

TH
W 1732

THE MAJOR EMPHASES IN
RUFUS JONES' INTERPRETATION OF MYSTICISM
IN THE LIGHT OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

by

MARGARET WINSLETT

B.A. Agnes Scott College

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Religious Education in
The Biblical Seminary in New York.

New York City

1932

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
HATFIELD, PA.

17736

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. Introduction	1
A. The Purpose of the Thesis	2
B. The Value of the Thesis Study	2
C. The Plan of Procedure	2
II. The Background of Personal Experience	4
A. Rufus Jones' Religious Experience	5
1. His Idea of God	5
2. His Sense of Mission	10
B. His Conception of Mysticism	13
III. His Emphasis on the Rationality of Mystical Religion	15
A. Mystical Experience Is Not Contrary to the Nature of the Universe	17
1. The Visible World Intimates a More Beyond	18
2. The Mind of the Universe Finds a Response in our Minds	19
3. Beauty Is an Overplus in the Universe	21
4. History Has a Meaning beyond Mere Facts	21
B. Mystical Experience Is Not Contrary to the Nature of Man	23
1. Man Reaches out for More beyond this World	24
2. Man Tends to Correspond with the "Eternal Nature of Things"	26
3. Man is Conscious of a Touch with a Spiritual Universe	27
4. Mystical Experience is Consonant with What We Know of Mind and Knowledge	29
IV. His Emphasis on the Practicality of Mystical Experience	35
A. Mystical Experience Is a Normal Experience	37
1. It Does Not Necessarily Involve an Abnormal Experience	38
2. These So-called "Abnormal" Phenomena May Not Be Essentially Abnormal	40
3. It Is a Normal, Healthy, Common Experience	41
B. Mystical Experience Has Definite Constructive Effects	43
1. It Unifies the Personality	43
2. It Enriches the Spiritual Life	45
3. It Increases the Efficiency of Life	46
C. Its Effects Are Demonstrated in Life	49
D. The Mystics Have Made a Definite Contribution	51

18577 Gift of Miss Margaret Winslett
 JUN 10 1932

17736

V.	His Emphasis on the Cultivation of Mystical Experience . . .	55
A.	The Cultivation of Mystical Experience through Individual Preparation	57
1.	Positive Factors in the Preparation	57
2.	Negative Factors in the Preparation	58
3.	The Cultivation of the "Single Eye"	59
B.	The Cultivation of Mystical Experience through Group Unity	61
1.	Mysticism a Group Experience	61
2.	Group-Mysticism and the Primitive Church	63
3.	Group-Mysticism and the Thirteenth Century Brotherhoods	65
4.	Group-Mysticism and the Society of Friends	66
VI.	The Scriptural Basis of Rufus Jones' Interpretation of Mysticism	71
A.	The Nature of the Universe and Mystical Experience	72
B.	The Divine Element in Mystical Experience	73
C.	The Human Element in Mystical Experience	75
D.	The Christian Group and Mystical Experience	78
E.	The Place of Christ in Mystical Experience	80
F.	The Place of the Holy Spirit in Mystical Experience	82
VII.	Bibliography	86

THE MAJOR EMPHASES IN
RUFUS JONES' INTERPRETATION OF MYSTICISM
IN THE LIGHT OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Purpose of the Thesis.

The purpose of this thesis is to discover the major emphases in Rufus Jones' interpretation of mysticism and to see if there is any Scriptural basis for it.

B. The Value of the Thesis Study.

A subject in this general field was chosen because of the present popular interest in mysticism and because of the need of clarifying the meaning of the word. The choice of Rufus Jones' interpretation in particular was made because he is a representative present-day mystic who tries to bring mysticism out of the realm of the nebulous and intangible into the life of today and within the comprehension and possibilities of any earnest believer.

C. The Plan of Procedure.

The plan of procedure will be, first, to review Dr. Jones' own religious experience as a background and explanation of his definition of mysticism; second, to find the chief emphases in his interpretation of mysticism and to present them in somewhat of their original setting of reasoning and illustration; third, to compare his mystical ideas with the teachings of St. John's Gospel to see if there is any Scriptural basis for them.

D. The Sources of the Study.

As Dr. Jones is the author of over fifty works dealing in large measure with mysticism and allied subjects, it was necessary at the outset to limit the material to be used as a basis for this study. Accordingly a letter was written to Dr. Jones himself asking for a statement as to the best sources for his interpretation of mysticism. His reply pertaining to this question is as follows:

"The most important things for my type of mysticism and its development would be: Finding the Trail of Life and the second small book, The Trail of Life in College. Then the introduction to Studies in Mystical Religion and the introduction to Spiritual Reformers, New Studies in Mystical Religion, the chapter on Mysticism in Fundamental Ends of Life and in Spiritual Energies and in Pathways to the Reality of God."

These works together with the Gospel by St. John shall form the primary sources of study.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Chapter II

THE BACKGROUND OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

Words and phrases brought together, even though in the right combination to satisfy the law of grammar and rhetoric, are too often a lifeless and wooden means of getting at the truth they are intended to convey. To state with however much correctness of phraseology the definition of poetry, is not to give an adequate idea of the truth and beauty and wonder of it because it is so much more than the mere mechanics and definable feeling described; it is vision and personality and God and more. Poetry like so much else can be known only through a poem, through itself. Likewise a definition of religion in so many words is inadequate; it is only a beginning. To clothe with meaning, to give color and character to these words, it is necessary to go back and examine the life out of which they have been wrought, to ask the eternal questions, Why and How. And so in this study of a present-day exponent of mystical religion, we shall first examine his religious experience and try to find what went into making him a mystic and whence came his conception of mysticism; and then with the discovery as a clue to the meaning of his words, his definition of mystical religion will be examined.

A. Rufus Jones' Religious Experience.

1. His Idea of God.

Examination of the life of Rufus M. Jones reveals two positive convictions controlling his thought and actions and form-

ing the basis for his religious beliefs and work: his idea of God and his sense of mission. The conception of God as a principal actor in every day affairs was as much a matter of inheritance as his home, for God was there. In his family God was a real Person who took care of them, knew all about them, and was always near-by. He was talked to every morning, spoken of all through the day and confidently sought in time of crisis. Born into a family where religion was as important an element as the air he breathed and the practice of it as natural as breathing, there was little verbal instruction. It was not a matter of the learning of creeds and doctrines and forms of worship, religion was acted, it was something done together. He mentions particularly the "family gathering", the time every morning when the family put aside household tasks and came together for worship, when a chapter from the Bible was followed by a silence while they waited expectantly for God. He records,

"We were feeling our way down to that place from which living words come and very often they did come. Some one would bow and talk with God so simply and quietly that He never seemed far away. The words helped to explain the silence. We were now finding what we had been searching for. When I first began to think of God I did not think of Him as very far off. . . . At home He always heard easily and He seemed to be there with us in the living silence."¹

So the religion of this quiet Quaker family into which he was

1. Rufus Jones, Finding the Trail of Life, pp. 21-22.

born made its very important contribution to his idea of God by making Him real and present to the boy.¹

After his home, one of the most blessed memories of Dr. Jones' early life was his close association with that remarkable body, the Friends of God, who were the heroes and saints of his childhood. The strong personalities among the Quakers of his own community, their saintliness and faith, left their impress, but it is of the meetings, of the effect and value of their hushed silences, that he speaks more feelingly. "I doubt if there is any method of worship which marks with a subtler power or which brings into operation in the interior life a more effective moral and spiritual culture."² Sometimes during these hushes a real spiritual wave would sweep over the worshipping group, which was significant even to a careless boy, for they made him feel very solemn and carried him, as he says, "down into something which was deeper than my own thoughts, and gave me a momentary sense of that Spirit who has been the life and light of men in all ages and in all lands."³ At other times the quiet life of the rural town was broken and enlivened by the visits of Friends from far away places who had come, sent by God with a "concern".⁴ The boy listened as they related their experiences of God or as they preached powerfully under His immediate inspir-

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Finding the Trail of Life*, pp. 21-22

2. *Ibid.*, p. 89. Cf. pp. 84-93.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 78.

ation. His heart was thrilled by accounts of God at work among men, of His care and guidance, of the detection of sin in a life and of victory over it, of prophecy and its fulfillment. He saw evidences that these strong men and women were seeing through the veil that separates the seen from the unseen into the Beyond, that they were being used by God as His mouthpieces. They made the connection with God very real, for their lives and words and experiences all witnessed to the fact that they knew God intimately and that they received power from Him to strengthen and enable them to endure, to accomplish, and to be more than themselves. He owes much to this association with the Friends, in that through them he saw man in close touch with God and through that touch life empowered and intensified, and he learned through demonstration the value of groups worshipping together in quietness and expectation.¹

As part of the influence of his home and in no way separate from his life in that Quaker community, Dr. Jones mentions two other factors working together with these to enrich his religious experience. His love of beauty in nature was a decided help in strengthening and supporting his faith in God. It was a matter of feeling His Presence in his world rather than of thinking out how He could be there. Beauty inspired in him awe, wonder and mystery and made him reach out for something beyond what he could see and touch. It was a religious feeling at

1.Cf. Rufus Jones, Finding the Trail of Life, pp. 73-83.

that time beyond his ability to explain to himself.¹ But, he says, this "religious faith would have been poor and thin if it had not been for the great Book which from the beginning formed a chief interest and a major influence in my life."² But with all his love for the Bible and as devoutly as he believed in those first years of acquaintance with it that it was to be interpreted literally, he very early reached the conclusion that God is always revealing Himself, and consequently that truth is something that grows as life unfolds. He explained this belief in this way: since the Spirit of God had been able to impress His thought and will on holy men of old, He could still do it, and this could only mean that through men of his own day still more light and truth could come. Fortunately those who taught him to love the Bible were wise enough not to interfere with his making use of all that science and history revealed, and can reveal, of God in His work of creation and in His dealing with man.³ This combination of methods, the development of the historical and objective side of his faith as well as the subjective, saved him from a narrowness which would certainly have hampered him later and which might have proved fatal to his faith, and furnished the material for a vital way of thinking of God, "a way of thinking of Him that would not be undermined or exploded by new discoveries of science in the march of time." He discovered

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Finding the Trail of Life*, pp. 57-58.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 58. Dr. Jones began to attend Bible School when he was six years old and read through the Old Testament at ten.
 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

that religion must be grounded on "an unshatterable basis", that "It must be as fundamental as experience itself."¹ It was then that the training and influence of youth and the slow maturing of faith and vision, bore fruit and he saw that "God as Spirit and man as spirit are inherently related and that there is something in man which is unsundered from God."² Since God is, He must not be conceived of as far away, off somewhere in space, or "as an object to be proved by syllogisms", but He is to be thought of rather "as the very ground and basis of our moral and spiritual nature as persons." He saw that it is as impossible for God to be "lost" or "undermined" by the advance of thought and discovery as it is for the basic nature of man to be lost or left behind. He had come through to the discovery of a God akin to man, a God with us, and a humanity essentially linked to God.³

2. His Sense of Mission.

It is impossible of course to trace accurately and chronologically the birth, growth and maturing of conviction in a life or to cut it off from other truths dawning on the same life or to say positively when and why this belief or that come into being. While the boy was arriving at his idea of God, there was forming in him gradually, surely, the truth that as there exists a definite relation between God and man in general, so there was a definite relation between God and Rufus Jones particularly. This

