted.

It would have been possible for Edwards to have had, even in the early writings of his diary in 1720, the works of some of the great mystics in his possession. For instance, the first edition of Thomas a Kempis was published in 1473 and translated into English in 1502; he could also have had the works of William Law and through him the influence of Jacob Boehme; also the works

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1. For a full statement of this element see the reference tables at the end of each chapter of this thesis. Also Underhill, *Mystic Way*, chs. 3 and 4; Inge, *Mysticism*, ch. 2; and Campbell, *Paul the Mystic*, London, 1928.

of St. Augustine might have been available to Edwards, either in the original or in translation. We can discover, however, no evidence, either external or internal, that Edwards had in his possession any of the works of these mystical writers.

The internal evidence of his writings, on the contrary, appears to indicate that he did not have any of these writings. He never refers to them, nor cites them as authority for any of his statements, nor gives them credit for any of the great mystical doctrines with which he deals. Ofttimes he shows a distinct hostility to mysticism and, no doubt, would have resented the application of this term to his writings. For instance, this is shown, as will appear later in this thesis, in his denunciation of the Quakers and their doctrine of the Inner Light; and in his rather vague attacks upon certain believers who claim to be "goddied with God" or "Christed with Christ", or, in other words, claiming to have within themselves something which was of the essence of God.

These attacks upon mysticism appear to have been directed against its abuses or the excesses of some of its adherents, rather than against the mystical theology as defined in this thesis. He denounced the Quakers because he felt that their teachings tended to the neglect of the Scripture through an undue trust in the leading of their Inner Light; also he condemned those who claimed to be "goddied with God" because they appeared to him to neglect the means of grace and especially the study of the Bible. Such criticisms could have come as naturally from Saint

John of the Cross as from Edwards.¹

That Edwards was most sympathetic to a different kind of mysticism is vividly illustrated in his attitude towards his wife. From the first he was attracted to her on account of her strong Christian character and widely known mystical experience.² Later in life she wrote, at his request, an account of her experience of the divine light in her soul and her frequent spiritual ecstasies which she experienced as a result of the indwelling light. Edwards was so impressed with the reasonableness and "sweetness" of these experiences of his wife that he incorporated her paper in his history of the "Revival of Religion in New England" and at its conclusion thus expressed his own feelings in regard to it:

"Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction!"³

C. Summary of the Chapter.

A study of the works of Edwards reveals the fact that he regarded the Bible as the supreme authority in all matters of doctrine. The place of reason and Christian experience were counted as important elements in the life of the believer, yet

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1. Cf. St. John of the Cross, Works, Vol. I, p. 3.
2. Cf. Allen, Jonathan Edwards, pp. 46, 201.
3. Vol. III, p. 306.

they were subordinate to and must be checked by the light of the revelation contained in the Scripture.

From his own statements the Scripture appears not only to have been the final authority but also the only source for the development of the mystical element in Edwards' theology. As far as we can discover from a study of his works, the influence of the Bible is the dominant one.

It is also to be noted that Edwards expresses a distinct sense of obligation to the Apostles John and Paul for the inspiration and information which he received from their writings. He singles them out as two of the most "conspicuous" saints of the Scripture.

CHAPTER III

THE DIVINE LIGHT

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THE DIVINE LIGHT

A. The Doctrine in the Mystics.

To the Christian mystic, the supreme fact in human history is the incarnated Word within the soul of man. This Life within is a divine nucleus which gives a point of contact between man's life and the divine life. This incarnated Word has been given various names in its development by mystical writers. However, all of these terms mean the same thing, though emphasizing different phases of its life. Sometimes it is called the Spark of the Soul; sometimes its Apex, the point at which the soul touches the Divine; sometimes it is represented as the Synteresis, the preserver of the soul's being;¹ again in emphasizing a different aspect of the subject, it is called the Ground of the Soul, from which springs all spiritual life; or again it may be described as the Divine Essence of the soul, the Divine Life of the soul, the Divine Principle of the soul, the Indwelling Spirit, the Inner Light, and other similar names.

Whatever name the writer may choose to give to this incarnated Word, it is always represented as the organ of man's spiritual consciousness. It is the germ of his real life, the place where the human makes contact with the Divine. Its presence in the soul of man makes him also divine and gives to him an immediate experience and knowledge of God. It also makes possible a spiritual growth towards the supreme goal of all life-union with

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1. Cf. Inge, Christian Mysticism, Appendix C., pp. 359-360.

God. The possession of this Life is within the reach of all but only in the life of those who allow it to have a free rule, does it develop into a life-giving spiritual "fire".¹

William Law represents the impartation of this Divine Light to the soul of man as the greatest design of God in his relations to man. In this need all mankind is alike. He writes,

"There is but one salvation for all mankind and that is the Life of God in the soul. God has but one design or intent towards all mankind, and that is to introduce or generate His own Life, Light and Spirit in them..... There is but one possible way for man to attain this salvation, or Life of God in the soul. There is not one for the Jew, another for the Christian, and a third for the heathen. No; God is one, human nature is one, and the way to it is one."²

Again Law attributes to this Light the source of the soul's greatest blessings. The fact of its existence or reality, he feels, is so evident that it needs no proof. It is as necessary for the growth of the spiritual life of man as the seed is to the development of the flower:

"Now that this form of a divine life is in every man, that no man is without this witness of God in himself, is a truth as evident as anything that can be affirmed by human nature. And as it is a certain truth that no fruit, flowers, or virtues can be or can come forth in any vegetable but what was first in its seed or root, so no divine glory, perfection, or power can ever come forth in any creature in heaven, but what arises from the seed of the Deity sown into it at its creation. Therefore as sure as the heavenly soul will to all eternity increase in

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1. For a full and authoritative discussion of this doctrine see Miss Underhill's, *Mystics of the Church*, *The Mystic Way* and especially her book entitled *"Mysticism"*.
2. Law, *Spirit of Prayer*, p. 42.

new openings and enlargements of divine union, enjoyment and perfection in God, so sure is it that in the center, or inmost birth of the soul's life, lie the riches of the divine nature as a Seed, or Root of glory, given to it by its first creative image or likeness to God. Everything that is endless or numberless in the essence of the soul: what seeing is, what hearing, feeling, etc. are in their boundless variety and ever increasing newness of delight in eternity, these, with all their wonders, are the innate birthright and sure inheritance of every immortal godly soul."¹

Meister Eckhart identifies this Spark of the soul with the life of God. He represents it as an impartation immediate from God and

"is his light striking down from above, the reflection (or image) of his divine nature and ever opposed to anything ungodly".²

Eckhart describes the origin and nature of this Spark in detail.

As a summary of his teachings upon this subject the following quotation is characteristic:

"There is in the soul something which is above the soul, Divine, simple, a pure nothing; rather nameless than named, rather unconscious than known. Sometimes I have called it a power, sometimes an uncreated light, and sometimes a divine Spark. It is absolute and free from all names and forms, just as God is free and absolute in Himself. It is higher than love, higher than grace. For in these there is still distinction. In this power God doth blossom and flourish with all his Godhead, and the Spirit flourisheth in God. In this power the Father bringeth forth his only begotten Son, as essentially as himself; and in this light ariseth the Holy Ghost. This Spark rejecteth all creatures and will have only God, simply as He is in Himself."³

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1. Law, Liberal and Mystical Writings, p. 164.
2. Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 88.
3. Ibid., p. 57.

Saint Augustine finds an explanation for the possibility of knowledge in what he describes as the mysterious faculty of memory. In this faculty he finds an adequate explanation of the manner in which knowledge becomes possible to man. However, when he attempts to explain the origin of the knowledge of God in the soul of man he finds that memory can furnish no adequate explanation. Hence he reasons that knowledge of God must be derived from some inner light directly imparted by God to the soul of man. Thus he sums up his argument that this knowledge of God is of a divine source:

"Where then did I find Thee, that I might learn Thee?
For in memory Thou wert not, before I learned Thee.
Where then did I find Thee, that I might learn Thee,
but in Thee above me? . . . behold, Thou wert within,
and I abroad, and there I searched for Thee . . .
Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee."¹

Again in an intimate description of his own emotions, Saint Augustine portrays this inner light of the soul and sees in it the source of all spiritual power which man possesses. To him, it is directly imparted by God to the soul of the believer:

"I entered even into my inward self, Thou being my Guide: and able I was, for Thou wert become my Helper. And I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul, (such as it was) above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the light unchangeable. Not this ordinary light, which all flesh may look upon, not as it were a greater of the same kind, as though the brightness of this should be manifold brighter, and with its greatness take up all space. Not such was this light, but other, yea far other from all these. Nor was it above my soul, as oil is above water, nor yet as heaven

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1. Augustine, Confessions, Book 10, Sec. 37-38.

is above earth; but above to my soul, because it made me; and I below it, because I was made by it. He that knows the Truth, knows what that Light is, and he that knows it knows eternity."¹

As mentioned above, Augustine recognizes this light as distinct from the soul and as a direct gift of God to man. It also gives to man an understanding of spiritual things and so an appreciation of the beauty and value of divine things. It also makes possible spiritual growth:

"Distinct from the soul is that light itself, whereby it is so enlightened, that it may behold all things, whether in itself or in Him, understanding them truly. For that Light is God Himself; but the soul although rational and intellectual, is a creature made after His image, and when it endeavors to behold that Light, quivers through weakness and is unable. Yet still thence is derived whatever it understands, as it is able. When then it is borne away thither, and withdrawn from the bodily senses, it is placed more expressly in the presence of that Vision, then, not in a local space, but in a way of its own, it sees even above itself that, whereby being aided it sees also whatever, by understanding, it does see in itself."²

Saint John of the Cross describes at length this light of the soul and declares it to be divine in nature and that its source is in God. He finds this to be in harmony with the gospel of John. We read that

"the soul has its radical and essential life in God, like all created things . . . St. John also says that all that was made was life in God; that which was made in Him was life."³

He attributes to this inner light the source of all of the blessings which the soul receives and finds in it the power which

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1. Confessions, chap. 17, sec. 17.
2. Ibid.
3. Works, Vol. II, p. 46.

makes all spiritual growth possible:

"It is a movement of the Word in the depths of the soul of such grandeur, authority and glory, and of such profound sweetness that all the balsams, all the aromatic herbs and flowers of the world seem to be mingled and shaken together for the production of that sweetness: that all the kingdoms and dominions of the world, all the powers and virtues of heaven seem to be moved; that is not the whole, all the virtues, substance, perfections and graces of all created things, shine forth and make the same movement in unison together. For as St. John saith 'What was made in Him was life.'¹

The soul which possesses this Light has an immediate access to God. God can through it speak directly to the soul and the soul to God. Thus the soul comes into that experience of God which can come only through a "sight" of God. Thus Saint John of the Cross continues:

"This is the meaning of those words of our Lord, 'He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him'. These words refer to this knowledge and these touches of which I am speaking, and which God manifests to the soul that truly loves Him."²

Saint Teresa also describes at length this inner light of the soul. She attributes to it the same power and attributes as did St. John of the Cross. To her it is an ever increasing source of wonder and inspiration. It is God within the soul. She writes,

"We are not forced to take wings to find our Lord, but have only to seek solitude and to look within ourselves. You need not be overwhelmed with confusion before so kind a guest, but, with humility, talk to Him as your Father. . . . Within this palace

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1. Works, Vol. II, p. 46.
2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 179.

dwells the mighty King who has deigned to become your Father and who is seated on a throne of priceless value - by which I mean your heart."¹

These citations from representative mystical writers identify this doctrine of the divine light as peculiarly mystical and also exemplify the characteristic emphasis which is placed on this doctrine of the inner light by the system as a whole. In order to be a true follower of this "Way" one must have experienced this access of divine vitality. The mystic sees in such a light a breaking down of old barriers, an enlargement of old methods of thought and conceptions of life and of God. Through this light comes the experience of the new birth and a new power is felt by the believer to be within himself which is "not himself". With this new power "welling up" within him the believer also experiences new wonders and a new beauty in the world and in God, which he has never known before. He has a new sense which Edwards characterized as the "distinguishing beauty of divine excellency". Or again, as Miss Underhill describes it, those who experience this light are

"new born, they stand here at the threshold of illimitable experiences, in which life's power of ecstasy and endurance, of love and of pain, shall be exploited to the full."²

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1. St. Teresa, Balfie, pp. 89, 92.
2. Underhill, Mystic Way, p. 52. In her description of this doctrine of the divine light Miss Underhill further states in this same volume, page 50: "It seems to him (i.e. the mystic) a separate gift or 'grace' infused from without, rather than developed from within. It startles him by its suddenness; the gladness, awe and exaltation that it brings; an emotional inflorescence, parallel with that which announces the birth of

B. The Doctrine in Edwards.

1. Edwards' Definition of the Divine Light.

The Doctrine of the divine light holds first place, both in space devoted to it and in emphasis placed upon it, in Edwards' system of theology. The place that he gives to this doctrine is as prominent, if not more so, than in any of the mystical writings from which we have quoted above. In his biography of Edwards, Dr. Allen expresses the opinion that Edwards' preaching of this doctrine of the divine light was the "impulse of the Great Awakening . . . which first took shape in Edwards' mind".¹

Edwards employs different terms in his description of

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perfect human love. This moment is the Spiritual Spring-time. It comes like the winds of March, full of natural wonder; and gives to all who experience it, a participation in the deathless magic of eternal springs. An enhanced vitality, a wonderful sense of power and joyful apprehension as towards worlds before ignored or unknown, floods the consciousness. Life is raised to a higher degree of tension than ever before; and therefore to a higher perception of Reality."

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1. Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 134.

On page 68 of this same book, Dr. Allen writes in regard to the word "light", as it is used by Edwards, as follows: "A recent American critic, speaking from a literary point of view, has called attention to the word sweetness as being Edwards' characteristic word. But there is another word which recurs quite as often in his writings, and that, too, in the most important connections, - the word light. It is more than an illustration of his thought; light is a word that controls his thought."

this light but they all have the same meaning. Various terms for this light are used in a single treatise, or even in a single paragraph, to express the same thought. The following are some of the words or phrases most commonly found in his descriptions of it: - it is a divine light¹; it is an immortal seed²; it is an image of God³; it is a participation in the Divine Nature⁴; it is an image of God instamped on the soul⁵; it is the indwelling spirit⁶; it is a witness of the Spirit and more⁷; it is a divine infusion⁸; it is a spring⁹; it is Grace¹⁰; it is a divine taste¹¹; it is a divine sight¹²; it is a vital principle of the soul¹³.

The origin of this light is God. He gives his Holy Spirit to be united to the faculties of the soul and He makes him to dwell there as a natural, vital principle. Thus the soul of the saint is indued with a new nature. This light does not dwell without the soul but within it. It is received from the Sun of righteousness and is, of its own nature a "luminous thing". And

"not only does the Sun shine in the saints, but they also become little suns, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light".¹⁴

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1. Vol. IV, p. 438.
2. Ibid. p. 472.
3. Vol. II, p. 256.
4. Vol. IV, p. 472.
5. Ibid. p. 544.
6. Vol. I, p. 68.
7. Vol. III, p. 87.
8. Vol. I, p. 172
9. Ibid. p. 72.
10. Vol. IV, p. 394.
11. Vol. I, p. 121.
12. Vol. I, p. 187.
13. Vol. IV, p. 175.
14. Vol. III, p. 157.

The soul may thus be compared to the lamps of the tabernacle; which although at the beginning were lighted by the fire from heaven, yet they thereby became themselves burning and shining lights. Or again, the soul not only drinks of the water of life, that flows from the fountain of God; but this water also becomes a fountain of living water in the soul - springing up there and flowing out of the soul. Or again this light may be compared to a seed implanted in the soil; it is not only in the ground but roots itself there and becomes an abiding principle of the life and nature of the soil.¹ This is in accordance with the teachings of Saint John in John 4:14 and 7:38, 39.²

This divine light through its influences and fruit is the sum of all grace, comfort and joy; or in other words, it is the sum of all the spiritual good purchased by Christ for mankind. It is the subject matter of the promises of both the Old and the New Testaments. It is particularly the chief subject of the covenant of grace delivered by Christ to his disciples, as his last will and testament and recorded in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John. It is for this reason that it is so often referred to as the Spirit of promise, as in Gal. 3:14, Eph. 1:13, 3:6. Thus, it is the great blessing which Christ brought to man.

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1. Cf. Vol. III, pp. 298-299.
2. All references made to the writings of John and Paul in this thesis are citations made by Edwards himself as proof texts of his statements. The extent to which these doctrines are found in John and Paul may be seen in the table found at the end of this chapter.

It was the blessing which he received from the Father when he ascended into heaven and which he communicated to those whom he had redeemed, John 16:7. It is the sum of the blessings wrought by Christ through his intercession, John 14:16, 17. It is also the blessing for which he prayed in the great prayer which he uttered for his disciples and for all future disciples in John 17.¹

This light is no dull, inactive or ineffectual principle. Rather is it a spiritual power. There is power in it because God is in it. It is a divine principle because it has a participation in the divine nature of God; or in other words, it is a communication of divine life. The soul thus has the power of an endless life. It lives but not by its own life for Christ lives in it. It is a holy flame enkindled in the soul, which makes of the soul a burning light.²

The description of this divine light calls forth some of the most eloquent passages in Edwards' writings. The following, from one of his sermons, displays both this eloquence as well as somewhat of the place that he assigns to this light:

"This light is such as effectually influences the inclinations, and changes the nature of the soul. It assimilates the nature to the divine nature, and changes the soul into an image of the same glory that it beheld, II Cor. 3:18. This knowledge will wean from the world, and raise the inclination to heavenly things. It will turn the heart to God as the fountain of good, and to choose him for the only portion. This light, and this only, will bring the soul to a saving close with Christ.

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1. Cf. Vol. III, p. 585.

2. Ibid.

It conforms the heart to the gospel, mortifies its enmity and opposition against the scheme of salvation therein revealed: it causes the heart to embrace the joyful tidings, and entirely to adhere to, and acquiesce in the revelation of Christ as our Saviour: it causes the whole soul to accord and symphonize with it, admitting it with entire credit and respect, cleaving to it with full inclination and affection; and it effectually disposes the soul to give up itself entirely to Christ."¹

Again this light is described as a most excellent thing.

In it, consist the most excellent experiences of both angel and saint. In it, consists the most excellent experience of Christ, whether in his state of exaltation or humiliation. In it consists the image of God; it is a communication of some of the very nature of the divine excellency and beauty of God himself. It is a partaking of the fullness of Christ, John 1:16. Through it the saints are said to be filled with the fullness of God, Eph. 3:18, 19. In it they have fellowship with both Christ and God, I John 1:3. "Yea, by means of this divine virtue, there is a mutual indwelling of God and the saints, I John 4:16."²

2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of the Divine Light.

This light discovers to the soul the real beauty and amiableness of the true moral good that is in divine things. It reveals the glory of God's perfections and of all other attributes belonging to the divine Being. It reveals also the glory of his works of creation and of providence. By means of this light is also understood the sufficiency of Christ as a mediator and of the

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1. Vol. IV, p. 449.
2. Vol. IV, p. 472.

excellency of the work of redemption purchased by Christ. By it is seen the beauty of the way of salvation - both in its fitness and its suitableness. By it is seen the excellency of the Scriptures and without it the Scripture is but "a dead, dry, lifeless, tasteless thing". By it is seen the true foundation of man's duties to God and to his fellow-man, and also the amiableness of these duties. By it is seen the true nature of sin, for it reveals the nature of holiness. He that sees the beauty of holiness sees the most important thing in the world. For "holiness is the fullness of all things, without which all of the world is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worse than nothing". Therefore, he that possesses not this light knows nothing of the nature of spiritual things. He can have only the shadow or form of knowledge, as the apostle Paul calls it, and is well represented as one who is dead or blind, Col. 2:12, 13. He who possesses this light views all things from a different angle than that from which the natural man views them, II Cor. 5:16, 17.¹ Thus to deny the existence of this light is to deny a great part of the Gospel. It is a denial of that in which actual salvation and redemption mainly consist.

In his well known sermon on this light, entitled "A Divine and Supernatural Light, immediately Imparted to the Soul by The Spirit of God, Shown to Be Both a Scriptural and Rational Doctrine", Edwards takes his text from Mt. 6:17 but the "scriptural" ground which he cites is largely from the writings of John and Paul. Only

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1. Vol. III, p. 114.

two other quotations are made from the New Testament and two from the Old Testament as compared to the fourteen cited from John and Paul.

In this sermon Edwards states that God and God only can impart this light and that he imparts it immediately to the soul. Such a gift to man is an evidence of his being greatly blessed. It shows how peculiarly favored man is in thus being made the object of such distinguishing love. Man should ever rejoice in that he thus possesses what God alone can impart. In a sense, God is the author of all light and knowledge but this spiritual light is unique and comes direct from God without any intermediary. For this reason it is in the reach of all. The poor and the rich, the ignorant and the learned, can hope to possess it.

This divine light is not a possession of the natural man and so should not be confused with such light as the natural man may possess. The natural man may have a conviction of his guilt and a fear of punishment and yet entirely lack that sense of divine beauty which this light imparts. This light may be said to assist the conscience of the natural man in his moral distinctions, but to the soul which is reborn, it imparts a new principle. Again, in its action upon the natural man this light is only an occasional, extrinsic agent. It does not unite itself to the soul. In the soul of the saint it acts as a vital, indwelling principle. This light is so communicated that its nature becomes the soul's nature. It cannot be regarded as a mere impression upon the imagination.

Indeed the impression which it makes upon the imagination may result in a sense of outward beauty and brightness which accompany the ecstasy but the ecstasy is only incidental to the spiritual life and not an essential. This light is not the suggestion of new truths and doctrines not found in the Word of God.¹ It is not inspiration in that it suggests new truths to the mind independent to former revelations in the Bible. Rather does it give a due apprehension of those things already revealed in the Scripture. Nor again is this divine light an affecting view that a natural man may have of the things of religion. For a natural man may be greatly affected by a recital of the sufferings of Christ and yet his life may remain as unchanged as if he were merely affected by a fairy tale. God alone can give this saving grace.

The nature of this divine light, then, may be defined positively as "a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the Word and a conviction of the reality of these revelations". Principally it consists of the former of these yet the conviction of the reality of such things is the natural result of such an insight into the Truth.²

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1. Edwards shows here, and in other places, a lack of sympathy and even hostility to the doctrine of the "Inner Light" as held by the Quakers. This hostility appears to be based largely upon the fact that he felt that this doctrine led to a neglect of the Scripture. Although he thus expresses his hostility, yet his doctrine of the Divine Light follows closely the essentials of this doctrine of the Inner Light. For a discussion of this point see Allen, Jonathan Edwards, pp. 70, 178. See also Vol. III, p. 288 for Edwards' view of the Quakers.
2. Vol. IV, p. 441.

Since this light is immediately received from God, it follows that man is directly dependent upon God for all of his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, I Cor. 1:29, 31. He also owes to it his ability to appreciate the gift of Christ, Eph. 2:8, and the means of grace placed at his disposal, II Cor. 4:7¹. Such wisdom, moreover, which is received through this light is the true wisdom for which a man can afford to become a "fool" to obtain, I Cor. 3:18, 8:2².

This light in the soul is so much the immediate effect of God's power that it is fitly compared in the Scripture to regeneration, to a being begotten, a resurrection, a new creation, a being brought out of nothing into being, and a glorification of the mighty power of God, Eph. 1:17, 29. Since this work is of God, it manifests his power in a special way and leaves no excuse for any glorying in the flesh, I Cor. 1:27-29, because the excellency of this power is of God and not of man, II Cor. 4:7. It manifests Christ's power in man's weakness, II Cor. 12:9. In Eph. 1:18, 19, the Apostle Paul sums up this thought when he speaks of God sending light into the mind of the believer in order that he might know by experience the greatness of God's power.³

Gracious affections all arise from the operation and influence of this divine light. This fact furnishes an adequate explanation of the fact that true grace is possessed of such activity,

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1. Vol. IV, p. 171
2. Vol. IV, p. 35.
3. Vol. IV, pp. 29-30.

power and efficacy. The reason is that it is the work of the divine light. For if God dwells in the heart and is united to it in a vital manner, the efficacy of his operation will show that he is God. Thus every saint that has this indwelling light, is made to know the power of God by experience. So this light, which is the "immediate spring of grace in the heart", is the source of all power, all life and all gracious affections, I Cor. 2:4, I Thes. 1:5, I Cor. 4:20, II Cor. 10:5. This fact explains the nature of true godliness, about which Paul writes, and the power of a godly life, II Tim. 3:5.¹

There is a difference in the knowledge which is derived from this divine light and that knowledge which is derived through the reasoning power of man. The former imparts a conception of the reality of God which the latter cannot do. There is a divine and superlative beauty in all things which is only visible to the eyes of the reborn man. This difference is comparable to the difference between a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former without having any idea as to how honey tastes. But he cannot have the latter, who has not tasted the honey for himself, and so, has the

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1. Vol. III, p. 186. In commenting upon the prominence of this doctrine of the divine light in Edwards, Dr. Allen remarks on p. 388 of his book: "All who accept the truth, that divine things are known to be divine because humanity is endowed with the gift of direct vision into divinity, are accepting what Edwards proclaimed, what constitutes the positive feature of his theology."

idea of its taste in his mind. Just so, the heart, in which this divine light dwells, has a taste or experience of the beauty of divine things, and so, can appreciate them.¹

The divine light imparts the power to appreciate holiness. This new supernatural sense prompts the saint to love the Word of God because it is very pure.² On account of it heaven is lovely to the saint because it is the holy tabernacle of God. For this reason also he loves Christ and is glad to acquiesce in his way of salvation. The divine light alone can perceive the beauty of holiness. This beauty is, in fact, the quality which is the immediate object of this spiritual sense. It is thus that it is represented in Scripture as in John 14:32, 34, Rev. 4:8.³

The divine light is an immortal seed that has in it the possibilities of eternal life begun. Through it the saint in partaking of the fullness of Christ partakes also of God, John 1:16, Eph. 3:18, 19, 1 John 1:3. The blessings procured through this seed is the most precious purchase of the blood of Christ. It marks the dawning of the light of glory in the heart of the saint. It is that water of life which Christ gives and which becomes within the soul of him who drinks of it, a well of living water, John 4:14. It has its origin in heaven and so is of a heavenly nature and tends towards heaven. It is an earnest of the Spirit that those who possess it, although they may suffer many hardships and

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1. Vol. IV, p. 441.

