

Stegs vir
Gebruik in Biblioteek



To Dr Andrew Murray
a
Mystic?



Theo. de Villiers
University of Stellenbosch

48/M

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1/ The Problem and its Difficulties

The idea which the term "mysticism" conveys to most minds is a very vague one. For many it is synonymous with what is most visionary in religion and most obscure in speculation. The truth of this fact for me has been substantiated on asking a number of senior university students to give a definition of this term. They have mostly found great difficulty in doing so, and the definitions obtained adequately prove that for most of them "mysticism" signifies what is unusual, supernatural or mysterious. A more exact definition they are unable to give. The idea also seems current that mysticism belongs to the dark ages and has a close alliance with magic or the black art. Others, again, connect it with the doings of spiritualists. Accordingly the problem with which we are confronted is an unusual one and one fraught with difficulties. For to a man whose fame is widespread, whose influence on religious thought in South Africa is unique, and to whose purity the Christian world pays the deepest homage, we intend applying a term which for most men has a very doubtful connotation and for a large number is a directly disparaging one. Hence as we are about to assert in unambiguous terms that Dr Andrew Murray was a mystic, it will be essential to state as exactly as it is possible what meaning we attach to the term "mysticism".

On the difficulties and inexplicabilities in this subject, very few books seem to throw any light. Of the books on this subject which

I have come across, few, if any, give anything like an ~~expos~~ adequate exposition of what mysticism is. Most of them contain some examples of mystical phenomena and utterances of the classic mystics, yet an exact analysis of these phenomena we seldom meet. Vaughan, formerly considered one of the greatest authorities on this question, writing in 1836 said "The ground I traverse lies almost wholly unoccupied¹". Histories of Philosophy usually mention little more than the fact that the Neo-Platonists and men in the Middle Ages like Fauler and Eckhart claimed to have had such mystical experiences. The idea is aroused in one's mind that men, including many great thinkers have generally considered mysticism to be a mere extravagance, either a noxious outgrowth of religious thought, or something so altogether removed from the intellectual life as to be passed by with a smile or sometimes even with a sneer of contempt. Even among modern writers, those who do discuss the subject, are very chary in giving exact positive statements. Thus we find such a lucid writer as William James, who devotes a number of pages to giving what he seems to consider to be well authenticated cases of mystical experiences, unable to come to a less compromising result than "Mystics have no right to claim that we ought to accept the deliverance of their peculiar experiences if we are ourselves outsiders and feel no private call thereto"².

Another difficulty with which we thus have to contend is that we have in mysticism by no

¹ Hours with the Mystics. Intro. p. 7

² Varieties of Religious Experience p. 24.

means a well formulated doctrine. Although mysticism in some form or other dates back to about 1000 B.C., seeing that direct traces of it are to be found in the Vedantic literatures, it to-day furnishes us with no exact statements or terminology. Many deny the reality of mystical experiences and relegate them to the realms of magic and alchemy. Others simply describe them as forms of auto-suggestion or self hypnosis. Such are the views advocated in the treatise "Christian Experience and Psychological Processes" (Rouse and Miller), according to which mystical phenomena are simply forms of auto-suggestion or self hypnosis. The view of another modern writer Hugo Münsterberg is that they can be explained by such facts as hypnotic alternations of personality, hallucinations and illusions. The mystic has consequently been regarded in many different lights. Some seem to hold that he is a cheat. Others seem to treat his feelings as falling under the category of mental pathology. History has all along passed a varying criticism on the mystics. As Vaughan has strikingly said, they have been "both persecuted and canonized by kings and pontiffs alike"²⁾

A further difficulty which we have to take into consideration is calling a man who professes the religion of Christanity a mystic, is the fact that mysticism has often contained elements which are directly opposed to the tenets of Protestantism - the religion of Dr A Murray. This is shown by the following facts.

1) Mystics have frequently ignored the knowable world and its inhabitants, in

1) Psychology and Life. H. Münsterberg.
2) Hours with the Mystics. Vol. 1, p 20.

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their search for the Ultimate Reality in a transcendent realm. This was notably the case with the Brahmins with their theory of absorption or with the Mystics of the Middle Ages who in pensive silence awaited the revelation of the Divine. For them the world and everything in it are not deserving of our attention which must be confined exclusively to the Super-sensible sphere. Hence an extreme form of self-centredness and withdrawal from the world has often been their characteristic feature. This is obviously far removed from the altruism preached by Christianity.

ii) Then too, in its extreme exaltation of the Infinite, mysticism empties It of all meaning. The abstraction of pure Being, as the Divinity is often named, and other vague conceptions applied to God by the Neo-Platonists and even by medieval mystics such as Santa Theresa, are often so empty that they hardly differ from nothing. This "Being" is widely removed from the Christian view of God which ascribes to Him definite characteristics such as "love" and "goodness." It also holds that He stands in close relation to the world, and is the Father of men, including in Himself all the ^{essential attributes of personality.}

iii) Furthermore mystics, who in their highest flights advocate an immediate communion with God, totally ignore the historical in Christianity. Since the soul has direct access to the presence of God, the mediators of Christ is often wholly lost out of sight. All forms of dogma, too, they regard as superfluous for as the soul can of its own accord lightly step into the presence of God, what need is there of these aids? Needless to say also in this

respect, there is a wide divergence from the tenets of Calvinism

IV Moreover, mere emotional states without actions are all insufficient for many mystics. In fact, as we shall show later on, passivity and being able to wait for a long period in breathless silence on God are of the utmost importance. Isolated from the rest of the world, and wrapped in deepest contemplation, many mystics have maintained to be the state desirable and blessed above others on earth. Yet they overlook the fact that even though they entertain the most exalted emotions, these emotions without action cannot raise us into a new life. When these ebullitions of emotion have passed, the mystic is left in the same state if not in a worse one than he was before. Christianity, on the other hand, is essentially a religion of action. Not the man who indulges in the deepest contemplations of heavenly things, but he whose convictions result in actions, is the truly religious man.

Can we still, in the face of these facts, class the "Church Father" of South Africa under the same category as the mystics?

It lies far beyond our scope to attempt to prove the reality of the mystical experience, or to essay to overthrow the arguments which are adduced to show that the mystical states can be explained psychologically or physiologically. I shall, however, later on show that even though there are observable elements with many mystics which contradict the teachings of Christianity, mysticism in its essential characteristics is altogether reconcilable with Christianity.

Before proceeding, however, it is necessary for us

Yet it remains difficult to state exactly what mysticism has meant during these ages. For all through history we do not seem to find a mystic who positively defines his principles. To reasoned statement of doctrine he pays but little attention. That region of truth to which he attains is of such a nature, is so contrary to all ordinary experience, that it defies definition. Moreover, mysticism is neither a school nor a doctrine. It is rather a tendency found in many different schools and which can be discerned in individuals much more distinctly than in sects or systems.

This difficulty of formulating in exact terms what mysticism means is increased by the fact that different ages and different religions differ in their mystical tendencies and characteristics. Thus the Nature Mysticism of Paracelsus, as it is named by Dr Inge, also found in the Middle Ages, with its astrology, white magic and alchemy, differs vastly from the Devotional mysticism of men like Fauler, Surward, Ruysbroeck who have been named "the lights of the world in their several generations". Again the mysticism of the Theosophists whose chief aim is to give an explanation of the universe, differs greatly from the mystical tendency in Samuel Lewis who is chiefly concerned about how the soul may meet its God. Every one of these mystics expresses his views in a form conditioned by the terms and symbols which were familiar to him. Yet the same vein of thought runs through all their utterances — namely supernatural communion. As Gilbert Murray has strikingly said "They are all trying to say the same ineffable thing."