1. Rufus Jones, *The Trail of Life in College*, pp. 121-122.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

was more than "conversion", though there was that certainly; it was a mission-consciousness, an assurance that God was guiding him into a very definite work. Doubtless his intimacy with the spiritual exploits of so many of the Friends awakened aspirations in him also to be such a worker for God, and he says that as they prayed for him particularly, he felt more confidence in what he might be. This comforting sense of being under the direction of God continued with him through his school and college days and until, expectant and ready, he knew to what mission God had called him: work in the field of mystical religion.¹

Dr. Jones was introduced to that type of religion at college through a study of Emerson in whom he found the first specific interpretation of mysticism called by that name. It seemed to have been what he had been unconsciously waiting for, because, the name having been supplied and described, he began to realize that the very essence of the Quaker religion was mystical experience, that mysticism was at its heart, and that this was the explanation of his early life.² Very likely "mystical" would have been a new word to every one of those childhood Quaker friends and not one among them would have understood if it had been applied to his particular form of worship, but he came to know that it was truly a mystical religion. He attributes to that Quaker group his unconscious preparation to appreciate and at a later time to interpret the experience of the life of the mystic.³ A

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *The Trail of Life in College*, pp. 130, 160, 91, 135.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Finding the Trail of Life*, pp. 81-83.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *The Trail of Life in College*, p. 91.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Finding the Trail of Life*, pp. 90 ff.

growing interest in the subject led him, under that direction of God of which he was so confident, to choose as the thesis for his Bachelor's degree, - *Mysticism and its Exponents*. He found in the mystics everywhere traces of the same type of faith and experience with which he was familiar in George Fox and by which he had earlier been so profoundly influenced.¹ Already with such a definite sense of mission and with such a growing enthusiasm for mysticism as a vital religion, there was wanting only that which could bring these two together and unite them into a dynamic whole. God did this when at last He spoke.- Dr. Jones relates this experience thus:

"I was on a solitary walk, absorbed in my own thoughts about the meaning and purpose of my life, wondering whether I should ever get myself organized and brought under the control and direction of some constructive central purpose of life, when I felt the walls between the visible and the invisible suddenly grow thin, and I was conscious of a definite mission of life opening out before me. I saw stretch before me an unfolding of labor in the realm of mystical religion, almost as clearly as Francis (of Assisi) heard himself called at St. Damians to 'repair the Church'. I remember kneeling down alone in a beautiful forest glade and dedicating myself then and there in the quiet and silence, but in the presence of an invading Life, to the work of interpreting the deeper nature of the soul and its relation to God."²

With this new testimony that God deals intimately with man, and with his sense of mission satisfied in the knowledge of what his work was to be, this present-day exponent of mystical religion began and continues his fruitful labors.

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *The Trail of Life in College*, p. 135.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

B. His Conception of Mysticism.

From this review of the factors in Dr. Jones' life which determined what he was to be religiously, it is evident that his definition of mysticism cannot be purely academic, but that it has been wrought out in the heat and intensity of his own inner life and illuminated by a sympathetic and appreciative study of others who have found God real. He is careful to state what mysticism according to his idea, is not. It is not historical or classical mysticism, by which he means "that elaborate body of doctrines and theories" which have made mysticism just another ism and have placed it in the same class with other "partial, more or less abstract formulations of religion."¹ In other words, he differentiates an ism from an experience, and a "formulation of religion" from religion. He further says that it is not synonymous with the "mysterious", the "occult", with "esoteric", "Gnostic", or "pseudo-psychic".² Mysticism is that type of religion which is based on the soul's first-hand experience of God, which brings conviction of His Divine Presence and of intimate touch with Him, and which results in an inflooding of power and peace and joy.³ Being what he was, Dr. Jones' religion could not

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. XIX.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 25.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XV.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 25.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in the Daily Life*, pp. 136-137.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 93, 106.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. XIX.

but be mystical and his definition of mysticism could not be other than this.

Religion cannot be separated from life, for religion is deeply inbedded in and shaped by all that makes up life. This applies in general and it applies in this particular case. Dr. Jones' definition of mysticism as a type of religion could not be truly understood out of the proper context of his own vital religious experience. By a consideration of those elements which have been most potent in determining his beliefs, it has been shown why he is a mystic and what he means by mystical religion.

CHAPTER III

**HIS EMPHASIS ON THE RATIONALITY
OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE**

Chapter III

HIS EMPHASIS ON THE RATIONALITY OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Mysticism through misinterpretation and misuse of the term has come to mean to a great many people that in religious experience which is foreign to the nature of the average man and in every sense other-worldly, with no basis in the world which we know and no place in our life. It is thought to be a kind of cult dealing with the darkly mysterious, the members of which receive information from another world through trances, ecstasies, and other psychical phenomena; that it is any tense emotional religion, all right for a "certain type" but at least undignified if not improper for sensible persons; that it is an abnormal experience, hence for the abnormal. In general the attitude toward mysticism is skeptical, wary or even antagonistic.¹ These ideas are perhaps due to the various types and manifestations of mystical experience and the widely differing interpretations of what it is. Such misconceptions are unfortunate for they tend to belittle and to question the reality of the very meaningful and richly vital religious experience of those whom we call the mystics and who have contributed so greatly to the spiritual wealth of the race. Dr. Jones in his interpretation of this much misused and abused term, shows that the mystical experience is Christianity

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 156.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 95.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, p. 21.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 95.
Ibid., pp. 24-25.

at its best, that "it is religion in its most acute, intense, and living stage",¹ and that it is an experience possible to every nature, with a reasonable basis in this world, and consistent with progressive, scientific twentieth-century life. And in so doing he answers the questions by which the world today makes its test: is it Rational? is it Practical? is it Verifiable? is it Obtainable?

A. Mystical Experience is Not Contrary to the Nature of the Universe.

The scientific method of bringing the world into an ordered system by fitting it into categories and of reducing the world for purposes of description, altogether disregards many realities. There is more significance in the facts of the world than it is possible to lay hold on and conserve by this method. Its limitation is revealed when it is applied to spiritual values, such as the consciousness of beauty or of goodness or of truth or the consciousness of God. It is seen that the human heart cannot be dealt with as can a triangle or a parallelepipedon!

"Categories which work admirably for describable facts fall short and break down utterly when they are used to interpret the unique creations of genius or when they undertake to assess a life which reveals the eternal in the midst of time."²

There is no case against science and its method when it deals with things in its own realm, but protest is made when its limits are

1. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XV.
2. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 125.

not recognized, when it claims to have exhausted man's possibility of knowledge and to have discovered all that is discoverable. It has discredited the mystical experience because it fails to fit into the same categories as sense experience and defies measurement by the same yardstick. Dr. Jones declares that when it is considered and interpreted in terms of a deeper universe which gives occasion for such experience, the rationality of mystical experience is apparent. He shows that the universe in its fundamental aspects reveals itself as spirit, that there is a realm beyond that which the physical eye beholds which is constantly breaking through into the material world and that it is consistent with the nature of man that he be able to communicate with it.¹

1. The Visible World Intimates a More Beyond.

To conserve the significant aspects of the world which cannot be reduced to describable facts, it is necessary to interpret them in terms of value and so to supplement the findings of science. Already it has become clear to many in the fields of science and philosophy that the visible world has been produced out of an invisible one, that the real in this world of matter is that which had its origin in the invisible. The temporal also seems to have its deeper being in an eternal, because the temporal and visible is never the all, the self-contained and self-explanatory whole, but presupposes a More, an overplus. It demands an

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 148-149.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 90.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 157.

explanation, but attempt at explaining by causes has no end and can never satisfy. Plato found the explanation of the incompleteness and lack of finality in this present world of time and space and sense, in an intelligent Mind which underlies the order and purposeful "forms" of it, yet transcends them all.¹ Creation, Dr. Jones continues, was not a matter of six days' duration, it has never ceased, for each new day there are new creations emerging. It is a continuing process, forever going forward. These "emergences" are not new in any absolute sense, but new in that they are an overplus from what was here before, a new combination or synthesis of what existed before. In the same way the visible world emerges from the vaster world of reality which surrounds it and bears the impress of an Author compatible with that encompassing world. There are evidences, therefore, that there is more to the universe than can be reasoned about or seen or handled.²

2. The Mind of the Universe Finds a Response in Our Minds.

But, incongruous as it may seem, the universe fits and correlates with our finite minds. Dr. Jones uses the illustration of mathematics, saying that ours is the same as that of the great worlds. Everything out there in the trackless spaces conforms to our geometry and must in some way belong to the same mental system as ours, for man can locate a new planet before it is yet visible

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 36ff.

2. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

in the sky and can forecast a new element by the laws of atoms and then by experiment find it. "There is", he concludes, "some kind of higher correlation and fundamental connection between our minds and the cosmic order."¹ Moreover not only is there a correspondence between our mind and that of the universe, but also, he goes on to say that our moral life is an inseparable part of the deeper moral life of the universe.² Conscience is as truly an organ of relation with the beyond as is the physical eye, and moral quality carries with it a sense of objectivity as real as atoms or the solar system though it is manifestly of a different order of reality. So when we line up with the highest and noblest ethical demands of our time, there comes the witness to our conscience that here and now in this visible, temporal world we are somehow "revealing a quality of life which is an essential characteristic of the Life of God."³ We are inspired with a confidence in the eternal nature of things, and even when confronted by moral issues which involve perhaps our very lives, we know we are backed by forces greater than gravitation and electricity.⁴ The visible and temporal world speaks of and reveals a vaster world of Reality beyond it and that Reality somehow makes connection with our minds and consciences.

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 38.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

3. Beauty is an Overplus in the Universe

The universe of time and space is essentially one of utilitarian values, but there is much also that cannot be accounted for on that basis. Dr. Jones instances beauty, calling it an overplus beyond and above the utilitarian aspect of the universe. Beauty cannot be found or accounted for by a causal explanation of things, nor can mechanism produce it. It does not come under the categories of time, space, matter or quantity, but it breaks through them all and is disclosed in them. Beauty is super-added to our world of fact and law and cause. It is one of those "emergences", always potentially present and waiting to be brought forth, kept until "a beholder brings a certain type of mind into correspondence with this over-brimming feature of the world."¹ Beauty transcends the object by which it is revealed and affects the beholder in a way that the object as bare fact could never do. The consciousness of the beholder, whenever beauty is realized through any of the senses, is fused, integrated, and en rapport with its object; the feeling of beauty centers his consciousness in the beauty-revealing object which as itself has lost its significance. Something has happened that is super-spatial and super-temporal, something that cannot be completely analyzed and tabulated.²

4. History Has a Meaning Beyond Mere Facts.

No more can the historical process be reduced to a system

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 39.

2. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

of cause and effect. History is more than fact; it is not something to be memorized, but to be interpreted, to be felt, to be evaluated. A sense of the drama of the majestic sweep of the ages must be caught and in its grandeur and magnificance can be found its meaning and value and direction. History reveals and verifies certain moral principles; there is order and continuity in its processes, the new and the old fit in, correlate, and complete each other. At times the march of history is broken by some person of genius who appears with new ideals and changes the direction of the course, so man plays a great part in this stupendous drama.¹ In preparation for his role, the mind of man has been fitted to correlate with and act in response to a deeper, fundamental Mind that steers the grand course of time. Dr. Jones shows that both Beauty and History, though they are known through this material world, are not begun and ended here, are not essentially part of it; and that they enable us here and now to bring ourselves in line with and to know something of the eternal nature of things. They confirm us in our conviction that there is an imperishable Reality making itself felt now, surrounding, and breaking through the temporal, visible, factual limits of the world.²

The universe which we too often see as designed for utilitarian purposes and divorced from eternal values is so only to our seeming. In reality it reaches out from eternity to eter-

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 40.

2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 39-40.

nity and wants only a heart quickened to sense the deeper significance of things and an eye sensitive to the invisible, to reveal itself in its vaster, more fundamental aspects. It is consistent with all we know of the universe in its depth and reality, to interpret it as spiritual and as controlled by Spirit, with whom man as spirit can have contact and commerce. The claim of the mystic to direct touch with God and to discovery of a spiritual environment where his soul finds home and nourishment, is not irrational or contrary to the fundamental nature of the universe as revealed in creation, in Beauty and in History.¹

B. Mystical Experience is Not Contrary
to the Nature of Man.

It has been stated that man as a spiritual being has contact with the spiritual world and with the Spirit behind it.² Dr. Jones believes that the sense of touch with a divine Being is a part of every genuine faith because of the very rationality of our beings, that we must believe in an inner unseen, spiritual universe and an eternal moral order.³ Mysticism is something fundamental to the normal, essential nature of the soul which is called the "central spiritual self."⁴ He proceeds to point out that in the nature of man evidences of this spiritual self are to be found and that this spiritual capacity is basic to his nature.

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 36-41.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 41. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 96.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XV.
 4. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 96.

1. Man Reaches Out for More Beyond This World.

The first aspect of man's endowment for touch with the world of spirit is his continual reaching out toward and after something beyond himself and all this world can offer; his soul is hungry and unsatisfied. He is equipped for more than mere physical survival or for coherent correspondence with his present environment in space. Is this not an intimation of his preparation to live beyond the limits of his sojourn here? It would be more than strange if, having been given the "structure and apparatus for living in a world of spirit", that world does not even exist, or existing, he could not find it; it would be unreasonable, inconceivable. The hungers of his heart betoken the possibility of satisfaction.¹ Man's outreach toward Reality is manifested also in his tendency to bring himself into accord with all he knows and senses of its nature, and this tendency is revealed in his sense of obligation and the weighing of the "moral quality of acts."² Even in those who would not profess to any touch with God and who would certainly disclaim all semblance of His guiding, there is a remarkable capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. This is fundamental in our self-conscious being, it is "rooted in the moral ground of the soul." This differentiation is a mark of being a person and not a thing and comes to light with the arrival of self-conscious personality. The ability to

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 93, 41.
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 178 ff.

weigh acts and to determine between right and wrong in specific acts is not infallible to be sure, but it can be cultivated. It does not mean that we are given private information about every issue of life,¹ but that by the use of intelligence and experience a comparatively sure intuition of what is right for us can be developed. Man tends to respond to the moral laws of the universe and reveals that his moral life is a part of that larger moral life.

Closely connected with this aspect of our nature is our conviction of truth. We see it as more than fact. It is universal and cannot be otherwise than it is; it does not shift and change from age to age, but holds forever and eternally. We have a sense of being in accord with something beyond ourselves when we arrive at truth, because we realize that truth "has its ground in a permanent Mind", and binds us to the "eternal reality of things."² By nature man longs and searches for a spiritual world and tends, however blind he may be, to make some response to what he feels is eternal and real; and in this he reveals a spiritual capacity which cannot be explained except on the basis that he was made to correspond with and respond to a spiritual world.

-
1. This does not mean that Dr. Jones doubts or questions the possibility of guidance. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 179 ff.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

2. Man Tends to Correspond with the
"Eternal Nature of Things."

In that we are incurably ideal-builders, Dr. Jones finds another evidence of the essentially spiritual nature of man. This living for ideal ends lifts us at once above the level of "things" and proclaims us to belong to a spiritual order. Because man is not bound down by facts, his imagination and ideals carry him beyond facts and make him creative. He sees what ought to be and might be, before it is fact, and the noble, gifted souls among us set to work to bring into being what they have "visioned".¹ Mistakes are made and much that is dreamed of fails to come to pass, but still we build, urged and impelled to action by the ideal within us striving for realization. And so we "transcend the patterns of sense", see beyond the is, think ahead of what is presented, leap ahead of what is finished. "This tendency to live beyond what is given in sense-experience and to transcend all our boundaries is due to something spiritual in the very nature of our being."² In the same way we experience values because we are not just pieces of clay, we are that and more, for beyond body and its mechanism, there is mind. These ideals through which we have arrived at values, are part of us, as truly a part as body and bones. Though such experiences are of mind, they are not wholly subjective, but refer to some reality beyond the individual. They indi-

-
1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 186.
"Everything supremely great in this world has lived as a dream in somebody's soul before it has had a local habitation or a name.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

cate that there is a world higher than that of matter, a world closely akin to our minds, yet vaster and more far-reaching, which as the source of these values must be a world of spirit. The soul's capacity to love and delight itself in these intrinsic qualities, testifies to a spiritual reality as the ground of ideal values. It is this in us that can go beyond what is and "live forward" into what ought to be, that makes us essentially religious beings.¹

3. Man is Conscious of Touch With a Spiritual Universe.

Along another and more specific line of evidence, we are led by Dr. Jones to view further proof of the essentially spiritual element in man's make-up. This is his consciousness, amounting to conviction, of his touch with this deeper, surrounding spiritual world from which he has come, based on certain experiences which to the recipient are as real as life itself. The content and results of the experiences vary widely, but the attending conviction of reality is consistently positive. There is a sense of objectivity comparable to that which accompanies the perceptions of the particular senses, and though not capable of proof by syllogism, the experiencer knows what he has experienced and that is enough for him. Sometimes the experience is vague, leaving the individual sure that he has touched Reality, yet with a haunting, inarticulate soul-hunger. For others it means a sud-

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 188-190.

den increase of vitality, of moral earnestness, of faith and conviction, for to such persons that which has been reached is God Himself. Such experiences of correspondence with the world of Spirit are often accompanied by "invasions" or inrushes of power. A larger, fuller life floods in and connects the recipient with what is essential for spiritual life.¹ Dr. Jones admits that it may be that this is an intuitive welling-up from the submerged deposits of one's memory, imagination and emotion; but he reminds us that it may also be that at such times when the inner self is integrated and quickened in its powers of apprehension, some inflow of energy from beyond the limits of our own being may force itself in and find us. In all ages and lands there have been persons who have testified "to a consciousness of an environing and invading larger life, surrounding their own being." To some it has meant a remarkable sense of answer or response from without themselves, "Something bearing witness" to their spirits. This has come more often in times of prayer and seeking, especially where those of one mind were united in spirit and purpose into a living whole. More often instead of being a clearly registered consciousness, the effect of such correspondence with God is revealed in practical activity; that is, many who have never had any

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 42: He relates his own experience at sea when his son was dying at home unknown to him. "I suddenly felt myself (on the night before the news came) surrounded by a mighty presence and held as though by invisible arms. At no other time have I felt such contact, and on this occasion my whole being was calmed, and I was inwardly prepared to meet the message of sorrow which waited for me the next day at Liverpool."

great experiences of "invasions", realize a power at work in them. They are enabled to endure, to lift burdens too great for them alone, to accomplish tasks set before them, to lead high-powered lives because they are constantly, quietly receiving spiritual energy from a source outside themselves. Peace likewise is a mark of strength supplied, and by it many timid shrinking souls are freed from their feebleness and fears and made strong and confident before all that life can do to them. "The peace which passeth all understanding" means order, joy, quietness, release, power; it is patently not of the world!¹

4. The Mystical Experience is Consonant With What We Know of Mind and of Knowledge.

In this connection mystical experience per se has not been mentioned, but all that has been said of the soul's consciousness of touch with God - peace, power, answer, invasion - is or may be a part of it. The mystic feels that he has pushed beyond the margins of his being and past the frontiers of knowledge to a world beyond this world of sense. The conviction of such contact was to him sufficient, he only knew and did not question how. To Dr. Jones the mystic's experience of discovery does not mean that he is favored with special information mysteriously given or that "new items of knowledge are dropped out of the void into the passive mind of the mystic"², but he feels that it is an inevitable

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 43-47.
 2. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, p. 41.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 15.

and natural result of the soul's having been brought into conformity to all it knows of that greater world of Spirit and a realization of itself in that direction.

The mystics "trained" for the experience, tending and nourishing through strenuous care and wise discipline the soul's innate longing for God and cultivating consciously and conscientiously its homing instinct. They set themselves seriously to enlarge their spiritual capacity and sensitiveness.¹ He compares this soul-culture with the artist's development of critical judgment and appreciation which comes through the understanding of the laws of art, the observation and practice of them. The mystics have made use of the spiritual wealth of the past, they have studied the "rules" revealed there and they have as far as possible brought themselves into line with them. As in art so in religion it is possible to build up a sensitive, creative knowing inner power. By correspondence with intimations of light and life from without, by sincerity of soul, by obedience to the heavenly vision, religious persons, and particularly the mystics, have built up such an inner self with a clear sense of spiritual direction and an unquestioned conviction of fellowship with God.² The mystical experience then is the reward of a "sensitively adjusted life", the "fruit of a long maturing process"³, and simply

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XXXI.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 109 ff.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 15-16.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, pp. 42-44.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 143.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 93.

the doing with "dexterity of soul" what has been prepared for: namely, meeting God and having fellowship with Him.¹ It is an experience in which the whole personal self at its best operates. "Its powers and capacities are raised to an unusual unity and fused together. The whole being, with its accumulated submerged life, finds itself"² - realizes itself God-ward. So that what seems to be "given" through such an experience, what may be called "mystical knowledge", is really a synthesizing of certain truths by such leaps of insight that slower-moving logic seems to be transcended; and to quickened, unified minds rich in the spiritual wisdom of the past and sensitive to the need of their own times, in a flash of realization, a way of knowledge opens, and they become the channels for transmitting spiritual truth which formerly was outside the boundaries of man's knowledge.³

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 143.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 105, 109, 92.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, pp. 41-44.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. XXIV-XXV.

Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 150-151.

"It is not alone in the sphere of religion that these 'swift flashes of insight' reach beyond the beaten track which the intellect has made. Einstein has recently said that without intuition the highest achievements in mathematics could not have been made. The experiences of Descartes, Sir Isaac Newton, and Sir William Rowan Hamilton finely illustrate this point. Science has a long list of forward steps that were made possible by sudden flashes of intuition, and the story of invention contributes also its quota of such incidents. There are many forms of experience in which wholes are grasped without any conscious process of building the whole up out of the parts. The mind leaps to a higher synthesis without noting any steps."