2. Cf. Vol. III, p. 124.

3. Vol. III, p. 104.

disappointments, yet, in the end, they "shall be transformed into a bright and pure flame, and they shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."¹

Without this heavenly seed within their souls, men cannot remain constant and persevere in any religious duty. The stream which has not its source in some unfailing spring will dry up. It may run plentifully in the Spring but when the heat of Summer and the burning drought arrives, it will disappear. Just so, without this heavenly seed within their hearts, men may for a season converse of their experiences of God's presence and of their appreciation of his beauty, yet in the end their deeds will betray them and their real life will be found to be corrupt.²

The Scripture often represents the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of the saint as this seed; and not only as influencing him occasionally, but as dwelling within the saint as his proper abode. This is found to be the case in such passages as I Cor. 3:16, II Cor. 6:16, John 14:16, 17. It is thus that the saints are said to live by Christ living in them, Gal. 2:20. They not only partake of him but he is ever present within their souls, John 4:14. This living water within, John himself calls the Spirit of God, John 7:38, 39. The divine light not only shines upon the saints; but, is so communicated to them, that they shine as little suns, and so become little images of God. The life-giving sap of

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1. Vol. IV, p. 472.
2. Vol. IV, p. 482.

the true vine is not conveyed into them as sap may be conveyed into a vessel, but is conveyed as sap is conveyed from a vine into its branches - "where it is a principle of life, John 16".
So this seed is divine because it is of the Holy Spirit.¹

As divine light developes, the saint is graciously affected, for he is ever learning something new of divine things. Some new vision of the beauty and excellency of God is constantly recurring to him in a fresh manner, I John 4:7, Phil. 1:9, Rom. 10:2, Col. 3:10, John 6:45.²

The divine light may again be said to be an infusion of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the saint. This infusion is a new principle in the heart and creates in the believer a new spiritual nature. It is vastly more noble and excellent than any-

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1. Vol. III, p. 68.

In his diary Edwards dwells at length upon this divine light, which he identifies often with the Holy Spirit. In its power to impart this higher sense of immediate awareness of God, he writes: "I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of sanctifier; in his holy operations, communicating divine life and light to the soul. God, in the communication of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life. And I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the Word of God, as the word of life; as the light of life; a sweet, excellent, life-giving word; accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in my heart." (Vol. I, p. 22) (The vocabulary of this and other sections of this diary reflect the influence of John as well as a strong mystical trend.)

2. Vol. III, p. 104.

thing that is in the natural man.¹ For this reason it can be said that the natural man can have no more sense or experience of divine things than a man, who is born blind, can have a sense or experience of color, I Cor. 2:14.²

This light within the saint differs not only in quantity but in quality from the light which the natural man possesses, or of anything which can be found in the natural man. It differs in that it is a direct work of God wrought in the soul of the believer, Rom. 8:28-30, I Thes. 5:23, 24. The Apostle Paul describes this gift of the divine light as a new creation, and as a resurrection from the dead, I Cor. 15:51, 52. It can be compared to Christ's command to the man at the pool of Bethesda; he was immediately made whole when he received Christ's command to arise and take up his bed and walk, John 5:8, 9. The natural man is said to be dead and when he is converted he is raised from the dead by God's power, John 5:25. The natural man may even go far into the things of religion but without this divine light he has no love natural to his heart as is seen in I Cor. 13. That this divine light is peculiar to the saint and so absent in the heart of the wicked is evidenced also in such scriptural passages as I John 3:9, 3:24,

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1. With Edwards the natural man is the unregenerate man. He has within him none of this divine light of God and so can appreciate none of the beauty of spiritual things. Man only becomes spiritual, i.e., of the Holy Spirit, at his second birth or the advent of the divine light into his soul. This is one of the phases of Edwards' doctrine of divine sovereignty that has brought upon him so much adverse criticism. For a discussion of this point see Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 101.
2. Vol. III, p. 72.

4:13, Rom. 8:9, I Cor. 1:22, 5:5, Eph. 1:14. Since the natural man has none of this divine seed within him it follows, as a matter of course, that he has none of the fruits of the Spirit as listed in Gal. 5:22. The man who has not been born again has nothing of that grace possessed by the godly man, John 3:6; - by flesh, is here meant the natural man and by spirit, is meant grace or divine light, as is evidenced by Gal. 5:16, 17, 6:8, I Cor. 3:1, Rom. 8:7. The natural man has no degree of enjoyment of spiritual things which the godly man has, I Cor. 2:14. The reason for this is again evidenced by his lack of the indwelling Spirit, I Cor. 2:10, 12, I John 2:27. This lack shuts him off from that sweet communion with God enjoyed by the Saint, John 1:16, because he is not united to Christ, I Cor. 15:22, Phil. 3:8, 9, II Cor. 5:17, I John 2:5, 3:24, 4:13. Only the true saints enjoy this communion with God in their union with Christ I John 1:3-7, I Cor. 1:8, 9. The natural man, before his spiritual rebirth, is capable of no good work or actual union with Christ, Rom. 7:4. Those who prove to be apostates never have experienced this divine light as is confirmed by Christ in the case of Judas, John 6:64, 70, 71.¹

Moreover, since God is the author of the divine light or infusion of the Spirit, he will not suffer his image in the soul to be destroyed by the forces of evil. It is wholly his work and he will not suffer one of his undertakings to be destroyed nor will he forsake the work of his own hands, I Cor. 13:7. When the

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1. Vol. II, pp. 591-6.

Spirit of God was given to man the first time it was lost, but when God gives it the second time it can never be entirely lost again. Man has a definite right in the Spirit of God which was assured to him in the new covenant and which he can never lose, Eph. 2:6. The saints were not partakers of Christ at the first gift of the Spirit but under the new covenant they are made partakers with Christ in his resurrection, Col. 2:12, 13, and so have been quickened with him from the dead, Col. 3:1, Eph. 2:5,6, Rom. 5:10, Phil. 3:10, 11, Rom. 6:4, 5, Rom. 6 and 7. They have thus been begotten to an eternal hope in Christ which assures to them an incorruptible inheritance, Eph. 1:18-21, Rev. 1:18, John 6:50, 51, Col. 3:4. Should this divine light in the soul not be permanent, then God's plan for the salvation of men would fail, John 18:8,9; 17:6-8, 11, 10:27-28, 15:4, 5, 7, 9, Rom. 11:22, I. Thes. 3:8, Phil. 4:1, I J. 2:24, I Cor. 15:2, II Tim. 4:7-8.¹

The saint rightly values this image of God in his soul more highly than any other possession. It is more precious to him than silver and gold. He values it as he values Christ and God.² This image of God is the distinguishing characteristic of the saint. Satan once possessed it but lost it. Since he is now without it he is the greatest sinner, the father of all sin, John 8:44, I J. 3:8. The saints are urged in the Scripture to guard this image against Satan, I J. 2:13, 3:12, 5:18, Eph. 6:12.³

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1. Vol. III, p. 520. Edwards uses this doctrine here listed in building up his scriptural argument for the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints.
2. Vol. IV, p. 544
3. Vol. IV, p. 452.

The divine light gives an immediate sight or experience of God. It gives to the soul the power to immediately perceive the difference between good and evil without the employment of reasoning. Just as the trained artist immediately appreciates beauty, or the trained musician knows true harmony, so does he, who possesses this divine light, immediately perceive the beauty of spiritual things, Rom. 12:2. Also since he has this image of God within him the saint has a true sense of the value of things. He holds everything in its proper proportion. He has put off the old man and has put on the new, entire in all his parts and members. The fullness and grace of Christ are in him. For "there is symmetry and beauty in God's workmanship".¹ As a result also of this immediate light of divine things, the saint beholds the transcendent glory of God and Christ. He becomes at once convinced of the reality of the Truth. He so partakes of the Spirit of Christ that he performs graciously all of the duties of the second table of the law as the Apostle Paul points out, Rom. 13:8-10, Gal. 5:14.

"If we have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, we shall have Christ himself thereby living in us, and then we shall undoubtedly live like him. If that fountain of light dwells richly in us, we shall shine like him, and so shall be burning and shining lights."²

The impartation of this divine light is appropriated to the second person of the Trinity as his sole prerogative,

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1. Vol. III, p. 172.
2. Vol. III, p. 602.

II Cor. 4:6. This clearly reveals that there is a revelation to man of the superlative glory of God in Christ. Also that it is as immediately from God as light is from the sun. It is comparable to God's creation of light at the first creation. Through the impartation of this divine light were revealed things long hidden from man, Gal. 1:15, 16 and in this revealed wisdom of God man arrives at a true and saving belief of the things of religion, John 6:40. For it is made plain in Scripture that a true faith is that which arises from a spiritual experience of Christ, John 17:6-8. So we read that when the disciples perceived the reality of God in Christ they recognized the fact that the Truth was in Christ and that he was sent from God, John 12:44-46.¹

This divine light is the sum of the work of redemption. It is the seal of the Spirit which is called God's earnest of the saints salvation. It not only witnesseth to the Spirit but it imparts a saving knowledge of the reality of spiritual things, II Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, 14, 4:13, Rev. 2:17. It not only declares and asserts a thing to be true but furnishes in itself evidence of this truth, John 5:36, I J. 5:8. So when the Scriptures speak of the seal of the Spirit, or the divine light, they refer to a work of the Spirit which has left a divine mark on the soul which distinguishes the children of light, Rev. 7:3. Thus the inheritance which Christ purchased for the saint is the Spirit of God in the soul or the divine light. This light, moreover, is

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1. Vol. IV, pp. 445-446.

not an occasional or extraordinary gift but rather is the Spirit's vitalizing indwelling in the heart and there working and communicating himself in his own divine nature:

"For so are things constituted in the affair of our redemption, that the Father provides the Saviour or purchaser, and the purchase is made of him; and the Son is the purchaser and the price; and the Holy Spirit is the great blessing or inheritance purchased, as is intimated in Gal. 3:13, 14, Eph. 1:13."

This inheritance, then, of the divine light is the great legacy which Christ left to his followers, John 14, 15, 16. It is the sum of the blessings of eternal life, John 7:37-39, 4:14, Rev. 21:6, 22:17. It is to this vital communication that the saints owe all of their joy, holiness, salvation, etc., which they shall enjoy in the fullest measure in heaven, Rom. 8:22.¹

This divine light should not be confused with any immediate revelation or inspiration which makes known to the believer the mind of the Spirit or something not taught in the Bible. In this respect it does not imply more than the gift of prophecy of which Paul writes in I Cor. 14:14, 26. The divine light is a greater gift than inspiration. Balaam was inspired for the moment to speak the oracles of God but he was lacking in those qualities which are born of the indwelling Spirit. The divine light is rather a gracious gift of the Holy Spirit which reveals a far superior way of progress in the Christian graces. The Apostle Paul so represents it in I Cor. 12:31, 13:1, Rom. 8:14, Gal. 5:18.²

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1. Vol. III, p. 90
2. Vol. III, pp. 117; I, 30.

The presence of the divine light in the soul of the saint is indicated by its tendency. It has a tendency which is the opposite of that of false pride. False pride and false experience are puffed up; their whole tendency is towards selfishness, even in the exercising of themselves in matters of religion. On the other hand, a true experience of the beauty and amiableness of God nourishes no self-conceit or self-exaltation. False pride was in a peculiar manner the sin of Satan, I Tim. 3:6. It is directly opposed to those characteristics of the saints referred to in Rom. 12:16 and Phil. 2:13. The divine light alone reveals God's beauty to the soul and by this same act reveals to the soul its own deformity and so inclines it to exalt God and abase itself.¹

This divine light also has a tendency to destroy Satan's work. It does this in its tendency to cause the soul to hate evil and all of the works connected with it, and so to have no fellowship with darkness, I J. 1:6, 7. This hatred of evil is a distinguishing mark of the reborn man, I J. 3:18, 19. This experience of divine things is of great power in its testimony to the consciences of men. Although the natural man may hate the light, yet there is a witness in his conscience in its favor, Rom. 14:17, 18. This prevailing of true experience ever tends to the honor of religion in the world even though it may provoke persecution. The more that it appears in the world, just that much more will it honor its possessor and its author, Phil. 1:11.²

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1. Vol. IV, p. 470.

2. Vol. IV, p. 472.

3. Edwards' Treatment of the Fruit as Work of the Divine Light.

The divine light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, makes of it a new creature. Edwards dwells upon this thought with a great deal of satisfaction in his account of the life of his friend, the Reverend David Brainerd. He saw in the life of Mr. Brainerd an ideal type of Christian. Edwards tells us that at the time of his friend's conversion a great and abiding change was wrought in his life. By this experience he became a new creature, with a changed nature, and with a new principle infused in his soul. Through this new power within him Brainerd had

"a manifestation of God's glory, and the beauty of his nature as supremely excellent in itself; powerfully drawing, and sweetly captivating his heart, bringing him to a hearty desire to exalt God. . . and also to a new sense of the infinite wisdom, suitableness and excellency of the way of salvation by Christ".¹

The possession of this divine light in the soul means much more than Christian profession or privileges as is evidenced by I J. 2:3 ff.; 3:3, 14; 4:12; 5:1, 18; 3:1; John 1:12. This light in the soul of the believer makes him a child of God. It opens to him a way of life that is higher than any extraordinary gifts, such as inspiration or special revelations as mentioned above. Paul speaks of this in I Cor. 12:31. This sanctifying influence of the divine light is in fact the end towards which all special spiritual gifts tend as indicated in Eph. 4:11-13. All other spiritual gifts are good only so far as they go towards pro-

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1. Vol. I, p. 658.

moting this end.¹ For this reason the redeemed are spoken of as children of God, "who is the Father of lights and, as it were, a boundless fountain of infinitely pure and white light", I J. 1:5; John 1:9.² This divine light is God's seal or mark or stamp, by which those who bear his image may be known.³

The divine light distinguishes the saint from the ungodly. The difference lies in the fact that the saint has an appreciation of God which comes from "seeing" him and so knowing him at first hand. Such knowledge is not a speculative knowledge, which the ungodly may possess, but it is a knowledge which comes by experience alone. Such knowledge possessed by the saint differs not only in degree, circumstances, and effect, but is also entirely different in nature and in kind. Saint John declares this in John 14:19; 17:3; I J. 3:6; 3J. 11.⁴

The difference between the saint and the ungodly is most marked in this difference of experience. The ungodly lack all sense and apprehension of the supreme holiness of God and of all divine things as they exist in their own nature. The ungodly may indeed have an idea of God's wrath, righteousness and justice but not of his holiness, beauty and love. This is foreign to his nature since he does not possess the divine light, which is the foundation of everything that is distinguishing in the experience

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1. Vol. I, p. 557.
2. Vol. III, p. 583.
3. Vol. IV, p. 452.
4. Vol. III, p. 269.

of the true Christian. This foundation is plainly set forth in the Scripture as necessary as is evidenced by II Cor. 4:3-6. For he that has his eyes open to the superlative beauty of Christ is immediately convinced that he is divine and that his work is of God. When he thus "sees" he may be said to have a saving faith, John 6:40; 18:6-8; Gal. 1:15, 16. And it is this sight of the beauty and holiness of Christ that calls forth the surrendered will and draws all men unto him. This sense of the beauty of Christ may be said to be the first thing in the experience of conversion and is fundamental to everything else as is evidenced by such scriptural passages as II Cor. 3:18; John 17:3; I J. 1:5.¹

A spiritual man, as this term is used in the Scriptures, is the man in whom dwells the divine light or Spirit. His being spiritual is spoken of as a peculiar characteristic and that which distinguishes him from the world. Thus the spiritual man and the carnal man are set in opposition one to another in the Scriptures, I Cor. 2:14, 15; Rom. 7:25; 8:1, 4-9, 12, 13; Gal. 5:16, 6:1; Col. 2:18. As the saints are called spiritual in the Scripture so are the qualities, belonging to the saints, so designated; Rom. 8:6, 7; Col. 1:9, Eph. 1:3. It should be noted that the

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1. Vol. IV, pp. 469, 456.

Again in his introduction to the treatise on Religious Affections, Edwards writes: "The consideration of these things has long engaged me to attend to this matter, with the utmost diligence and care, and exactness of search and enquiry, that I have been capable of. It is a subject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever since I first entered on the study of divinity". (Vol. III, Introduction, p. IX.)

saints are thus called spiritual in the New Testament because of their relationship to the Spirit of God. Spirit is the substantive of which the adjective spiritual is derived. So true Christians are called spiritual because they are born of the Spirit and have the influence of the divine light in their souls. This same is true also of things as seen in Rom. 8:6, 9; Col. 1:9; II Cor. 2:14.¹

In this sense, then, it can be said that the true saints alone can be described as spiritual. The natural man has nothing of the divine since he is destitute of this spiritual light. Christ himself teaches the necessity of a rebirth or a being born of the Spirit. From this we learn that he that is born of the flesh has nothing but the flesh and no Spirit, John 3:6. The Apostle Paul also teaches that the natural man has nothing of the Spirit of God dwelling in him, Rom. 8:9-11. But having the Spirit of God is often spoken of as a seal or pledge of eternal life, II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14; I J. 4:3. Since the natural man knows nothing of the Spirit, any discussion of spiritual things appears to him as foolishness, I Cor. 2:14; John 14:17. Even though the natural man may indulge in the practice of religion yet he still remains a stranger to spiritual things, I Cor. 13, John 5:42; I J. 1:3, 6, 7; I Cor. 1:8, 9. The possession of this gracious light in the soul of a man makes the practice of sin inconsistent with his new nature, I J. 3:9.²

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1. Vol. III, p. 67.
2. Vol. III, p. 70.

Thus it becomes evident that the saint has an insight into and an understanding of divine things of which the natural man is ignorant. The Apostle Paul writes of this in I Cor. 2:14; certainly it is this peculiar understanding possessed by the saints that is spoken of by John in I J. 3:6; III J. 11; John 6:40, 14:19, 17:3, Phil. 3:8, Col. 1:9. In summarizing his treatment of this phase of the divine light Edwards writes:

"From hence it may be surely inferred wherein spiritual understanding consists. For if there be in the saints a kind of apprehension or perception, which is in its nature perfectly diverse from all that natural men have, or that it is possible that they should have, until they have a new nature; it must consist in their having a certain kind of ideas or sensations of mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the same thing as to say, that it consists in the sensations of a new spiritual sense, which the souls of natural men have not, as is evident by what has been before, once and again observed."¹

So the Apostle John well speaks of this divine light as an unction of the Holy One which illumines the souls of the saints, I J. 2:20; compare also Rom. 2:20, II Cor. 2:14.

The divine light is best evidenced by its fruit. When present within the heart of the saint, it makes of him a new creature not only within but without. He has a new heart and a new attitude towards God. This is illustrated in Christ's conversation with Nicodemus in which he tells him that he must be born again, John 3. It brings about a change of mind in which a saving faith is attained, John 1:12, 13; the reception of this divine light in the Scripture is connected with baptism, John 3:5,

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1. Vol. III, p. 111.

Titus 3:5. Paul characterizes it as a circumcision of the heart, Rom. 2:28, 29, which signifies the putting off of the body of sin and flesh, Col. 2:11, 13, Rom. 6:3-5, 11. The resurrection from the dead with Christ, Col. 1:18, Rev. 1:5, is the same thing as being born again.¹

This evidence of grace in the heart of the believer is the only sure sign of his changed nature. This is the only evidence that Christ gave as a test of true discipleship in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John; and of which the Apostle Paul speaks often as the proper evidence of true Christianity, as in Gal. 5:22-25, Col. 3:12, 13, I Cor. 13, where he insists upon the fruits of the Spirit. This is also a common note in the writings of John and especially so in his epistles.² Again in his treatise on Marks of the Work of the True Spirit, Edwards dwells at length upon this evidence of the fruits of the divine light. He takes for the text for this treatise I J. 4:1 and finds in this chapter abundant evidence for his statements listed above. Of this chapter he writes:

"I shall confine myself wholly to those marks which are given us by the apostle in the chapter wherein is my text, where this matter is particularly and more plainly and fully than anywhere else in the Bible. And in speaking to these marks, I shall take them in the order in which I find them in the chapter."³

From this chapter he discovers that the divine light is distinguished by the fact that it confirms and establishes

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1. Vol. II, pp. 467-9.
2. Vol. IV, p. 461.
3. Vol. I, p. 539.

the truth of Christ and the validity of his work as the mediator, I J. 4:2, 3, 15, also Rom. 15:9, Phil. 2:11, I Cor. 12:3. This light also causes in man a greater love for and reverence for the Scriptures and establishes him in his conviction of their divine origin, I J. 4:6, Eph. 2:20, 5:13. Another fruit of this light is that it operates in the spirit of love, I J. 4:12, 13, 17-19. This fruit is the most eminent of all of the fruits of the Spirit and for this reason the sacred writers most widely insist upon it. If then one finds, that a man's actions demonstrate his belief that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is the Savior of the world; that the holy Scriptures are the word of God and able to give a true account of him; and if he shows a spirit of divine love and Christian humility; if he shows these things in his life, then it may be safely assumed that that man has become a partaker of divine light and so has experienced the new birth.¹

Humility, meekness, love, forgiveness and mercy are spoken of in the Scriptures as the fruit of the divine light or Spirit. These terms are also used in describing the character of Christ himself. Such characteristics of Christ can properly be ascribed to true Christians in as much as they are Christlike and partake of his nature through this indwelling divine light. Thus Paul writes of the new man being renewed after the image of Christ, Col. 3:10, II Cor. 3:18, and that the elect are predestined to be conformed to his image, Rom. 8:29. As they have borne the image

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1. Vol. I, p. 543.

of the earthly, so will they bear the image of the heavenly, I Cor. 15:47-49. This same thing is meant when John speaks of Christ as being full of grace and that Christians receive of his fullness, grace for grace.¹

The work of the divine light leads to Christian practice. This expresses itself first of all in obedience, I J. 3:3, 5:18; John 15:14. This obedience is exemplified in zeal for the cause of religion. It becomes the "main business" of the Christian's life, Titus 2:14, Phil. 3:3. In prosecuting this zeal he puts on the whole armor of God; he forgets those things that are behind and presses forward in obedience to the divine command in order to obtain the prize. Such obedience must continue until the end of life.² We quote here one of Edwards' characteristic summaries which reflects at the same time his mystical theology and the Johannine and Pauline influences:

"The reason of it appears from this, that gracious affections do arise from those operations and influences which are spiritual, and that the inward principle from whence they flow, is something divine, a communication from God, a participation of the divine nature, Christ living in the heart, the Holy Spirit dwelling there, in union with the faculties of the soul, as an internal, vital principle, exerting his own power and nature, in the exercise of those faculties. This is sufficient to show us why true grace should have such activity, power and efficacy. No wonder that which is divine is powerful and effectual; for it has omnipotence on its side. If God dwells in the heart, and be vitally united to it, he will show that he is a God, by the efficacy

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1. Vol. III, pp. 159-60.
2. Scriptural references listed by Edwards here are: John 8:30, 51, 15:6-8, 10, 16; Rom. 2:7, 11:22; Col. 1:22, 23; II Tim. 2:15, 4:4-8; Rev. 2:13, 26, 2:10.

of his operation. Christ is not in the heart of a saint, as in a sepulcher, or as a dead Saviour, that does nothing; but as in his temple, and as one who is alive from the dead. For in the heart where Christ savingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the power of that endless life that he received at his resurrection. Thus every saint that is a subject of the benefit of Christ's sufferings, is made to know and experience the power of his resurrection. The Spirit of Christ, which is the immediate spring of grace in the heart, is all life, all power, all act, I Cor. 2:4, I Thes. 1:5, I Cor. 4:20, II Cor. 10:5. . . . Herein chiefly appears the power of true godliness, viz., in its being effectual in practice, II Tim. 3:5."¹

The work of this divine light within the soul is progressive. In his life of Rev. David Brainerd, Edwards emphasizes the fact that the impartation of the divine light to his soul in conversion was by no means the end of the work of the Spirit in his heart. On the contrary, it was just the beginning of the work of grace. It was just the beginning of a long series of experiences in spiritual discoveries of the limitless riches of God. He compares it to the dawning light of the sun that later in the day floods the earth with its brightness.² Every new discovery in the spiritual world tends towards a greater illumination of the soul and a transformation of the life. There is a divine power and energy in each new experience to affect and alter the nature of the soul. This gradual transformation continues until the end of life - until the soul is perfected in union with God. Paul speaks of this as a renewing of the mind or a quickening of the dead, Rom. 12:1,2, Eph. 1:1, 16. Thus every true Christian

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1. Vol. III, p. 186.

2. Vol. I, p. 657.

should constantly strive to put off the old man and put on the new,
Eph. 4:22-24.¹

This divine light removes prejudices against the divine Truth. The natural man has an enmity towards the truth of the gospel. Without the divine light the appeal of the gospel will fall upon deaf ears. However, when a person, with an enlightened soul, discovers the excellency of the gospel, then these prejudices are destroyed and the mind is open to the divine truth. This is illustrated in the different effects which the miracles of Christ produced in the disciples and in the Pharisees. The disciples did not have stronger reasoning powers; most likely they were not as well educated as the Pharisees. But rather had the disciples received this divine light which had removed their natural prejudices and so enabled their minds to be open and sympathetic to the truth. This does not mean, however, that the divine light destroys or sets aside the reason but rather does it enhance the powers of the reason. The faculties of the mind under its influence are more awake and exert themselves more effectively to their purpose. In this way the reason is more capable of asserting itself and arriving at the Truth, free of darkness and delusion.² There is a beauty in Truth that is so transcendent that when seen will gain immediate assent to its divine reality. When it is thus viewed through this divine light there is no place for any thought that would attribute such Truth to any human origin.

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1. Vol. III, p. 158

2. Vol. IV, p. 443.

This is a part of the Sermon on Spiritual Light referred to on p. 31.

"At such times the people of God do not need any help of ministers to satisfy them whether they have the true love of God; they plainly see and feel it; and the Spirit of God then witnesseth with their spirits, that they are the children of God."¹

This divine light alone can bring to the heart this conviction of the truth of religion. Tradition and education can never alone confirm the mind in a satisfying and effectual belief in the reality of the truths of religion. When this conviction of reality is brought, through the divine light, to the consciousness of a man it will inevitably affect his whole future life and conduct.²

The true spirit of prayer is the result of this divine light dwelling within the soul of the saint. Since this light comes from God it is natural to suppose that it has a strong tendency and desire to return to God. In this way it is said that the Spirit makes intercession for the saints with strong groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. 8:26. To a certain extent this divine light may be said to inspire the prayers of the saints and they are thus said to worship God in the Spirit, Phil. 3:3, John 4:23. Thus "prayer is as natural to the reborn soul as breathing is to the nature and life of the body."³

This divine light reflects the goodness of God. It is of such a nature that it changes the very quality of the soul and so effectually influences all its inclinations for good. It assimilates the nature of the soul into the divine nature of God as is evidenced by Paul in II Cor. 3:18.