They are indeed mostly frank on this point and we find mystics at all times seeming to concur. Gregory: Christian Mysticism p. 47.

is holding that their mystical feelings are incommunicable. The images with which they have to clothe their feelings give but a faint reflection of the reality. They have to use earthly forms to explain celestial truths. Often, too, as in the case of St. Theresa, this imagery merely envelops the ideas in a cloud of obscurity. The difficulty of Systematization is aggravated by the fact that mystical states are states of feeling rather than of intellect. One cannot describe to another a feeling which the other has never experienced. William James affirms that St. Theresa is the "expert of experts in describing such conditions".¹⁾ Yet the description which she gives of the state of union with God, is by no means free from vagueness. She says "the soul neither sees nor understands so long as she is united with God".²⁾ "Again" "During the short time the union lasts she (the soul) is as it were deprived of every feeling and even if she would, she could not think of any single thing".²⁾

Descriptions of such experiences are often fantastical. St. Theresa, describing one of her visions, tells us "how it was as if the world were an enormous and sovereignly limpid diamond in which all our actions were contained". To the ordinary mind this is hardly intelligible. This is not to be wondered at, since these experiences are admitted to be altogether novel. It is like being lifted suddenly into a fourth dimension.

Accordingly we find that descriptions are usually couched in negative terms. The book which goes under the name of the Pseudo Dionysius, by common consent falsely attributed to Dionysius, gives a description of this dimension which is typical. It tells us that "The Divine gloom is the

¹⁾ Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 48
²⁾ The Dark Night of the Soul, Bk. II, ch. XVII

been declared bankrupt, Christianity with its tenets of union with God, came as a welcome draught to thirsty souls. This same tendency was especially notable in the Middle Ages. When Scholastic religion had degenerated into a system of dialectic subtleties, the craving for God, which is natural to man, revealed itself in a reaction against excessive intellectualism. The logomachies, which had come to take such an important part in the religious system, the mystics of the time severely condemned. Thus we find Bernard of Clairvaux condemning Abelard's distinctions as degrading the faith. Fauler Eckhart and Ruysbroeck and others appealed to the life of the heart instead of to that of the intellect, to feeling rather than to reason.

The same occurrence takes place when a religion begins to ossify into a system of formulas and observances. At such times there are usually found some who protest in the name of heart religion. Mysticism is then the natural corrective of a dogmatic system which draws hard lines of division between God and man, between finite and infinite. Again and again men have like the Brethren of the Free Spirit and the Prophets of Jurekhan in the sixteenth century, under the pressure of religious emotions disregarded all the limitations of dogmas, and have risen to a region in which the division between God and man becomes as it were transparent.

When speaking of mysticism we are above all transported to the Middle Ages, for though we find at all times men who have trusted in the close union between man and God, the Middle Ages were specially prolific in men who devoted their attention exclusively to the mystical side of religion. With them this was not a mere passing

faney. They held that they were fulfilling a mission of mercy to the world, opening the way out of the dark cavern of superstition to the joy of a new life in God's sweet air and the light of His countenance. The mystics taught men to seek the evidence for their spiritual life not in ritual and Creed but in the depths of their own souls.

IV/ Definitions

To seek for a definition of "mysticism" among these mystics will indeed be a vain task. All they do is to bear witness to "What they have seen and heard in their inner man". Accordingly to give an exact definition of this term will be no easy task. A logical definition of that which, if it is any thing at all, transcends dialectic, is obviously not to be expected. Yet there are certain common features on which most men seem to be agreed. This is obvious when we compare the different definitions given. Inge, in his Bamflet lectures, notes twenty six different uses of the word "mysticism". The most adequate definition seems to me to be the following: "Mysticism is the belief that the human spirit is capable of an immediate apprehension of Absolute Being or Reality; an apprehension which is not inferential but intuitive; without intermediate stages and therefore incapable of explanation, but for the same reasons infallibly sure." It is interesting to compare with this the definition of a mystic which I have found with Andrew Murray. "The mystic believes in a Divine light and power that comes on the soul that makes there its special object." These two definitions agree in essentials, and, as we shall endeavour to show

1) Intro. Wholly for God.

later on, the mysticism observable in his writings fully corresponds with the definition we have given.

Two streams in Mystical thought

It is, however, necessary to point out two streams of thought observable in a survey of mysticism in its historical setting. Though these streams are not absolutely separable at all times, still they are at many points divergent. Though the distinction is not frequently made, it may for our purpose be worthwhile to distinguish between the two aspects.

Mysticism can be used in a more philosophical or a more religious sense. The first named emphasizes the nature of the Being with whom this communion is held, the latter the fact of this union or communion. Philosophic mystics endeavour to grasp the Divine essence of the ultimate reality. Under this form of mysticism, we must also include those mystical tendencies which have a pantheistic or monistic tendency. Characteristic of this tendency is Neo-Platonism according to which the universe proceeds from primal being by a process of emanation. These emanations are of different orders decreasing in dignity and excellence as they are distant from the primal source. Every soul is fundamentally an emanation from the primal being. As we are a form or mode of God's existence we find God in ourselves and are consciously one with Him. It is also pointed out that reason is not a faculty of the human soul but God is man. The same idea is also expressed by the Logos, or Divine impersonal reason, which, as Philo and others taught, is diffused through the world of mind and reveals itself more or less potentially

in the souls of all men. For Pythagoras and Plato too, this Logos is the interpreter of God and teacher of man, divine and human at the same time.

In history mysticism has generally kept itself vague and mystical as regards the ultimate principle of unity. Of the "One" no exact account is given. Plotinus simply calls it the "One". "The One" he says "is all things and yet no one of them. ... the one overflows as it were, and what overflows forms another hypostasis"¹⁾

The same tendency is found in pantheistic philosophy, like that of Spinoza. For him our minds are a constituent part of God's nature, since every thing that exists, exists in God. Hence he teaches that true blessedness is nothing but that very satisfaction of the soul which arises from an intuitive knowledge of God.

The form of mysticism to which we shall have to confine ourselves in this discussion is religious mysticism.

VI Characteristics of mysticism

What is meant by religious mysticism will become clear when we point out the chief characteristics such as they have always been revealed in the great mystical religious thinkers.

(a) Communion The idea which expresses constitutes the very essence of mysticism is that of intimacy or direct communion with God. Not only is this direct communion put in the foreground, but in many forms of mysticism all other modes of relation are entirely abolished. To obtain this communion is indeed the endeavour of all mysticism. All

¹⁾ Quoted from Bakerelli's "Some Books in Ancient Philosophy".

mystical literature abound with such expressions as communion ~~and~~ converse with, being in the presence of God. In the more extreme forms we meet with such phrases as being one with or absorption in God. This is especially the case in Brahmanic Pantheism and Buddhistic nihilism. Both teach the unreality of the physical world and preach mystical absorption as the highest goal.

The closeness of the communion on which mystics usually insist is described in various and often in fantastic ways. For Ruybroek this communion is "a living immersion and melting away into Him".¹⁾ Fauler cannot describe the closeness of this union less vaguely than by saying "God is nearer to me than I am to myself."²⁾

The Higher Faculty (c) Mystics are agreed that to gain this communion the ordinary senses are not sufficient. The mystic is, as it were transported into another world and in that world ordinary vision and sense are insufficient - nay they can be dispensed with. He admits that some higher faculty is brought into play in this communion, yet what this faculty is mystics cannot tell us. Plotinus seems to be one of the first ^{direct} advocates of this superior faculty for he says "You can only apprehend the Infinite by a faculty superior to reason."³⁾ Augustine again names this faculty "the eye of the soul."⁴⁾ Fauler speaks of this faculty as "that noblest part of the soul to which no name can be given."⁵⁾ Eckart attempts to explain this faculty by calling it a "supernatural vision above space and time."⁶⁾ In more modern times we find Walt Whitman, too,

1) Prediger p 353. 2) Ueberweg. Hist. of Philosophy p 472

3) Quoted from Vaughan: Hours with the Mystics Vol 1 p 87.