Such a rationalizing of the mystical experience is in keeping with what is known of the mind and of all knowledge. Dr. Jones says, "All knowledge transcends sense"¹, and cannot be reduced to sense-experience, for there are many forms of human experience in which the senses utterly fail to explain what has happened. An example of this is our ability to recognize and communicate with other minds, which all of our information about sense-experience cannot explain. Even in ordinary cases of perception the external sense presents "something" from the outside world of matter which the mind receives and "interprets"; the interpretation is what we know as "knowledge", and goes far beyond what was originally presented. It means that there is a creative, organizing center in the mind, that there are resources in the mind itself by which it knows and that the mind operates on these contributions from within as well as on those brought to it by the senses. There are occasions when the mind functions as a whole and synthesizes old material and produces experiences which senses alone cannot produce or explain. It is apparently out of these "synthetic activities" of the mind that our experiences of value - appreciation of moral goodness, of beauty - come. This central spiritual self that plays a creative role in such activity, which is manifestly in a different realm than sense, may become through direction and training an organ of a greater Spirit and learn to respond spiritually. The mind under "intense mystical

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 93.

concentration and unification" seems to develop spiritual antennae that reach out beyond organized knowledge and bring us information from unexplored realms.¹

The mystical experience and all experiences of value - those experiences which are as real to consciousness as are stone walls - point to the fact that there are depths and capacities in the nature of the human mind to which too little regard is given. They reveal that the mind in its full range has "some sort of contact and relationship with an eternal nature of things deeper than atoms and molecules".² It is altogether possible that there is a universe of spiritual reality to which our finite spirits respond. There is a priori no reason to doubt it. If our senses have correspondence with objects in the material world, is it unreasonable to think that "constructive and illuminating influences should stream into our inner selves from that central light with which our inmost self is allied"? There seems to be such a world of spirit and many are certain of having intercourse with it. Belief in it conflicts with no proved and demonstrated facts in regard to the nature of the universe or of man or of mind. Furthermore, Dr. Jones' conviction that man is essentially spiritual and capable of contact with a world that is fundamentally spiritual and whose Author is Spirit, is in full accord with all Scriptural teaching on the origin and nature of the uni-

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, Pathways to the Reality of God, p. 43.
Cf. Rufus Jones, Spiritual Energies in Daily Life, p. 147.
 2. Ibid., p. 157.

verse and on God's purpose that man shall know Him and be like Him. Though not demonstrable by proofs which will satisfy the senses, mystical experience does verify itself by the results which follow a first-hand contact with God.¹

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, pp. 151-157.

CHAPTER IV

**HIS EMPHASIS ON THE PRACTICALITY
OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE**

Chapter IV

HIS EMPHASIS ON THE PRACTICALITY OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

A practical mystical experience, on the face of things, seems a paradoxical absurdity, for mystical and impractical have become almost synonymous. A mystic to most persons stands for a visionary, who lives "up in the clouds" and seldom comes to earth, a builder of air-castles rather than one who has any part in the construction of a better social order. But the revival of interest in mysticism and present-day reinterpretation of the mystic and his experience, have put new content into these familiar, yet little understood, terms. Another of the chief emphases of Rufus Jones in his treatment of mysticism is its practicality for the individual and for society here and now. He says that it is not inconsistent that a life be both practical and mystical, on the other hand the more mystical a life is the greater likelihood that it will also be practically effective.¹ There have been impractical idealists and dreamers among the mystics, it is true, but they ^{been} have few in comparison with the great host who have combined contemplation with action and magnificently served their times. "The greatest of the mystics have not been spiritual drones; they have been one-hundred-horse-power persons pouring in- to the world of time their unwanted additions of spiritual energy."²

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 202.
 2. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 86.

It is true that to the mystic the discovery of God is enough, an end in itself, but a genuine mystical experience not only brings satisfaction to the soul of the recipient, but also a call to gird himself for participation in the spiritual tasks of the race and an increase of efficiency wherewith to meet the summons.¹ Mystical experience affects the whole self, reaches into every part of the being, and is complete only when to "spiritual health" is added energetic efficient living.² It does not separate from life but throws one into the thick of it, for the true mystic lives and acts his mysticism where things are happening, in the world of affairs.³ A mystical experience is practical because it is possible to the average person as a part of vital Christianity⁴ and because it is positively constructive in effect.

14 A. It is a Normal Experience.

18 Dr. Jones' interpretation of mysticism removes one of the most serious accusations brought against it, in that he emphatically denies that it necessarily involves an abnormal experience. He frankly agrees with its accusers that trances, ecstasies, visions and other psychological phenomena have often accom-

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 55, 96.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 158.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 53.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, p. 24.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 116.
 4. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XV - "It is religion in its most acute, vital and living stage."
Ibid., p. XXXIV, "It is Christianity alive and vocal in personal experience and in individual love."

panied the individual's experience of God, but he takes issue with them when these states are set up as the criteria of mystical experience and proclaimed as the significant and characterizing marks of it.¹ The classical definition of mysticism is that it is an intense and uncommon type of contemplation which reaches its height in ecstasy and seems to the experiencer to be "a marriage union of the soul with God." Dr. Jones brings it out of the realm of the mysterious and the unusual into the familiar atmosphere of common life and of the average person, by shifting the emphasis from the means of reaching God to the actual contact with Him.²

1. It Does Not Necessarily Involve
an Abnormal Experience.

The presence of such unusual phenomena are due sometimes, he says, to the intensity of the experience³ or to a certain type of psychical structure and disposition;⁴ at other times they come as a result of the individual's having sought for them as "supernatural signs of union with God." All who are familiar with the mystics of history know that sometimes the importance of such phenomena was so over-emphasized that these became an end in them-

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 47.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 94 ff.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 158.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, pp. 22 ff.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. XX.
 4. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 137.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 95.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Experience*, p. 51.

selves and that the greatest austerities were practiced to bring the body into such a state that these phenomena were possible. For instance, some fasted for long periods, others lacerated the body, and in the resulting weakened, feverish, and suggestible condition, it was fairly easy to achieve a state of psychic concentration and to lose themselves in trance or ecstasy.¹ These, Dr. Jones calls the pseudo-mystics, for he points out that the great mystics discounted all that did not enrich the life and character morally or spiritually. Some of them tried these methods and then gave them up - sometimes at God's express command - as "unnecessary severities and superficial signs of holiness",² aware that "the training and culture of the soul to become an organ for God in the world is vastly more important than the attainment of a nirvana state of mind."³ St. Francis realized much of the suffering of our Lord, but even he, "is at his highest and noblest when he is walking Christ's way of love and joy; not when, with agony of imitation, he is experiencing the stigmata of the nail-prints."⁴ These phenomena as ends in themselves are spiritually unimportant and without religious meaning.⁵

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Experience*, pp. 74 ff.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XXV.
 2. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 74.
Ibid., p. 75. Henry Suso for twenty-five years practiced frightful austerities and tortures. In a vision he was commanded to give them up. He then rose to a saner and higher stage of mystical experience.
 3. Ibid., p. 50.
 4. Ibid., p. 76
 5. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. XXI.

2. These So-Called "Abnormal" Phenomena
May Not be Essentially Abnormal.

However Dr. Jones is not willing to altogether discount all such accompaniments of mystical experience as without value or to dogmatically class all of them with the abnormal. Examination of concrete cases has fairly well established the fact that such phenomena have sometimes been the means of unifying and organizing individual lives and of putting them in touch with new spiritual and moral energy and power.¹ Although trances, raptures and ecstasy in being unusual experiences and often indicative of a pathological condition of personality, are abnormal in a technical sense, it seems irrational to stigmatize as abnormal a state that has transformed the experiencer into an efficient and high-powered member of society through whose influence hundreds have been brought into new joy and hope and usefulness. On the contrary an apparently pathological experience which generates spiritual energy might justifiably and reasonably be called normal. Many results of peculiar traits of psychic disposition, such as automatism, communication with disincarnate spirits, telepathy, are now receiving scientific attention and some day it will be known whether they are "gifts" which may have constructive value. These strange accompaniments of the extreme types of mystical experience may or may not be pathological. They are significant religiously in direct proportion to the constructive effect they have on the experiencer, and the normality or abnormality of the

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Experience*, p. XXXI.

experience must be determined by study of the individual case.¹

3. Mystical Experience is a Healthy,
Normal, Common Experience.

Dr. Jones is as sure that mystical experience is normal, common and healthy as he is that it is not essentially abnormal.² Study of the mystics of history has led him to believe that the experience called mystical is charged with the conviction of direct touch and intercourse with God and that God is found through the experience.³ This simplifies the usual conception of mysticism and brings it within the spiritual possibilities of all. It is not dependent on the practice of certain principles and doctrines, or on walking a certain "sacred" way, or on being the recipient of visions. It is open to all serious souls who believe that Spirit is the natural basis of reality, who can be quiet and meditate, who "center down into that interior hush where the human spirit touches the skirts of God."⁴ "To find Him we do not need to travel off into space or backward in time, but rather to go down to profounder levels of spiritual life."⁵ It is de-

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, pp. 134, 144, 145.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 95ff, 111.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XVII.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 95.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 202. *Ibid.*, p. 96- Instead of involving or leading to abnormality, Dr. Jones says, "It promotes health and sanity."
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 96, 116.
3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 136.
4. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 109.
Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 154.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 196. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 105.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XVIII, "The Person in all human history who found Him most truly and revealed Him best did so by opening out all the potential levels of His deepest nature to the Spirit of God, so that the human and the divine were for once harmoniously united in one life."

pendent on purposeful expectation, serious intent, and training and adjustment of the spirit, rather than on technique.¹

Mystical experience reaches its height in religious geniuses, but it is by no means confined to them. Numbers of men and women, sane, matter-of-fact persons, have a sense of contact with spiritual forces that makes them effective and active. These have not seen visions nor dreamed dreams, but they have come to know God through gleams of light along their paths or gentle healings of the spirit or inflowing power, or through some other way that assures that He is with them.² Dr. Jones cites as an illustration of this quiet, normal, "natural" experience of God, the case of a young man of unusual business ability and spiritual quality, who was told by his physician that he was the victim of a disease which would destroy his hearing and sight and would eventually affect his memory. The brief and crushing pronouncement swept away his future in a moment's time. Almost stunned and yet trying to collect himself, he was

"enveloped by the envading love of God and filled with a sense of unutterable peace. There emerged within him a source of energy sufficient to turn his primary tendency to despair into a steady consciousness of hope and joy which lasted throughout his life and gave him extraordinary power and influence."³

Multitudes there are, who at times have such a sense of God's drawing near, stooping to their needs or giving grace for grace.

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 140.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
 3. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 106.