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1. Vol. IV, p. 547.
2. Vol. IV, p. 344.
3. Vol. IV, p. 447.

4. Edwards' Treatment of the Mystery of the Divine Light.

In a treatise upon Ephesians 3:10, Edwards finds in this divine light the mystery about which Saint Paul writes. It is that which was not understood in former ages but which was brought to light in a glorious manner by Christ. It had been intimated to the angels but was above their power of comprehension. They had witnessed God's work and wisdom in the creation but his wisdom shown in the revelation of this mystery was the greatest of all, Rom. 11:33, I Tim. 3:16.¹

The Word becoming flesh in the incarnation, Edwards declares to be beyond the comprehension of man. He deals at length in his descriptions of its wonder and glory and its meaning in the life of mankind. This plan of God in bringing divine light to man sets at naught and throws contempt upon all earthly wisdom that seeks power and show for itself. The natural man, if he had had this way proposed to him, would have condemned it as foolish and unworthy of Christ, I Cor. 1:25, 2:6.²

The wonders of the incarnated Word are great and there is nothing within the range of human knowledge to compare with it. It exceedingly magnifies the power of God. If God can do this there is nothing that he cannot do. It is a greater and more marvelous work than that of creation. God's power appears most gloriously in man's being redeemed in this manner; in his being

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1. Vol. IV, p. 133.

2. Vol. IV, pp. 134-68.

changed from a sinful nature to a nature that loves and appreciates the beauty and holiness of God. In this work was overcome man's most powerful enemy, Satan, Col. 2:15.¹

The work of the incarnation also greatly glorifies the justice of God. He gave his Son to die on the cross in order to bring about a remedy for sin. In this way only could man's peace be obtained. This work also greatly magnifies the mercy of God and his all surpassing love. For while men were yet sinners he gave his Son for them and so purchased for them immortal glory, Gal. 3:13, 14.¹

The blessedness of the saint, then, consists in his partaking of Christ's fullness. This fullness consists in divine light revealed by Christ and placed at the disposal of the saint. It is given, not by measure, but freely to those who believe. This is the mystery of the ages which in the fullness of time was revealed to man through the incarnated Word:

"How affecting the thought, that infinite wisdom should be set on work, so as to surprise the angels, and to entertain them from age to age; - and that to men, though so plainly set before them, it should appear foolishness! I Cor. 1:18, 'The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.'"²

5. Edwards' Treatment of the Uniqueness of the Divine Light.

The indwelling light is the only thing that will satisfy the human soul in its longing for God. It is the only power that

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1. Vol. IV, pp. 134-68.
2. Vol. IV, p. 161.

can enable the soul to come into a "saving close" with God. As stated above it constitutes the fundamental difference between the natural man and the spiritual man. It is also the foundation of everything that is distinctive in the true Christian experience; it is the basis of that "sense of the divine beauty and amiableness" of the gospel upon which Edwards so fondly dwells. It is that which savingly convinces the soul that it is divine and comes from God, II Cor. 4:3, 4, 6. From such passages it is evident that such a saving belief is represented in the gospel as arising from the divine beauty of the things it sets forth. He that sees Christ thus is convinced of his sufficiency to save unto the uttermost. He sees how Christ can be thought to be worthy by God to be accepted for the sinner and an adequate compensation for the greatest sins. Thus this light

"satisfies the poor guilty soul and gives it rest; when the finest and most elaborate discourses about the sufficiency of Christ, and suitableness of the way of salvation, would not do it. When a man then comes to see the proper foundation of faith and affiance with his own eyes, then he believes savingly, John 6:40, 17:6,7,8 This sense of divine beauty is the first thing in the actual change made in the soul in true conversion, and is the foundation of everything else belonging to that change, as is evident in the words of the apostle, II Cor. 3:18."¹

In his treatise on Religious Affections, Edwards lists four ways in which this divine light is soul satisfying. These ways are as follows: first, it is so adapted to the needs of the soul, its nature, its capacity, etc., that the soul desires no

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1. Vol. IV, pp. 469-70.

other kind of enjoyment: secondly, it answers the expectation of the appetite; this expectation is not satisfied by worldly enjoyments which never bring true happiness; thirdly, it satisfies the soul in that it is permanent; this is far from being the case with any worldly knowledge: lastly, it is satisfying because its resources are inexhaustible; "There is room enough here for the soul to extend itself; here is an infinite ocean of it."¹

This divine light is the only thing that will give assurance. In what might be called his last will and testament, Christ declares his special and everlasting love to his disciples and promises to them a future participation with him in his glory in a most positive manner, John 14, 15, 16. He also states to them that he does this in order that their joy might be full, John 15:11, 16:33. In his great prayer he speaks of the eleven disciples as having believed in him and for this reason that they would be with him in his glory, John 17. The Apostle Paul throughout his epistles speaks of this assurance. He writes of his special relationship to Christ as his redeemer and of his firm expectation of a future reward; among such passages might be cited Gal. 2:20, Phil. 1:21, II Tim. 1:12, 4:7, 8, etc.²

This divine light is the only hope for mankind. No instance has been known of any people who have fallen into ignorance and vice who have been redeemed by any wisdom of their own. The

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1. Vol. III, p. 179.

2. Vol. III, p. 181.

heathen world before the coming of Christ had been in darkness for centuries. They continued for ages and ages to grow worse and there was no remedy discovered by them. Some of these nations, like the Greek and the Romans, did emerge out of slavery and cast off the yoke of their enemies, but "they never conquered the blindness of their own lusts". They excelled in art, government and culture, yet never were they able to deliver themselves from heathenism. They illustrate the fact that power, reason and culture are of little avail against the spiritual blindness of the human soul. "If God lets men alone, no light arises: but the darkness grows thicker and thicker". The only hope for man lies in this divine light which is able to shine into the darkness of the heart and which alone can bring life and immortality to light through the gospel.¹

To sin against such a light is an especially heinous sin. For the abuse of this light men are judicially given up by God to the blindness of their own minds, Rom. 11:7, II Cor. 3:14, II Cor. 4:3,4. Such judgment when inflicted is commonly for the abuse of this light. Unbelief and sin in the face of this light incurs greater guilt because they can in no sense be excused by ignorance, John 9:41.²

A deliberate unbelief in the face of this divine light is especially heinous in that it reckons as of no value all of

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1. Vol. IV, p. 24.
2. Vol. IV, p. 33.

the beauty and excellency of Christ. This is done even though this glory of Christ is infinite, even though it be the glory of God himself, which has been so clearly manifested in what Christ has done and suffered. In his unbelief, the natural man casts contempt upon it and treads it under his foot as a thing of no value. In this lays the greatness of such a sin, John 3:18, 16:9, I J. 5:10.¹

C. Summary of the Chapter.

One of the outstanding doctrines of the mystical system of theology, if not the outstanding doctrine, is that of the incarnated Word within the soul of man. This light within makes man also divine and assures him of his ultimate goal of union with God. This inner light is commonly represented as a vital principle, a spark, a seed, a spring or other similar terms. The doctrine is characteristic of such representative mystical writers as William Law, Meister Eckhart, Saint Augustine, Saint John of the Cross, Saint Teresa and others.

This same doctrine and emphasis has been discovered to be a characteristic of the theology of Jonathan Edwards. His doctrine of the divine light becomes for him the supreme fact in the history of redemption and on it he bases much of his theology. It has been found that he gives much space in his writings to a definition of this divine light and also to its nature, its work and its uniqueness.

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1. Vol. IV, p. 35.

It has also been discovered that Edwards makes a very large use of the writings of John and Paul in his development of this doctrine. In the description of practically every phase of the doctrine, he is careful to establish its Biblical basis and this basis is largely taken from the works of these two writers. His wide use of these writers in this connection makes apparent their influence upon him.

D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to Which the Mystical Doctrine of the Divine Light is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings.

Book of Bible	Terms Used for Divine Light	Characteristics of the Divine Light	The Fruit or Work of the Divine Light	Mystery of the Divine Light	Result of Sin against the Divine Light
John	1:4,7,9,16; 3:34; 4:10; 7:38,39; 8:12; 14:16, 14:17,26; 15:26; 16:13; 20:22; 6:21, 6:33,63; 14:19; 17:2,22,26	1:5;3:6,19,36 4:14; 6:45; 12:35,36;16:15 5:24; 6:40,47; 20:31.	5:24-26,29; 6:33; 11:25 6:35,48,63		5:40
Romans	4:16;5:15,16, 5:17; 12:6	1:4,19; 5:5 8:9; 10:20	7:6; 8:2,6, 8:15,16;12:2	16:25,26	8:9; 1:21.
I. Cor.	2:4,12,13; 10:4; 12:3,8 15:45	1:5; 2:4,5; 2:12,13,18-25 3:19,19	2:16	2:7	
II. Cor.	1:12; 3:3,6 4:15; 8:1,4, 8:6-7, 11:10 12:9	1:12; 3:16; 4:6; 11:4; 12:1-6	3:5,6; 8:1; 11:10		4:4; 10:12
Gal.	1:6,15,16; 2:9; 3:5; 4:6,29; 6:18	1:11,12,19; 2:6; 3:5,22, 3:23	1:15,16; 3:22,23; 4:6 4:29; 6:15		
Eph.	1:6,7,8,13; 2:8-10; 3:2, 3:7,8; 4:7; 5:14	1:6,17; 2:7; 3:16-19;5:7	1:7,8,18; 3:16-19; 4:23; 5:7	1:9; 3:3 3:4,5,9; 6:19	
Phil.	1:19				
Col.		1:27	1:9,10,11, 1:27,29	1:26;2:2	

Book of Bible	Terms Used for Divine Light	Character- istics of the Divine Light	The Fruit or Work of the Divine Light	Mystery of the Divine Light	Result of Sin against the Divine Light
I.Thes.	1:5	1:5	5:5		
II.Thes.	3:18		3:5		
I.Tim.	1:14		4:14		4:1-3; 6:21; 6:3-6;
II.Tim.	1:9; 4:22; 1:14	1:7; 2:7	1:6; 2:25,26	1:9,10	3:7
Titus	3:5	1:3; 3:5			
Philemon	1:25				
I John	1:5; 5:13	1:7; 5:13,20	5:10,11,12, 5:13,20; 2:20,27		
Rev.	2:7,11,17, 2:29; 3:6 3:13,22; 4:2	1:1; 2:7, 4:1,2		10:7	

CHAPTER IV

THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATION

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A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers.

Religion, to the mystic, is primarily a way of life. The very concept of life also implies the idea of growth; and where there is spiritual growth there must be renunciation as well as achievement. That which is renounced, however, is only that which inclines to a lower level of life and so hinders the soul by confining its attention to physical needs and desires.¹

He who would attain, then, to a higher level of life, and so free himself from the drag of the lower self, must travel in a Way of Life which is recognized in a general way by all mystical systems.² The first stage of this Way is generally designated by the term, Purgation; the second stage is known as Illumination; and the third and last stage is Union with God. The second and third stages of this Way are not always definitely marked, however, and in some instances are scarcely differentiated.³ Edwards lays little emphasis upon illumination as such, but rather treats it as a phase of union.

Purgation, the first stage of this Way, involves a renunciation on the part of the believer of all carnal things which

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1. Cf. St. John of the Cross, Works, Vol. I, p. 9
2. Cf. Underhill, Mysticism, pp. 156, 205.
3. Cf. Underhill, The Mystic Way, p. 32

impede the spiritual growth of the soul. It is a putting off of all of those elements of normal experience which are not in harmony with reality. These elements involve all false illusions of life, all forms of evil and all imperfections of every kind. The lower self is not capable of spiritual adventure, for all of its activities are centered about the material world. Therefore, the soul must be purged of this lower self before it is capable of attaining to higher things of the spirit. This goal is attained through the practice of self-denial, repentance, prayer, etc. And he who walks in this Way must take up his cross of suffering and burden bearing as Christ did when he was here upon the earth. He must also show by his conduct a spirit of contrition and a readiness to make amends for any wrong committed. It is not possible for him to harbor in his heart anything selfish or sensual for such things are foreign to the character which he hopes to ultimately attain. In short, he must renounce self and the world.

Thus we find Thomas a Kempis welcoming adversity and regarding it as a discipline from God for the purging of his soul. Patience in suffering wrongs offers to him an opportunity for praying for his enemies and of exercising the grace of forgiveness. In it all, he sees his soul being purged of the lower self and so made ready for some greater spiritual gift. Thus we read:

"Wherefore visit me Lord oftimes and inform me with holy discipline. Deliver me from my evil passions, heal my heart from all inordinate affections; that I, inwardly healed and well purged, may be apt to love, mighty to suffer, stable to persevere. . . . He hath a great and

wholesome purgatory that patiently receiveth wrongs, that gladly prayeth for his adversaries and heartily forgiveth his trespassers . . . that more easily forgiveth than is wroth, that doeth violence to himself, that laboreth in all wise to hold his flesh under the spirit."¹

Meister Eckhart regarded the work of purgation as the means of great gain to his spiritual life. To die to the lower self is, for him, the attainment of a higher goal. He writes,

"There is no greater valor nor no sterner fight than that of self-effacement, self-oblivion. . . To die the death in love and knowledge, that is more noble and more worth than all the works put together that holy Christendom has done in love and knowledge from its beginning until now or ever shall do until the judgment day. These do but serve to bring this death about, this death wherein springs life eternal."²

Saint John of the Cross can see no possibility for spiritual growth without purgation. He who would seek an easier way is sure to fail:

"There is no progress but in the imitation of Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life. . . That spirituality, therefore, which would travel in sweetness at its ease, shunning the imitation of Christ, is in my opinion, nothing worth."³

The presence of evil in the lower self causes this purgation to be painful to the soul, according to Paschal. In the end, however, it will bring happiness and the pain is only "in proportion as the evil, which is natural to us, resists the supernatural agency of grace."⁴

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1. Imitation of Christ, pp. 104, 50.
2. Eckhart, Pfeiffer, pp. 421-22.
3. Works, Vol. I, p. 78.
4. Thoughts, p. 346.

William Law also made purgation the first step in the Way. He represents the lower self as dominated by the "spirit of the world" and until this spirit is well purged from the soul the light of God cannot dwell therein. He who professes to be a child of God professes to live contrary to everything that is peculiar to the world. -

"St. John expresses this opposition to the world in this manner: 'They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world and the world heareth them. We are of God.' This is a description of the followers of Christ; and it is proof enough that no people are to be reckoned Christians in reality, who in their hearts and tempers belong to the world."¹

The constant striving for holiness and purity of life is a vital part of this first stage of the Way. "It is holiness, not disputation, that comprehendeth God", writes Saint Bernard.² Purity leads to a knowledge and sight of God according to Saint John of the Cross:

"O my God and my life, they shall know Thee and behold Thee when Thou touchest them, who, making themselves strangers upon earth, shall purify themselves, because purity corresponds with purity."³

Writes Meister Eckhart:

"I never ask God to give himself to me: I beg of him to purify, to empty me. . . How to be pure? By steadfast longing for the good one, God to wit. How to acquire this longing? By self-denial and dislike to creatures."⁴

Thomas a Kempis writes that the traveler in this stage

"Must be bare and bear to God a pure heart if thou wilt taste and see how sweet God is. . . Wherefore visit me Lord oftimes and inform me with holy discipline."⁵

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1. Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, p. 222.
2. Balfe, Thoughts of St. Bernard, p. 63.
3. Works, Vol. II, p. 242.
4. Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, pp. 420-422.
5. Imitation of Christ, pp. 76, 104.

The way of purgation is also characterized by the practice of charity towards one's fellow-man. This phase of life attracts special emphasis by many mystical writers.

Meister Eckhart writes that "the mystic never withdraws himself from the business of life, no, not even from the smallest business";¹ and in explaining what is the business of life, he declares that the practice of charity is a large part of it. In describing the beauty of her spiritual experiences, Lady Julian of Norwich relates that in all of it she "was greatly stirred in charity to my fellow Christians that they might see and know the same that I saw."² Saint Teresa expresses her thoughts concerning this charity in the words of Saint John: "Who loves not his brethren loves not Thee, my Lord."³

Thomas a Kempis felt that

"Without charity the outward work availeth naught; but whatever is done of charity, be it never so simple or so little, all is fruitful."

He also saw in the practice of charity a direct means of spiritual growth and exclaims:

"O the acceptable and jocund service of God whereby a man is verily made free and holy. . . O the service to be embraced and even to be desired, whereby the highest and sovereign good is deserved (won) and joy gotten that shall dwell without end."⁴

To Paschal, "Charity is not only the end of Holy Scrip-

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1. Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 425.
2. Juliana of Norwich, Warrack, p. 18.
3. Balfe, Thoughts of St. Teresa, p. 21.
4. Imitation of Christ, pp. 25, 119.

tures but the entrance to them."¹ To Saint Bernard the practice of charity is of the very nature of the Christian religion.

He asks: "How doth he live unto Him who so neglecteth them whom he loveth."² This theme is a favorite one with William Law who declared that there is no other natural or reasonable use of possessions than to employ them in the service of needy brethren.³

B. The Doctrine in Edwards.

1. Edwards' Definition of Purgation.

Under the heading, "Sabbath, Jan. 6th, at night", Edwards makes the following entry in his diary:

"Much concerned about the improvement of precious time.
Intend to live in continual mortification, without
ceasing, as long as in this world."⁴

This was a resolution made in his early manhood but his later life bears witness to its almost literal observance. His life was characterized by a self-denial, an annihilation of self, as marked as that of any of the mystics quoted above.

In a sermon upon the theme of the True Christian Life, Edwards states that life in this world for the Christian is but a journey and the saints should regard it as such. The saints should always be striving for the attainment of their goal and should not allow themselves to become too much attached to the

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1. Thoughts, p. 357.
2. Thoughts of St. Bernard, Williams, p. 25.
3. Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, p. 127.
4. Vol. I, p. 6.

things of this world. They should keep their hearts so freed from earthly things that at any time they could cheerfully part from them, I Cor. 7:29-31:

"Just so we ought to look upon these things (i.e., things of the lower self) as only lent to us for a little while, to serve a present term; but we should set our hearts on heaven as our inheritance forever."¹

In this same sermon we have a detailed description of the journey towards heaven, or union with God. The following is a typical passage setting forth the nature of this journey:

"While they were on their journey, they underwent much labor and toil. It was a wilderness that they passed through; a difficult road. There were abundance of difficulties in the way; mountains and rough places. It was a laborious, fatiguing thing to travel the road. They were forced to lay out themselves to get along; and had many wearisome days and nights; but now they have got through; they have got to the place they sought; they are got home; got to their everlasting rest. They need to travel no more; nor labor any more; nor endure any more toil and difficulty; but enjoy perfect rest and peace; and will enjoy them forever; Rev. 14:13."²

Again, in this same sermon, Edwards states that the saints' present state, and all that belongs to it, is designed by God solely as a preparation for union with him. Man's earthly life was given to him that he might be prepared for a higher life hereafter. All of the temporal things of life are intended for this same end and so should be subordinated to spiritual things.

Edwards shows the characteristic reactions of the mystic

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1. Vol. IV, p. 574.
2. Vol. IV, p. 579.

in his account of his conversion.¹ He describes here his own sense of unworthiness and the wickedness of the lower self. He emphasizes his need of and longing for purgation:

"My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me as perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often for these many years, these expressions are in my mind and in my mouth, 'Infinite upon infinite - Infinite upon infinite.' . . . I have greatly longed of late for a broken heart, and to lie low before God; and when I ask for humility, I cannot bear the thoughts of being no more humble than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them, yet it would be a vile self-exaltation in me, not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind."²

Thus the need of purgation is great because the propensity of man to live for the lower self rather than to the higher is great, Rom. 3:19, 20; Gal. 2:16; I J. 1:7-10. Saint Paul declares that in the flesh dwelleth no good thing, Rom. 7:18. It is wholly opposite to the nature of God and the rule of the Spirit, Rom. 8:7, 8. It is directly contrary to the true nature of holiness, Gal. 5:17; and it is not possible for the flesh to do any good thing in the sight of God, Rom. 8:7, 8. Therefore he who would be purged of the evils of the lower self must put off the old nature and put on a new one; and if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away and all things are become new, Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 3:8-10, Rom. 6:4-6, also I J. 2:29;

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1. For a description of the mystic's definition of conversion see Underhill, *Mysticism*, Part II, chs. 2 and 3. The second phase of conversion, that is the sense of God and his beauty will be treated in chapter V of this thesis.
2. Vol. I, pp. 22, 23.

3:1, 2.¹ All of this implies the forsaking of the world,

"for as long as men set their hearts on the world as their chief good, and have that as the chief object of the relish and complaisance of their minds, they will not relish and take complaisance in Christ, and set their hearts on him as their best good."²

The repentance of purgation is the special condition for the remission of sins. The very nature of it implies an acknowledgment of the believer's unworthiness of God's goodness, and a denial of all confidence in the flesh. It is God's method first to lead men "into a wilderness" that they may be brought into distress and so made to see their dependence upon him alone. Afterwards he speaks to them words of comfort and deliverance. This was the case in Old Testament times and was also true in the life of the Apostle Paul, II Cor. 1:8-10. Thus purgation must always precede illumination.³

"It concerns us greatly to look at this humiliation, as one of the most essential things pertaining to true Christianity. This is the principal part of the great Christian duty of self-denial."⁴

2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of Purgation.

Edward's definition and description of the nature of purgation has a marked similarity to that of Saint John of the Cross in his Dark Night of the Soul.⁵ In his Narrative of Surprising Con-

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1. Vol. II, p. 472.
2. Vol. II, p. 622.
3. Vol. III, pp. 38, 39.
4. Vol. III, p. 139.
5. As has been stated before, we can discover no evidence that Edwards had any contact with the works of the great mystics mentioned in this thesis. The very nature of his surroundings, times, etc., makes any supposition of his use of these writers unlikely. Both Edwards and St. John of the Cross do

versions he finds that some of those who are seeking for greater spiritual light are driven to the very border of despair. Everything appears as "black as midnight to them a little before the day dawns in their souls".¹ Sometimes their sense of sin is so great that they cry out in their anguish and are overcome with the thought of their own sinfulness to such an extent that their bodies are affected. It is not until their purgation is complete, until the lower self has been completely mortified that the illumination of the divine light is granted to them by God. Then

"the joy that many of them speak of is, that to which none is to be paralleled; is that which they find when they are lowest in the dust, emptied most of themselves, and as it were annihilating themselves before God, when they are nothing, and God is all, are seeing their own unworthiness, depending not at all on themselves, but alone on Christ, and ascribing all glory to God."²

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have this in common, however; they both claim the Scripture as the great source from which they drew their teachings. In the light of this a comparison of the following passage from Edwards' with passages from St. John of the Cross in his Dark Night of the Soul is most interesting: - "Sometimes the fear, trouble, and exercise of mind, which are undergone respecting this business, and the salvation of the soul, are great and long continued, before any comfort is obtained. Sometimes persons in this situation labor long in the dark, and sometimes, as it were, in the very fire, they having great distress of conscience, great fears and many perplexing temptations, before they obtain light and comfort to make their care and labor more easy for them. They sometimes earnestly, and for a long time seek comfort, but find it not, because they seek it not in the right manner, nor in the right objects. God therefore hides his face. . . They seem to themselves not at all to get forward, or nearer to a deliverance from sin; but to go backward rather than forward. They see no glimmerings of light; things rather appear darker and darker. . . In this situation, and under these views, some are almost driven to despair." (Vol. IV, p. 373.

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1. Vol. III, p. 242.
2. Vol. III, p. 255.

This way of purgation is a positive way. Man cannot trust to merely passive methods for its attainment. It is a task that requires great labor and care. There are many commands to be obeyed and many duties which must be performed. There are also many temptations which must be met and many opponents to be overcome. The seeking of this life is a "constant business". No relaxation from the task is possible but rather must it be pursued without interruption. It is an undertaking of "great expense". All earthly hopes, if necessary, must be sacrificed in order to follow in this Way. It is a way that requires much counsel, prayer, fasting, etc., for many have made shipwreck of their lives upon this way. Moreover, it is a way that has no ceasing until death and then, with life completed, perfect union with God is attained.¹

3. Edwards' Treatment of the Fruits of Purgation.

Purgation produces in the life of the saint a spirit of humility and meekness. "These things are like garments to him, he is clothed all over with them, Col. 3:12"² It allows for no such thing as contempt for others and bitterness of spirit. It promotes a child-like nature that is harmless and is free from the sin of hatred, Eph. 4:31. The great commendation which Christ gave to the Church at Philadelphia was for the fact that they kept the

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1. Vol. IV, p. 373.
2. Vol. III, p. 358.

virtue of patience and long-suffering in times of persecution,
Rev. 3:10.¹

This humility which is produced by purgation is a true humility. There is a humility which comes from a spiritual pride and is the product of a false experience. In its very nature it is highly conceited of itself. True purgation has the opposite effect of this and produces in the saint the virtues of the Spirit as listed by Saint Paul. It ever keeps the believer conscious of the reason why he should be truly and deeply humble and so draws him to Christ and fills him with a longing for a greater purgation. The true Christian is apt to make his humility to appear small and unworthy, while on the other hand, his remaining pride and selfishness appear to him to be very great and sinful. When he is brought lowest of all it does not appear to him, that he is brought below his proper station, but that he is not come to it; he appears to himself yet vastly above it, he longs to get lower, that he may come to it, but appears at a great distance from it.²

True purgation produces a spirit in the saint that makes him modest and helpful in his attitude towards others. The Apostle Paul represented the design of the gospel as the making of any sense of self-glorying impossible, Rom. 4:1-2,³ as freeing the

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1. Vol. III, p. 358.