4) Ibid. p 160.

5) Jopp: Christian Mysticism p 170.

6) Pratt. Psychology of Religious Belief p 172.

describing this unknown quantity as a "soul sight" which is something apart from the intellect and which has an intuition of the Ultimate Reality".

Vaughan names this faculty as follows "There is a

(c) Reason
disparaged.

kind of soul within the soul which may unite with God. Seeing that this faculty must be relied on in the act of communion, mystics are unanimous in deprecating the use of reason in the act of converse with God. The mystic assumes that the senses and reason are alike untrustworthy and inadequate as sources of knowledge in all that relates to our relation to God. In the work ascribed to Diogenes the Anciphetes we have the following advice given to all who would meet God "Leave behind sensible perceptions and intellectual efforts and all objects of sense and of intelligence..." The utterances of Bernard of Clairvaux in this respect are also typical "Great is the philosopher who seeks the Eternal by means of thought, but greatest of all is he who spurning the senses and the intellect, soars by a direct flight to the Divine". The Simons of Ekart are full of exhortations to give up reasoning as a necessary step to attain the higher sort of knowledge. "The emptier your mind, the more susceptible are you to the working of His influence", and again "if you would know God your own knowledge can serve you not a whit."³

In connection with this question of the discerning ability of the soul, we sometimes find mystics drawing a distinction between its different faculties. With Richard of St Victor we find the following distinction drawn:

1) Specimen Days - collect. p. 174

2) Hours with the Mystics Vol. II, p. 316.

3) Quoted from Ueberweg Hist. of Philosophy Vol. I, p. 438

- I The eye of flesh - to know the corporeal world
- ii The eye of reason - to know oneself in his own nature
- iii The eye of contemplation - to know the deity.

The same writer also distinguishes between

- (a) Imagination which has to deal with things of sense
- (b) Reason - which has to do with things accessible to reason
- (c) Intelligence (*supra rationem*) which has to do with
- (d) unseen things above reason.

Feeling
Predominant This communion is frequently described in terms of feeling rather than of intellect. It seems to be an experience in which the feelings are uppermost, in which a divine thrill is sent through the subject. Examples are often given of people who are overcome by certain intense indescribable feelings when they are in the presence of some Higher Being. A number of such examples are given by James in his Varieties of Religious Experience. Joy seems to be a frequent accompaniment of these feelings. Speaking of these celestial joys St Theresa describes them as "penetrating to the marrow of the bones whilst earthly pleasures affect only the surface of the senses." I, too, have occasionally experienced this feeling which I cannot describe but which seems to me to approach nearest to the feeling of love. It is remarkable to note how often this feeling of communion is described in terms of love and longing. This is especially the case with the Indian mystics, but this characteristic is also found with others, such as St Theresa. The following verses taken from Indian mystical literature is typical of this phase

Thus with the measure rod of love
 I met the Infinite

In sooth to measure Him there is,

No other means so fit.

1) Interior Castle 5th Abode Ch. 1

My nature is beyond the grasp
Of human speech or thought
So love I've made the measure rod
By which I can be taught²⁾

(2)
Sinking
of
Self

Another fundamental idea which is predominant in all mysticism is that of Self-abnegation. Self and God are set in direct antithesis. The more of God the less of self, and the less of self the more of God, is an idea frequently reiterated. This self-abnegation has generally appeared in two forms. In more primitive times it is characterized by mortification of the flesh. The idea connected with this practice is that by thus torturing the body, those elements in our personality which impede our spiritual growth are crushed and starved out. The result is that the intuitive faculties of the soul then become clarified. Once this negative method is adopted, men are carried logically onward. No longer only the body but all secular affairs come to be viewed as distracting to the spiritual life. In the East especially much attention has always been devoted to these external preparations. Even posture, breathing form an important part in all mystical exercises. Y^{et} even in the West up to the Seventeenth century men indulged in this external self torture. The Flagellants who went about scourging themselves were an extreme type. Y^{et} we even find the famous mystic Sussex indulging in the same practice, by constantly wearing a shirt pierced by 150 sharp nails close to his body.²⁾

Y^{et} at a higher stage it takes on the form

1) Jankovics - Macneils Translation

2) Vaughan - Hours with the Mystics.

of mere suppression of the desires and impulsive tendencies. Above all the will must be brought into total subjection. All are unanimous in deceiving the self-life. Until self has been completely set in the back-ground there can be no communion. E.C. Gregory speaking about self-negation says "for the mystic it is his Alpha and Omega".¹⁾ Bernard of Clairvaux strongly insists on this self-renunciation. "Loving oneself, having no consciousness of oneself, being almost annihilated. - So to be affected is to become God" This idea also takes a prominent position in the "Theologia Germanica": The more the Self, the I, the Me the Mine that is self-seeking and selfishness, abate in man, the more doth God's I, that is God Himself increase in him"²⁾. Eckhart holds that "the man who will see God must become dead to himself and be buried in God"³⁾. In the same strain Fauler gives as advice "Sink then only into thy nothingness"⁴⁾. Thomas a Kempis is also filled with this idea. In his Imitation of Christ he says "... because few labour to be perfectly dead to themselves or wholly go forth from themselves, they remain enmeshed in self, nor can they be lifted up in spirit above themselves"⁵⁾

(f)
Quietism

This form of preparation for communion known as the via negativa has also been characterized by what is known as quietism or apathey. For this the Eastern nature seems to be especially adapted. The ideal of the Brahman was to sit passively until he was lost in God. Yet among all classes of mystics we find the idea expressed of being still before God, waiting patiently until He might choose to have the longing soul. With

3) Quoted by Heberley vol. 1, p. 477. 5) Quoted by Gregory (Mysticism) p. 67.
4) Sermon on the 15th Sunday after Trinity.
1, E.C. Gregory: Mysticism
2) Quoted by Gregory: Mysticism p. 68.

For Stoics we find this idea frequently expressed. Thus he says "Our part in drawing near to God can be only an inward gentle still and peaceful yielding or bending of our will" Eckhart also demands this quiet state of mind as essential. "Man must be silent that God may speak. We must be passive that God may work"²⁾ This quiet state of mind was very extensively practised by the hesychasts of the Greek Church in the fourteenth century. They commonly believed that remaining absolutely silent and also in some cases by fixing the mind intently on some object, the process of communion with God could be furthered. The Quakers, too, strove after a state in which all thoughts, all activity was suspended; a state of perfect quietude in which the soul is lost in God. All conscious self-activity must be suspended to attain to this perfect rest in God. There must be no prayer, no thanksgiving, they were declared that there must be no preference of heaven or hell! So disinterested must the love for God be, that the soul should be willing to be damned, if such be the will of God. This however is an extreme form, and is only found among a limited number of mystics.