These calmer, more restrained experiences of God are of more importance and consequence than the more extreme types of mystical experience because they have greater constructive value for life and character.¹

B. It Has Definite Constructive Effects.

Mystical experience is practical because those who are lifted up into the heights come back with new powers and a new sense of mission as well as a new conviction of the reality of God. They have been given to behold the glory and love of God, not for their own soul's refreshment alone, but also that the sight might fit them to be a revelation of Him to their fellows. Very definite constructive results of having met with God are the basis for belief in and respect for the mystic's claim. "Mystical experience refashions the recipient's active attitude toward all that constitutes life."² This is manifested in the reconstruction of personality, in enrichment of spiritual life, and in new dedication to service.³

1. It Unifies the Personality.

Sometimes mystical experiences may rise to the height of ecstasy or even to a sense of ineffable union with God, but the significant feature of a genuine experience is that, however

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, pp. 146, 136-7.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XXXI.
2. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 20.
3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 114-115.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 158.

extreme or however "natural" may be the accompaniments, it always brings a conviction of having met with God which does something to the experiencer. This change wrought in the individual is of much greater importance than all the ecstasies, raptures, visions and trances which leave merely a memory of exaltation.¹ It is this "transmutation of the inner life", this becoming a "new man", that is a demonstration to the mystic and to those that know him that energies beyond himself are at his disposal. A unifying of the self around a new center has taken place.² This is the What, but not the How or the Why, except that God has been found. Mystical experience with its unshakable conviction of God at hand unites all the ordinarily divided and conflicting tendencies of the inward self into one coherent whole, removes doubts and inhibitions, and sets formerly defeated purposes on the way to being realized. It means an integration and fusion of the self, resulting in "an undivided whole of experience" in which the intellect, the will and the emotions equally participate; it is an experience in which the person in finding God, also finds himself and becomes "a new creation."³

Sometimes psychically unbalanced constitutions through such experiences have become organized and brought into harmony

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, pp. 24ff.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 53.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. XIX, XXV.
- Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 20.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, pp. 26ff.

around an energizing force at the center of their beings.¹ This unification of personality and "interiorization" of the individual is evidenced by a new self-confidence and "sense of direction"; with conflicts quelled and doubts hushed, there is possibility of "centering down" in the ensuing quiet and reaching some understanding of the self. Sight is clarified, the will is united and directed, "the deep-lying powers of the inner self" are released, and the new person emerges - always potentially in existence but not discernable until this touch with God Himself brought it into sight. The experiencer exhibits new confidence also. He speaks with assurance, lives in serenity and walks with certainty; he is more aggressive, efficient, and dynamic in all his relationships. The mystical experience, however and whenever it comes, brings stabilization and establishment.²

2. It Enriches the Spiritual Life.

This resulting enrichment of life reaches upward to God, inward to the soul, and outward toward the world. Conviction of the reality of God and of His availableness gives new spiritual courage and power, joy and buoyancy, that even this world of "un-
stability and frustration" cannot overcome. Love is born and casts out fear, peace and a sense of security possess the soul.³ Mysti-

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, Pathways to the Reality of God, pp. 40.
Cf. Rufus Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, p. XXXI.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, Pathways to the Reality of God, pp. 28, 39 ff.
Cf. Rufus Jones, Fundamental Ends of Life, p. 87.
Cf. Rufus Jones, New Studies in Mystical Religion, p. 53.
 3. Ibid., p. 46

cal experience reveals things in their true relationships; the eternal and the spiritual are discovered in the visible and temporal,¹ God is known as transcending man's noblest dream yet present and operating now, in the world of nature, in the history of nations, and in the heart of man.² A new intent toward God is begotten and He is sought in selfless love and served in true devotion.³ The call to "delight thyself in God" is met with joyous response and results in "spiritual fecundity", for to consider Him and to be with Him is to grow in His likeness and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.⁴

"The most striking effect of such an experience is . . . new moral energy, heightened conviction, increased caloric quality, enlarged spiritual vision, an unusual radiant power of life. In short, the whole personality, in the case of the constructive mystics, appears to be raised to a new level of life and to have gained from somewhere many calories of life-feeding, spiritual substance."⁵

3. It Increases the Efficiency of Life.

The experience of God is adequate and complete in itself, but it does not end there, it increases the activity and efficiency of life and reaches out far beyond the person to whom it comes

-
1. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, p. 28. "The beyond, 'the yonder' has suddenly become 'the here'. . . . The finite is no longer set over against the Infinite, they seem to interpenetrate. The temporal appears to be lifted up into the Eternal, as a musical note is taken up into its place in an unbroken melody."
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 56.
 4. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 117 ff.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, pp. 39 ff.
 5. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 153.

originally.¹ Dr. Jones illustrates this claim by appealing to the mystics of history. He quotes William James as saying of Ignatius Loyola that "his mysticism made him assuredly one of the most powerfully practical human engines that ever lived."² This can be said of a great many mystics, particularly of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and of George Fox, both of them men whose moral, spiritual, and practical powers were released and set in action by a first-hand experience of God. As a class, mystics have been engaged in the constructive tasks of their day, having been spiritually equipped and "girded for action" through their friendship with God and have demonstrated a unique quality of sane leadership and ability to work together with others.³ They "championed causes, organized movements, founded societies, reformed the church, led crusades, and took their part in rebuilding the world of their time."⁴

What has been said of that group called the mystics, may be applied to all those who have come to know God also through a personal experience. New energies are supplied, life is lifted to a higher level, new capacity for usefulness is developed. Those who see God, also catch a vision of what might be and what ought to be and set out to remake the world, confident in their faith, equipped by the Spirit, and joyous in the task. Their love for God enlarges their hearts toward men and they dedicate their vision

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 52.
 2. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 413.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 112.
 4. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 51.

and love and beings to meet the demands about them.¹ Their service is at once both spiritual and practical, for while ministering to men's material needs², they are leading them to greater appreciation of eternal values and quickening in them love for God. It has been these through the ages who have had fellowship with God, who have been "the master-builders of religion", marking out new trails of adventure that led back to Him. They have revealed God and made Him real to others, they have reinterpreted religion and demonstrated the technique of Christian living, they have been centers of inspiration and energy and encouragement; and they have served and lived and lifted with a Christ-like radiancy and joy and love.³ Mystical experience is verified by the fact that it makes the recipient "inwardly vital and outwardly fruitful"⁴; neither pure emotion nor subjective feeling nor auto-suggestion in the pathological sense could effect this.⁵ The discovery of God unifies the personality, fortifies and rejoices the soul, and opens up the life to usefulness. The results verify the reality of the experience.⁶

-
1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 52 ff.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 164. Dr. Jones designates as a practical mystic, John Tauler, Dominican preacher who declared "that no virtue is to be trusted until it has been put into practice", and who "translated all his experiences of God into deeds of life." When the Black Death came to Strassburg and all who could leave, deserted the city, Tauler remained comforting the terrified plague-smitten citizens by his preaching and personal visits.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 51-54. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
 5. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, p. 33.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XXXI.
 6. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 114, 116.

C. The Effects of Mystical Experience
are Demonstrated in Life.

Mystical experience has been described as the indescribable, and the inability of the mystic to tell what has happened to him and what he has seen, is one of the great limitations of the experience. But in every age there are those who attempt to utter the unutterable, and inadequate and unsatisfactory as these accounts are, they are of use in helping others to interpret and understand their own experiences. But cataloguing the experience under a technical name tends to clothe it with strangeness and to reserve it for the especially talented. In the religious geniuses mystical experience is best exhibited, ^{for} they are the skilled artists in the field of religion; but there are others, with less talent and skill perhaps, but with no less sincerity and reality, who experience God and live as vitally beautiful and worshipful lives as the recognized genius. Dr. Jones calls these practical mystics. Many of them do not realize that they are mystics; they act rather than analyze the meaning of their experience, they "practice the Presence of God" instead of reaching a very definite formulation of knowledge about it. Theirs is a mysticism of life and action, the greatest and noblest kind there is.

Often the practical mystic cannot look back to a particular occasion and say with Isaac Penington, "I have met with my God,"¹ but by the purity and power, the unselfishness and gracious-

1. Isaac Penington, Works, Vol. I, p. 37, quoted by Rufus Jones, Fundamentals: Ends of Life, pp. 115-116.

ness of his life, he reveals his friendship with God.¹ Such persons are unassuming and wholly unselfconscious, serving quietly, efficiently, and not realizing that they possess remarkable graces. They are often busy outside the realm of religion in its narrow sense, and their deeds of love are done not as "religious work", but as the natural overflow of a generous God-motivated heart. Where there is something to be done for the church or the community, for the individual or a cause, these are to be found organizing and executing, making things go through because they are concerned and because of their enthusiasm and energy. They sense what ought to be done and are resourceful leaders, inspiring confidence and transmitting energy. Nearly every community knows the uplift of such a personality. Often naturally gifted, they always have the added gift of the Spirit which spiritualizes all they do and explains the beauty and forcefulness of their way of living.

"God reveals Himself in many ways and any way that lets His Life break through and form the atmosphere and spirit of a village, of a church, of a school, a college, a Sunday School, or a home is a revelation of God, and the person, who is in some sense the fresh, present-day organ of the Life of God, is just so far a practical mystic."²

Such lives are "the outstanding evidences of Christianity."³

-
1. Lord Rosebery says of Oliver Cromwell: "He was a practical mystic, the most formidable and terrible of all combinations, a man who . . . has inspiration and adds to it the energy of a mighty man of action; such a man as that lives in communion on a Sinai of his own."
 2. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 202.
 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-203.

D. The Contribution of the Mystics

While it is true that the true mystic, who lives intimately with God, is himself "an epistle of Christ . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God,"¹ and his own attempt at putting into words that which is beyond the telling, falls as far short of the reality as the artist's effort to picture what he sees in the sunset; yet such written testimony has also made its contribution. Mystical literature has in all ages supplied spiritual nourishment and direction for hungry, seeking souls, and though the mystic could not tell how God was found, he was able to assure others that He could be found and to help them prepare for the discovery of God. The mystic has not added any concrete information to our stack of knowledge, he does not bring back from his experiences new finite facts which can be accurately described, causally explained and systematically tabulated.² Because the consciousness of God baffles analysis and defies differentiation into demonstrable facts, man has not yet learned how to deal in words with the soul's meeting with God. But Dr. Jones asserts that the mystic, though he has not added facts, has increased the positive content of our knowledge of God.³ By knowledge he means not scientifically organized facts, but "an enrichment of the individual mind, an increase of its

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 115-116.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, pp. 151-155.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, pp. 34-45.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. XXIV.

range and depth" rather than a wider range on the surface plane. Furthermore, knowledge does not mean "secret messages from sociable angels", mysterious communications received by a few favored individuals, but it means the enlargement of the "area of truth", a new content of life, which comes to those who will cultivate the spiritual capacities of the soul and who have learned to concentrate and fuse the interior strata of life and so have lent themselves out as organs for the interpretation of realities beyond the former boundaries of truth. The mystics have been "bringers and bearers of fresh insight and vision of God's spiritual nature and character,"¹ and have revealed, corrected, and added to the portrait of God.