2. Vol. III, p. 151.

3. In his treatise on Original Sin, Edwards accounts for the sinfulness of man by tracing his inherent sinfulness from birth in accordance with the Calvinistic doctrine of sin. Among his scriptural proof texts he cites, Rom. 3:9-24, 5:6-10, Eph. 2:3,

saint from all false pride, I Cor. 13:4, and especially of such as is exhibited towards his fellow-man, Rom. 13:7, II Cor. 7:15, Eph. 6:5, I Tim. 2:9. In another of his summarizing paragraphs Edwards graphically describes the results of purgation:

"Now it is out of such a heart as this, that all truly holy affections do flow. Christian affections are like Mary's precious ointment that she poured out on Christ's head, that filled the whole house with a sweet odor. That was poured out of an alabaster box; so gracious affections flow out to Christ out of a pure heart. That was poured out of a broken box; until the box was broken, the ointment could not flow, nor diffuse its odor; so gracious affections flow out of a broken heart. . . . All gracious affections that are a sweet odor to Christ, and that fill the soul of a Christian with a heavenly sweetness and fragrantcy, are broken hearted affections. A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken hearted love. The desires of the saints, however earnest, are humble desires. Their hope is a humble hope; and their joy, even when it is unspeakable, and full of glory, is a humble broken hearted joy, and leaves the Christian more poor in spirit, and more like a child, and more disposed to a universal lowliness of behavior."¹

4. Edwards' Treatment of Holiness of Life.

Purgation should be accompanied by a holiness of life.

"We ought to be continually growing in holiness; and in that respect coming nearer and nearer to heaven." The more holy one becomes the nearer is the approach to the supreme goal of life;

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Rom. 7, John 5:45, Gal. 2:15, 16. In his treatment of such a doctrine Edwards exhibits a strange intermixture in his writings of the mystical and non-mystical or anti-mystical trend of thought. At heart he was a mystic and these apparent inconsistencies are probably the result of his adaptation, possibly unconscious, of his thought to the dominant theology of his time, that is, to Calvinism in its harsher form. For a fuller treatment of this subject see Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 80 and following pages.

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1. Vol. III, p. 155.

that is, union with God. One should be content with nothing in this world short of this holiness and should emulate the Apostle Paul who was always reaching forward to this goal, Phil. 3:13, 14.¹ The way of holiness is the only way to God and so the saint should lay aside every sin that he may attain thereunto. Every pleasure that is a stumbling block in this way should be sacrificed.

This holiness is the background of the moral excellence of God and when applied to men it denotes their true excellency as moral beings.² In an entry in his diary Edwards writes:

"I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes. It appeared to me that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely; the highest beauty and amiableness - a divine beauty; far purer than anything here on earth; and that everything else was like mire and defilement in comparison of it."³

The greatest privilege of the apostles was not the gift of inspiration which was poured out upon them, or the power to work miracles; but rather was it the purging and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. That was a far greater blessing than the gift of any extraordinary power. I Cor. 12:31; 13. This gift of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit is the end of all other gifts, Eph. 4:11-13. No other spiritual gift would be of any advantage without this one. This is the gift which makes the saint and the church on earth most like the inhabitants of heaven. The

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1. Vol. IV, p. 576.

2. Cf. Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 227.

3. Vol. I, p. 18.

Apostle Paul speaks of all other gifts as childish in comparison with this one, I Cor. 13:11, and as inferior in many other ways as described in this same chapter.

In his account of the last illness of his friend, David Brainerd, Edwards recounts most approvingly his "vehement desire" for a holiness of life. Just as his life became detached from the desires of the flesh, so much the greater became this longing for holiness. Edward thus sums up the situation.

"It appears plainly and abundantly all along, from his conversion to his death, that that beauty, that sort of good, which was the great object of the new sense of his mind, the new relish and appetite given him in conversion, and thence forward maintained and increased in his heart, was holiness, conformity to God, living to God and glorifying him. This was what drew his heart; this was the centre of his soul; this was the ocean to which all the streams of his religious affections tended; this was the object that engaged his eager thirsting desires and earnest pursuits."

In one of his sermons, Edwards points out that we are abundantly taught in the Scripture that true Christians lead a holy life; that every one who hath the hope in Christ purifyeth himself as Christ is pure, I J. 3:3. Thus they walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, Rom. 8:1.² Holiness comprehends all true virtue and so should be sought by all. A love of holiness for its own sake inclines the saint to practice holiness and to all of those things that are holy. For he whose life has so been purged that holiness is a delight to him, will necessarily be inclined to the practice of holiness.³

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1. Vol. I, p. 659.
2. Vol. IV, p. 481.
3. Vol. III, p. 187.

Holiness is a product of the divine light dwelling in the soul of the saint. Being holy in his own nature he naturally imparts holiness in the heart in which he dwells, John 3:6. From this it follows that the natural man cannot walk in the way of holiness for he has nothing of the light within him to make his desire any such course. "Holiness is entirely, throughout, the work of God's Spirit."¹ Acceptance of the light into the heart is made possible by purgation which prepares the way for holiness.²

The possibility of attaining to a life of holiness through purgation was made a reality by Christ. He himself traveled this road and never did his holiness shine forth so illustriously as it did in his last suffering in the garden and on the cross. When he was tried in the furnace of these sufferings his holiness shone forth as pure gold from the refiner's fire. Just so, must no soul go into the presence of God, without having the sins of the flesh purged away. Happily for the saint, however, a provision has been purchased in Christ whereby he too can be holy if he perseveres in the way.³

5. Edwards' Treatment of the Practice of Charity.

Purgation is not only a putting off of the old man but it is also a putting on of the new man; it has not only the negative aspect of dying to the lusts of the flesh but it also implies

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1. Vol. I, p. 9.
2. Vol. II, p. 622.
3. Vol. IV, p. 145.

a practice of charity towards one's fellow-man. This very practice makes perfect the work of the divine light. The love of God is said in the Scripture, to be made perfect in the keeping of his commandments, I J. 2:4, 5; the loving of one another is an expression of the saint's love for God, I J. 4:12; the withholding of charity is difficult to reconcile to true love, I J. 4:17, 18. Thus it is by "loving in works" that the love of God is perfected in the saint,

"So grace is said to be perfected or finished in holy practice, or therein it is brought to its proper effect, and to that exercise which is the end of the principle; the tendency or design of grace herein is reached, and its operation completed and crowned."

Christian practice is the best evidence of the truth of conversion. This is spoken of and insisted upon in the Scripture more than any other sign. It is represented as the "chief of all evidences". God has repeatedly so signified this truth in his Word as in the fourteenth chapter of John where the Apostle quotes Christ as saying, "he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me"; also in the 15th, 23d, 24th verses of this same chapter, and in I J. 2:3, 3:18, 19; 3:6, 10; II J. 6; I J. 5:3, is the same thought expressed. The Scripture never uses such emphatic expressions about any other sin as it does towards the sin of unholy practice, Gal. 6:7, I Cor. 6:9, 10, Eph. 5:5,6, I J. 3:7, 8, 2:4, 1:6, Rev. 21:27. The importance of this practice of charity is again emphasized in the Scripture in that it is

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Made the basic evidence for the final judgment. God at that time will judge the people as their lives are evidenced by their works and his judgment will appear to all as a righteous judgment, Rom. 2:5, Rev. 20:12, II Cor. 5:10, Rom. 2:6, 13, Rev. 22:12, 2:23.

Edwards thus summarizes the above statements:

"Now from all that has been said, I think it to be abundantly manifest, that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the gracious sincerity of professors, to themselves and others; and the chief of all the marks of grace, the sign of signs and evidence of evidences, that which seals and crowns all other signs - I had rather have the testimony of my conscience, that I have such a saying of my Supreme Judge on my side, as that of John 14:21 - 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is the loveth me.'"¹

Charity is the best evidence of a true faith. It is represented by John to be the proper evidence of a true Christian conduct, III J. 3. Again John speaks of it as the best evidence of a gracious hope in the saint, I J. 3:3, I Thes. 1:3. This practice of duty and doing the will of God is the best evidence of true joy in the Christian's life, I Cor. 13:6, II Cor. 8:24. It is also the best evidence of Christian fortitude of which Paul writes in I Cor. 9:25, 26, II Tim. 3:3-5.

Christian experience and Christian practice are represented in Scripture as one. Indeed all Christian experience may not be expressed in practice, but all Christian practice is properly the result of experience. Thus Scripture represents the grace of love to God and fear of God as consisting chiefly in practice as

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1. Vol. III, p. 216.

in I J. 5:3, II J. 6, Rom. 1:9, II Cor. 1:12, 4:13, 5:7, 14;
6:4-7, Gal. 2:20, Phil. 3:7, 8, Col. 1:29, I Thes. 2:2, 8-10.

Thus the surest evidence of the degree of that which is spiritual and divine in the heart of the saint, is the degree in which his experiences have influenced his practice. All claims to spiritual discoveries, love, and joy, are to be regarded no further than they have their influence on practice.¹

The Scripture portrays the spirit of the true saint as a spirit which prefers the welfare of God's people to his chief joy. This was the dominating spirit of the prophets of the Old Testament and we find it also to be the spirit of the Apostles in the New Testament, II Cor. 4:15, II Tim. 2:10. So the Scripture speaks as though every saint should do all for the welfare of the church just as each member of the body acts for the good of the whole body, Rom. 12:4, 5; Eph. 4:15, 16, I Cor. 12:12, 25-31, I Cor. 13.² And finally good works are included in the very nature of faith as is implied in the statement of Saint Paul in I Tim. 5:8 - "If any man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith."³

C. Summary of the Chapter.

In this chapter we have seen that the mystics set forth a certain series of stages through which the novitiate must pass

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1. Vol. III, p. 220.
2. Vol. II, p. 246.
3. Vol. II, p. 613.

in his rising above the lower self towards a higher plain of life. This is recognized by such representative writers as St. John of the Cross, Thomas a Kempis, Meister Eckhart, Paschal, William Law, St. Bernard, St. Teresa, Julian of Norwich and others. The first of these stages is that of Purgation. In this stage the soul, through fasting, prayer, etc., is gradually enabled, as Saint Paul expresses it, to die to the old man and to live to the new man.

This mystical doctrine has also a prominent place in the writings of Edwards. In his emphasis upon the necessity of purgation, its nature and its purpose he generally agrees with the mystical teachings upon the subject. In his development of the doctrine, Edwards also recognizes this stage of the way as characterized by a striving for purity and holiness of life, and by an urgent obligation for the practice of charity. He represents such a life as one of rigorous hardships; but, at the end of it, he sees a reward, that more than repays the traveler for all efforts made and sufferings undergone in his progress, from the dominance of the flesh to the life in the Spirit.

It is also revealed in the study of this doctrine that Edwards made a wide use of the writings of John and Paul. It has been found that these writings were used freely as proof-texts in his definition of purgation, in his description of the nature of purgation and of its fruits; also in his mystical emphasis upon a life of holiness and of Christian charity.

D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Mystical Doctrine of Purgation is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings.

Book of Bible	Its Nature	Its Fruits	The Necessity of Holiness	The Fractise of Charity
John	3:30; 4:33; 5:30,34, 5:41; 6:63; 7:7; 8:23; 12:24,25; 13:14 16:2,20,33; 17:16; 18:36; 1:29,36; 3:14 6:51; 10:15; 11:50; 12:32; 19:18; 8:17; 8:18	5:30; 6:63; 8:23; 12:24, 12:25; 13:14 17:16; 6:51 11:50; 12:32	5:14; 8:11,34,36	5:17; 13:29 15:13; 19:26,27; 20:21; 21:15,16,17
Romans	1:1; 5:3; 6:3,5,6,8 6:11,12,13; 7:6; 8:4,12,13; 12:9b; 13:12,13,14	5:3,4; 6:4,5 1:7; 6:6,11,19 6:6,8,10,11 6:22; 7:24; 6:13; 8:4,5; 8:1,4,10; 7:4; 12:1,2a; 12:1,2 13:14; 7:24		12:13; 12:20
I Corinthians	4:9; 7:29-31; 5:9; 10:21; 8:13; 9:24, 9:24,27; 10:1-13; 10:14; 15:19,30-31	5:8,11; 6:19	6:9,10,11,13, 6:15,20; 10:21	10:24
II Corinthians	1:5,9,17; 4:2,7-12 5:15,16; 6:4-10; 5:1-4; 11:23-27; 12:8,10; 4:14-18	1:5,9; 4:2; 7:10; 8:21; 12:7	7:1; 8:21; 5:9; 6:3,14-18 11:3; 13:5,8,9, 13:11	8:24; 12:15
Galatians	2:20; 5:4,16,21,22 5:23,24; 6:12,14,17	2:20b; 5:17 5:25		5:13, 14; 6:10
Ephesians	2:3; 4:22,24,25,28, 4:29; 5:3-14,15,16 6:12; 6:10-20	4:23,24,30, 4:31-32; 4:1-2	1:4; 4:24; 5:9	1:15
Philippians	2:5-8, 30; 3:8,10, 3:12,13,14	2:5-8; 3:3, 3:10	1:10,11; 2:15 4:8; 1:27,28,29	1:5,7,4;10 4:15-18
Colossians	1:24; 2:11,12,23; 3:5-11	2:12,20-23; 3:1-4; 4:12	1:28; 3:12; 1:10; 4:5	1:4
I Thessalonians	1:9; 4:3,6; 5:21-22 3:3,4; 5:8	4:8	2:10,12; 13x 3:14; 4:7; 5:23	1:2; 3:12; 4:9, 10.
II Thessalonians	1:4,5,7		1:11, 13	

Book of Bible	Its Nature	Its Fruits	The Necessity of Holiness	The Practise of Clarity
I Timothy	5:6; 6:9, 10; 4:7,15	2:9	3:1-12; 4:12; 5:22 6:14; 1:5,19; 2:2 3:9; 4:2, 7; 6:11 4:15	5:4-9, 16 6:17
II Timothy	2:3,4,22; 3:10-12; 4:5,10; 1:8; 2:9-10 2:12; 4:6-8	2:21; 22	1:3; 2:15,19,22, 2:17	1:16,17,18 4:11
Titus	2:3; 2:12	2:12	1:5-9; 2:2,3,5,7 2:10,14; 3:8	3:13-14
Philemon				1:13
I John	1:15; 3:3,16; 4:4,5 4:19, 44.		1:6; 2:3;2:4,5 2:6,9,13; 3:3 3:5,6,7,9; 5:18 5:19,21	2:9,10,11; 3:10,11,17, 3:18,23; 3:14,15; 4:7,8,9,10, 4:11,12,19, 4:21;5:1-2.
II John				1:5,6
Revelation	2:16; 3:3,19; 9:20-21; 18:4; 1:9; 2:2,9-11,13 3:5,8; 5:9-11; 7:14, 12:11,17; 16:6; 17:6; 17:14; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4; 21:7		1:5; 3:4; 14:4,5 19:8; 20:6; 22:11	2:19

CHAPTER V

THE ETERNAL SOURCE OF LIFE

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A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from The Works of Representative Writers.

In the journey of the soul through the Purgative Way there is one factor that remains constant and that is the Eternal Reality or God.¹ In God there is a never varying source of life; he is the All of Eckhart and St. John of the Cross, the Pure Love of St. Catherine of Genoa, the Fountain of Life of St. Teresa and Thomas a Kempis, and Supreme Being and Supreme Life of St. Augustine.

The contemplation of this Eternal Source of life gives to the mystic an unfailing storehouse of inspiration. Mystical literature is rich in its expressions of a longing for a greater knowledge of, and union with this Divine Life. Descriptions of the attributes of God as the source of life are especially numerous.

Thus St. Augustine's oft quoted saying: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts shall have no rest apart from Thee", has found a hearty response in many of his followers.² Again he writes in a further description of this dependence upon God;

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1. I have followed the lead of Miss Underhill in treating this subject in connection with the doctrine of Purgation. See her book on Mysticism, p. 276. It might as appropriately be taken in connection with the chapter on Divine Light - God being the source of that Light.
2. Confessions, Book I, Ch. 1.

"For thou art nothing else but Supreme Being, Supreme Life. For thou art the highest and changest not, nor does To-day run out its hours in Thee; and yet in Thee its hours run out, for in Thee is every moment of time."¹

In his Imitation of Christ, Thomas a Kempis is often found to represent God as the fountain source of all life. He flees to this Source and puts his confidence in His mercy and bounty. Hungry and thirsty he flees "unto the Fountain of Life."² Again he declares that all things are to be referred to God as the "last end" that is the final source. He urges his followers to regard all things as "welling" from this highest Good and to constantly rejoice in the fact that they have such a vast source of blessings at their disposal. As with Augustine, so with Thomas a Kempis, it is only in God that the soul can find rest and no gift from God, other than Himself, can ever satisfy. For

"it is little and insufficient whatever Thou givest me beside Thyself, or revealest or promisest of Thyself, Thee not seen or gotten fully; for my heart may not verily rest nor be fully and wholly content, if it rest not in Thee and ever pass Thy gifts and every creature."³

To Meister Eckhart this divine source of life is his "all". To it, is not only due his existence but his daily welfare depends upon an uninterrupted communication with this source. He writes,

"God is not only the Father of all good things but is the Mother of all good things to boot. He is father because he is the cause of all good things and their creator. He is the Mother of all things as well, for when creatures have gotten their being from him, he still stays with creatures to keep them in being."⁴

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1. Confessions, Book I, Ch. VI
2. Imitation of Christ, p. 236.
3. Ibid., p. 142.
4. Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 427.

Saint John of the Cross explains his intense longing for God by citing the fact that man is made in the image of God and so partakes of the divine essence. Thus the soul of the believer seeks God and is never satisfied until God is found. "For this reason", he writes, "the soul is under a great anxiety to find Him in all things, and not finding Him immediately as it desires. . . . has no pleasure in other things."¹ This longing for the Light is with St. John of the Cross, as with Thomas a Kempis, a "living thirst".

Not only doth the soul receive all that it hath from God but the very universe itself is an expression of the beauty of the Divine Being. The awakening to the consciousness of this sense of the divine in all things is a characteristic mark of the mystical conversion.² To Erigena, the world is "the poem of the Word to the glory of the Father; in it and by means of it, He

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1. Works, Vol. II, p. 51.
2. The following extract from "The Everlasting Mercy" by Masfield well illustrates this mystical conception; the converted poacher, Saul Kane, thus exults in his new found power:-

"O glory of the lighted mind,
How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind.
The station brook, to my new eyes,
Was babbling out of Paradise,
The waters rushing from the rain,
Were singing Christ has risen again.
I thought all earthly creatures knelt
From rapture of the joy I felt.
The narrow station-wall's brick ledge,
The wild hops withering in the hedge,
The lights in huntsman's upper storey,
Were parts of an eternal glory;
Were God's eternal garden flowers,
I stood in bliss at this for hours."

Quoted by Miss Underhill, The Mystic Way, p. 50.

displays in time all the riches which God has eternally put within Him.¹ God clothed the universe, writes St. John of the Cross,

"with beauty in the face of His Son, communicating to it a super-natural being when He made man, and exalted him to the beauty of God, and, by consequence, all creatures in him, because He united Himself to the nature of them all in man. For this cause the Son of God Himself said, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself and thus in this exaltation of the incarnation of His Son, and the glory of His resurrection according to the flesh, the Father not only made all things beautiful in part, but also, we may well say, clothed them with beauty and dignity.'²

B. The Doctrine in Edwards.

1. Edwards' God-Consciousness.

When we come to the works of Edwards we find not only similar expressions of mystical thought concerning this Eternal Source of Life but often the same terms and symbols are used. Dr. Allen says of him that

"the God-consciousness was the deepest substratum of his being. . . . in all these treatises (i.e. Edwards' writings) there is seen the tendency to one common conclusion, - that nothing exists but God."³

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1. Quoted by Inge, Christian Mysticism, p. 51.

2. Works, Vol. II, p. 38.

The hymnals of the Church also contain many poems which are rich in this mystical conception of God and Christ. The following stanza taken from The Church Hymnary, compiled by Edwin A. Bedell, and published by Merrill and Co., N.Y., is typical of many others:

"Earth has nothing sweet or fair,
Lovely forms or beauties rare,
But before my eyes they bring,
Christ of beauty, source and spring."

- Johann Scheffler, 1657.

3. Allen, Jonathan Edwards, pp. 6, 337.

We have taken the title to this section from Dr. Allen. By God-consciousness is meant the mystical tendency to regard God as the direct source of all life. This implies on man's part a continual striving to return to God for in Him only can life be complete.

The tendency in Edwards towards the mystical rapture is found from his early youth. The following extract from his diary was written when he was twenty years of age and well expresses his attitude towards this mystical conception of God:

"The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, I Tim. 1:17, Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen. As I read these words there came into my soul, and as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself how excellent a Being that was, and happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in him forever! I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him, and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do; with a new sort of affection. . . . After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast or appearance of divine glory in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity, his love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun and moon and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees, in the water, and all nature. . . . I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunder storm. . . . I felt then great satisfaction, as to my good state; but that did not content me. I had vehement longings of the soul after God and Christ and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break. . . . My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year. . . . It was my continual strife day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should be more holy, and live more holily, and more becoming a child of God and a disciple of Christ."¹

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1. Vol. I, pp. 16, 17.

In his "Revival of Religion in New England" Edwards goes at length into a study of the ecstasy. His New Testament authority is largely based upon the visions of John as recorded in the Revelation and that of Paul where he describes himself as being caught up into a third heaven, II Cor. 12. Some of these descriptions recall to a reader similar descriptions of experiences recorded by St. Teresa or Juliana of Norwich. During such ecstasies Edwards writes that the soul "has been as it were perfectly overwhelmed and swallowed up with light and love, and a sweet solace, rest and joy of soul, that was altogether unspeakable."¹ During these times of ecstasy the physical body is very much affected and often faints with the contemplation of the love of God. At such times the whole world and all things which formerly were considered to be of the greatest value are "renounced as dirt and dung". All that before that was pleasant and glorious, and even all that was before terrible in this world, seem to entirely vanish into nothing, and God alone is left as an infinite ocean of blessedness.²

Thus we find Edwards in harmony with the mystics in his contemplation of God as the Fountain Source of life and the resultant longing, on the part of man, for a greater understanding of and participation in a union with this Source. In an entry in his

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1. Vol. III, p. 300.

2. Vol. III, p. 301.

In such descriptions as these the influence of Mrs. Edwards upon her husband is apparent. She was a brilliant woman, of a strong character and thoroughly mystical in her religious life. For a description of Mrs. Edwards, see Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 45.

diary during a time of sickness, he tells us that God often visited him with the sweet influences of his Spirit and at such times his mind was engaged in "divine, pleasant contemplations and longings of soul."¹ When the light of morning would first dawn it appeared to him to be the image of the light of God's glory. Again he writes that his heart "burns" for God and that the greater that his love for God grew, the greater this longing after God became. He declares that seeking God in this manner is a distinguishing characteristic of the saint and so peculiar to him alone.²

In his detailed account of the last days of his friend, David Brainerd, Edwards describes with satisfaction this intense longing for God by his friend. He feels it to be in harmony with a similar longing expressed by Paul in his description of his own spiritual experience. Brainerd's great love for God, for Himself alone, and his preference to be with God rather than to remain in the flesh, Edwards cites as a proof of the reality of his Christian experience.³

The godly man, even though in great affliction, is infinitely better off than the ungodly because he has God for his portion. Even though he has nothing else, this is enough. "He that hath God, hath All."⁴ In this way it is the natural thing for a man, who is truly godly, to prefer God above all other things,

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1. Vol. I, p. 20.
2. Vol. I, pp. 178, 189.
3. Vol. II, pp. 652-659.
4. Vol. IV, p. 540.

whether in heaven or on earth.

Since he thus prefers God above all other possessions, every godly man has his heart in heaven. His affections are there and on what is to be had there. Heaven, since God is there, should be regarded as his home country and his great inheritance. His attitude towards heaven is the same as that of the traveler, who is abroad, towards his own country. He may content himself to sojourn in the foreign land until his business is accomplished but his own native land is preferred by him above all others. Or again, this place where God is, may be likened to a father's home. The child may be content to remain away for a season but the place for which his heart at last yearns is his father's home. The home of the true saint is the place where God is. Such was the testimony of Christ in John 14:1, 2.

"Now, the main reason why the godly man hath his heart thus in heaven, is because God is there; that is the place of the most high God; it is the place where God is gloriously present, where he is to be seen, where he is to be enjoyed, where his love is gloriously manifested, where the godly may be with him, see him as he is, and love, serve, praise, and enjoy him perfectly. It is for this chiefly that a godly man desires heaven. If God and Christ were not in heaven, he would not be so earnest in seeking it."¹

Moreover, the godly man prefers God to anything else that might be in heaven. There is nothing there, nor is he able to conceive of anything being there, which could be esteemed as highly as God. No dream of any sensual delight of Mahomet's heaven can

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1. Vol. IV, p. 541.

compare with a heaven where God is. The highest ideal of the saint is a heaven where he can enjoy God. "If it were empty of God, it would indeed be an empty, melancholy place."¹

It is also the spirit of the godly man to prefer God to all other things on earth. He looks not so much at the things that are temporal and seen, as at the things that are spiritual and unseen. They seek and desire that unseen honor that is in God, more than that which is only temporal, John 5:44. They desire communion with God more than any pleasure which earthly things can give to them, Phil. 3:8. Even a partial communion with God is to be preferred before anything else in the world. The divine light which was infused into his heart at the time of his conversion is more precious to the saint than anything which the world can offer. He would not part with this knowledge and experience of God for all the wealth of the world. It affords to him a view of the beauty and excellency of God which is very precious to him. He would rather have such a possession as this, than to be a child of a prince. He would not part with this honor for any kingly crown.

Since God is the saint's All; since he is in himself greater than any other conceivable good, either in this world or the world to come;

"Therefore, so run, not as uncertainly; so fight, not as those that beat the air; but keep under your bodies, and bring them into subjection. Act not as though you counted

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1. Vol. IV, p. 542.

yourselves to have apprehended; but this one thing do, 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."¹

God is, then, the "chief end" of life; the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, Rev. 1:8, 11, 17; 21:6; 22:13.

By such expressions, Edwards points out, is meant that God is the "fountain source from which all things originate as is confirmed by Rom. 11:36, and Col. 1:16."² Every conceivable blessing which man receives, or shall receive, comes from this fountain source. Without God

"the soul of man would wither and pine away, and sink into a most wretched state."³

The redeemed have all of their good in God; he is the great author of it; he is not only the "first cause" but is the only "proper cause".⁴ It is from God that Christ comes into the life of man, and that man is united to Christ, Eph. 2:8. It is of God that man has the means of grace placed within his grasp. It is of God that man has the holy Scriptures, the efficacy of which depends upon the immediate influence of God's Spirit, II Cor. 4:7. Man not only has these things from God but he, himself, is of God as are all other created things, I Cor. 8:21.