(9)
Prayer

Yet among many mystics and especially Christian mystics, prayer and adoration are ^{also means of preparation} ~~indispensable forms~~ for meeting God. Many are the cases reported where the soul in the act of prayer has had a Divine vision or has heard celestial words uttered in his heart. Those mystics who chiefly avail themselves of such devotional exercises, are sometimes designated with the name of devotional mystics. The necessity of prayer to gain the desired communion is often asserted. W. James holds

1. Quotes from Sketches of the Quaker in the Land p 400
2. Ueberweg. Hist. of Philosophy Vol. 1. p 477.

that prayer is the basis of all Christian mysticism.
Behmen also strongly insists on the necessity of prayer.
"If thy will could but break itself off every half-
hour from all creatures and plunge itself into that
where no creature is or can be, presently it would be
penetrated with the splendour of the Divine glory"²
St. Theresa in her writings also makes frequent mention
of the necessity of prayer. In one of her writings
she describes her "Eighteen years of misery in prayer."
She also says "In prayer there would sometimes come
upon me such a sense of the presence of God that I
seemed to be all engulfed in God"³

Ecstasies

Many mystical writers especially of the extreme
type lay much emphasis on visions and ecstasies. The
history of Roman Catholicism teems with allusions to
visions of the Cross, Mary and Christ. About them, how-
ever there is much dispute and moreover, we do not
find them with those mystics we have mentioned as
essential elements of their experiences. We ~~consider~~
that they belong to the extravagances and not to
the essentials of mysticism. They are incidental and
not integral elements in mystical experience

vii

Mysticism and the New Testament

As we are about to discuss the writings of one
who professed the Christian religion and whose
writings are based on the New Testament, it is of
value for us in the solution of our problem to
show whether mysticism is reconcilable with the
doctrine of the New Testament

An examination of Scripture shows that Christianity
is not only not opposed to mysticism, but is
indeed fraught with mystical ideas. Indeed,

¹ Vanghies of Rel. Exp. p. 406

² Whyte. in Behmen p. 63-64.

³ Quoted from Whyte in Saint Theresa p. 77.

nothing else could have been expected, seeing that two of its exponents namely John the Evangelist and Paul had very strong mystical tendencies. The idea with of communion or fellowship with God is a basic one and is chiefly found with John. The idea we find expressed in 1 John 1. v 3 is a common one: "our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ." The fifteenth chapter of his Gospel in which the relation of the branch to the vine is discussed is perhaps one of the clearest expositions of the mystical form of union in any literature.

The mystical element in St. Paul's theology is very marked. The belief in a supernatural illumination is unambiguously professed. He speaks of a "hidden wisdom" which "God has revealed unto us"¹⁾. Moreover he too disparages human reason, in the sense we have pointed out before, when he speaks of the "wisdoms of this world" or the "wisdoms of the wise"²⁾. Furthermore such illumination is granted only to those who are spiritually inclined, who as the later mystics frequently taught have the heart prepared for this communion "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God they are spiritually discerned"³⁾

Sincking of self plays an important part in the doctrine of the New Testament. The idea of renouncing all self-life and adopting the New Life is very prominent in the teaching of Christ and also of Paul. The idea expressed in Col. 3 v 10 "and have put on the new man" often occurs with St. Paul. The view is also

1) 1 Cor 2. v 10.

2) 1 Cor 1. v 20.

3) 1 Cor 2 v 14.

advocated that a mystical death must also precede the mystical union "our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed"

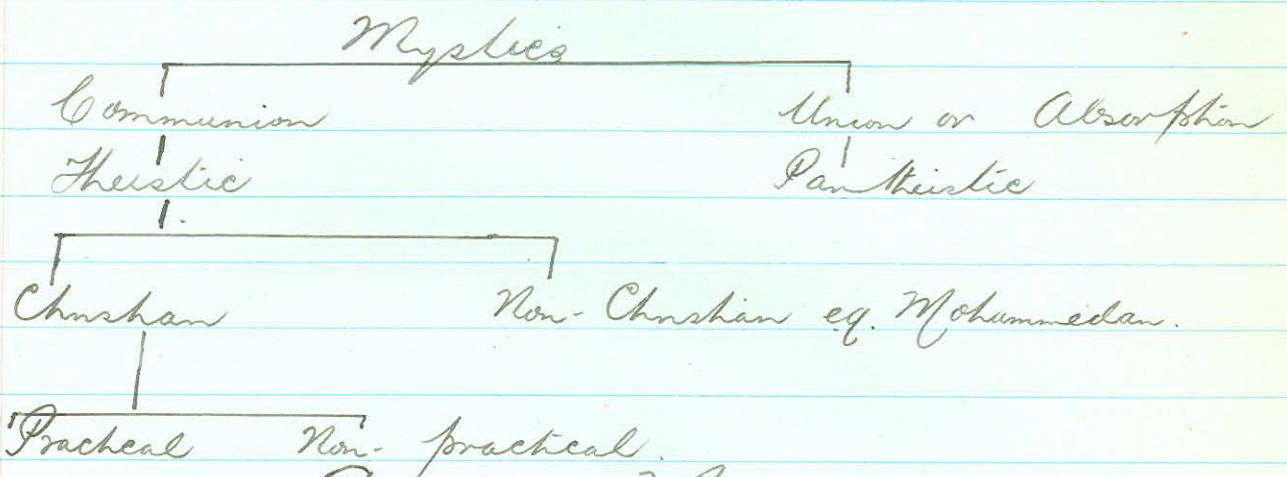
Thus in spite of the disparaging way in which mysticism is often spoken of, we hold that Protestantism is not only not opposed to mysticism but, on the contrary, ^{there} necessarily must be mystical tendencies in this form of faith. It has always emphasized the fact that there is nothing which bars the way between the soul and God, and that the "pure in heart" can meet Him. At all times has it raised a warning against the ascetic claim of self. Faith and not reason it has advocated as the means to lead man to God. The life of self-surrender in which the soul becomes nothing and God everything, it has constantly shown to be the life of highest perfection and bliss.

VIII Classification

Various have been the classifications of the different forms of mysticism, but none of those which I have come across seem to me to be satisfactory. This difficulty of classification is no doubt largely due to the fact that mysticism has mostly appeared in individualistic form and not in connection with a specific creed or doctrine. Such classifications, as that of Van der Meer into Theopathic, Theosophic and Theurgic mystics or that of Dr Inge into Super-rational, Rational and Extreme mystics, do not, to my mind, draw a sufficiently distinct line of cleavage between the different classes of mystics. For our purpose the following scheme of classification

1) Romans 6 v. 6.

seems to me to be more satisfactory



IX Andrew Murray

Following this scheme of classification I wish to show that the writer I am discussing was a Theistic mystic for whom divine communion was the most essential reality. As opposed to those mystics who deny the fact of the divinity of Christ, he was truly Christian in his mysticism. As distinguished from those mystics for whom life consists almost entirely of contemplation of divine things, apart from all activity, he was essentially a practical mystic for whom communion with God did not exclude concern for his fellowmen.

A A.M. Drawn towards Mysticism

A glance through the library of Dr Murray shows that he was intensely interested in mystical writers. In his library the following books are still to be found. The lives of St. Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Santa Teresa, Thomas a Kempis, Fauler, Suso, Ruybroeck, Eckhart, Der Steegers Hymnen, Boehme, Lawrence, Madame Guyon, Fenelon, Samuel Rutherford, James Brayer, William Penn, George Fox, Bellet and other Quakers, Vaughan's Hours with the Mystics, Sketches of the Quiet in the Land, and most of the works of Law. All these have names of men

who are commonly recognized to have strong mystical tendencies. They are everywhere recognized as the classic mystics.

Moreover, that these books were not only read but also studied carefully cannot be doubted. In some of these books many sentences and phrases are carefully underlined and marginal notes made. This is especially apparent in the Works of Law Sketches of the Quiet in the Land, a book describing the lives and sayings of the mystics of the Middle Ages, and the lives of Santa Teresa and Behmen. One is also struck by the type of phrases which he so carefully underlines. In the "Sketches of the Quiet in the Land" such phrases especially are underlined as "awaken to a sense of His presence", "waiting on Him in blessed simplicity and stillness", "the love of the inmost heart" "actual communion with God Himself" "withdrawing ourselves into the seclusion of the inner sanctuary of communion with God". All these are phrases which belong to the very essence of mysticism.