Assurance and conviction have marked their testimony and affirmation that God is and that He is here with us now. Their interpretation has centered in the "love-character of God". His love led to an intensifying of their own love, as was true of St. Bernard of Clairvaux whose love was enkindled to a flame. Richard Rolle speaks of his experience as "a wonderful joy of God's love."² Linked with God's love was the "self-giving nature of His Life." The mystics re-interpreted grace and removed any doubt that "God is a Being Who pours Himself out in unending loving-kindness." They meant more than sacrifice which carries with it

-
1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 51.
 2. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, pp. 46 ff.
 Lady Julian, *All Shall Be Well*, p. 7 - "Wouldst thou wit thy Lord's meaning?" "Wit it well: Love was His meaning. Who showeth thee? Love. What showeth He thee? Love. Wherefore showeth He it thee? For Love."

a suggestion of compulsion, of having to be done. God, as they knew Him, gave Himself with an abounding joyousness, transcending justice, righteousness, and holiness in His self-giving. Their experiences with God replaced fear and formalism with security and joy in His Presence; and the more they learned of Him, the greater became their awe and wonder and love. The God of mystical experience is depicted as transcendent certainly, more than a super-man, but not as an "absolute other". The mystics hold that there is something in man which is related to Him, so that friendship and fellowship and a growing acquaintance are possible. They do not claim that they approach to fullness of knowledge, but that they know enough by which to live and be guided. The mystic's expansion and enrichment of the interpretation of God is one of the greatest achievements of the human race.¹

In mystical experience wings are supplied on which the spirit of man with homing instinct makes its way back to that Eternal Spirit whence it came, and at the same time hands and feet are given with which to go in loving, selfless ministry the way of God Himself among men. The finding of God may come with blinding sublimity or merely with gentle stirrings in the soul, but always it leaves behind an unshatterable conviction of God's Presence and a new capacity for appropriating Him and for revealing Him in activity and life. This in brief is Dr. Jones' conception of the effects and results of mystical experience. He has been quoted as

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, Pathways to the Reality of God, pp. 45-49.

saying that mysticism is "Christianity alive and vocal in personal experience and in individual love."¹ Inasmuch as the foregoing description of what happens when a soul has an experience with God squares with Scriptural ideals of Christianity, it may be said that his mysticism is a reinterpretation of Christianity as it is set forth in Scripture.

1. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XXXIV.

CHAPTER V

THE CULTIVATION OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Chapter V

THE CULTIVATION OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

The mystical experience has been described as one entirely within the possibilities of the nature of man and of the universe as we know it in its deeper aspects; as one that is normal, healthy, and common; and as one that is practical and valuable in its effects. This description applies to the actual moment of contact with God and its results. Underlying and behind the experience there is the conscious or unconscious fulfillment of certain conditions which have made it possible. Mystical experience is not a gratuitous heavenly gift to a favored individual, neither is it chance. On the contrary it is "the fruit of a long maturing process",¹ the results of the individual's having brought himself into line with fundamental requirements. It has been compared with the perfection of artistic taste and like that, presupposes training and effort and culture.² Dr. Jones emphasises not only the individual's need of preparation of his soul for fellowship with God, but also the contribution the group has to make in the culture of mystical experience among its members.³

-
1. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 143.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 109-111.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, Chs. IV and V. The following pages are largely based on chapters IV and V as the best elaboration of a decided emphasis in Dr. Jones' interpretation of mysticism.

A. The Cultivation of Mystical Experience
through Individual Preparation.

1. Positive Factors in the Preparation.

There are some persons who seem endowed with a psychological temperament that predisposes them to mysticism. They are apparently capable of easily detaching themselves from the here and now and of enjoying fruitful and vitalizing contemplation; they can "center down into that interior hush where the human spirit touches the skirts of God."¹ But finding God is not limited to these specially endowed persons, it is possible to all who will cultivate the soul's innate capacity for God. There are certain human agencies which tend to turn the mind and heart toward this goal. The study of the Bible and other religious literature, particularly the works of the mystics, the use of time to leisurely bring the self into an atmosphere of appreciation and understanding of the spiritual riches and achievements of the race, these are powerful agents in setting the mind and heart in the right direction. Dr. Jones stresses the cultivation and use of the imagination through which the invisible is seen and appreciated. Meditation too is a way to interior depth and insight and moral power, and it is learned by doing. In this connection he refers to his own experience in the home where every day time was set aside for meeting with God, when without formality the family waited for Him in hush and silence and with expectant hearts.

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 154.

"The habit of turning the mind from the outward things and events to an attitude of love and confidence toward an invisible Presence became as natural to me as breathing."¹

The practice of consciously thinking of God who is believed to be as real as any person seen with the physical eye, as present and of considering the unseen as the real, will necessarily enlarge the dimensions of the soul and open it to spiritual influences.²

2. Negative Factors in the Preparation.

The individual's purpose to find God involves discipline on the negative as well as on the positive side. Like all things worth effort and seeking, it is also worth sacrifice. The preparation of the soul for an experience of God demands a certain amount and kind of asceticism. It has been noted that some of the mystics have misused ascetic habits to produce desirable states of body and mind and that the greater mystics of history discounted all such practices which tended to become ends in themselves. But the determination to find God means a concentration of effort and interest, and a cutting off and exclusion of all that does not in some way contribute to the attainment of it. Those who seek Him set out to remove as far as it is humanly possible, every obstacle in their path, and the asceticism which they practise is purely for that purpose. Although often much that is good in itself, has

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 105.

2. Cf., *Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.

to be put away, that is just a part of the "cost" of the way of life chosen. Every true seeker must form new habits of life, must reorganize his passions and instincts around his central purpose, and must make a conquest of the self. Nothing of the old pleasure-loving, easy-going ego must be allowed to remain. This does not mean that the love of pleasure is killed or repressed, but that it is raised, sublimated and fused in with a different and higher purpose in life. The mystic has been called a spiritual athlete who endures and denies himself and suffers, not because there is merit in these exercises themselves, but because they will help him on his chosen way of discipline and control. He is willing to give up lesser things to win the more glorious - life with higher functions, life with God in it.¹ St. Catherine of Sienna testifies in these words: "I would rather exert myself for Christ crucified, than not so to exert myself and feel repose."²

3. The Cultivation of the "Single Eye."

The training for mystical experience further involves a continual discipline of the soul's capacity of vision. The "single eye" must be developed by which the course can be steered and the goal reached, because focused on God, it fails to see and to turn aside to any other attraction along the way. But the single eye must also be a seeing eye and so trained as to be able to see through the visible and temporal, the eternal and the spiritual re-

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 72-89.

2. Quoted by Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 84.

vealed in the midst of time and things. The severity which the seeker for God is to practise is not to be found in starving "brother ass", the body, nor in world-flight, but rather in finding a spiritual realm here and now in the midst of the turmoil and tasks of life and making this finite world a means to the Heart and Life of God. This supreme achievement, the first hand contact with God, is

"Not simpler or easier than is the attainment of perfect taste or of perfect courtesy of manners. . . . It comes . . . only through the slow accumulation of insight and depth, the practise of discrimination as fine as that which gives poise and balance to the tight-rope walker, the discipline of hush and silence, the urge of a spirit that will not stop its quest,"¹

until it has returned to that Spirit from which it came. The mystical meeting of the soul with God comes to those who are prepared and expectant, who have concentrated on that end and have given the "toil of knees and heart and hands" to that purpose. It is a matter of giving and using the whole self and personality to it, for it is "no more emotional than . . . rational and volitional." It is to be worked for and won, for although God is lovingly near and ready to give Himself, the human soul must be opened toward Him before He can come in and reveal Himself.²

-
1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 88.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 108-110.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 143.
 Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 58-89.

B. The Cultivation of Mystical Experience
through Group Unity.

1. Mysticism a Group Experience.

The prevailing opinion is that mysticism is essentially a private and individual affair. This is reflected in William James definition of religion as

"The feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."¹

The opinion is explained by the fact that, though the organization and polity of the historic church have not been such as to promote mystical experience because they were not grounded in the needs and nature of Christian religious experience, but were adapted from already existing forms; nevertheless the church has always had individual mystics in its body. It has tolerated, even encouraged them as long as they climbed "the interior way to God" in solitude and refrained from counter-organization. But Dr. Jones holds that the solitary character of mysticism has not grown out of the essential nature of it, but out of the fact that the church, organized as it was, forced it into individualism. He maintains that mysticism flourishes best in a group, and that given opportunity, it can produce from its experience a type of organization that will insure its growth and furtherance. To prove his point, he cites from the history of the church, instances where

1. Quoted by Rufus Jones, New Studies in Mystical Religion, p. 146.

religious experience directly corresponds with its expression in forms of thought and organization, and then considers how mystical experience can best be transmitted.¹

Even a cursory survey of the history of the church reveals constantly recurring "outbreaks" of mysticism from the time of Pentecost to our own day. These recurrences are characterized by certain fundamental traits which have persisted through the ages and which are the same in every age and in every land. But the mysticism of any particular time is expressed and interpreted in terms of that time. It is a part of the social and intellectual environment in which it appears, and is made articulate by means of group material. It reflects the expectations and popular symbols of its time and the prevailing views and beliefs of its group. This close relation between mysticism and the social group keeps it sane and safeguards it from caprice. History and religious heritage are combined with the individual's "inward Light". Mystical religion emphasizes the supreme importance of the unveiling of the Face of God in the Person of Christ and the significance of every glimpse of Him throughout history, as well as the individual's personal experience of Him. It is then both personal and social because it is a personal experience interpreted and expressed in terms of both the spiritual heritage of the group and the dominant modes of thought of its particular time.²

-
1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 144-146.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 153.
Cf. Rufus Jones *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p. XXIV.
Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XXXIV.

2. Group-Mysticism and the Primitive Church.

The first outbreak of mysticism in the church was the Pentecost event, for whatever else that may have been, it was certainly an intense mystical experience. The significant feature was not the outward phenomena, it was the inflow of divine Life and Power. To that group at Pentecost, Christ ceased to be an external Companion with Whom they had fellowship, and became within them a spiritual Presence and Power. The common experience of this incursion of Life welded them into "a unity of fellowship". The breaking in upon them of a divine Power was to the early Christians not a mystery, but a fact to which redirected lives and spiritual fruit attested. The indwelling of Christ in the believer and in the Christian group was St. Paul's supreme emphasis. The credentials of an ecclesia group were the invasion of the Spirit which fused the fellowship and produced the fruits of spirituality.¹

At this stage of primitive Christianity, the fellowship was an organism, not an organization. A common experience, baptism into one Spirit, had integrated the group; and the partaking of the common meal, the love-feast, which was both sacramental and mystical and brought a fresh consciousness of Christ's Presence with them, was another factor in fusing the members into one. At their meetings procedure was marked by spontaneity rather than system and was directly dependent on the group, for there was no leader. It was a gathering of people drawn together through de-

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 155-158.

votion to one Lord. Each felt free to take part according to his gift or the special inspiration of the moment, so the "exercises" were not by plan and program, but grew out of the group. There was prophesying, ecstatic speaking instead of a logically organized address, and it was often illuminating and "edifying". Sometimes for very joy, warmed and over-flowing hearts found expression in spiritual songs and hymns of praise. Again there was tongue-speaking or "groanings that could not be uttered" or concerted ejaculations of words, such as "Abba". Unedifying as all this sounds and as much of it must have been, there was in addition a greatly heightened moral power present and working itself out in deeds of love and in reconstructed, fruit-bearing lives. This is Dr. Jones' idea of the original church - a spiritual fellowship held together by a common experience and by love for Christ, a mystical group which felt itself to be an organ of the Spirit, "Christ's body". Its method of organization was favorable to mystical experience and was developed to suit both personal and group experience of the Person of Christ.¹

This type of organization was short-lived, in spite of its suitability to the needs of religious experience. Before it was fully realized, other systems were pushing in - Jewish, Greek, Roman, Gnostic. The only way the church could conquer was to absorb them and absorption meant transformation. Once begun, the change was rapid and complete. Spontaneity gave way to rigidity,

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 158-161.

freedom to rule. The imperial Church emerged and those who quested for God Himself walked a lone way. The mystic was welcomed, but he had to make his way against or outside of the imperial order.¹