"Thus it is that God has given us a Redeemer, and it is of him that our good is purchased; so it is God that is the Redeemer and the price; and it is God also that is the good purchased. So that all we have

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1. Vol. IV, p. 547.
2. Vol. II, p. 222.
3. Vol. IV, p. 485.
4. Vol. IV, p. 170.

is of God, and through him and in him, Rom. 11:36,
I Cor. 7:6."¹

2. Edwards' Treatment of the Glory of this
Eternal Source of Life.

In his early ministry Edwards preached a sermon in Boston which immediately gave him a place of leadership in the church. This sermon was upon the theme of the glory of God as exemplified in man's dependence. He took his text from I Cor. 1:29-31. In this sermon, he emphasizes the statement that man is a debtor to God for every good thing that enters his life; that man's world is God-centric. He not only receives all things from God but through God and in God does he live, I Cor. 8:21. It is through God that Christ becomes ours and that we are brought to him in union, Eph. 2:8. Through God man's work is made fruitful, II Cor. 4:7. Man is dependent upon God for every step of his redemption, II Cor. 5:17. Through God man is made a new creature and is raised from the dead, Eph. 4:24; Col. 2:12, 13; his righteousness is a righteousness from God, II Cor. 5:21; through God's Spirit he has a fountain of true holiness in his soul, John 4:14, 7:38,39, Rev. 22:1. Moreover, what he actually now possesses is but an earnest or pledge of what he shall have in a state of complete union, II Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, 14; for such is the content of the blessings which God gave to man in Christ, Gal. 3:13, 14, and is but an indication of his glory.²

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1. Vol. IV, p. 175.
2. Vol. IV, p. 170.

Again in a sermon preached from the text of Rev. 5:5, 6, Edwards finds this glory and excellency of God greatly magnified in his gift of Christ. In Christ the extremes meet. He is the highest and most holy; yet in his humiliation he became the friend of man, and that the most meek of friends. Such a conjuncture of the most infinite highness and low condescension is admirable and greatly magnifies the glory of God, I Cor. 1:28; Col. 3:11. In Christ, who is both God and man these two diverse excellencies are harmoniously united, Phil. 2:6, John 5:25. Also in Christ meet infinite majesty and transcendent meekness; in him is infinite worthiness of good and the greatest patience under suffering. In him are joined absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation, Col. 1:16, 17, John 5:17. So the greatest demonstration of God's fullness and glory was in the incarnation of Christ.

"In this act his infinite condescension wonderfully appeared, that he, that was God, should become man; that the Word should be made flesh, and should take on him a nature infinitely below his original nature."¹

Everything in heaven and on earth are ordered for the glory of God.² The expression of this glory is the last end for

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1. Vol. IV, p. 186.
2. In discussing this tendency of Edwards to emphasize the all-comprehensiveness of God and to view life as entirely God-centric, Dr. Allen states: "In all treatises there is seen the tendency to one common conclusion - that nothing exists but God; His existence being infinite must be equivalent to universal existence. By a downward movement from God, humanity as well as the whole realm of nature are swooped up by the sole activity of the one universal will." See Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 337.

which both the physical and moral worlds were made, Rom. 11:36. For the enhancement of this glory he sought out a peculiar people for himself, Eph. 1:5, 6, John 17:10, II Thes. 1:10. The value and the worth of any part of creation is determined by the extent to which it reflects the glory of God, Phil. 1:10, 11, John 15:8, Rev. 11:3, 16:19, Rom. 15:5, 6. This is also true in determining the value of any particular grace, such as faith, Rom. 4:20, Phil. 2:11; or repentance, II Cor. 8:19, I Cor. 6:20. Man's last end is to glorify God, I Cor. 10:30. This was even the highest and last end of Christ, John 7:18; 12:27-28. It is the last end of that greatest work of providence, that is, the work of redemption, John 17:18, 12:27-28; 12:23, 24; 17:4, 5. And in this work Christ rejoiced, John 13:31, 32; for it was God's glory being expressed through him, Phil. 2:6-11, John 12:23, 28; 13:31, 32, 17:1, 4, 5; Eph. 1:3, II Cor. 4:4, 15.¹

The glory of God is set forth in the execution of his wrath as well as in the manifestation of his mercy. It is shown in the misery of hell and in the happiness of heaven, Rom. 9:22, 23; II Thes. 1:9, 10. This glory of God is the end and virtue of all religion and the holy behavior of the saints, Rom. 1:5; Phil. 1:11, III J. 7, Rev. 2:3. It is the great end of redemption both, in its purchase by Christ, and, in the fruits which it works in the lives of the saints, Rom. 3:25, 26; Eph. 2:4-7, 3:8-10; John 17:26. Thus, "it is that grand consummation of God's moral government of

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1. Vol. II, p. 235.

the world, and the day for bringing all things to their designed ultimate issue, Rom. 2:5."¹

The love of God is displayed chiefly for the enhancement of his glory. His blessings to men and his gift of salvation to them through the work of Christ only serve to further promote the glory of God as the infinite fountain of life, John 3:16, I J. 4:9, 10, Eph. 2:4. Christ's love for man was for the glory of God as well as for a blessing for mankind, Gal. 2:20, Eph. 5:25, John 17:19, 12:23,32. And so this blessing to man could be called also the ultimate end of the moral world, Rom. 13:8-10, Gal. 5:14. For this reason the welfare of the church has always been a great concern to all of his saints, II Cor. 4:15, II Tim. 2:10, Rom. 12:4, 5, Eph. 4:15, 16, I Cor. 12:12, 25.²

Thus this glory of God, or what is also called in Scripture the sum of the emanation of divine fullness, John 1:14, is the one end of all creation. It

"is fitly compared to an effulgence or emanation of light from a luminary, by which this glory of God is abundantly represented in Scripture. Light is the external expression, exhibition and manifestation of the excellency of the luminary, of the sun for instance; it is the abundant, extensive emanation and communication of the fullness of the sun to innumerable beings that partake of it. It is by this that the sun itself is seen, and his glory beheld, and all other things are discovered; it is by a participation of this communication from the sun, that surrounding objects receive all their luster, beauty and brightness. It is by this that all nature is quickened and receives life, comfort and joy."³

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1. Vol. II, p. 240.
2. Vol. II, pp. 243-245.
3. Vol. II, p. 254.

C. Summary of the Chapter.

We have seen in the study of this chapter that in the mystical conception of religion as a Way of Life or a Becoming, that there is one constant element; and that is, God as the source of all life. A vast longing for this Source of Life is found to be present even in the "dark night" of despair into which the soul is sometimes led in its purgation. This element is so prevalent in mystical literature that it has been described as the mystic's "instinct for God".¹ It is so fundamental to this system of thought that its followers are never content with anything less than a sense or experience of their essential unity with this Source of Life.

This same characteristic doctrine is found to be present in the works of Edwards. Under what has been described as his God-consciousness we find that his love of the contemplation of this Eternal Source of life leads him into the spiritual delights of the ecstasy. It is also indicated in the large amount of space which he devotes in his writings to the description of the attributes of God as the divine fountain of life. His glory, his mercy, his power, knowledge, love, fullness, works of providence and creation, are all but inadequate expressions of His infinite resources.

Again Edwards has been found to make a wide use of the Johannine and Pauline writings in the development of this doctrine.

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1. Underhill, Mystic Way, p. 3.

In his descriptions of the beauty and glory of God, which leads him into the ecstasy, he draws freely from the benedictions found in Paul's writings, the vision of Paul in II Cor. and from the Revelation of John. In his development of the other phases of this doctrine, he again draws more freely from these writings than from any other source, and oftentimes, to the exclusion of all other sources.

D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Mystical Doctrine of God, the Eternal Source of Life is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings.

Book of Bible	God the Source of Life	Longing for God	Glory of God
John	1:1,3,4,9,10,12,13,16,17, 1:29,33,35,41,45; 3:6,15 3:16,17,18,36; 4:14,25,42 5:21,24,25,26,29; 6:33,39 6:35,40,47,48,53,57,63; 8:12; 10:7-10; 11:25; 12:50; 14:6,19; 15:1,5; 17:2,22,26; 20:31	14:28; 17:3,5	1:2,14,15,27; 2:11; 3:31; 5:23; 10:29; 11:40; 12:28; 13:31; 13:32; 17:1,4,5,10, 17:22,24
Romans	1:20,25; 3:26; 4:17; 5:2 5:9,11,15,19,21; 6:23; 8:3,11,32; 9:16; 10:4	8:23-25; 8:28	9:5; 10:12; 11:33-36 16:25-27
I Corinthians	8:6; 12:6; 15:28,38		10:31; 15:28
II Corinthians	1:20; 3:5,6,17; 5:5,18, 9:8, 10.	5:7,8; 4:16-18 5:1,2,4	1:3,4,20; 4:7; 9:15 13:14
Galatians	2:21; 3:22; 3:26; 4:7; 6:7		1:5, 24.
Ephesians	1:3,5,7,18-23; 2:4; 4:7 4:5,6	6:24	1:7,12,14; 2:7; 3:20,21.
Philippians	2:13; 3:20; 4:19	1:23; 3:20	2:9; 4:19
Colossians	1:13,14,15,16,17,18,19, 1:20,22; 3:4, 11		1:15,16,17,18,27 2:3, 3:17; 1:10
I Thessalonians	4:8; 5:23,24; 5:9	1:10	
II Thessalonians	2:16	1:7	1:12; 2:14.
I Timothy	1:1,14; 2:5; 6:13,17		1:17; 6:13,14,15,16
II Timothy	1:7, 9, 10; 2:25	1:12; 4:8	4:18
Titus	1:2,4; 3:4,5,6,7		

Book of Bible	God the Source of Life	Longing for God	Glory of God
I John	1:5; 5:11,12,20; 5:13,16 1:2; 4:13; 5:1	3:2, 3	
Revelation	1:18; 2:8; 4:11; 7:10; 15:7; 16:5; 21:2,5,6,10 21:22; 22:1, 13		1:4-6,8,18; 4:8, 4:11; 5:9; 4:12, 4:13; 7:12; 11:12; 11:15,17; 15:3; 16:7; 17:14; 19:1,2,5,6,7,16 21:10,22; 22:5,6 22:16.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH

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A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers.

The mystical doctrine of faith differs from that doctrine in dogmatic theology in emphasis, rather than in substance. The conception of faith as an intellectual belief or as a certain element prerequisite to salvation may be accepted by the mystic but seldom dwelt upon. His treatment of faith is largely an emphasis upon that element in it by which the believer is led to some "venture" in his spiritual life. Faith is not only an intellectual assent to truth, but, an acting upon that belief. It is through active faith, - as the mystic sees it, - that there comes that experience of God, which gives a vitalizing knowledge of Him.

Thus we find Saint John of the Cross emphasizing the power of faith, in producing a Christian experience in the life of the believer. It has the power "to make us believe the truths which God himself has revealed - truths surpassing the light of reason and beyond the reach of all human understanding."¹ Again he sees faith as an expression of that spiritual power, given direct from God, which leads to an assent of the soul to God's will. He writes that, "faith is not knowledge that enters in by any of the senses, but only the assent of the soul to that which cometh

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1. Works, Vol. I, p. 58.

by hearing."¹ For this reason he describes faith as "obscure" and as working "in darkness"; it has no sensible object by which to guide itself, but is a launching out into the unknown with a trust in God that all will end well:

"In this way the soul draws nearer to the Divine union in darkness, by the way of faith, which, though it be also obscure, yet sends forth a marvelous light. Certainly if the soul will see, it thereby becomes instantly more blind than he who should attempt to gaze upon the sun shining in its strength. On this road, therefore, to have our own faculties in darkness is to see the light, according to the words of our Lord in John 9:39."²

Saint John of the Cross continues in his description of faith, and sees it as a direct gift of God, and the only means for the attainment of union with God. God's will is only revealed to him who exercises such faith.

In his Thoughts, Paschal discovers this same use of faith in arriving at new truths and experiences. It cannot be sensibly demonstrated and yet it leads to an experience that convinces the heart: He writes:

"There are truths that are felt, and there are truths that are proved, for we know truths not only by reason, but by the intuitive conviction that may be called the heart. The primary truths are not demonstrable, and yet our knowledge of them is not less certain. Truths may be above reason and yet not contrary to reason."³

Similarly, the writer of the Theologia Germanica, recognizes this function of faith, in producing knowledge directly,

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1. Works, Vol. I, p. 59.
2. Ibid., p. 65.
3. Thoughts, p. 289.

through experience. He declares that any one who would be convinced of truth in any other way will never arrive at the goal of spiritual certainty:

"He who would know before he believeth cometh never to true knowledge. . . I speak of a certain truth which it is possible to know by experience, else you will never come to know it."¹

William Law emphasizes this aspect of faith in a similar manner. He declares that it has ever been of just such a nature and ever will continue to be. He attributes its origin to the abiding of a divine light in the soul of the believer. He writes that

"it matters not in what age or under what dispensation of God we live, the necessity, the nature, and the power of faith is always the same; that simple, illiterate, unreasoning faith, that helped Abraham to righteousness, life and union with God, is the one faith that alone can be justification, life and salvation to Christians. For faith is nothing else than so much of the Nature and Spirit of Christ born and living in us."²

Meister Eckhart also emphasizes this conception of faith and defines its nature and power in a manner similar to the above writers. To him, it is a direct gift from God and is the chief power of the soul in arriving at spiritual understanding.³

The contrast of faith with unbelief is also a mystical emphasis. Just as faith works for a greater knowledge of and appreciation of spiritual things in the heart of the believer, so in the heart of the unbeliever there is a gradual lessening of any

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1. Quoted by Inge, Christian Mysticism, p. 50.
2. Liberal and Mystical Writings, p. 162.
3. Cf. Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 95.

initial regard for spiritual things which eventually ends in hatred. The state of the soul, in this world, cannot remain static. It will either be raised through its exercise of faith to a greater union with God, or else it will sink through unbelief into deeper and deeper spiritual darkness.¹

B. The Doctrine in Edwards

1. Edwards' Definition of Faith.

This mystical emphasis upon faith is as congenial one to Edwards. In his sermon upon True Grace he emphasizes the statement that faith is something more than intellectual assent to truth. Rather is it "another kind and manner of believing which is called the faith of God's elect". The believing which is spoken of in I J 5:1, he says, is a spiritual conviction of the truth which is peculiar to the saints and arrived at through the heart more than through the mind.²

In the Treatise on Religious Affections, he represents faith as essentially synonymous with that experience of God obtained through "sight" of him. This sight, as has been pointed out above, comes immediately from God to the soul of man through the divine light. Thus man has that power to walk by faith rather than by the power of his physical senses; this is indicated in such passages as II Cor. 4:18, 5:7, Rom. 8:24, John 20:29. The Scrip-

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1. Cf. Hugel, von, Mystical Element of Religion, p. 96.

2. Vol. IV, p. 457.

ture is "ignorant" of any faith that is not founded on such a spiritual sight of God, John 6:40. True faith is never exercised except by those persons who have experiential knowledge of the glory of God, II Cor. 3:18; 4:6. The natural man believes not because he has not the knowledge of such an experience, II Cor. 4:5.¹ Moreover, those who prove apostates never have had the same kind of faith that is possessed by the true saint. This is Christ's meaning in John 6:64 and is also illustrated in the case of Judas in 6:70,71.²

In a treatise entitled, Concerning Faith, Edwards states that there are two elements in faith. First, it may be defined as a belief of the truth - that is, an intellectual conviction of its reality; or secondly, it may be regarded as an "answerable disposition" of the heart - that is, a willingness to venture one's actions, a conviction that God is and that he will fulfill his promises.

"Therefore, faith may be defined as a thorough believing of what the gospel reveals of a Saviour of sinners, as true and perfectly good, with the exercise of an answerable disposition towards him. That true faith, in the Scripture sense of it, implies not only the exercise of the understanding, but of the heart or disposition, is very manifest."³

A little later he states that trust and faith in the Scripture mean the same thing in a general way and that the "first fruit of each

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1. Vol. III, p. 53.
2. Vol. II, p. 597.
3. Vol. II, p. 625.

is being willing to do and undergo in the expectation of some thing".

In his Observations Concerning Faith, Edwards aptly states that this conception of faith is difficult to define because "we have no word that clearly and adequately expresses the whole act of acceptance, or closing of the soul or heart with Christ". He then continues to enumerate and discuss a large number of definitions that partially express his conception of faith. His use of the writings of John and Paul in these definitions is one of their most noticeable characteristics. Among these definitions might be mentioned the following: Faith is a belief of a testimony and an assent to truth, II Thes. 1:10, John 20:31, II Thes. 2:13; faith is the suitable act of the soul towards God as faithful, Rom. 3:3,4; faith is a belief of truth which arises from a sense of the beauty and excellency of God, John 20:29, I Cor. 12:3; faith is a belief of the truth which arises from a spiritual taste and appreciation of what is excellent and divine, Eph. 4:15; faith in Christ is the design of the gospel, John 17:8, Rom. 10:16, 17; faith includes a knowledge of God and Christ, John 17:3; an acceptance of the promises of God makes up a large part of faith, Gal. 5:5; faith is a receiving of Christ in the heart, John 1:12, Rom. 10:6-10; true faith involves more than belief - it includes full acceptance of the gospel, I Tim. 1:14, 15; II Cor. 11:4; it is more than a mere assent of the understanding and is called an obeying the gospel, Rom. 10:16, 6:17,18; this obedience to the gospel is something more than merely believing the truth of the gospel, it denotes the heart

yielding to the gospel, John 12:42; faith is a trusting in Christ, Eph. 1:12,13, II Tim. 1:12 and implies a submission to God, Rom. 15:12, I Tim. 4:10, II Tim. 1:12, I J. 5:13,14. Faith is a committing of oneself to Christ, II Tim. 1:12, John 2:24; it is obedience to teaching, Rom. 6:17. It is a partaking of the waters of life, an eating and drinking of Christ's blood, a hearing of Christ's voice and following him, John 10:26,27, 8:12. Faith consists in two things - in being persuaded of the truth of God and an embracing of his promises, I Cor. 13:7, John 5:42, I J. 5:1; it involves man's reconciliation to God through Christ, II Cor. 5:18-21, Col. 1:21; it is a being drawn to Christ, John 4:10, 12:46-48. Faith is closely related to love, John 3:18,19, II Thes. 2:10,12. Faith is a thirsting for the waters of life, Rev. 21:6; it is a being persuaded to join ourselves to Christ, John 8:12. It involves a sense of the sufficiency and ability of Christ to save, Rom. 4:21, II Tim. 1:5,12; it is a submitting to the righteousness of God, Rom. 10:3, John 16:8. It is a receiving of the truth for its own sake, II Thes. 2:10,12. It implies a cleaving to Christ so as to be willing to sacrifice all for him, John 12:42,43; 5:54, Eph. 3:12. This faith is not all kinds of assent to the word of God as true and divine, John 5:45, I Cor. 13:2, but must include an applying to God and a seeking of him through Christ, Rom. 15:12, 10:8-13. Faith is "the soul's active closing or uniting with Christ".¹ In one of his summarizing passages Edwards

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1. Vol. II, pp. 606-616.

states the essentials of his conception of faith as follows:

"The definition might have been expressed in these words, faith is the soul's entirely adhering and acquiescing in the revelation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour. - Or thus, faith is the soul's embracing that truth of God. . . Or thus, faith is the soul's entirely acquiescing in and depending on the truth of God. . . It is the whole soul according and assenting to the truth, and embracing of it. There is an entire yielding of the heart and mind to the revelation, and a closing with it, and adhering to it, with the belief and with the inclination and affection. . . It may be more perfectly described than defined by a short definition, by reason of the penury of words; a great many words express it better than one or two. I here use the same metaphorical expressions; but it is because they are much clearer, than any proper expressions that I know of."¹

The faith of the true saint has its origin in the divine light, within the soul, as mentioned above. This fact is evidenced by such scripture as John 3:3. The change in which the soul of the believer becomes a new creature witnesses also the impartation of a new kind of faith, John 1:12,13, 3:5, Titus 3:5. There is an essential difference between this faith and the faith which the natural man possesses. The former receives the divine truth not only with the mind but also with the heart; with the latter, it is a matter of the intellect alone, II Thes. 2:10, John 1:12. John represents the exercise of such a faith as the principal duty of the believer, John 6:28,29, I J. 3:23. The exercise of this faith illuminates the mind and leads to a conviction of the nature of the divine origin of the gospel, to which the natural man can never attain, II Cor. 4:3-6. Such a faith has in

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1. Vol. II, p. 616.

itself its own evidence and tends to assure the heart of its possessor. In this way the disciples were assured that Jesus was the Son of God, John 1:14. Those only are fit witnesses of the gospel who have such a faith and who can say that they have "seen" the truth of the thing they assert, John 3:11, 1:34, I J. 4:14.¹

2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of Faith.

Edwards appears to delight in this emphasis upon the conception of faith as a venture of the soul. The following paragraph is so characteristic of him, in both substance and emphasis, that we quote it, as it can best be expressed in his own words.

"If a man should have word brought him from the king of a distant island, that he intended to make him his heir, if, upon receiving the tidings, he immediately leaves his native land and friends, and all that he has in the world, to go to that country, in a dependence on what he hears, then he may be said to venture himself, and all that he has in the world upon it. But, if he only sits still, and hopes for the promised benefit, inwardly pleasing himself with the thoughts of it; he cannot properly be said to venture himself upon it; he runs no venture in the case; he does nothing, otherwise than he would do, if he had received no such tidings, by which he would be exposed to any sufferings in case all should fail. So he that, on the credit of what he hears of a future world, and, in a dependence on a report of the gospel, concerning life and immortality, forsakes all, or does so at least, so far as there is occasion, making everything entirely give place to his eternal interest; he, and he only, may properly be said to venture himself on the report of the gospel. And this is the proper evidence of a true trust in Christ for salvation. . . . If the doctrine of falling from grace be embraced, it would have a great tendency to prevent an act of faith; for if so, a person, if he should venture his soul on Christ, could not be assured that Christ would save him."²

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1. Vol. III, p. 134.

2. Vol. III, pp. 219, 526.

In commenting upon I J. 5:1-5, Edwards finds that this faith differs from the faith possessed by the natural man in nature, kind and essence. It is evident, he declares, that there is such a thing as a spiritual conviction of the truth of the gospel. That is peculiar to those who have experienced spiritual things through the divine light, - as an indwelling, vital principle in their souls. It differs from faith of the natural man, not alone in its fruit; but the faith itself is different. This is evident from the Scripture, he says, "if anything at all is so", John 17:8, Titus 1:4, John 16:27, I J. 4:5, 5:1,10,11.¹ From I J. 4:15, he deduces that this faith is a supernatural gift and also finds the same truth in I Cor. 12:2, 2:14, Eph. 2:8-10, II Thes. 1:11, Col. 2:12. It is for this reason that the possessors of this faith are spoken of in the Scripture as being justified, Rom. 1:16, 17, 3:22, 10:4. This same kind of faith is illustrated in the life of Abraham who went out into an unknown country, trusting entirely to the promises of God, Rom. 4:16. Such a faith is an "unfeigned" faith, I Tim. 1:5, II Tim. 1:5. Thus it becomes evident that the natural man has nothing of such a faith, II Cor. 4:3,4. The heart and mind of the saint is being constantly renewed by such a faith as this, II Thes. 2:10. In this sense John calls it a receiving of Christ, John 1:12.²

It is of the nature of this faith, to commit the soul to

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1. Vol. III, p. 127.

2. Vol. III, p. 131.

Christ's keeping. The believing soul takes this action because of its realization of its own weakness and insufficiency, II Tim.

1:12. And such a commitment is necessary, in order that the soul may continue to enjoy the blessings of union with God, Rom. 1:17,

John 15. Christ himself was an example of this for all believers; for he made the abiding in God the basis of continuing in God's

love, Rom. 11:22, Col. 1:21-23, I Tim. 2:15, II Tim. 4:7-8, Rom.

4:3, I J. 2:24-28.¹

Edwards treats at length the doctrine of justification by faith. In this treatment he follows closely the lines of Calvinistic theology, and sees in justifying faith that which makes possible an act of God whereby the sinner is pardoned of his guilt; it is by God's power alone that the sinner is pardoned and not on account of any virtue, that may be in him or any works that he may do.

And yet, in his development of this legal conception of faith, Edwards shows the influences of the mystical element in his thinking. In its essence he finds that this justifying faith might be called also an acceptance of God's promises, or the soul's venturing its all upon those things which are spiritual and unseen with the confident expectation that all will be well in the end.²

It is a reliance upon the conviction

"that goodness goes forth and flows out, from the fullness of God's nature, the fullness of the fountain of good . . . and that we have this interest (in God) only by faith, or by our souls receiving Christ, or adhering to and closing with him."³

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1. Vol. III, p. 515.

2. Vol. III, p. 627.

3. Vol. III, p. 225.

This faith, exercised by the believer, is a progressive faith. It is ever leading the saint to a higher and higher plane of spiritual experiences. God has respect not only to the first act of faith but also to all future, persevering acts. Thus it is said that through faith the Christian grows in grace. The experience which comes through a spiritual venture is not a complete experience but rather does it only prepare the way for a greater illumination through future acts of faith, Rom. 1:17.¹ In the exercise of such a faith as this, is it said that the believer passes from a state of death into life, or from a state of condemnation into a state of salvation, John 5:21, 3:18, 20:31.² Indeed, this continuance and progress in faith is necessary to salvation; for, it is implied in Scripture that if the believer fails in such a perseverance that he will fail in attaining to salvation, John 18:8,9; 17; this also involves the attaining to the possession of eternal life, John 10:27,28; 15, for to fail in such a faith is represented as a cutting off from the goodness of God, Rom. 11:22, II Thes. 3:8, Phil. 4:1, I J. 2:24, I Cor. 15:2, II Tim. 4:7,8.³

This faith is, then, the instrument by which the saint actively appropriates Christ rather than the instrument by which God imparts the divine light to the soul of the believer. This trust in Christ is that element which renders it a fit thing, in the

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1. Vol. IV, p. 107.
2. Vol. II, p. 624.
3. Vol. III, p. 523.

sight of God, that the believer, rather than others, should have God's gift of light in his soul. Thus this difference in qualification may be called the determining element which causes it to appear suitable in the sight of God that justification should be accorded to some and not to others. It is that element in man, which makes it possible for God to bestow his highest reward upon him; that is, unity with Christ. So the exercising of this faith is the chief thing on man's part in the uniting act by which he is made a partaker of eternal life, in the state of union, John 6:35-39, 40, 5:38-40, 1:12. In this same connection Edwards points out, again, that this faith is not a reward from God for any intellectual belief; but the soul's own acting in uniting itself to Christ as a spontaneous act, growing out of its longing for union with him.¹

Faith may thus be said to justify, for the reason that it makes Christ and the believer one. It gives to the saint eternal life, because it unites him to Christ; in whom is eternal life.