One is also struck by the fact that at the top of many of the pages of some of these books Andrew Murray has written a synopsis of the contents of the page. In one book of Law I find 58 such synopses made.

What conclusions can we draw from this?

1. The fact that a man reads a book of a mystic does not by any means prove that he is a mystic. Yet if he is not at all mystically inclined, it seems most unlikely that he would read a large number of books on the same subject. ~~A man who is not at all mystically inclined, would probably not read such a large~~

~~number of books on the same subject:~~

II. Then, too, the fact that words and phrases are so carefully underlined, shows that he read these books carefully and not merely with a passing interest. When people are only casually interested, as they mostly are when reading a novel, they do not stop to mark or underline phrases or sentences. We generally mark only such phrases as specially took interest in us and have for us a deep meaning.

III. From the practice of giving a synopsis of the contents of the page, we also hold that a definite conclusion can be drawn. He was greatly interested in the contents of the page, wanted to have a clear conception of the ideas expressed, and wished to make them his own.

This great interest in mystical thoughts is also proved by another fact. We have it from one of his family that he was very fond of reading aloud to them the hymns of Der Steyer. At the breakfast table and elsewhere he used to read aloud certain ones which specially took his fancy. That Der Steyer was a mystic his poems clearly show. Moreover in the ^{see} Sketches of the "Quiet in the Land" he is discussed as one of the mystics. The following poem of Der Steyer was one of which he was specially fond, and used to read aloud.

Wanderer rest thy weary feet:
Shapes and sounds forgotten now
Close thine eyes in stillness sweet:
With thy God alone art thou
In the deeps of silence rest:
Let Him work His high behest!

In Thy strength my soul is still
Clay within the Potter's hands
Moulded by Thy tender will
Mightier than all commands
Shaped and moved by Thee alone
Now and evermore Thine own.

These verses to my mind, contain the gist of mysticism. The ideas of losing oneself, being quiet in the presence of God, shutting out the rest of the world, we find here, are those of all religious mystics.

Poems which we rapturously read to our friends, are such as we are not only deeply interested in, but also respond to our souls. Mystical ideas were thus not merely an object of study for him. He loved them and enjoyed them so extensively, that he wished to utter them forth to others.

Thus far we have shown that Andrew Murray's nature was strongly drawn towards mysticism. The ideas of the mystics found a ready soil in his heart. We shall now show that he stood directly under the influence of at least one mystic.

B How influenced

The writer in whom Andrew Murray seems to be most interested is William Law. That he read Law very carefully is adequately proved by the way in which he has marked and underlined sentences in his copy of Law. As I have pointed out he often at the top of the page gives a synopsis of the page, showing how strongly he was impressed by Law.

Of the fact that Law was a mystic there

can be no doubt. Dr Whypé calls him "the greatest of English mystics". Coldecott in his Philosophy of Religion classes him under the mystics. So also does Jones in his article on Mysticism in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Leslie Stephens in his "English Thought in the Eighteenth Century" expatiates at length on the mysticism of Law. This fact is also accepted by Andrew Murray who says "Law is known as a mystic"

In his works too, Andrew Murray shows a close intimacy with Law's works, and there are undoubtedly traces which show that he was influenced by Law. I frankly admit that he owes much to that mystic. Speaking of him he says "I confess that in all my reading I have never found anyone who has so helped me in understanding the Scriptural truths of the work of the Holy Spirit."²⁾ Again "I have nowhere met a teacher who has opened up the same truths of the glory of God and our absolute dependence on Him as Law."³⁾ An even more direct testimony is the following "I cannot say how much I owe to this volume of Law (Waiting on God) in Sherrington's how waiting on Him is the very beginning as it is the highest attainment in true religion."⁴⁾ When speaking of Law's "A Serious Call to a devout and Holy Life" he says "As I have read and re-read the first ten chapters of the book and felt how difficult it is to realize even intellectually this absolute devotion to God."⁵⁾ This passage adequately proves that he took pains to make the contents of Law's book his own.

An apparently insignificant little incident

1) Intro. Wholly for God p 19.

2) Intro. Wholly for God p 11.

3) Ib. p 13.

4) Ib. p 19.

5) Ib. p 14.

Shows how he appreciated and used Law's ideas. At the back of his copy of the seventh volume of Law's works, I find the following note made by him.

Self 5-5, 66

world 70, 72, 98-102, 247, 248

Humility 73, 121

Reason 168

These numbers are found to refer to the pages of the book. What conclusion can we draw from this? Why did he make this reference? To my mind there can be only one answer. He wanted them as ideas which he could use afterwards. And, as we shall show, they are ideas which occur with him repeatedly.

That he discovered in Law a rich store of ideas is also shown in another way. In four books, namely, Wholly for God, The Divine Indwelling, the Spirit of Love Dying to Self he has given us extracts from Law which especially appealed to him. In the preface of one he says in speaking of the value of Law's works: "I feel confident that the teaching will be a stimulus and a strength to many" ¹⁾ In the book "The Divine Indwelling" he has given selections from the letters of Law. In this book he has had a large number of phrases printed underlined. In the introduction he says that he hopes that the "underlining will help others." One is struck by noting how many of these underlined phrases breathe a mystical spirit. They are chiefly of the following nature: "Dying to self as well as to reason" ²⁾ "Carried out of himself and united to God" ³⁾ "The presence and power of God in your soul" ⁴⁾ He

1) Intro. Wholly for God p 12.
2) p 38

3) p 53

4) p 63.

repeatedly says that he is sure that "all thoughtful readers of Law" will receive a lasting blessing from him. Will this influence not have been exercised on him who we know, read Law's books so carefully?

I am convinced that they have, and am strengthened in my opinion on comparing the works of these two writers. It would take us too far afield to point out in detail the similarity between the two writers. Comparison shows that the chief ideas emphasized with Law, also take a prominent position in the writings of Andrew Murray. Few other writers have expounded more fully on the necessity of prayer. Law's Spirit of Prayer, a book of 140 pages is wholly devoted to this subject. With this we can compare Andrew Murray's forty books and pamphlets written on the subject of prayer. Both too insist more than others on the one necessary preparation for communion with God, namely, "dying to self". Andrew Murray has edited a book entitled "Dying to self" which contains extracts from Law, all embodying this idea. He himself has written 5 books with this idea as subject. The idea of love both for our fellow-men and for God also receives a fuller treatment with Law and with A. Murray, than with other writers with a mystical tendency. Law's book "The Spirit of Love" is devoted to this idea. Of Andrew Murray's books six are devoted to this subject.

One cannot help feeling that these two writers breathe the same spirit. Both place close and daily communion with God above every thing, yet both are, as we shall show,

unlike similar thinkers, essentially practical, and are wanting in the usual mystical feature, namely, a narrow outlook on life

Moreover, we have it on good authority, that Law was under the influence of Behmen. This fact is attested to by various writers. Leslie Stephen says "Law began his studies of Behmen about 1733"¹⁾ and "all his later writings are more or less expositing of Behmen"²⁾. Vaughan expresses the same fact "Law may be said to have introduced Behmen to the English people"³⁾. This fact is also affirmed in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, which speaks of Law's works as "the noblest English interpretations of Behmen's mystical message". Andrew Murray also testifies to this fact "In different works... the influence of Behmen was distinctly visible"⁴⁾

Law's own words confirm this "Next to Scripture my only book is the illuminated Behmen"⁵⁾ And again "in reading Behmen I am always at home"⁶⁾

It has also struck me that there are certain features common to Behmen and Law which I have not found with most of the other mystics. He too, lays special emphasis on the necessity of prayer. Behmen tells us that he prays eight times each day. He also advises "A short prayer when we awake... a prayer... after we have risen... a prayer while we wash and dress" etc. Behmen's book "Holy Week" is devoted to this subject. Also his Probleme von der heiligen Gebet is a collection of prayers. As we have shown

1) Leslie Stephen: English Thought in the 18th Cent. Vol. 4 p 409 p 29
2) ib.
3) Hours with the Mystics Vol. 4 p 248
4) Intro. wholly for God p 4
5) A Whistle: Behmen p 22
6) A Whistle: Behmen p 62

This prominent position given to prayer is also a characteristic of Law and AS Murray.