3. Group-Mysticism and the Thirteenth Century Brotherhoods.

Not until the early thirteenth century was there again an outbreak of group-mysticism, and then there was a great variety of movements, all taking the form of fellowships or brotherhoods. The members of these groups did not withdraw from the church, but they discounted external forms as "dead" and emphasized and believed that "the Life of God revealed within the soul was the all-important matter." There was practically no organization, though they lived in groups; their aim was freedom, friendship, spontaneity, spirituality, life. In their retreats or fellowships, spiritual vitality was heightened by silence and prayer, by communion and service. Some of the best of all mystical literature came out of these movements, the Theologia Germanica and the Imitation of Christ, and a large amount of a semi-fictitious sort. The major emphasis in these writings is that God deals directly with the pure in heart, either layman or priest, and that this first-hand knowledge of God is the true mark of a Christian. John Tauler is typical of the mystics of this time and his life of love and selfless service rep-

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 145, 146, 161.

resents the high level of everyday living attained by them. Their aspiration seems to have been voiced by one who said he wished "to be to the eternal God what a man's hand is to a man." After so many centuries mysticism again appeared and flourished under a "simple, fluid fellowship-type of organization, favorable to communion and corporate silence, where each helped the other to be an organ of the Eternal Goodness."¹ These movements continued for more than a hundred years and reached their climax in the Friends of God and the Brethern of the Common Life.²

4. Group-Mysticism and the Society of Friends.

Perhaps the best historical example of a mystical body with an organization suited to foster mystical experience is found in the Society of Friends, especially in its formative period. George Fox, its founder, formulated a simple, experimental type of Christianity based on his belief (and his own experience) that there is something in man akin to God which makes it possible for God to reveal Himself to man, and that every person can become a revealer of God. His purpose was to free Protestant Christianity from its impure and complex system by discounting externals, by changing from outward to inward authority, and by showing that salvation was effected by an inward power rather than by belief in any system of theology. It was essentially a religion of inward experience and brought to bewildered souls the refreshing assurance that God

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 165.

2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 162-165.

could be found through the "interior way". Francis Hawgill very charmingly puts this conviction into words:

"Why gad you abroad? Why trim you with the saint's words when you are ignorant of the life? Return, return to Him who is the first love, and the firstborn of every creature. . . . Return home to within; sweep your houses all; the groat (the lost coin) is there."¹

The Society of Friends evolved out of the experiment of faith and inward experience of mystically minded men and women, and the organization which resulted also evolved to suit and meet the needs and aims of the group. It was not a constructed system superimposed, but a growth of life. Allowing and furthering the personal discovery of God among its members, it was a spiritual fellowship which helped each one to grow in depth and scope of life and at the same time bound each to the group as a whole as it became more coherently integrated.²

The group itself was responsible for its life and welfare, for there was no visible head and center of authority. The prerequisite of membership had not to do with fixed beliefs, or sacred ways or ritual or external sacraments, for, again, there were none of these. Each person worshipped for himself, preparing his heart and seeking God in his own way. It was discovered however that worshipping in hush and silence with others who were earnestly seeking communion with God, somehow helped each single

-
1. Quoted by Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 166, from *A Lamentation for the Lost Tribes* - 1656.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 165-167.

worshipper; for instance, if one found God, it made it easier for others to find Him. It was as though they "lent their souls out to produce a corporate state which in its unity was immensely more than the sum of the parts"; they were able to do together what no one perhaps could do alone. The group at such times was truly mystical and often experienced spiritual baptism and inward fusing into one whole. Horace J. Bridges of Chicago says:

"It is said that they (the Quakers) have no ritual, yet there is no device of the Catholic or any other church more penetratingly powerful than the ritual of social silence."¹

Whatever prayer or speaking there was in the meetings came because some one in the silence had found God and spoke with Him or spoke what God had called him to say. Likewise Quaker humanitarian work was divinely guided, and undertaken when conviction came that God meant a particular piece of work to be done by their particular human hands. So worship, business, charity, everything done by the Friends was (and still is) preceded and accompanied by silent meditation and prayer and was the result of group thinking under divine guidance. Quaker mysticism was wrought out by individuals together and not in solitude. It was not "a flight of the alone to the Alone", but a vital discovery of God in the midst of life revealing Himself in and through a group who sought Him and wanted to be transmitters of His divine Life.²

There have been these three outbreaks of group-mysticism

1. Quoted by Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 168.

2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 167-171.

in the historic church. The early church (ecclesia) groups were of short duration, the thirteenth century brotherhoods continued for more than a century, and the Society of Friends has gone on for two hundred and fifty years. Each appearance has been characterized by the same type of organization and experience of God. It has been an organism-type of organization which has grown out of the group life and has been fitted to the needs and possibilities of that life. It has served to further the individual's experience of God and to weld him into the group which became an organ for transmitting the Life and Power of God.¹

"The ideal mystical group, then, is one in which each member is palpitantly sensitive to the divine Life, and at the same time all the members fuse together to form a unified body that heightens and enhances the spiritual capacity of each."²

Mystical experience according to Dr. Jones does not just happen. It comes only to the prepared soul. This preparation for meeting with God consists in the individual's aligning himself with certain principles of attitude and conduct which the experience of others has shown to be a step toward God. Motivated by a belief in God and a hunger for Him, the individual fills his mind with high thoughts and holy aspirations by constant study and reading of the Bible and religious literature, he wills to find God, he purposes to be found with a heart "perfect toward Him". He puts out of his heart and life all recognized unclean-

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 171.

2. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 171.

ness and unworthiness, and learns through patient practice to wait for God, using effort, time, and study to seek Him. Through believing, obeying, abiding, such an aspirant to the friendship of God is made ready. But the natural environment of mystical experience, Dr. Jones holds, is the group. In unity of heart and purpose and worship, prepared individuals have found it easier to find God. He compares the group to the vine of which God is the sap.¹ The Pentecost group illustrates, he says, the type of experience that is possible through group unity and the kind of organization that suits a mystical group. The thirteenth century brotherhoods and the Society of Friends have demonstrated through the years the value of the group as a contributing factor in mystical experience and the moral certainty and strength of oneness.

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 170.

C H A P T E R V I

**THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS OF RUFUS JONES'
INTERPRETATION OF MYSTICISM**

Chapter VI

THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS OF RUFUS JONES' INTERPRETATION OF MYSTICISM.

In the foregoing chapters the three major emphases in Dr. Jones' interpretation of mysticism have been considered; namely, that mystical experience is rational, that it is practical, that it can be cultivated. The analysis of these emphases has revealed Dr. Jones' ideas regarding the universe, God, man, and the Christian group and suggested the close analogy to the teachings of Scripture on these subjects. The purpose of this chapter shall be to discover by a comparison of his ideas with the Gospel of St. John, whether or not there is any Scriptural basis for Dr. Jones' position. St. John's Gospel has been chosen for comparison because it is recognized as the preeminently mystical book of the Bible and as such, has been called the "Charter of Christian Mysticism."¹ Although Dr. Jones may not himself quote from the Scripture in justification of his beliefs, in so far as his thought parallels that of St. John, it can be said to be true to Scripture and to have a Scriptural basis.

A. The Nature of the Universe and Mystical Experience.

As has been pointed out, one of his main emphases in his treatment of mysticism, is that mystical experience is rational. This is based on the belief that the universe in its deeper aspects

1. W. R. Inge, Christian Mysticism, p. 44. Dean Inge also quotes Clement who calls it the "Spiritual Gospel".

is essentially spiritual. The material world speaks of a More beyond what the physical eye beholds, a More than can be described only in terms of value. "It seems consonant with all we find and with all we know to interpret this deeper fundamental World . . . as intelligent and purposeful Spirit."¹ It is clear that the visible has been produced by an invisible world and that the temporal has had its beginning in an eternal; that is, that this world of sense reveals a world of spirit which is the true and eternal, because it is a world of values.² Turning to St. John, there is much regarding the contrast between the spiritual and the material worlds. He says, "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made,"³ and therein emphasizes the spiritual origin of all things. His Gospel is characterized by frequent reference to the spiritual as opposed to the "world".⁴

B. The Divine Element in Mystical Experience.

The universe that is fundamentally spiritual presupposes a divine Author who is Spirit. Dr. Jones says, "God is Spirit, not abstract Being, and Spirit is essentially self-revealing - the Life that pours itself through history and art and religion."⁵ That there is a conviction in man of correspondence with a spirit-

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 41.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-40.

3. John 1:3.

4. Cf. John 3:6; 4:21; 6:27, 42; 8:23; 15:18, 9; etc.

5. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 92.

ual environment¹ and that Something "answers back" to his reaching out after more than this world of time and space can offer,² is evidence that God as Spirit is seeking man and trying to get in touch with him. Man can find God in such a spiritual environment and through his spirit in spiritual ways.

"God cannot be our God unless He is Spirit, unless He is kindred to our souls, and if He is of that nature then we must find Him where we find ourselves - in the spiritual sphere, not in space. We must find Him knocking at the gates of our own dwelling and entering to share Himself with us there."³

Man prays and sees in the new peace or strength or energy or life that comes to him, the answer to his prayer.⁴ God, who is greater than man's thoughts of Him, is yet near at hand loving and revealing Himself in acts of love.⁵ The supreme revelation of God was Christ.⁶

St. John says, "God is ^A Spirit"⁷, and proceeds to speak of the kind of worship and worshippers acceptable and suitable. "The true worshippers shall worship in spirit and in truth."⁸ Furthermore, God is seeking men true and spiritual, to be His worshippers⁹, He draws men to Himself¹⁰ and because of His will they believing become His children.¹¹ When man prays, in love He re-

1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 91.
2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 93.
3. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 96.
4. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 41-49.
5. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 96, 103.
6. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. XXXV.
7. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 122, 124.
7. John 4:24.
8. John 4:23.
9. John 4:23.
10. John 6:44, 65.
11. John 1:13.

sponds to him¹ and bestows on him spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit, peace, joy, eternal life. In Him is the source of Life² and to know Him is life eternal.³ Love is His means of revealing Himself and Christ is the supreme Gift of His love.⁴

C. The Human Element in Mystical Experience.

Dr. Jones believes that there is something in man akin to God and attributes the longing in the heart of man for God (the More beyond this present visible world), to this fundamental element in the nature of man.⁵ He says that when he talks of mysticism he means,

"A native capacity in us for intercourse and communion with God, Who is not 'up in the sky', but rather is the fundamental Life and Spirit within us and by Whom we live and are."⁶

This kinship with God is basic not only in man's longing for God, but also in his capacity to find Him, to be united with Him, and to become a means of revealing Him.⁷

"We ourselves are spirit, and we are, therefore, not turning away to something alien and foreign to ourselves when we talk of Spirit."⁸

Man's discovery and knowledge of God is also dependent

-
1. John 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24.
 2. John 5:24, 26.
 3. John 6:40, 47; 17:3.
 4. John 3:16; 14:6, 7, 9-11; 16:23-24.
 5. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 115.
 6. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
 7. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God*, p. 24.
 8. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 41.