"The Apostle John in these words, 1 J. 5:12, 'He that hath the Son, hath life', seems evidently to have respect to those words of Christ that he gives account of in his gospel, 3:36, . . . and in the same places that the Scripture speaks of faith as the soul's receiving or coming to Christ, it also speaks of this receiving, or coming to or joining with Christ, as the ground of an interest in his benefits: to as many as received him, 'to them gave he power' to become the sons of God . . . and this is certainly what the Apostle Paul means, when he so much insists upon it, that we are not justified by works. . . For the proof of which I shall at present

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1. Vol. IV, p. 71.

mention but one thing . . . and that is, the apostle from time to time, speaking of our not being justified by works, as a thing that excludes all boasting, Eph. 2:9, Rom. 3:27, 4:2."¹

In setting forth his arguments from Scripture in defense of this doctrine Edwards states that he finds a large amount of material "but particularly the Apostle Paul is abundant in teaching that, 'we are justified by faith alone, without the works of the law.'"² It is not within the scope of this thesis to treat the legal aspect of this doctrine of justification by faith but rather to call attention to Edwards' mystical emphasis upon the active side of faith and especially to call attention to his use of the Johannine and Pauline writings, as authority for his emphasis. This phase of the treatment of the doctrine of faith revolves around his statement that faith leads to union with God, and so, an immediate communication with Him, who is the source of life. To Edwards this was the crowning glory of Scripture and anything which detracted from it was offensive to him.³

Faith bestows a title to that glory which is the reward of righteousness, that is, union with Christ and God, John 5:1,2, 5:24.⁴ In such a faith there is a revelation of spiritual things which are unseen, full of wonder and exceedingly remote from all the objects of the sense and those things with which we commonly converse in the world; "so that it is the first and principal manifestation

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1. Vol. IV, pp. 72-73.
2. Vol. IV, p. 78.
3. Vol. IV, pp. 78, 83, 90.
4. Vol. IV, p. 67.

of the symphony between the soul and those divine things, that it believes them, and acquiesces in them as true."¹ Thus through this faith we come to know truths not so much through the reason as by intuition and while we are not able to prove them by any sensible demonstration yet we are convinced of their reality.²

3. Edwards' Treatment of Faith in Relation to Other Doctrines.

Prayer is as natural to the expression of faith as breathing is to life. A life which lives by faith must by necessity be a consecrated life, and so filled with the spirit of prayer. He who neglects the duty and privilege of prayer does not know God and those experiences which arise from union with him. "A prayerless life is so far from being a holy life, that it is a profane life."³ The same expressions which are used in the Scripture to designate faith may be appropriately applied to prayer also, Eph. 3:12, for "prayer is only the voice of faith", 1 Tim. 2:8, John 14:13,14, 16:23,24.⁴

The character of faith is clearly revealed in a comparison of it with unbelief. Just as faith grows out of the divine Seed, within the heart of man; so, does the unbelief of the natural man have its origin in the seed of wickedness in his own heart. This malice within his heart may be restrained in the time of his prosperity; but, when he falls upon days of adversity, it breaks out into violence. Since malice towards God is his natural state

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1. Vol. II, p. 608.

2. Vol. III, pp. 538, 540.

3. Vol. IV, p. 481.

4. Vol. IV, p. 105; Vol. II, p. 613.

any trial of him by God only serves to inflame this malice into open rebellion. "The heart of a natural man is as destitute of love towards God, as a dead, stiff, cold corpse is of vital heat, John 5:43". Since the natural man is of the darkness he hates the light; he delights in his enmity and chooses it, Rom. 7:14. The tongues of men and of angels cannot persuade such men to give up their enmity towards God; miracles are equally powerless. Such enmity can never be overcome through any power that is in man. It hates God worse than it hates Satan.¹

Just as true faith leads to an ever increasing experience of God, so unbelief leads to a gradually degenerating experience and hatred of divine things. The spiritual element in the nature of the wicked decreases as the evil increases. Sometimes he may even be unconscious of the real effects of this increase of unbelief, Gal. 3:3.²

It is in this sense that Satan's kingdom is called in the Scripture a kingdom of darkness, while Christ's kingdom is called a kingdom of light. His people are not children of the darkness but are children of light, I J. 1:5. Christ came into the world to be the light of the world, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."³

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1. Vol. IV, p. 40.
2. Vol. III, p. 387.
3. Vol. III, p. 583.

The conduct of the entire life of the children of light is in sharp contrast with that of the children of darkness. The former walk in light while the latter love the darkness, Rom. 13:12,13, I Thes. 5:5-8, Phil. 4:8.¹

The object of worship of the wicked man is himself and the world. He recognizes no allegiance to God and so exalts himself and the world to the place of God, I J. 2:15,16. Sometimes for selfish reasons, such as love of gain or other temporal advantages, the wicked man will show respect for God but this is only for a season and is contrary to the true nature of his heart, John 6:15,25,26.

Wickedness properly belongs to this world, but the children of faith are saved from the world or called out of it, John 7:7, 8:23, 14:17, 15:18,19, 17:9,14, Rev. 14:3,4, I J. 3:13, 4:5, 5:19. Thus wickedness is a characteristic of the natural man as light is a characteristic of the child of God, John 8:44. Again the end of the natural man, who clings to the world, is death, while the end of the child of God is eternal life, Rom. 6:23, 7:5, 8:13, II Cor. 3:7, I Cor. 15:56, Rev. 2:11, 20:6,14, 21:8, I J. 3:14, John 5:24, 6:50, 8:51, 11:26, etc.²

The sin of unbelief is thus represented in Scripture as a heinous one. It counts the glory of God and the work of Christ as things of no value and holds them in contempt. The more that

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1. Vol. IV, p. 600.

2. Vol. II, pp. 391-407.

unbelief comes into contact with the holiness of God, the more does it increase the hatred for God. Unbelievers are so blinded spiritually that they cannot see the evil of their course. They regard the beauty and excellency of Christ as of less value than the meanest of earthly enjoyments. It is for such reasons that the Scripture speaks of this sin of unbelief as of so heinous a nature, John 3:18, 16:9, 1 J. 5:10.¹

C. Summary of the Chapter.

In this chapter, we found from representative writers that the mystical doctrine of faith differs from the legal presentation of that doctrine not so much in content as in emphasis. While the former would emphasize the fact of the believer's justification by an act of God which is received through faith, the latter might scarcely mention this phase of the doctrine, and dwell at length upon faith as a venture upon the promises of God and the experience of God, which comes from such a venture.

In Edwards, both of these phases are found but the emphasis is that of the mystic rather than the legalist. In his treatment of the doctrine, he dwells at length upon his definition and nature of faith and arrives at the conclusion that it is an "active closing" with Christ; that it ultimately leads, through experience, to union with God. The nature of this faith is essentially different from the faith of the natural man, for it has its origin in the

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1. Vol. IV, p. 468.

divine light. Or again it may be described as a venture upon God's promises, or a committing of the soul to Christ, or the instrument for receiving Christ. It justifies man by uniting him to Christ.

Again, it was discovered, that in his development of the mystical emphasis on faith, Edwards made wide use of the Johannine and Pauline writings. While other texts of Scripture are used yet these two writers predominate and are quoted in his development of practically every phase of this doctrine, - often to the exclusion of all other texts of Scripture.

D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Mystical Emphasis upon Faith is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings.

Book of Bible	Characteristics of Faith	Fruits of Faith	Faith is Progressive	Faith and Unbelief
John	1:33,34; 8:28 20:8,16,18; 1:12 3:33,36; 6:29,35 6:36,37,40,44,45 6:47,65; 8:47; 10:3,5,14,26,27 10:38; 11:22-27 14:17,20; 15:15 18:37	1:12; 3:33,34 3:35,36; 4:42 5:40; 6:49 7:17,37,38 8:12,19,24 11:22,40; 12:40,44; 14:7,9,10,11 16:27,30; 17:3,7,8,21 17:25,26; 19:35; 20:27 20:29,31; 9:38	1:50; 2:11,22,23 4:39,41,48,50,53 5:47; 6:28; 7:31 7:48; 8:24,30,46 9:35-38; 10:38, 10:42; 11:15,42 11:45,48; 12:11 12:42; 13:19; 14:1,10,11,12,29 16:9,27,30,31; 17:8,21; 19:35; 20:8,25,29,31	1:11; 3:19,20 5:18,38,45,46 5:47; 6:30,60, 6:61,64; 7:1,5 7:12,25,41,44 7:48; 8:13,24, 8:37,43-49,59, 9:29; 10:20; 9:39; 10:26,31 11:46,47,48,50; 12:10,11,36-40; 15:18,21,22,23, 15:24,25; 16:3,9 18:12; 19:6,14, 19:15.
Romans	1:5; 3:26; 4:3-5,12,16,18 4:19-24	1:16; 3:22,27 4:13; 12:6,7 12:8; 16:26	1:12, 17	14:22,23
I Corinthians	2:5			10:5; 1:18,21, 1:22,23,26-29 2:14; 3:19
II Corinthians			1:16; 3:18	2:16; 3:12,15; 4:3,4; 10:5
Galatians	3:2; 5:5; 6:6	3:14,22,23 3:24; 6:6		
Ephesians	2:13	1:13		2:12
Philippians	3:9			3:18, 19
Colossians	1:23; 2:5			1:21
I Thessalonians	1:8, 10	1:10; 5:8		4:8
II Thessalonians	1:5; 2:13,14	1:4,5,11,12		3:2; 2:10,12
I Timothy	1:5,6,14,19	1:16; 4:10		1:4,13; 4:1 6:21

Book of Bible	Characteristics of Faith	Fruits of Faith	Faith is Progressive	Faith and Unbelief
II Timothy	1:12,13; 3:15			2:25,26; 3:8,9 4:3,4
Titus	1:1			1:16
Philemon	1:6			
I John	2:3,4,5,13,14 2:20,21,29; 3:1,2,5,14,19 3:24; 4:2,6,8, 4:13,16; 5:1,2 5:5,4,10,13,15 5:18,19,20			2:22,23; 4:3 5:10
II John				1:7
Revelation	3:20			2:21; 9:20,21; 11:10; 21:18; 22:5.

CHAPTER VII

THE DOCTRINE OF LOVE

CHAPTER VII

THE DOCTRINE OF LOVE

A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers.

The mystical doctrine of love differs from the same doctrine in dogmatic theology in emphasis rather than content. This emphasis is so apparent in mystical literature that we need not dwell upon it at length. Even a casual reader of this literature will recognize that love is a distinguishing characteristic of it.

Love is the cleansing fire that purifies the life. It is the spring and stimulant of action. It is to the follower of the Way the universal solvent; it prepares the way for the Christian graces.¹ Angela of Foligno finds in love an "inestimable satiety" for the soul; it is the spiritual "eye": She writes,

"The eyes of my soul were opened and I beheld love advancing gently towards me, and I beheld the beginning but not the end. Unto me there seemed only a continuation and eternity thereof, so that I can describe neither likeness nor color, but immediately that this love reached me, I did behold all these things more clearly with the eyes of the soul than I could do with the eyes of the body. . . .² Then was I filled with love and inestimable satiety."

William Law, in writing of this love, finds nothing else like it; it is the fire that purifies, the source of all that is good and holy:-

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1. Cf. Underhill, *Mysticism*, pp. 58, 96 seq.
2. B. Angelae de Fulginio, *Works*, chap. XXV, Quoted by Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 410.

"There is nothing that so much exalts our souls, as this heavenly love; it cleanses and purifies like a holy fire, and all ill tempers fall away before it. It makes room for all virtues, and carries them to their greatest height. Everything that is good and holy grows out of it, and it becomes a continual source of all holy desires and pious practices."¹

Julian of Norwich exemplifies this emphasis upon love, in explaining the meaning of one of her visions. She writes:

"And from that time that it was shewed, (i.e. her vision) I desired oftentimes to learn what was our Lord's meaning. And fifteen years after and more, I was answered in ghostly understanding, saying thus: 'Wouldst thou learn thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well! Love was His meaning. Who showed it thee? Love. What showed He thee? Love. Wherefore showed it He? For love. Hold thee therein, and thou shalt learn, and know more in the same. But thou shalt never know nor learn therein any other thing without end.' Thus did I learn that love was our Lord's meaning."²

Thomas a Kempis sees in love the greatest spiritual asset. To him, there is nothing nobler nor sweeter. He thus describes this love:

"There is nothing sweeter than love, nothing higher, nothing broader, nothing more jocund, nothing fuller, nothing better in heaven and in earth; for love is born of God, nor it may not rest but in God above all creatures."³

Saint John of the Cross finds in love a direct communion with God; one of these does not exist without the other:

"That soul, therefore, has greater communion with God that is most advanced in love. . . . For God never grants the mystical wisdom without love, it being love itself that influences it into the soul. The soul is not al-

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1. Serious Call to a Devout Life, p. 283.
2. All Shall Be Well, p. 7.
3. Imitation of Christ, p. 105.

ways conscious of this burning and anxious love, for in the beginning of the purgation all the divine fire is employed in drying up and preparing the soul rather than on setting it on fire, but when the soul becomes heated in the fire, it then feels most commonly this burning and warmth of love."¹

Saint Bernard finds love to be born of the Spirit and greater than death:

"It is love, not patience nor hope, that is strong as death. Love is set afire of the Spirit. Love doth not say: It is fitting, or it is expedient to do such and such a thing; it saith rather: I will, I desire, I vehemently long so to do. Ye see, how sublime, how fearless, how delightful is love."²

The mystics often use the doctrine of the Trinity in explaining their conception of the nature of this love.³ Thus in one of his sermons, we find Meister Eckhart identifying love with the Holy Spirit. He who has this love within him has God:

"He who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. Suppose I am in God, then where He is I am; and if God is in me, then, unless the Scriptures lie, where I am God is . . . Now you must know, God loves the soul so mightily, he who should rob God of loving would rob him of his very life and being."⁴

B. The Doctrine in Edwards.

1. Edwards' Definition of Love

Love has its origin in the Holy Spirit. The influence of love in the heart is the greatest privilege and glory of man and of the highest angel. It is "the very thing by which the creature

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1. Works, Vol. I, p. 149.
2. Thoughts of St. Bernard, Williams, p. 146.
3. For a treatment of this phase of the doctrine of love see, Underhill, Mysticism, p. 139 seq.
4. Eckhart, Pfeiffer, pp. 27, 113.

has fellowship with God himself, with the Father and the Son, in their beauty and happiness." In love the saints are made partakers of the divine nature and the joy of Christ is fulfilled in them. Love is attended with a sense of humility on the part of its possessor and leads to a renunciation of all self-righteousness, I J. 4:9-11, 19; I Cor. 13:4,5. "He that thus dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him."¹

In his treatise on the "Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God", Edwards finds that this love in man is a distinguishing sign, that he is of the Spirit of God, I J. 4:6 ff. This also is especially evident in 4:12,13. From such texts Edwards argues that love is then the participation by the saint of the nature of the Holy Spirit and so is identical with the divine light treated in this thesis in chapter three.² In this manner, he intimates that the Holy Spirit and love are identical. For this love, within the soul of the saint, is not merely the result of the influence of the Holy Spirit; but is, itself, a personality; it is in itself nothing less than the essence of the Spirit. The Scripture speaks of love in a peculiar sense, and in such a way as cannot be said of the Father or the Son. It is in this sense that John wrote, that God is love; and that, he that dwells in love dwells also in God and God in him; and again, when John says, that we know that we dwell in God, because he has given us of his Spirit.³

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1. Vol. I, p. 557.

2. Vol. I, p. 543.

3. Vol. I, p. 543. In this connection, Dr. Allen makes the statement, that in an essay written in later years but now lost, Edwards comes out plainly in a treatment on the Trinity and

2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of Love.

The greatest exhibition of the nature of love was in God's gift in Christ and Christ's work while on earth. This is made even greater when we consider that this love was shown while men were yet sinners and so not deserving of such love, Rom. 5:10.

"How wonderful was this love of Christ in thus exercising dying love to his enemies! That he should so love those that hated him, with hatred that sought to take away his life, so as voluntarily to lay down his life, that they might have life through him. 'Herein is love; not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and laid down his life for us.'"¹

This love greatly glorifies the mercy of God. Such a quality was never witnessed before, in heaven or on earth, until it was seen in the redemptive work of Christ. It appeared great towards the angels in their creation and blessedness; it was also made glorious in the creation of man in his first state of purity and innocence; but in the gift of Christ to an undeserving world was seen the greatest of all exhibitions of God's love.

This love is greater than any fear of hell. In his description of the last days of his friend, David Brainerd, Edwards finds that love was the dominating principle of his life. His friend's whole thought, he declares, was concerned with the

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identifies Love with the Holy Spirit. He also uses the same language of John: God is love, then it must follow that Love is God. This would be a logical sequel to his rather vague intimations in his Marks of a Work of the Spirit. See Allen, Jonathan Edwards, pp. 360-70.

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1. Vol. IV, p. 63.

wonderful love of God, which was in his heart, and which was a constant source of inspiration. In an "infinite fountain" of love all thoughts of hell were forgotten by Brainerd.¹

Such a love is implied in the nature of the faith described in the preceding chapter of this thesis. He who trusts in Christ must love him and also the Father: "He that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him", I J. 5:1, also 2:22-24, 4:15, John 14:1, 15:23-24. The keeping of the commandments is good evidence that the saint has a true love to God, John 15:3-5. And through this love, he is able to triumph over the difficulties and evil of the world, which impede the exercise of faith.

"This is explaining (i.e. I John 5:4) what he had said before, that our love to God enables us to overcome the difficulties that attend keeping God's commands; which shows that love is the main thing in saving faith, the life and power of it, by which it produces great effects; agreeably to what the Apostle Paul says, when he calls saving faith, faith effectual by love."²

In his diary, Edwards dwells upon the longing in his heart for this love and expresses his delight in the contemplation of it. A constant abiding union with God in love, was his ideal of heaven. The following lines are characteristic of this longing for love and

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1. Vol. I, p. 657.

2. Vol. II, p. 619.

Edwards' sermons upon the subject of hell appear to be better known than any of his other writings. It is interesting to note how comparatively small a place these sermons, eight in number, take in his work as a whole. He lays his great emphasis upon God, divine light, faith, union, love, etc. These doctrines, and not hell, were the dominant elements in his work.

are taken from his diary:

"The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven, and the enjoyments there; and living there in perfect holiness, humility and love; and it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. . . The inward ardor of my soul seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful, as a world of love; and that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love."¹

Somewhat later in life, he wrote further of this perfect love as it exists in the perfect union of heaven:

"Thus they shall eat and drink abundantly, and swim in the ocean of love, and be eternally swallowed up in the infinitely bright, and infinitely mild and sweet beams of divine love; eternally receiving that light, eternally full of it, and eternally round with it, and everlastingly reflecting it back again to the fountain of it."²

This love increases with the increase of the knowledge of God. And, as it increases, the spiritual horizon of the Christian is extended more and more, until the soul is "swallowed up" with the vastness of the object of its love. Thus the saint should be continually growing in divine love; that this may be an increasing flame in his heart until his heart "ascend wholly into this flame. In this way the will of God will be done on earth even as the angels do it in heaven."³

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1. Vol. I, p. 18.
2. Vol. III, p. 630. Such quotations as these could be greatly multiplied from Edwards' writings. As expressions of mystical theology they could be placed side by side with the works of St. John of the Cross, William Law, Eckhart and others without any impropriety.
3. Vol. IV, p. 576.

The place of love in religion is given a prominent place in the Scripture. "The Scriptures do represent true religion, as being summarily comprehended in love, the chief of the affections, and fountain of all other affections." This was the conception of the Apostle Paul as evidenced by his statements in Rom. 13:8-10, Gal. 5:14, I Tim. 1:5, I Cor. 13:1.¹ From such references it "clearly and certainly appears" that the greater part of true religion lies in love; and that light which is the foundation of love and those things which are the fruit of light, make up the whole of religion. From love, also, arises an intense hatred of evil and a dread of God's displeasure. From it, arises a sense of gratitude for God's goodness and a fervent zeal for his glory. Again, from this same love, arises a fervent zeal for the welfare of men and all of those other virtues implied in such a zeal.²

This spiritual love transcends any love which the natural man may possess. It is far greater than the love of the natural man although it includes it. The love which the natural man possesses is motivated by some selfish end, while the love of the Spirit is for the sake of spiritual things alone. God's perfection is the first foundation of the delight, which the true saint has in Him; Christ's beauty is the real cause of the delight, which the true saint takes in Him. The saint delights in the way of salvation, because it so clearly manifests the admirable qualities of the divine

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1. In other places Edwards cites this as the "great representation" of the Apostle John also.
2. Vol. III, pp. 10, 11.

perfections. Indeed the saints delight in their inheritance in Christ but this is not the first cause of their joy:

"they first rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himself, and then secondarily rejoice in it, that so glorious a God is theirs. They first have their hearts filled with sweetness, from the view of Christ's excellency, and the excellency of his grace and the beauty of the way of salvation by him; and then, they have a secondary joy in that so excellent a Saviour, and such excellent grace are theirs."¹

This love is greater than fear. The spirit of love dwelling within the saint bears witness with his own spirit that he is the child of God, Rom. 8:14-16. The Apostle here speaks of two kinds of spirits; the spirit of the slave and the spirit of "adoption, that is, love". It is not the spirit of bondage and fear that is in the believer; but rather, the spirit of love which casts out fear. In this way the spirit of love within the believer is a witness of the fact that he is a child of God. John also speaks of this in I J. 4:18 when he says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."²

This divine love is the means to the attainment of purity and holiness. Through the burning flame of love, all of that which is unworthy in the Christian, is burned away and he is thoroughly purged and prepared for union with God. The following description of this work of divine love might have come from the pen of Saint

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1. Vol. III, p. 98.
2. Vol. III, p. 90.

John of the Cross, Thomas a Kempis, or other great mystical writers:

"It is indeed a flame, but a sweet one; or rather it is the heat and fervor of a sweet flame. For the flame of which it is the heat, is no other than that of divine love, or Christian charity, which is the sweetest and most benevolent thing that is, or can be, in the heart of man or angel. Zeal is the fervor of this flame, as it ardently and vigorously goes out towards the good that is its object, in desires of it, and pursuit after it; and so consequently, in opposition to the evil that is contrary to it, and impedes it. . . . Bitterness against the persons of men is no part of it, but is very contrary to it; insomuch that so much the warmer true zeal is, and the higher it is raised, so much the farther are persons from such bitterness, and so much fuller of love, both to the evil and to the good. . . The more that a true saint loves God with a gracious love, the more he desires to love him, and the more uneasy is he at his want of love to him; the more he hates sin, the more he desires to hate it, and laments that he has so much remaining love to it; the more he mourns for sin, the more he longs to mourn for sin; the more his heart is broke, the more he desires it should be broke; the more he thirsts and longs after God and holiness, the more he longs to long, and breathe out his very soul in longings after God: the kindling and raising of gracious affections is like kindling a flame; the higher it is raised, the more ardent it is; and the more it burns, the more vehemently does it tend and seek to burn."¹

3. Edwards' Treatment of the Fruits of Love.

The Scripture represents Christ's work of redemption as a fruit of love, John 3:16.² Here it is implied that, if God had not have had such a love, all of mankind would have perished. From the context of this verse and from its setting in the Old Testament, it also appears that man was deserving of destruction and was only saved by love. That man owes his being saved from destruction on account of his sin to God's love, is also shown in John 3:36 and 5:24.

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1. Vol. III, pp. 164, 178.

2. John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A saving faith is also the fruit of love. This appears from Phil. 1:9-10 where Paul writes, "and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more to knowledge, and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent". This approving of things that are excellent is an exercise of that knowledge and sound judgment, which is the fruit of love. This appears more clearly in the original Greek as the connection is there evident; this same truth is also expressed in II Thes. 2:12.¹

A "loving, benevolent, beneficent temper" is the fruit of love and should be found in the heart of every saint. Without love, although he may speak in the tongues of men and of angels, and though he should have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, yet his life would be lived in vain, I Cor. 13. There is no one virtue that is so often insisted upon in the New Testament whereby we may recognize the true Christian. It is a distinguishing sign whereby all may know Christ's disciples. It is laid down both as a negative and a positive evidence. Christ called the law of love his commandment, John 13:34, 15:12, 15:17, 13:35, 14:21.

"The beloved disciple who had so much of this sweet temper himself, abundantly insists on it in his epistles. There is none of the apostles so much in laying down express signs of grace, for professors to try themselves by, as he; and in his signs, he insists scarcely on anything else, but a spirit of Christian love, and an agreeable practice, I J. 2:9,10, 3:14, 3:18,19, 3:23,24, 4:7,8, 4:12,13, 4:16, 4:20."²

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1. Vol. II, p. 618.
2. Vol. III, p. 165.

C. Summary of the Chapter.

The doctrine of love is a characteristic emphasis of the mystical system of thought. Some of the representative writers of this system find in love the chief attribute of God and, from God, it passes into man to become the dominating element in his life; other writers personify love in the person of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. To all of these, it is a "burning fire" whose flames are powerful and efficient in man for the purging away of the sin and dross of the lower self, and thus preparing the soul for its union with its Maker.

It has been discovered that this emphasis was a congenial one to Edwards also. He, too, finds love to be an outstanding attribute of God and of the same essence as God. Starting with the statement of John, that God is love; he finally arrives at the complement of this statement, that love is God and is represented in the Scripture as the Holy Spirit. He finds love to be the greatest good in the life of man and the perfect love of heaven to be the goal to which all mankind aspires. This love is the motivating force in the life of the saint and out of it grow all of those fruits of the Spirit, which are the distinguishing characteristics of the true child of God.