Another idea which I find taking a prominent position with Behmen as with Law, and not usually with the mystics, is the idea of love for our fellowmen. We need note only a few passages embodying this idea "Throw out thy heart upon all men" and again "... unless thou dost exercise thy heart, and the love of thy heart upon every man in the world, thy self-love, thy pride.... will still have dominion over thee" "Love thy neighbour as thy self" be scholar! We have shown that this idea also is a characteristic feature with Law and AS Murray.

A third characteristic which I find with Behmen and also with Law, and which seems to be wanting in the most of the mystics is the practical tendency. This is amply attested to by many writers. Vaughan affirms that "The Treatise on the Three Principles abounds in counsels and exhortations designed to promote practical holiness"²⁾ A Whyfe speaks of "the immediate and intensely practical bearing of all his speculations.... that is Behmens true and genuine distinction"³⁾. Another passage of Vaughan is worthy of quotation to prove this point. He says "His life was a waking dream, but never did mystical Somnambulist more sincerely intend service to man and praise to God"⁴⁾. This distinctive feature I find also with Law. Two of his works at least are intensely practical, namely, A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection and "A Serious call to a Elevated and Holy Life". Andrew Murray also speaks of them as "practical works"⁵⁾.

1) Quoted from A Whyfe's Behmen p 85 3) Vaughan. Hours with the mystics p 95
2) A Whyfe: Behmen p 70 4) Vaughan. Hours with the mystics p 97.
5) Intro. Wholly for God p 12.

It seems almost superfluous to state that A. Murray was no mere thinker but a practical man. His more than fifty years of pastoral work, in which he travelled through the length and breadth of the land, his leadership for many years in the chief assembly of the Church, the struggle he waged against modern unbelief as shown by his book "Het moderne ongelooft" and also the pamphlet "De Predestinatie Strijd", his other practical treatises such as that on "Geld" and "The State of the Church" - all this adequately proves that he was no mystical dreamer to whom contemplation was the ideal of life.

This distinctly practical tendency separates Behmen and Law at least A. Murray, more than any others into a distinct class of mystics.

If we can prove that Andrew Murray is a mystic then we have also shown that he is not a mystic standing all by himself. We have found that there are three features common to Behmen and Law and also found in Andrew Murray. Moreover they are features which we do not find with ^{most} other well known mystics. We know that Law was strongly influenced by Behmen, and we have shown that Andrew Murray was greatly influenced by Law. Thus if we can prove that the writer we are discussing is a mystic, we have to do with three mystics who seem to form a class by themselves. We also find that the same chain of thought can be traced from Andrew Murray through Law and ending in Behmen. Further back than that we cannot proceed, for Behmen was an independent thinker. As A. Whyte remarks in the description of his life

"He was a total stranger to the world of books"¹
The same writer also speaks of his "most original thoughts"²
He himself says that the visions he had were the true
source of his knowledge³

C/ General trend of his writings

All the evidence we have thus far adduced
go to prove go to prove that he was deeply interested
in mysticism and stood strongly under the influence
of at least one mystical writer. Yet this is not sufficient
to prove that he was a mystic. The greater source of
information still remains to be examined namely,
his books. Do the works he wrote reveal the
characteristics of the mystic?

A survey of the titles of all the books he wrote
gives us the following facts. In his more than 200
books and pamphlets, the following subjects are dealt
with:

40	deal with prayer	(These numbers cannot be given exactly as it is difficult to find out whether certain books are mere translations or revised editions).
7	.. faith	
3	.. abiding in Christ	
9	.. holy life	
3	.. fellowship with God	
3	.. Surrender of self	
2	.. self life	
4	.. waiting on God	
3	.. being like Christ.	

This does not of course mean that these ideas
occur only in the books having them as titles
In fact I have noticed in reading through
about thirty of his works that the same ideas
recur in almost all the works.

1) Whyte: Behmen p. 15
2) ib. p. 7.
3) ib. p. 7.

The above list of subjects should be a true index of the general trend of the writer's mind. Judging from the titles, all the essential attributes of mysticism seem to be advocated as necessary for the inward life. Moreover this was not for him a mere passing phase of thought. For though when we study the dates at which the different books were written, we perceive that a larger number of books with a mystical tendency was written in the latter part of his life than in the former, yet almost all through the sixty years in which he wrote (1858-1918) we find books containing mystical ideas being written by him. Thus as early as 1864 we find the book "Bliss in Jesus" breathing the same spirit as so many of his later works. If a man of his ability confines himself so largely to such mystical subjects, they undoubtedly must have formed the most predominant element in his intellectual life.

D. Characteristics of Mystics found in the him

An examination of some of the works of Andrew Murray confirms us in the view just advocated. The essential characteristics of mysticism, such as they have appeared at all times, I have found in almost all the books which I have read. Moreover they are not merely found as stray thoughts scattered here and there, but in many books one finds from beginning to end a distinctly mystical atmosphere. Such books are, for example, The Mystery of the True Vine, a book containing 170 pages and devoted exclusively to the description of the closeness of the Divine communion. The same is also the only theme in the book entitled "God in us." In the book Dying to Self, the absolute necessity of total self-renunciation is insisted

upon.

All this, however, will become clearer when we consider some of the extracts from his books.

Communion with God - the most characteristic element of mysticism at all times, is an idea found repeatedly in his works. In fact, the closeness of the relation which there can be between the soul and God, is the idea which I have found to recur most frequently in his works. The following are typical examples, out of a large number I have found.

"Het verborgen leven in Hem alle dag"¹⁾

"We need ... a real personal meeting"²⁾

He frequently advocates "Nieuwen omgang met de onzichtbare wereld"³⁾

"Men must not rest" until they know that God has met them"⁴⁾

"Werkelijk God te ontmoeten en Zijn aangezicht te zien"⁵⁾

There is no need so trying us that believers be taught how to meet with God, to tarry and to dwell with Him"⁶⁾

"Gij loopt gevaar Gebed en Bijbel studie te stellen in de plaats van levende gemeenschap met God"

The value and reality of communion with God are here repeatedly insisted on. What is more, Andrew Murray clearly does not mean by communion mere worshipping of God, but a state in which there is a real feeling of His presence. That this is the case is specially clear in the last quotation which we have given. There living communion with God is clearly distinguished from mere

1) Christus ons Leven 10 de Dag.

2) Morning Watch 29th Day.

3) De Bediening der Voorbedding p. 126.

4) State of the Church p. 99

5) Genade Zoon 16 de Dag.