on his fulfilling certain conditions. The first step is an experimental faith, for he cannot hope to come into any kind of correspondence with God until he first believes that He is and that the world of spirit is a reality.¹ This faith is usually a growth and increases as man has further evidences that confirm him in his conviction that God can be found and known. But to some, fulness of faith comes with some blinding Damascus-Road vision.² After faith, man who desires to find God, sets his will toward that end. This involves very definite organization of his energies and interests around his "intent toward God". His heart must be prepared and a life must be lived that will help in that preparation. Everything that will stand in his way toward God, must be put away; and all that is known to be helpful in bringing him into line with the conditions of meeting with God, must be practiced. The cultivation of the interior life, dwelling in the love of God, loving God and man, renunciation and self-denial, and obedience are means to this end. This discipline fits the soul for God and makes it possible for Him to come in through the interior way.³ Dr. Jones says of Christ's example to us in this respect:

"The Person in all human history Who found Him most truly and revealed Him best did so by opening out all the potential levels of His deepest nature to the Spirit of God, so that the human and the divine were for once harmoniously united in one life."⁴

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, p. 109.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 45.
 3. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 58-59, 15-16, 53.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

And when the soul has found Him, it has found One for Whom it was made and to Whom it is kin. There is the possibility that man's relationship to God will mean intimate fellowship or even union. Certainly his touch with God will mean a "renewal" of the inner man, an enrichment of his spiritual life and a broadening of his sympathies, interests and usefulness. Peace, joy, love, vitality, victory, energy, satisfaction, and inspiration will characterize a life that has been where God is and come back refashioned.¹

In regard to the human side of mystical experience, St. John stresses the truth that man can bear the same relation to God as Christ did.² Man is endowed from eternity with "the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world."³ Christ is the way to the Father and has revealed Him, so that going to Him is possible.⁴ Christ exemplified the life of perfect union through love and obedience and the same relationship is open to the believer.⁵ "If any man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."⁶ There are certain preliminary steps to be taken by the believer on which his union with God, or as St. John puts it, his abiding, depends. A man must first "be born of water and the Spirit",⁷ he must make an experiment in faith,⁸ he must "will

-
1. Cf. Jones, Rufus, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, p. 143.
Cf. Jones, Rufus, *Fundamental Ends of Life*, pp. 109-111, 93, 114-115, 117.
 2. John 15:10; 6:57.
 3. John 1:9.
 4. John 14:6, 9.
 5. John 5:19-29; 6:54-59.
 6. John 14:23.
 7. John 3:5.
 8. John 6:26.

to do His will",¹ subordinate all other purposes to the one purpose of finding God,² and give up all claims of self. Abiding, obeying, fruit-bearing are other prerequisites of union and its privileges.³ As a result of conditions fulfilled, the believer's life will take on a new quality. It will be characterized by peace,⁴ joy,⁵ liberty,⁶ power⁷; it is directed and illuminated by the Spirit.⁸ It will exhibit security,⁹ satisfaction,¹⁰ and triumph over the world.¹¹ The believer's inward experience of God will be revealed in works among men.¹² Like Christ, he will do the Father's work,¹³ and will do even greater works than Christ.¹⁴ He will lay down his life in love for his fellowmen,¹⁵ he will be a source of light and life.¹⁶ And in giving up his life, he will be like the grain of wheat that dies in order to bear much fruit.¹⁷ In short, St. John says that man can know God and that knowing Him will change the character of his inner life and the expression of it will be love to man and God.

D. The Christian Group and Mystical Experience.

The group, Dr. Jones holds, is the natural environment of mystical experience. Persons worshipping together are unified through one purpose, and the effectiveness of one in a group is

-
- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. John 7:17. | 9. John 14:1; 14:27. |
| 2. John 12:25, 26. | 10. John 6:35; 10:9. |
| 3. John 15:4, 7, 10, 16 | 11. John 16:33; 10:28; 14:38. |
| 4. John 14:27; 16:33. | 12. John 13:35; 17:21. |
| 5. John 15:11; 17:13 | 13. John 5:17. |
| 6. John 8:31, 36. | 14. John 14:17. |
| 7. John 14:13,14; 16:23,24. | 15. John 15:13,17; 13:34. |
| 8. John 14:17; 16:13; 14:26. | 16. John 7:38; 4:13. |
| | 17. John 12:24. |

greater than his effectiveness alone. The group lends itself as an organ for revealing God to those outside and as a medium for the individual's discovery of Him.

"Each comes to be more than himself, and he discovers, too, what he really wants, a thing which he could not discover by himself alone."¹

Seeking God together welds the worshippers into a unity through which it is possible for God to reveal His mind and will. This unity is not that of a crowd or a mob, but is "made by the intelligent contributions of many cooperating minds and wills."² Dr. Jones compares the Christian group to an organism and also to a living vine of which God is the inward sap.³

A characteristic teaching of St. John is the union of the Son and the Father. "I and the Father are one."⁴ In the last half of the Gospel, the emphasis is on the union of the group of believers and Christ, a union patterned after that perfect one of the Father and the Son.⁵ The figure of the vine and the Branch is used to symbolize this unity and the kind of relationship the body of believers is to bear to Christ.⁶ Each is dependent on Him for life which he receives because he is a part of a whole; life in a group united by Christ and to Him, means life in the believer. Love for Christ and for each other together with union with Him and His followers, will mark any group before the

-
1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 170.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-170.
 4. John 10:30.
 5. John 8:16; 14:17-19
 6. John 15

world as belonging to God.¹ Christ prayed for His disciples that "they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us."² And before He ascended, He gave them authority as a united group of believers, to pronounce judgment.³ Although the individual may surely find God, he is realizing his utmost possibilities when he is one of a group which through unity finds the mind of God and executes His will in work, judgment or love for the brothers.⁴

E. The Place of Christ in Mystical Experience.

Thus far it has been found that Dr. Jones' position practically coincides with that of St. John, but the comparison would be incomplete if mention was not made of the fact that St. John's emphasis on the place of Christ and the Holy Spirit in mystical experience is not paralleled in Dr. Jones' writings. In regard to Christ, it is not that Dr. Jones denies that place to Him, but that he dwells on the end of mystical experience - the soul's discovery of God - rather than on the part of Christ in that discovery. Again it is not that his doctrine of Christ is at variance with that of St. John, but that he gives it much less prominence than does St. John. Dr. Jones says that Christ united within Himself the human and the divine,⁵ that He has unveiled the Face of God and brought a new revelation of mankind,⁶ that He was the incarna-

1. John 13:35; 17:20-23.

2. John 17:21.

3. John 20:23.

4. Cf. W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 51.

5. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 197.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 115.

tion of God,¹ and that the historical Christ lived the Kingdom of God here among men.² But in only a very few of the many instances in which the nearness of God, His love, His availableness to man, are brought out, does Dr. Jones even hint that it is through Christ that God is to be known. For example, in reference to the difference between primitive Christianity and modern efficiency, he says, "Christ. . . was concerned to have men's lives flooded with the consciousness of God, to have them become 'right in God'. He is always assisting men to 'enter into life.'³ "Enter into life" may well mean entry into the knowledge of God. Another instance in which the part of Christ may be implied, is this:

"But the best account anyone has given of that buoyant and triumphant spirit, produced by the first-hand discovery that 'God is for us', and that through Him 'we are more than conquerors', is that rapturous outburst from the greatest affirmation mystic, St. Paul: 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.'⁴

Examination of what Dr. Jones says directly and indirectly about Christ leaves no doubt as to his conception of Him as deity.⁵ His seeming lack of emphasis on Christ and on Him as the way to God, may be a question of terms. When he speaks of "God", he may

-
1. Cf. Rufus Jones, Pathways to the Reality of God, p. 49.
 2. Cf. Rufus Jones, New Studies in Mystical Religion, p. 122.
 3. Ibid., p. 118.
 4. Rufus Jones, Fundamental Ends of Life, p. 119. With reference to the negative factor in mystical experience, he again quotes St. Paul - II Cor. 1:19-20, "In Christ is the yes."
 5. Cf. Rufus Jones, New Studies in Mystical Religion, pp. 156-161, 197.

mean God, the Son, as well as God, the Father, as the statement quoted above would seem to indicate. On the other hand, St. John's doctrine of Christ and emphasis on His place in mystical experience is very definite. God showed His love by sending His Son to draw man back to Himself.¹ The Father and the Son are one.² Christ is the Revelation of God, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"³ and Christ is the Way to the Father.⁴ As it has been observed, in the matter of the doctrine of Christ, Dr. Jones is not at variance with St. John's teaching; it is patently a matter of difference in emphasis.

F. The Place of the Holy Spirit in Mystical Experience.

Teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit is certainly found in Dr. Jones' writings, but it is also much less clearly defined and stated than in the Fourth Gospel. St. John definitely notes that the Spirit is to reveal Christ, to bring to remembrance His teachings and to help the believer to understand them.⁵ The difference in emphasis on Christ would probably account for the difference in the prominence given to the Holy Spirit. Describing the Pentecost event and the early church ecclesia, Dr. Jones clearly states what happened at the "invasion of the Spirit" and when the group received His baptism.⁶ Again in using Christ as an example,

1. John 3:16; 1:14.

2. John 10:30.

3. John 14:11.

4. John 14:6.

5. John 16:13,14; 15:26.

6. Cf. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, pp. 156-159.

he says that He found God and was able to reveal Him "by opening out all the potential levels of His deepest nature to the Spirit of God."¹ This is a plain statement, but it is exceptional. And yet in the background, underlying what is said, there is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The difference, in comparison with the Fourth Gospel, is that there it stands out and in the works of Dr. Jones under consideration, it must be looked for because it does not proclaim itself and demand attention.

In conclusion it may be said that comparison of the major emphases in Dr. Jones' interpretation of mysticism with the teaching of St. John has shown that there is a Scriptural basis for his position. His belief that fellowship with God is not irrational because God is Spirit, man is spirit and the universe fundamentally spiritual; that it is practical because it is possible to every serious seeker and brings very practical results in life and action; that it can be cultivated through individual preparation and group unity; in short, Dr. Jones' conception of mystical experience, is amply backed by St. John's teachings. While there is nothing in what he says that is contrary to Scripture, there is a difference in emphasis, as has been pointed out, in regard to Christ and the Holy Spirit. He is of course not concerned primarily with the the-

1. Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 197.

ology of mystical experience, but with its reality, and has described an experience rather than a system of belief. Dr. Jones' interpretation of mysticism is a clarification of the meaning of the term and a restatement of it in the language of our own day. It is valuable because it takes away the shroud of mystery and vagueness that has for so long clung to the word "mysticism" and reveals its richness of meaning for the average earnest believer. In his adherence to Scriptural truth, Dr. Jones has described mysticism as Christianity at its highest and best.

CHAPTER VII

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chapter VII

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Inge, W. R., - Christian Mysticism, New York, 1899.
- Jones, Rufus M. - Studies in Mystical Religion,
London, 1909.
- Jones, Rufus M. - The Spiritual Reformers of the 16th and 17th
Centuries, London, 1914.
- Jones, Rufus M. - Spiritual Energies in Daily Life,
New York, 1922.
- Jones, Rufus M. - Fundamental Ends of Life,
New York, 1924.
- Jones, Rufus M. - Finding the Trail of Life,
New York, 1926.
- Jones, Rufus M. - New Studies in Mystical Religion,
New York, 1927.
- Jones, Rufus M. - The Trail of Life in College,
New York, 1929.
- Jones, Rufus M. - Pathways to the Reality of God,
New York, 1931.
- St. John's Gospel, American Revised Version.