It is not strange that Edwards, in common with many of the great mystics¹, should find in the writings of John, known as

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1. The use of the Johanne and Pauline writings as the basis of the mystical element in Christian theology is not peculiar, in any sense, to Edwards. Many of the great mystical theologians

the Apostle of love, much of his scriptural basis for his emphasis upon love. His use of the writings of Saint Paul has also been discovered to be equal to, if not more, than that of John. Although not so popularly regarded as such, the writings of the Apostle "born out of due season", may well be regarded as emphasizing love as much, if not more, than John.

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owe the same debt to John and Paul, as does Edwards. For striking statements of this fact see Inge, Christian Mysticism, pp. 44-45, and Underhill, The Mystic Way, pp. 216, 223, 257.

D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Mystical Emphasis on Love is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings.

Books of Bible	Characteristics of Love	Fruits of Love	Love of God
John	3:16; 10:13-15; 13:34; 15:9,12; 17:23,26	14:15,21,23,24 14:28; 21:15, 21:16,17.	3:16; 5:42; 10:13-15 8:42; 11:5; 13:1,23, 13:34; 14:21,23; 15:9,12,13; 16:27; 17:23,26; 19:26; 21:20
Romans	8:32,35; 11:28 13:9	8:28	5:5; 8:32,35,39; 11:28,32
I Corinthians	12:31; 13:1-13; 14:1,4; 16:14	13:1-13	
II Corinthians	7:3,4		
Galatians	5:6,13,14	5:22	
Ephesians	4:2,15; 5:1,25 5:22-33	4:16	5:1
Philippians	1:9; 2:1,2,3		
Colossians	1:8; 3:12-14 3:18-4:1		
I Thessalonians	3:12; 4:9,10 5:12-13		
II Thessalonians	1:3		
I Timothy	2:13		
II Timothy	1:7,13; 2:22		1:13
Titus	3:4		3:4
I John	4:20, 21	3:14	2:5,16; 3:1,16,17; 4:7-12; 4:16, 19.
Revelation	2:19		3:19; 7:16,17; 21:4

CHAPTER VIII

UNION WITH GOD

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UNION WITH GOD

A. The Doctrine Identified as Mystical from the Works of Representative Writers.

The goal of the Mystic Way is union with God. In this union, the mystic finds the fulfillment of all his longings and desires. This emphasis upon the goal of life, is probably the best known phase of the mystical system of thought. In a way the whole system could be described in the terms of union with God, as everything in it tends to this one end.¹

Saint John of the Cross sees in union the culmination of all of the blessings of his life. He draws his teachings concerning union largely from the Gospel of John. In union the soul beholds the "beauty of God", and is made a partaker of this beauty through the incarnation of Christ. There is no limit to the blessings which are here received and he who attains to perfect union shall be "like unto the Son, and so is called, and is, by participation God."²

Saint Bernard looks forward to sharing with God the blessings of union. He writes that "God is in us in such a way that he is imparted and shared, so that a man need not fear to say that he

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1. "Mysticism, in its pure form is the science of ultimates, the science of union with the Absolute, and nothing else, and the mystic is the person who attains to this union, not the person who talks about it. Not to know about, but to Be, is the mark of the real practitioner", Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 86.
2. *Works*, Vol. I, p. 440, Vol. II, pp. 191, 218, 172.

is, as it were, one spirit with us, albeit not one person and one substance."¹

In writing of her own spiritual experiences which grew out of her strivings for this union with God, Juliana of Norwich informs us that she had long looked forward to the attainment of this goal, for

"then shall we all come unto our Lord, ourself clearly knowing, and God fully having; and we shall endlessly be all had in God, him verily seeing, and fully feeling, Him spiritually hearing, and Him delectably in-breathing (smelling) and of him sweetly drinking."²

Thomas a Kempis describes union as the sum total of the desires of his heart. For this great consummation, his whole life had been lived:

"And when my soul shall be perfectly united with him, then shall my inward parts rejoice and then my Lord will say unto me, 'If thou wilt be with me I will be with Thee.' And I shall answer him, 'Blessed Lord, I beseech Thee dwell with me, for all the desire of my heart is to be with Thee inseparable without departing.'"³

Saint Teresa looked forward to this union with God, for in it, she saw rest from the sin and temptations of life. It marked the end of a long and weary journey for her and a rest from many a weary struggle in purgation. Thus she exclaims:

"Freedom! Enslaved by thy liberty, unless established in the fear and love of thy Creator, when will that blessed day arrive in which, absorbed in the infinite ocean of Supreme Truth, thou wilt no longer possess the power nor the wish to sin, being freed from all misery, and

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1. Thoughts of St. Bernard, Williams, p. 113.
2. All Shall be Well, p. 38.
3. Imitation of Christ, p. 272.

united to the life of thy God. . . O my Bridegroom, my Master, at last the longed-for hour has come! Now it is time for us to see one another. My Master, it is time to set forth. Blessed be this hour, and may thy will be done. Now is the hour for me to leave this desert, that my soul may rejoice in Thee whom it has so ardently desired."¹

Meister Eckhart declares that he could be content with nothing less than perfect union with God. Nothing in heaven or on earth could compensate him for the loss of full communion with God, in union. For

"all that God ever made or shall yet make, all this (I say) if God should give it to my soul without Himself, he staying, so to speak, a hairs breadth off, would not content my soul or make me happy. I am happy when all things are in me and God, and where I am God is, and where God is I am."²

In the mystical theology, obedience is an inseparable characteristic of this union. By a life of obedience union is made perfect, and, in the changed nature of the redeemed, it becomes natural to the soul. A surrendered will implies an obedient will.

Thus we find that Thomas a Kempis holds that obedience is a necessary condition for a proper appreciation of Christ. The failure to obey cuts off the soul from all communication with God.³ St. John of the Cross similarly states the necessity of obedience and considers it to be of more value than penance or works.⁴

Another characteristic of this union with God is peace.

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1. Thoughts of St. Teresa, pp. 28, 127.
2. Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 27.
3. Imitation of Christ, pp. 1, 124.
4. Works, Vol. I, p. 34.

St. John of the Cross finds peace in union because it represents the abiding presence of Christ in the heart. Just as he gave peace to his disciples while he was here upon earth, so now does he impart this same peace to those who abide in him:

"He who, when the doors were shut, entered bodily in among his disciples, and said, 'Peace be unto you', in an unexpected and inconceivable way, will enter spiritually into the soul without its knowledge or cooperation, when the doors of Memory, Intellect, and Will are shut, and will fill it with His peace."¹

Meister Eckhart discovers this same peace in union and represents it as the natural result of a Spirit-filled life. Here through purgation the lower-self has been overcome and the soul now enjoys a peace which he likens to the evening time of a perfect day:

"So the evening is warm. There is perfect day in the soul, when all the soul is full of divine light. But it is evening in the soul, as I have said before, when the light of this world fades and the soul goes in to rest."²

As set forth by Saint Teresa, in the quotation of her conception of union given above, man can attain to real freedom of the old nature, or lower-self, and is able to enjoy spiritual things. The only real freedom to her mind is spiritual freedom.

Meister Eckhart extols this spiritual freedom for, in it, he finds the will of man free to will as God would have him. He writes,

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1. Works, Vol. I, p. 215.
2. Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 103.

"God does not compel the will, rather he sets the will free, so that it wills not otherwise than God himself wills; and the spirit desires not to will otherwise than what God himself wills; and that is not unfreedom, it is true freedom and real freedom. For freedom is that we are not bound, but free and pure and unmixed, as we were in our first out-pouring, as we were set free in the Holy Ghost. Holy Scripture cries aloud for freedom from self. Self-free is self-controlled and self-controlled is self-possessed and self-possession is God possession of everything God ever made. . . This method gives self-mastery."¹

Thomas a Kempis recognizes in union this same quality of freedom and sees in it perfect liberty. For "the free oblation of thyself into the hands of Almighty God ought to go before all thy works, if thou wouldst obtain liberty and grace."²

Perfect union does not violate the freedom of the soul, according to Saint John of the Cross, but rather does it increase the soul's freedom. "Thus all the movements of the soul are divine, and through God, still they are the soul's, because God effects them within it, with itself willing them and assenting to them."³

The salvation of the soul lies in union. As in the doctrine of faith, the mystical emphasis on salvation is not upon the legal aspect of a judicial act by which the believer is freed from sin; rather is the emphasis laid upon the fact of the new birth in the Spirit. It marks the entrance into a new life in which a new nature is given to man. In salvation he becomes conscious of a new force within him which is often compared to a fountain of life or a

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1. Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 418.
2. Imitation of Christ, p. 255.
3. Works, Vol. II, p. 224.

fountain of living water. This new consciousness also, so changes his nature, that the things of the old life become very distasteful to him. Joy in the new found salvation now becomes the dominating element of life.

"The joy of the soul is now so abundant", writes Saint John of the Cross, "that it is like the sea, which is not diminished by the waters that flow out of it, nor increased by those that empty themselves into it; for the soul now contains the fountain of which our Lord said, that it is 'springing up into life everlasting'. . . . O wonder! The soul is now overflowing with the Divine waters, which run from it as from an abundant fountain into everlasting life. It is very true that this communication is light and fire from the lamps of God, yet the fire is here so sweet, that though an infinite fire, it is as the waters of life which satisfy the soul."¹

Meister Eckhart also emphasizes the joy of those who have salvation in union with God and admonishes them to bring forth fruit worthy of their high calling.² Julian of Norwich felt that "it is the will of God that we have true enjoyment with Him in our salvation, and therein He willeth that we be mightily comforted, and strengthened."³

William Law finds an adequate explanation for the joyful character of salvation in the Scripture; it is the indwelling Spirit of Christ in the heart:

"It is the language of Scripture that Christ in us is our hope of glory; that Christ formed in us - living, growing and raising his own life and Spirit in us - is our only salvation. . . must not our redemption be equally

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1. Works, Vol. II, pp. 114, 256.
2. Cf. Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 232.
3. All Shall be Well, p. 28.

inward, an inward essential death to this state of our soul, and an inward growth of a contrary life within us? Consider the treasure thou hast within thee; the Saviour of the world, the eternal word of God, lies hid in thee, as a spark of divine nature which is to overcome sin, and death and hell within thee, and germinate the life of heaven again in thy soul. Turn to thy heart and thy heart will find its Saviour, its God, within itself."¹

B. The Doctrine in Edwards.

1. Edwards' Definition of Union.

It is evident from the Scripture, Edwards writes, that there is some kind of a union existing between Christ and his people. This is indicated from time to time by such expressions as being in Christ, being members of Christ, being united to him as members of the body are united together, as branches are united to the vine, or as the bond of union existing between husband and wife.² It is also evident that Scripture represents this union in Christ as the ground of the Christian's rights in Christ. This is evidenced by such passages as I J. 5:12, I Cor. 1:30, Eph. 1:6. Since, then, this union is so significant in the life of the Christian in his relationships to God and Christ it must be regarded as a vital thing in his life.³

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1. Liberal and Mystical Writings, pp. 12-13.
2. It would appear that Edwards met with adverse criticism for his use of the term "union" in this mystical sense. We find him in his treatment on "Faith" making a defense of the term and expressing his willingness, for the time at least, to employ any other terminology which would convey to his hearers his conception of this union. Possibly the current opposition to the Quakers made this mystical term distasteful to his hearers just as Edwards opposed the term "inner light" for the same reason.
3. Edwards quotes, with approval, the following view of union from a sermon by Dr. Tillatson: "Our Saviour compares his mystical

This vital union of the soul with God is the work of the Holy Spirit and can be obtained in no other manner. It is entirely different from anything which the natural man may possess. It is marked by the indwelling of the Spirit in the soul as an abiding principle. Since it is the work of the Spirit of God, the effect wrought in the soul of the saint is a spiritual effect. There is no work so high and excellent as the work of union for there is no other state in which God does so highly communicate himself to the believer; and in which the creature has, to such a high degree, a participation of God. This is meant by such expressions of Scripture as "having God dwelling in them, and they in God", I J. 4:12, 15,16, 3:21, John 17:21, Rom. 8:10, II Cor. 6:16, Gal. 2:20, John 17:26, 17:13, I J. 1:3, Eph. 3:17-19, John 1:16.¹

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body, that is his church, to a vine, which his Father, whom he compares to a husbandman, hath planted; I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman. To represent to us the union that is betwixt Christ and all true Christian, and the influence of grace and spiritual life, which all who are united to him do derive and receive from him, he sets it forth to us by the resemblance of a vine and branches. As there is a natural, vital union between the vine and the branches, so there is a spiritual union between Christ and true Christians; and this union is the cause of our fruitfulness in the works of obedience and a good life." Vol. IV, p. 70.

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1. Vol. III, p. 69. It is interesting to note, in this connection, how Edwards denounces the notions of some "heretics" who use "abominable and blasphemous language" in their description of the saints as "partakers of the essence of God, and so godded with God, and Christed with Christ", and then proceeds himself to make rather vague statements which appear to mean the same thing that he denounces. For a discussion of this inconsistency see Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 165.

In this union true Christians partake of the life of Christ in his resurrection. They live by the resurrected Christ living in them, Gal. 2:20. By this is meant the life which Christ received after his resurrection and when he arose from the dead. Of this life he communicates to his followers from his own fullness of life. It is thus in union with Christ, that the believer is spoken of as risen with Christ, Col. 2:12,13, 3:1, Eph. 2:5,6, Rom. 5:10, Phil. 3:10,11, Rom. 6:4,15. So this union may be regarded as a spiritual resurrection of life which was purchased by Christ in his sufferings, in the same manner as his own life and resurrection were purchased. In this union the believer is married to Christ, they are united to him as members of his living body, Rom. 6, 7, Eph. 1:18-21. Moreover, this union of the believer with Christ is an immortal, unfailing union, Rev. 1:18. It is that living bread of which he that eateth shall never die, John 6:50,51, Col. 3:4.¹

Edwards is fond of dwelling upon the union between husband and wife as an apt illustration of that spiritual union of the believer with Christ and God. He feels with the Apostle Paul that God's reason in establishing so near a relationship between husband and wife was for the purpose of illustrating this divine union between Christ and his redeemed, Eph. 5:30-32.²

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1. Vol. III, p. 522.
2. Vol. III, p. 566.

2. Edwards' Treatment of the Characteristics of Union.

The spiritual union between the believer and God is the consummation of the highest good of man. The whole creation strives for this goal and, as it were, awaits for the day when perfect union between God and man shall be attained. In that day shall be manifested the glorious freedom and joy of the true Christian, Rom. 8:19-22. The church also must undergo much hardship and suffering in order that this mystical union may be effected, Rev. 12:1,2,5, Gal. 4:19.¹

In perfect union every wish and every desire of the soul is satisfied. In it, provision is made, that the redeemed shall "see" God and dwell with Him forever, who is the object of his supreme love, I Cor. 13:12, I J. 3:2.

"Provision is made for this also; that we should have spiritual conversation with God while in this world; and that we should be hereafter admitted to converse with Christ in the most intimate manner possible. Provision is made in this way of salvation, that we should converse with God much more intimately, than otherwise it would have been possible for us; for now Christ is incarnate, is in our nature; he is become one of us, whereby we are under advantages for an immensely more free and intimate converse with him, than could have been, if he had remained in the divine nature; and so in a nature infinitely distant from us - We naturally desire not only to converse with those whom we greatly love, but to dwell with them! Provision, through Christ, is made for this."²

Since this union is so vital to the welfare of the saint,

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1. Vol. IV, pp. 450-454.
2. Vol. IV, p. 143.

he should allow nothing to stand in competition with it. Everything should be sacrificed, if necessary, in order to attain to it, Gal. 5:24, Phil. 3:14.¹ A life could well be wholly spent in the attainment of so great a blessing, as perfect union with God. This is the only way by which the saint can hope to be free from the bondage of sin. Those who earnestly seek union with God through Christ will find it, for Christ himself said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved and go in and out, and find pasture, John 10:9."²

God is glorified in this divine union. It is true that God's end in creation was himself and the manifestation of his own glory; yet in this seeking of his own glory, it can be said that God was also seeking the glory of the saint united to him through the Son. That which is for the glory of God is also for the glory of all who partake of him in union.³

The heart of the true saint longs for this union with God. In his Memoirs of Mr. Brainerd, Edwards dwells with approval upon this characteristic of his friend. He feels that such a longing is natural to the enlightened soul and is also in itself a proof of his abiding union.⁴ Provision is made in Christ for the fulfillment of this longing and

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1. Vol. IV, p. 389.
2. Vol. IV, p. 583.
3. Vol. II, p. 256.
4. Vol. I, p. 651.

that we should stand in the nearest possible relation to God; that he should be our Father, and we should be his children. We are often instructed in the Holy Scriptures, that God is the Father of believers, and that they are his family. Not only is this so, but they stand in the nearest relation to Christ Jesus. This is the closest union possible. The souls of believers are married to Christ. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Yea, there is yet a nearer relation than can be represented by such a similitude. Believers are the very members of Christ, and of his flesh and of his bones, Eph. 5:30. Yea, this is not near enough yet, but they are one spirit, I Cor. 6:17."¹

In this union provision is also made that the saint shall be made like God, that he shall be transformed into the same image; so that ultimately he shall see God as he is and be like him, II Cor. 3:18.²

This union is an abiding union. Just as it is necessary for the branch to abide in the vine in order that it may continue to be nourished by the root, so it is necessary for the believers to maintain a constant abiding union with Christ in order to partake with him of his eternal life, John 15:6-10, Phil. 3:9, I J. 2:28, Rev. 14:13. The branch is of the same nature as the stock and sap of the vine and bears the same kind of fruit; just so in his union with God, the Christian is of the same temper and spirit as Christ possesses, for they are one in Spirit, I Cor. 6:17, Eph. 4:4, I J. 2:24-27. The saint lives in such a manner, that it is not he that lives but Christ that lives in him. He is a follower of Christ, Rev. 14:4, and is clothed with the Spirit of Christ whom he has "put on". The church, moreover, should be

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1. Vol. IV, p. 144.
2. Ibid.

clothed not only with Christ's righteousness but should also be adorned by his graces, Rev. 13:14. Christ himself is called a Lamb and believers are called lambs, John 21:15. The dove is a Scriptural emblem of the Spirit which descended upon Christ; and in this abiding union it is represented as the spirit of the Christian also. For the same Spirit which descended upon Christ as the head of the church, descends upon the members also, Gal. 4:6, Rom. 8:9. And in this Spirit an abiding union is made possible, John 20:22.¹

The union with God in Christ is a progressive state. Just as the soul succeeds in dying to the "old man" so does it live in an ever increasing consciousness of the "new man". It is begun on earth and is perfected in heaven. All things that exist are of God and through God and in God; therefore does the saint attain to the highest when he is perfected in his union with God. There is but an imperfect union with God in this world because there is but an imperfect knowledge of him. The soul of the saint, when absent from the body, goes to be with Christ in a "most perfect conformity to and union with him". This union, begun in the body, is as one who beholds the glory of God in a glass and who is gradually changed into that image which he beholds. The perfect union of heaven will do away with all misunderstandings and misconceptions of God, as all darkness is abolished by the noon-day sun. So when

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1. Vol. III, p. 160.

a soul gets to heaven it has reached its home. It has never been at home before as it has never before been in its Father's house. Here it finds a thousand times more comfort than it ever enjoyed on its journey towards heaven, or perfect union with God. In his times of contemplation, Edwards delighted to dwell upon this conception of heaven as he notes, so often in his diary. For instance, he wrote upon one occasion:

"It was a comfort to me to think of that state, where there is fullness of joy; where reigns heavenly, calm, and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the deepest expressions of love. . . where those persons who appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers joined together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How will it fill us with joy to think, that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises will never cease but will last to all eternity".¹

The fall of man served to bring about a greater and closer union with God, for it made necessary the work of Christ in redemption. If man had never fallen he never would have been alienated from God by sin and would have ever had the favor of all the persons of the Trinity. But on account of the fall Christ became man's Saviour and surety and took upon himself the nature of man. This occasioned between man and Christ a union of a different kind than ever existed, before and so resulted in a nearer relationship than ever would have been without the fall. The fall may thus be regarded as the occasion of Christ becoming the head of the church, and the saints members of his body. Therefore, due

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1. Vol. I, p. 20.

to this closer and different kind of union with Christ our union with God has become closer, "We are sons by virtue of our union with the natural Son of God, Gal. 4:46. In this way both Christ and the saint can address God as, Our Father, John 17:17, 17:20-23."¹

This union, which God grants to the saint here on earth, is the source of much joy and happiness. In it, the saint partakes of the "ineffable delights" which Christ has in heaven; for when Christ ascended to heaven he was received into a glorious and peculiar joy in the presence of the Father; of this peculiar joy, the saint has a part in union. By virtue of this union the saints do, to a certain degree, partake of the "childlike" relation to the Father and are called heirs with Christ in his inheritance. This is intimated by Paul in Gal. 4:4-7, John 20:17. This was also manifested by Christ in his prayer recorded in John 17, and especially in the 5th, 13th, 22th, 26th verses of this chapter, also in Rev. 3:21. Since the saints are thus represented as heirs of Christ in his inheritance, and are given to possess the same kingdom with him, they are spoken of as possessing all things because they are Christ's and united through him to God, I Cor. 3:21-23. Even the angels are ministering spirits of the saints in this union as they are ministering spirits of Christ and are subject to his rule.²

3. Edwards' Treatment of the Basis of Union.

The saints have this union with Christ and God through

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1. Vol. IV, p. 154.
2. Vol. III, p. 622.

the work of the Holy Spirit and his dwelling in them. In this state the Holy Spirit becomes an inhabitant of the soul, a vital principle within it. His influence within the soul is like a fountain of holiness, a spring of living water. He exerts and diffuses himself through the whole nature of man. This indwelling Spirit is the sum of what Christ has purchased for man and so is fitly described in such terms as living water or rivers of water as in Rev. 22:1, John 4:14, 7:38,39, Gal. 3:13,14. In this Spirit is the fullness of Christ which God has given to the saint without measure. Saint Paul refers to this gift of the Spirit as a pledge of a greater inheritance which the saint shall receive, when he arrives at perfect union with God, II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13,14.¹

Christ assures to the true saint an abiding union with God. This is part of his work as a mediator. It is, through Christ, that the believer is acceptable to God in union, John 14:21; it is through Christ, that the saints prayers are heard, John 14:13, and that he has communion with God and the constant presence of his favor and grace to sustain him in his times of temptation, John 14:16, 5:23. Christ not only promises the blessings of union with God but he says that he himself will bestow them, John 15:26. It was necessary that Christ should do this work for man in order that he might be fully reconciled to God and brought into that fullness of union with him. Otherwise, the saint could have had no rest in

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1. Vol. IV, p. 175.

union for fear of its being broken by his own weakness. Christ is able to do this because all power has been committed to him by the Father, John 16:15.¹ It was for the establishment of this union of his people in the Spirit and their full communion with God, that Christ came into the world; it was also the substance of his last prayer, John 17:21-23. His foreknowledge and consideration of this perfected union was the thing that supported Christ when his soul was troubled at the thought of his approaching sufferings and death, John 12:23,24,27,31,32.²

The foundations of this union rest upon the will of God. It is but the fulfillment of his plan of redemption. Thus this union makes the saint a child of God in a higher sense than would have been possible under any other conditions. "They are not only sons of God by regeneration, but by a kind of communion in the sonship of the eternal Son", as is suggested in Gal. 4:4-6. So, being members of the Son, the saints are partakers of the Father's love for the Son, John 17:23,26, 16:27. And, according to their capacities, they shall also partake with the Son of his enjoyment of the Father and so have his joy fulfilled in themselves, John 17:13.

"And by this means we (they) shall come to an immensely higher, more intimate, and full enjoyment of God, than otherwise could have been. For there is doubtless an infinite intimacy between the Father and the Son; which is expressed by his being in the bosom of the Father. And saints being in him, shall, in their measure and manner, partake with him in it, and the blessedness of it."³

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1. Vol. III, p. 518.
2. Vol. III, p. 449.
3. Vol. IV, p. 201.

4. Edwards' Treatment of the Fruits of Union.

The divine union of the soul gives to the child of God the ability to see intuitively the things of God. This gift does very greatly and directly satisfy the soul. The soul in such a state stands in need of no multiplied signs or long reasonings:

"The saint sees and feels plainly the union between his soul and God; it is so strong and lively, that he cannot doubt it. And hence he is assured that he is a child. How can he doubt whether he stands in a childlike relation to God, when he plainly sees a childlike union between God and his soul, and hence does boldly, and as it were naturally and necessarily cry, Abba, Father?"¹

It is not sufficient merely to believe that Christ came from God but to see him and to know him is eternal life as John meant when he said, "This is eternal life, to know thee, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Thus in union is provision made that the saint should see God, the supreme object of his love and does not have to depend upon hearing of him only.²

This union with God in which the Christian is said to be in Christ, constitutes the grounds of his right to Christ's benefits. This is made evident by such scripture as I J. 5:12, I Cor. 1:30, Eph. 1:6.

"Our being in him is the ground of our being accepted. So it is in those unions which the Holy Ghost has thought fit to compare this union to. The union of the members of the body with the head, is the ground of their partaking of the life of the head; it is the union of the branches to the stock, which is the ground of their partaking of the sap and life of the stock; it is the rela-

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1. Vol. III, p. 91.
2. Vol. IV, p. 143.

tion of the wife to the husband, that is the ground of her joint interest in the estate",

So, Edwards continues, there is a union between Christ and his people which is of such a nature that God accepts one, in many respects for the other.¹

This union of the saint with God is the center around which Edwards' long treatment of justification revolves. Man has no merit in himself which would entitle him to such a deliverance from the guilt of sin; in no manner can his righteousness be considered as making him acceptable to God. He partakes of Christ's blessings and is considered as righteous in the sight of God only through his union with Christ.²

5. Edwards' Treatment of Freedom in Union.

The union of the soul with God is not of such a nature as to prevent the exercise of the freedom of the will. Rather is the opposite of this true as seen in the life of the natural man who is not free. Real freedom is only found in the enlightened soul which has the indwelling spirit within it. The natural man does not desire union with God because his mind is blinded by the powers of darkness, John 5:40. The child of God, on the other hand comes freely and willingly to God because his nature so prompts him.

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1. Vol. IV, p. 70.

2. Vol. IV, p. 73.

It should be noted that in this treatise upon Justification by Faith Alone that Edwards follows closely the Calvinistic theology. The mystical conception of divine union, however, is found throughout the treatise and, as suggested above, is the goal towards which his arguments tend.