6) Intro. Power of the Holy Spirit p. xv

+ The context, unfortunately does not state very clearly what he means by this, nor does it give a further description of this being in the presence of God.

prayer. There, and also in the two previous examples he definitely states that the true believer, should personally meet God, should feel that he is in the presence of God. He clearly believes that we can be conscious of the nearness of God, and that we should practise to become aware of it. The passage which I could discover, seems to indicate that he himself had a personal experience of God's presence. Speaking about praying he says "From the very beginning I come face to face with God; I am in touch with the everlasting omnipotence of love." Unlike most of the other great mystics, Andrew Murray does not describe his own personal experience in this matter. At least, I have been able to find only this one passage in which there is anything like a personal testimony. He repeatedly states that all Christians should strive to feel the presence of God. This is the one essential for all true believers. While he so earnestly and so repeatedly states the pressing need for each one to have this divine communion, can we for one moment think that he was a total stranger to this personal meeting with God? If to this we add this one personal testimony which I have quoted, I feel convinced that he like Fauler Eckhart and Teresa, though perhaps not in such a realistic way, enjoyed this direct communion with God.

II Self-negation He further resembles the great mystics, in that he, with as much vehemence as they used to do, insists on the necessity of self-abnegation. Before there can be this direct and close relation

"Waiting on God p. 26."

with God, self must be brought into subjection
"In the path that leads to the personal actual
enjoyment of the blume life there is ... one great enemy
to be overcome, Self." 1)

"Dying to self is the only way to life in God" 2)

"The habit of our souls must be unceasingly: I am
nothing, God is all" 3)

"We have ... to sink ourselves into Him" 4)

"And why did God give the angels or man a
self? The object of the self was that we might
bring it as an empty vessel unto God, that He
might put into it His life" 5)

But when you have given your heart, there is
yet more to give. There is the head, the brain with
its thoughts" 6)

"When a soul comes into perfect humility before
God, it becomes nothing and God becomes all with it."

In all these and many other similar passages
the idea is expressed that it is only when man
recedes from his own abilities and desires, and, as
it were, becomes vacant before God, that this
higher experience can take place. This "Self"
against which the monks and mystics fought
so strenuously, he too recognizes as being the great
obstacle which hinders man from having direct
communion with God. Dying to self he relentlessly
advocates. This idea of dying to self occurs
68 times in one small book, entitled "Dying to Self"

Quietism To gain this blessed state of communion, he

1) Intro. Blume Indwelling p 8

2) ib.

3) ib p 24.

4) Mystery of the Inner Vine p 51.

5) Out of this Fulness p 10.

6) Ib. p 82

7. Out of this Fulness p 91.

holds that it is not enough merely to fight against the self. The soul must also fit itself for a state in which it can meet God. As the older mystics considered that withdrawal from the world and the things of sense was necessary for mystical contemplation. So he, too, holds that the soul must withdraw from the world, be quiet and wait patiently for God, if it desires to experience His presence.

"Begin uw wachten op God door de werkgzaamheid uwer natuurlijke krachten tot rust te brengen, en wees stil voor God"¹⁾

"Take more time to be still before God, without saying one word"²⁾

Speaking of the ordinary worshippers he says "They take any thing rather than God - ministers and preaching and books and prayers ... instead of waiting and waiting long, if need be, for God to reveal Himself"³⁾

"Bow down and be still ... and wait until ... you feel His Holy Presence with you and in you"⁴⁾

"Wij moeten lyd nemen ... om onze ziel tot Hem stil te zetten en Zijne tegenwoordigheid bewust te worden"⁵⁾

"Als wij eerst in aanbidding zonder wachten totdat wij een gezicht hebben van God..."⁶⁾

"In de stille u voor God te brengen totdat er een besef gegeven wordt van Zijne tegenwoordigheid"⁷⁾

"You are so occupied with praying, studying ... that you do not give God the time to make Himself known"⁸⁾

Here again, speaking to the ordinary Christians,

1) Op God wachten. bl 4.

2) Out. of this fulness p 25.

3) Ib. p 26.

4) Mystery of the True Vine p 18.

5) De Schadepoel 19^{de} Dag.

6) De Bedenning der Voorbedding p 164

7) Ib p 166

8) Out. of this fulness p 24.

he exhorts them to be quiet, so as to experience the reality of God's presence. This is chiefly apparent in the last three quotations where a clear distinction is drawn between the act of praying and being directly aware of God's nearness. Since he wants every Christian to become aware of the presence of God, it seems ludicrous to say that he himself never was aware of this close communion with God.

Longing

Yet along with this passivity there must at least be so much activity on the part of the soul that it should long for this meeting with God. This idea of longing and love, as I have shown, is found with many of the great mystics. With him too it is a necessary condition. "Thirst for God as the body thirsts for a drink of water" is his solemn exhortation. Again "God wurdte geworden godra thy allen wurdte gezucht" ²¹. The necessity of love, too, forms an important element in his teaching. Thus "love is the one only bond of union between God and the creature" ³⁾

Reason

We have pointed out in a former paragraph decried that what has at all times distinguished the mystic from the ordinary thinker, is the fact that the mystic is not so dependent on reason as the other thinkers, or at least can boast of another faculty in addition to reason, which in a certain department of truth can give him a form of knowledge.

An examination of his works shows us that he is so convinced, that we want a higher faculty than reason to make our religious life

1) Morning Watch: 19th Day.
2) God in us: 14th Day.
3) Intro. Bying to Self p. X

more efficient, that he positively declares that this predominance of reason is the cause of deterioration in our religion "One of the great reasons that our religion is so powerless is that it is too much a thing of reason and sense"¹⁾. A similar thought is expressed in the following.

"Gens waerheid is meer zeker dan dat wetenschap en geleerdheid nodig. een vonk van het hemelsch leven in onze ziel kan brengen"²⁾

"Zij zullen God nooit vinden die Hem zoeken door 't verstand"³⁾

"Onmogelijk is het voor ons met ons verstand Zijnen hemelschen wil te kennen"⁴⁾

Similar ideas I have found expressed in 12 different passages. It is quite clear that with the mystics he holds that when we are engaged in this act of communion with God, reason should be completely in abeyance.

Special Faculty Yet even as the older mystics insisted on a special faculty which is brought into play when we are "in the presence" of God, so he too, speaks of a different form of consciousness or a different principle of knowledge which is displayed during this higher form of intercourse. He calls it

"the deep centre of the soul"⁵⁾

"The Spirit is the seat of our God consciousness; the Soul of our Self consciousness; the body of our world consciousness"⁶⁾

Speaking of the original constitution of man's nature before the Fall, he says

1) Intro. Wholly for God p xxiv 6) The Spirit of Christ. p 326.

2) God in ons. 17 de Dag.

3) God in ons 16 de Dag.

4) Op God wachten p 13.

5) Intro. Wholly for God p xxiv

"In the constitution of the three parts of man's nature the Spirit as linking him with the Divine was the highest, the body connecting him with the Sensible and animal the lowest; intermediate stood the Soul partaker of the nature of the others."

Yet he goes on to say, owing to sin
"the Spirit in man became dormant - a capacity for knowing and serving God which would have to wait its time for deliverance and quickening" ²⁾

"In regeneration it is this Spirit of man which is quickened again and renewed." ³⁾

Like the Trichotomists he thus holds that Soul, Spirit, and body are three separate entities with different functions. The Spirit is for him a separate function apart from reason. It is that faculty which is above reason and which comes into working when the presence of God is concerned. The Spirit has as its function the bringing of the soul in contact with God. Reason, as he has repeatedly said, is totally unable to be of any service in this sphere. This Spirit is the highest faculty in the constitution of man. Yet in many men this faculty is never displayed. Sin has soothed this godlike sense to sleep.

All this fully agrees with what we have stated about the higher faculty of the mystics. He too holds that there is a special kind of consciousness with which neither reason nor the ordinary senses have to do, for it is elevated above them. When rightly attuned it can become aware of the heavenly music. For the

1) The Spirit of Christ: p 333.

2) Id.

3) Id.