That God's impartation of the divine light to the soul of the saint is not inconsistent with his freedom, appears in Paul's statement in II Cor. 8:16,17. In this instance, God gave his Spirit to Titus, but that did not prevent Titus, in any way, from being solicitous of his own accord to do God's will.

So "when men are truly willing to come to Christ, they are freely willing. It is not when they are forced and driven to it by threatenings; but they are willing to come, and choose to come without being driven. But natural men have no such free willingness; but on the contrary, have an aversion. And the ground of it is that which we have heard, viz. that they are enemies to God. . . Hence we may learn the reason why natural men will not come to Christ: for they do not come because they will not come."¹

6. Edwards' Treatment of Obedience in Union.

The obedience of a true Christian is but an expression of the soul's union to Christ. Every work of such a person is in reality an act of obedience which

"is only a new, effective act of reception of Christ, an adherence to the glorious Saviour, Gal. 2:20, Col. 3:17. . . So that as was before said of faith, so may it be said of a childlike, believing obedience, it has no concern in justification by any virtue or excellency in it; but only as there is a reception of Christ in it."²

Obedience, then, leads to a closer union as well as being a proof of union. It is the way to a greater light as well as the way out of doubt; "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself", John 7:17. Thus obedience in the practice of the knowl-

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1. Vol. IV, p. 57.

Edwards would define freedom as the ability to follow one's inclinations or "to do as one pleases". This much of his argument is mystical as appears from the introduction to this chapter. For a discussion of his Freedom of the Will see, Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 90.

2. Vol. IV, p. 107.

edge which one possesses will lead to a greater knowledge. Moreover, Christ will only manifest himself to those who obey him; disobedience will darken any life. Indeed Christ made obedience a distinguishing characteristic of those who are truly his disciples, John 8:31.¹

The obedience of the saint is inward as well as outward. The practice of good works is given in scripture as an external evidence of the soul's union to God. There is a higher obedience than this, however, which more immediately and directly reveals the real nature of a man. This higher obedience - which is the soul's entire yielding to Christ - is a quality of those who abide in him, John 14:23; 13:34,35; 15:10,12-14, I J. 2:3, 2:7-11, II J. 1:5,6, Rev. 2:23.²

Christ is the great example of obedience. This fact was manifested in his life while he was here on the earth, John 14:31, 15:10; the greatness of his spirit appears in his perfect obedience to commands of such great difficulty and which led him to suffering and death, John 10:18, Phil. 2:8. But this obedience on the part of Christ has been the means of bringing eternal life to man, I Cor. 15:22. It also demonstrated the wisdom of God in his plan of salvation and assures for the saint a continued communion with God.³

Edwards enters at length into the meaning of Christ's obedience in a sermon on faith which he based upon Rev. 4:5. In

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1. Vol. IV, p. 484.
2. Vol. III, p. 205.
3. Vol. IV, p. 138.

this sermon he points out that Christ in his obedience obtained for man not only the pardon for his original sin; but also, by his obedience, he purchased for man the power to abide in union with God, Rev. 4:18,19. His death should not only be regarded as a propitiation for sin; but also, as a voluntary submitting, as an act of obedience to the Father's will. The word, obey, is often used in Scripture in reference to the law of God, but never is it used in any other sense. In his obedience to the law Christ voluntarily underwent those sufferings and actively yielded himself up. It is for this reason that his righteousness is considered a part of his active obedience, John 10:17,18, 18:11. The laying down of his life was the acid test. "His respect shown to God in it, and his love to God's authority was proportionately great; it is spoken of in Scripture as Christ's principal act of obedience."¹ In this manner he is also the great example for the Christian.

7. Edwards' Treatment of Peace in Union.

In union with God there is peace. This is the peace that can satisfy the cravings of the human heart. In this peace the true saint is freed from the condemnation of the law, Rom. 8:34. Here they are free from the temptations of the wicked, Rom. 8:31. They are even out of the reach of the fear of death, John 6:4, 9:50; for in union death has lost its sting and is no longer the dreaded foe, I Cor. 15:55. Here the saint can rest in the assurance that

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1. Vol. IV, p. 100.

nothing can separate him from the love of God, Rom. 8:38,39.¹

In a sermon entitled, The Peace Which God Gives to His True Followers, and preached from John 14:27, Edwards describes graphically the nature of the peace which the Christian enjoys in his union with God. He states that this peace was the peculiar benefit which Christ bestowed on his followers. It was the same kind of peace which he enjoys with the Father. For the peace, which Christ bestows upon his people, is a participation in his own peace, which he has with the Father, John 15:11, 17:13,22. In this sense the saints share with him on his throne, Rev. 3:21, and they shall have the same glory which he possesses, John 17; since all things are Christ's so also are they possessed by the saints, I Cor. 3:21,22.²

This peace consists not only of peace with God and one's fellow-man but it is that inward peace of the soul. In procuring for man peace with God Christ also bestowed upon him this inward peace, which imparts "tranquility and peace within". While this peace is not perfected until the soul attains to perfect union in heaven, yet in union with Christ here on earth it differs only in degree and not in kind.³

This peace is greater than anything which the natural man may possess. It is of more value than all the combined wealth of the world. The possessors of wealth can enjoy all of the com-

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1. Vol. IV, p. 432.

2. Vol. IV, p. 431.

3. Vol. IV, p. 433.

forts of material things and exercise temporal power and authority; but they cannot have this peace through this means. They cannot buy the spiritual bread of life.

This peace is a reasonable peace. The more light and knowledge to which the believer can attain, the greater is this peace. The more the conscience is awakened by the knowledge of light, the clearer can one see the true meaning of life and the greater value he places on this peace. The peace which the natural man possesses is in striking contrast to this peace of the saint: "The peace which Christ gives his true disciples, is the light of life, something of the tranquility of heaven, the peace of the celestial paradise, that has the glory of God to lighten it."¹

This peace, which the true Christian enjoys in his union with Christ, is not only the comfort but is a part of the beauty of the redeemed soul. The possession of it is not only a privilege but is a "virtue and grace of God's Spirit, wherein the image of God does partly consist". It results in the exercise of such spiritual fruits which Paul lists as coming from the Spirit in Gal. 5:22,23.

"It is exquisitely sweet, because it has so firm a foundation as the everlasting rock that never can be moved. It is sweet because perfectly agreeable to reason. It is sweet, because it rises from holy and divine principles, that as they are the virtue, so they are the proper happiness of men."²

This peace is an unfailing and an eternal peace. Any

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1. Vol. IV, p. 435.
2. Ibid.

peace which the natural man can have is as ephemeral and temporary as a dream, I J. 2:17, I Cor. 7:31.

"But the foundation of the Christian's peace is everlasting; it is what no time, no change, can destroy. It will remain when the body dies; it will remain when the mountains depart and the hills shall be removed, and when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. The fountain of his comfort shall never be diminished, and the stream shall never be dried. His comfort and joy is a living spring in the soul, a well of water springing up to everlasting life."¹

8. Edwards' Treatment of Salvation in Union.

Edwards' treatment of the doctrine of salvation, like his treatment of faith, has both the legal and the mystical elements. The legal aspect of salvation as growing out of the death of Christ on the cross is dwelt upon at length. However, he also follows the mystical writers in laying great emphasis upon salvation as a new birth or a new life which brings joy into the heart of the believer. No mystical writer takes greater pains to describe the joy of this new experience than does Edwards. In his diary he writes that he "made seeking my salvation the main business of my life". He did this because he felt that those who possess this salvation make up "the most excellent and happy society in the world". God has pardoned their sins and they have his peace in their hearts; also through his gift of divine light they are admitted to all of the privileges of the children of God.²

The nature of this joy differs widely from worldly joy.

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1. Vol. IV, p. 436.
2. Vol. IV, p. 414.

Because of this salvation a godly man may be happy, even though he may be passing through adversity. He may lose all of his possessions and even his friends; and yet, he may still possess the joy of salvation, for he still has God. For "how great is the happiness of those who have chosen the Fountain of all good, and prefer him before all things in heaven or on earth, as they can never be deprived of him to all eternity!" It is possible to have such a joy as this hidden in the heart when one's loved one passes through the shadow of death to a greater union with God in heaven. The Christian does not sorrow as one without such a hope in salvation, I Thes. 4:13.¹

The joy, in the salvation, of union with Christ is a mutual joy. Christ and his people, standing in this new relationship, rejoice together. This mutual joy is likened to that of the bridegroom and the bride "in that they rejoice in each other, as those who have chosen above others, for their nearest, most intimate, and everlasting friends and companions". The Scripture likens those who are partakers of this joy of salvation as particular guests, whom God has invited to a marriage supper; they are happy and truly blessed, who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, Rev. 19:9. They are also likened to the friend, who partakes of the joy of the bridegroom. In union, the saint is the special friend of the bridegroom and rejoices with him in his blessedness. Christ and the saint have a special propriety in each

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1. Vol. IV, p. 545.

other; the saints are called the first fruits of Christ, Rev. 14:4; and Christ and his church rejoice in their mutual communion, Rev. 3:20. His joy is fulfilled in his people, John 15:11, 17:3.¹

Provision is made in this salvation for the life and happiness of the soul to all eternity. Christ brought deliverance from a state of temporal death as well as from spiritual death. The body of the saint shall be raised in incorruption and glory and shall be like the glorified body of Christ "to shine as the sun in the Kingdom of his Father, and to exist in a glorified state in union with the soul to all eternity".²

In the perfect union of heaven, this joy of salvation shall also be made perfect. In it, the saints will enjoy that fellowship with Christ and shall participate with him in that dominion to which God has exalted him.

"Such is the saint's union with Christ, and their interest in him, that what he possesses, they possess, in a much more perfect and blessed manner than if all things were given to them separately, and by themselves, to be disposed of according to their discretion. They are now disposed of so as, in every respect, to be most for their blessedness, by an infinitely better discretion than their own; and in being disposed of by this head and husband, between whom and them there is the most perfect union of hearts, and so the most perfect union of wills, and who are most perfectly each other's."³

C. Summary of the Chapter.

Union with God is the ultimate goal for the follower of

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1. Vol. III, p. 567.
2. Vol. IV, p. 145.
3. Vol. III, p. 631.

the Mystic Way. All of the leading representatives of this system of thought agree in placing it as the final goal of life. It should be striven for and attained at any cost. In this state of union with God, the nature of man is so changed by the indwelling Spirit, that it partakes of the character of God, after whose image it was made. Obedience, peace, freedom and joy are attributes of one who dwells in this union.

It has been discovered that Edwards makes union the goal of his system of theology. In it, he also finds the greatest good possible to man; as in it, every spiritual longing of man for God is satisfied. He defines union as the union of the divine soul of man with God. In his description of the nature of union, he finds that it satisfies the human soul, gives direct communion with God, and is constituted of the divine light or spark from God. In his description of the fruits of union, he finds that it results in a changed nature of man; that it imparts power to "see" spiritual things, and gives to him a spirit of perfect obedience, freedom, peace and joy.

The influence of the Johannine and Pauline writings upon Edwards' development of this doctrine is indicated by his wide use of these writings in his exposition of each phase of it. In many instances they are not only widely used ^{but} by used to the exclusion of other scriptural evidence of his statements. Especially, did he find a rich field of inspiration in John's gospel, chapters 13 to 17; in Paul's teachings upon the subject of the union of Christ and his church; and in the promises of the Revelation as to the ultimate happiness and triumph of the saints in their redeemed state of union with the Lamb.

D. Reference Table Showing the Extent to which the Mystical Doctrine of Union with God is Found in the Johannine and Pauline Writings.

Book of Bible	Characteristics of Union	Fruits of Union	Union and Obedience	Union and Peace	Union and Salvation
John	1:16,18; 14:20,21; 1:3,4; 14:3 14:17,23; 15:9,10; 17:22,23; 10:16;17:21	15:7, 15:4,5 10:16 16:23 6:56,57 17:23,26	14:20;8:32 17:6; 10:26 10:27; 12:47,48; 9:31; 13:17 15:10; 4:34; 5:30; 6:38 8:28,29,32 8:42,55; 10:18; 11:9 12:27,28,49 12:50;14:31 17:4; 18:11 19:30;14:15 21:23,24	6:35,68; 7:38;4:14 14:1,27 20:19,21 20:26; 16:33 17:26	10:28; 14:3; 3:36 8:52; 3:29; 15:11 16:24; 17:13; 20:20; 8:56; 16:33 1:12,13; 3:3-8; 4:14; 6:51;8:31,32 9:41; 10:9,27; 13:10,35; 14:23; 15:3,4,14,19; 17:14,16,25; 3:21; 7:38; 3:15-17,36 4:14,36; 5:24; 6:27,40,47,51,54, 6:58,63; 8:51; 10:29; 17:2,24.
Romans	6:3,4,5,6 6:8,11; 8:9, 35-39; 13:14; 16:8	6:23; 7:4,5 8:1,2 8:10,11 8:17; 12:5	2:7,8; 8:1 8:4,5,14; 12:2; 16:19 16:26	1:7; 8:6 14:16,18 14:19; 15:13	1:16; 3:24; 5:2 5:11, 12-21; 6:14 7:6,24; 8:1,2,17 8:30; 10:15; 14:16; 15:13
I Corinthians	3:16,23; 6:15,17,19 7:24; 12:27	11:11 12:12,13 10:17			15:22,28,49,57
II Corinthians	4:14; 5:17 5:19,20; 13:3,5	1:21; 2:17; 13:3,4 13:11,12	10:4,6	13:11	10:17,18; 8:9 2:14; 5:17; 13:4
Galatians	1:16; 2:20 3:27; 5:4	3:28	5:25	5:22 6:16	5:1, 13
Ephesians	1:23; 2:21 2:22; 4:4-6; 4:15,16.	1:11,13 3:12		2:14,15 2:16,17 2:18,19 4:3	2:1; 2:4-6; 2:13
Philippians	1:21,25,26 3:9; 4:21	4:13	2:12,13 3:16;4:9	4:7,9,11	1:11,19,20,21,28; 3:1,20,21; 4:4

Book of Bible	Characteris- tics of Union	Fruits of Union	Union and Obedience	Union and Peace	Union and Salvation
Colossians	1:14-17, 18 1:27; 3:3	1:28; 2:10,19	1:10; 2:6; 3:17	1:20; 3:15	1:5,13,27; 2:27,13,14 2:15
I Thessalonians	5:10	4:14,16 4:17	4:1	5:13,23	1:6; 4:14-17 5:8,9,16
II Thessalonians	1:12		3:4	1:2,7; 3:16	
I Timothy			3:1-13; 4:16;6:14	1:2	4:9,10; 1:14 15:16
II Timothy	1:1,13,14 2:10,11; 3:12,17	2:1; 4:17	1:13	1:2; 2:22	1:1,9; 2:10; 4:8, 17, 18
Titus			2:9; 3:1, 3		1:2; 2:11, 2:13,14; 3:5
Philemon			1:21	1:3	
I John	2:28; 5:20	3:2 2:5	2:24; 3:6 3:24; 2:17 5:2,3		4:4; 1:4
II John			1:9; 1:6		1:12
Revelation	2:1; 3:20; 17:14;19:7 21:3,22,23	3:21; 20:4 22:3	2:10,26; 14:4; 17:14 22:7	21:4	7:3,9,10; 7:15,16,17 14:1-3, 13; 15:2; 19:1 19:2,3,9 20:4,6; 21:7 21:12,27 22:4,5,14

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

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The purpose of this thesis was stated, in the Introduction, to be an attempt to discover to what extent the mystical element in the theology of Edwards was derived from the Johannine and Pauline writings. It had been noted that certain doctrines in Edwards' theology were mystical and from this the question arose as to the origin of these doctrines. Did he evolve them from his own reasoning or experience, or from the writings of mystics who had preceded him, or did he get them from some common source such as the Scripture?

From a study of his works it was discovered that Edwards stated repeatedly that his system of theology was not based upon any conclusions at which he had arrived through the power of reason or experience alone. He regarded these as allies in the interpretation of Scripture but never as a sufficient bases in themselves; reason and experience could illustrate the Scripture and prepare the way for its being understood but at that they stopped for him.

No instance could be found in the works of Edwards in which he refers to or acknowledges his use of the works of any of the great mystical writers in the development of a doctrine peculiar to mysticism. On the contrary, he appears at times to be hostile to such writers and speaks of them in a slighting manner. For instance, his opposition to the doctrine of the "Inner Light" as held by the Quakers was expressed in no uncertain terms. Also he denounced those mystics who appeared to him to deify man at the expense of his

belief in the pre-eminence of God. Edwards' criticism of these doctrines may not have been consistent with his own teachings, nor have shown an adequate understanding or appreciation of them, yet such criticism on his part does indicate that he was little influenced by such doctrines. His own doctrine of the divine light very closely resembles the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light and the Divine Spark of Law and Eckhart, yet this resemblance must be found in some common source of material rather than in a direct influence through contact with the writings of these mystics.

If then, neither reason nor the mystical writings are the sources of this element in the Edwardean theology, there must have been a third source. This source has been discovered, in this thesis, to be in the Scripture and especially in that portion written by Paul and John.

This conclusion is regarded as correct for two reasons: Edwards himself repeatedly stated that the Bible was the basis and source book for all of his writings. In chapter two of this thesis, it was discovered that Edwards states this fact clearly and appears to delight in making such statements emphatic. He felt that his system of theology, and especially his doctrine of the divine light, were so based upon the revealed word of God that the Great Revival of 1840 was but the natural outgrowth of the application of such teachings to the lives of men. Such a revival of religion appeared to him as the fulfillment of God's promises when applied to actual

life as he had done in the teaching and preaching of His Word.¹

Secondly, it is felt that Edwards' source book for the development of the mystical element was the Scripture, and especially that part of it written by John and Paul, because he makes such a wide use of these two writers in his treatment of this element. But not only does he use these writings most, and often to the exclusion of all others, but he also makes special mention of his debt to John and Paul and acknowledges this debt in fitting terms as was seen in chapter three.

It has been discovered that the influence of John and Paul was a vital influence in the following doctrines of Edwards; moreover, these doctrines will be noted as the principal teachings of his system of theology as is evidenced by the large amount of space he gives to them, and also by their influence upon his age and succeeding generations.

The first of these doctrines is that of the divine light. Edwards' whole system of theology might be said to center around this doctrine. This light comes from God and is communicated directly by God to man. It is the distinguishing characteristic of the child of God. Without this light no man can ever hope to "know" God nor even to desire those Christian graces which appear to be of so much value in the sight of the redeemed. It is the sine qua non of all spiritual growth.

The soul which has this light within it possesses a new

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1. Cf. Allen, Jonathan Edwards, p. 108.

nature which is of the essence of God; it has thus within itself the power of growth. Within it there is an ever-flowing fountain of living water from which it can draw upon every occasion of need. The whole life of the soul is dominated by this new nature. Sin no longer appeals to the soul but rather the beauty of God and Christ is its chief delight. Since this light makes the soul divine, it will never be satisfied until it rests in perfect union in the Eternal Source from whence it came.

In his detailed development of this doctrine it was discovered that Edwards constantly draws upon the writings of John and Paul. For instance, it was pointed out that in his famous sermon entitled, "A Divine and Supernatural Light, Immediately Imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God, Shown to be Both a Rational and Scriptural Doctrine", he employs fourteen major references from the works of John and Paul in the establishment of the scriptural basis of the doctrine; while he uses only three other references from the entire New Testament. From the Old Testament he cites three passages, - two from the book of Psalms and one from Jeremiah. This sermon is selected as an illustration as it expresses the central doctrine of Edwards' theology as is indicated by his full development of it in his other writings. Its effect upon his hearers and his community was immediate and profound. The influence of the Johannine and Pauline writings upon Edwards in the arguments of this sermon may be regarded as typical of the influence of these two biblical writers in his treatment of the other mystical doctrines dealt with in this thesis.

In his doctrine of Purgation, Edwards was also found to be in sympathy with the mystic. Here through repentance, self-denial, etc., that which hinders the spiritual progress of the saint is repressed. Life, for him, was essentially a journey towards heaven and so should be regarded as a preparation for heaven or union with God. The lower-self must be annihilated in order that that which is spiritual may have full sway. For this reason man should not regard this world as his home but should expect to endure a life of trial and disappointment. He should be ever ready to welcome adversity and so make of it a means of purging his life of all that is evil. Such purgation, even though it may lead through "the dark night of the soul", is the best way and the only way the desired end may be obtained.

The fruits of purgation are humility, holiness, and above all, a soul prepared for the incomparable blessing of union with God.

It has been discovered that Edwards makes a wide use of the writings of John and Paul in his treatment of this doctrine. He found that the nature, fruits, and the obligations of the way of purgation had their bases in the teachings of these two sacred writers. In many instances he employs their figures of speech and even the same vocabulary. Thus it becomes evident that he was directly and consciously influenced by them.

Edwards shows a strong mystical tendency in his conception of God. God was to him an infinite fountain from which flowed every blessing. In this adoration of God and fervent longing for

complete union with Him, he shows a decided tendency towards the ecstasy. In such times of contemplation he tells us that he was "completely swallowed up" in an intense desire for the delights of perfect union. God is represented in such descriptions as Life, the Infinite Source of Life, the Fountain of All Life, the Vine, the Head, etc.

In this contemplation of God Edwards delights also in the ascription of all glory to God. Everything in heaven and on earth is seen to have a definite relationship to this glory of God. This glory is the cause of all creation and the end of all creation. In seeking his own glory God was also seeking the highest welfare of the saint who was in an abiding union with Him. Edwards thus gives to the Calvinistic doctrines of God's end in creation and man's dependence upon God this mystical background of the saint glorified in the glory of God by his union with Him.

Edwards' development of this mystical emphasis also reflects the vital influence of the Johannine and Pauline writings. The Johannine influence is reflected in such instances as when he uses John's conception of the Word as the light of life, or as well of water, or bread from heaven; or again in such representations of Christ as the Vine, or Lamb, or various other representations of Christ and God in the Gospel and in the Revelation. The Pauline influence is shown in Edwards' use of the vision of Paul in II Cor. and especially in the various benedictions found in Paul's letters. It should also be added that many other direct quotations are made from these two writers as was indicated in chapter V of this thesis.

It was discovered in his treatment of the subject of faith that Edwards laid emphasis upon the mystical conception of faith as a venture upon the promises of God and the attainment of a religious experience that comes only through such a venture. Faith is a saving faith in so far as its activity leads the believer into a vital experience of God. It is through faith that the saint "sees" God for himself. The possessor of such faith needs no intermediate means for his access to God. His experience of the Truth is its own evidence and is much more convincing to the mind of the saint than any other evidence that may be devised by the reasoning power of man. Thus faith leads to appropriation of the divine light by the believer. It is the natural expression of the prayers of the saints; it is the condition of the receiving of that joy of salvation which comes to that soul which dwells in union with God.

For this reason faith is not found in the natural man. It is a peculiar attribute of the spiritual man from the very nature of the case. Its activity would not be agreeable to the natural man since it grows out of that changed nature of man known as the new birth.

In these definitions of faith, Edwards is again found to be strongly influenced by the Johanne and Pauline writings. He freely uses the works of these two apostles to lend authority to his teachings concerning the nature, the effects and the power of faith. It has been noted that in his definitions of faith and in his detailed development of many of the phases of the doctrine he

uses these two writers often to the exclusion of all other sacred writers.

Edwards lays the typical mystical emphasis upon the doctrine of love. To him, it is the distinguishing characteristic of both God and the saint. Love magnifies the mercy of God; it is greater than any fear of hell or any other thing known to man. Although a man may possess every other virtue and yet be lacking in love, he is a failure in the sight of God.

Love is of the essence of God. It increases with the increase of the knowledge of God. It is the source of all Christian zeal. Even Christ's work of redemption was the fruit of love. Every fruit of the Spirit may also be regarded as the fruit of love.

It was also found that Edwards follows such mystics as Meister Eckhart in his identification of love with the third person of the Trinity. Such an identification may be regarded as the natural development of his early teachings upon the Holy Spirit and love. Starting with John's statement that God is love, Edwards arrived in his argument at the converse of this statement that Love is God; that is, Love is God as expressed in the third person of the Trinity, - the Holy Spirit.

It is but natural to find that Edwards has been vitally influenced by John and Paul in his development of this mystical emphasis upon the doctrine of love. The Apostle John has long been called the apostle of love and this title could be given just as appropriately to the author of I Cor. 13. In many places, as was seen in this thesis in Chapter VII, Edwards' treatment of the sub-

ject of love becomes largely a commentary upon the writings of John and Paul.

The doctrine of union with ~~with~~ Edwards, as with the whole mystical system of thought, is the climax of his theology. It is that goal for which he so much longed in his diary and other writings. It was, to him, that state where the soul is at last united to its Maker after a long period of purgation. In union the soul at last reached "home" and all that that word connotes.

This union is the consummation of all good because it fulfills every aspiration of the soul of the saint. It is an abiding union with God and in it the soul partakes of the glory of God. The thought of partaking with Christ of the glory of God was a particularly beautiful one to Edwards.

Such a union with God is based on the work of the divine light and its permanency is assured by the atonement of Christ upon the cross. In it there is a hatred of all evil and of that which is out of harmony with the character of God and the new nature which he gives to the saint. In union there is perfect obedience and perfect freedom.

The influence of John and Paul is so evident in Edwards' development of the doctrine of union that it scarcely needs further mention. These two sacred writers furnish to him not only a large part of the content of his thinking but also, as in his treatment of purgation mentioned above, the very phrases and words which he uses. John's use of the figure of the vine and Paul's treatment of the mystical union between Christ and his church illustrate this use.

Thus we have discovered that there is a large element in Edwards' theology which may be characterized as mystical. Judging by the number and prominence of these mystical doctrines, they could be said to constitute the greater part of his theological system. It has also been discovered that Edwards was vitally influenced by John and Paul in his development of this mystical element. This is felt to be true, first, by his disclaiming any authority for the truth of his teachings other than the Scripture and by his own statement of his indebtedness to these two writers in particular. Secondly, by his actions; it was found that in his development of these six prominent mystical doctrines, he has used the works of these two sacred writers as the principal basis of his thought, and in many instances the only basis.

If then by his own statement and by his acts - by word and by deed - Edwards shows that these two writers had a predominant influence upon his mystical thinking, then the purpose of this thesis has been attained; namely, that the Johannine and Pauline writings have had a vital influence upon Edwards in his treatment of the mystical element in his system of theology.

CHAPTER X

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CHAPTER X

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