42

ordinary man this faculty is dormant. Sin and self-love are the soporifics. Yet when God is sought and the self is renounced, this self-faculty through God's goodness awakens and brings the soul into the presence of God.

Nearness of God

We have pointed out that the mystics speak, even though they do so in vague terms of God being very near to them. Definiteness on this point we do not find, although they are unanimous in their view that God is at least so near to them that they can become directly aware of His presence.

Of the nearness of God to us he is absolutely convinced. "What folly it is to imagine that I cannot expect God to be with me every moment!"

"Is God not able so to take possession that He can be nearer to me than any thing in the world?"²

This sense of nearness, he also expresses by the term "light of God's consciousness". He asks

"Is He not able to let His light and His presence so shine through you that you can walk all the day with God nearer to you than anything in nature?"³

"The light of God shines, but you must open the shutters of your heart."⁴

To his readers he gives the following advice "Let nothing but the full light of God's countenance satisfy us every day."

He is so certain of the necessity of this light of God's countenance for everyone, that it is folly to think that he never experienced it

1) Out of this fulness p 24.

2) Out of this fulness p 19.

3) Out of this fulness p 24

4) My Soul shall no more go down. 9th Day.

Joy

A usual concomitant of this sense of nearness of God, has often been a feeling of joy. Andrew Murray agrees in holding that the truest joy will be experienced in the presence of God.

"Fellowship with Him... will be a delight."¹⁾
He also speaks of certain conditions necessary to "to enjoy this blessed indwelling"²⁾. Also of the "joy of daily fellowship with God"³⁾
"Omgaan met God is 't toppunt van zaligheid op aarde"⁴⁾

E/
Meaning
of
Communion

Meaning of "Communion"

As I have pointed out before, mystics are usually vague in their descriptions. Explanations they do not give "What they have seen and heard in their inner man" that they bear witness to. All of them agree that there is "communion" with God, though what is exactly meant by this communion, is not exactly told.

Andrew Murray as distinguished from most of the mystical writers, is a very lucid writer. The meaning which he wishes to convey to his readers is usually clear. He is no doubt one of the few writers of this kind, who can make his ideas intelligible to the ordinary man.

Yet there is one important point in his thought which he has not carefully elucidated, and that is ^{the question,} "what is meant by 'communion' with God. What interpretations are we to give to his use of the word 'communion'?"

He undoubtedly uses the word "communion" in

1) Out. of this Fulness p. 41.
2) The Home Indwelling p. 13.
3) Secrets of Intercession p. 62
4) De Binnens Kamer p. 7.

a fairly vague way. He has hardly ever told us what he means by this act of communion. He usually describes it as a state in which we are "near" or "in the presence" of God. Yet undoubtedly he means something more than "nearness" when he speaks of the need of all to enter into communion with God. I cannot think that he holds that this mere consciousness of being near to God, is the ideal to which each believer should strive to attain.

There are, however, a few phrases discoverable in his works, which seem to give us some idea of what meaning he attached to the word. e.g. "Dan weet jij wat het is werkelijk God te ontmoeten, en Zijn aangezicht te zien en te onderkennen hoe zeker en hoe zwaar het is dat Zijn liefde op u rust" 1)

Through communion we thus get the assurance that God loves us.

"Hij (God) alleen kan de verborgene myshandeling bekend maken. De menselijke kennis van de genadeweg die wij verkrijgen kunnen door het gebruik van ons verstand is niet genoeg" 2)

"Het is Zijn werk om al de verborgenheden van den verlossenden Christus in ons binnenste te openbaren" 3)

On another occasion he also speaks of this inner life of communion which should realise "de kracht Gods om te redden" 4)

From this I believe we can conclude what he considers to be the function and value of communion. Reason teaches us the objective fact of salvation and grace, to a certain extent. Yet

1) De Genadeweg. 16^{de} Dag.

2) Zijk my genadig. p 119

3) God in ons 19^{de} Dag.

4) De Binnen Kamer p 49.

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This is not enough. God, in our communion with Him must make us realize, must impart to us, the deeper meaning of these great facts, which are veiled from reason. He teaches us that we can and must subjectively accept these facts. Moreover, in our act of communion He gives us the inner assurance that we have saved, and that we stand in a close relation to Him.

F The Communion Ineffable

It is indeed not surprising that we find difficulty in interpreting his meaning of the word communion, for like the mystics who rest-assured of this close relation to and intercourse with God, but cannot give exact expression to it, he too, admits that this act of communion is ineffable. An exact explanation of it cannot be given. Thus when speaking of those who feel God's nearness, he says "wanner zij in de afheid zo bewust worden van Zijn nabijheid dat zij in heilige vrees het gevoel maar niet uitgesproken kunnen". This close union he also describes as "a Divine reality that words cannot express"^{1) 2)} The words "Abide in me and I in you just tell us to believe in this Divine mystery". Again he says "No thinking or teaching or praying can grasp it; it is a Divine mystery of love. As little as we can affect the union can we understand it"⁴⁾ It is striking to note how often he uses the word "mystery" in connection with this fact of the relation into which we can enter with God. One of his books "The Mystery of the True Vine" (containing about 140 pages) he has devoted simply to this

1) Cf. God Wachten bl. 89.

2) The Mystery of the True Vine.

3) Ib.

4) The Mystery of the True Vine p 53.

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idea of the wonderfulness of the relation.

G The Reality of Communion

The result to which Andrew Murray comes is the result to which the mystics in general come. Communion with God he urges as the great reality to which each soul should strive to attain. It is indeed the profoundest of realities. We cannot doubt that he himself attained to it. Judging from the way in which he speaks of it, his experience in this respect must have been a very real one. In reading his works one cannot help feeling that he has had first-hand knowledge of this communion. That a man of his power and influence should devote such a large number of his books to this subject; that he should continually plead with all his readers to strive to gain this happy state on earth, that he should give as clear a description of this state and its characteristics as any other man, and yet be a stranger to this mystical state, is

H for me a total impossibility.

Conclusion Of the "extravagances" of mysticism which we find with some mystics, I find no trace with Andrew Murray. Yet all the essential characteristics of the mystic are found abundantly with him. Moreover, the different kinds of evidence we have brought forward amply corroborate each other. We have shown that he was deeply interested in the mystics and that their thoughts very strongly appealed to him. The subjects with which he busied himself were essentially of a mystical nature. Finally his thoughts during almost sixty years during which he wrote, are those of the classic mystics. Thus mysticism was for him not a mere passing phase, but formed a

prominent element in the life of this great thinker. It is interesting to note that Dr Andrew Murray did not consider himself to be a mystic. We have it on good authority, from one of his children, that he did not like to have himself called a mystic, because he held the mystics in such reverence and considered that the mystics lived on a higher plane than he did. Yet we hold that we have the fullest right to designate him with the name of mystic.

A Practical Mystic Yet as the mysticism of Andrew Murray in one respect differs so greatly from that of most other mystics, we deem it necessary not merely to call him a mystic but to add some further qualification. The works of most of the mystics bring one under the impression that religion is for them something passive and narrow. The spiritual faculty is for them not only the most predominant faculty, but it also entirely swamps and often annihilates all other faculties of the soul. Such mystics generally have time for little beyond their own feelings. The rest of the world does not exist for them.

That this was not the case with Andrew Murray cannot be disputed. For him the religious life was not one of mere contemplation. I have not found a single instance in which he advocates the value of the contemplative life. For him life was not passive but active, as we have shown. Life is struggle, as many of the quotations show, a struggle day by day against the assertive claims of the self. Some of his books are definitely practical and are void of all mystical ideas. Thus e.g. the book entitled "Geld"

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is an exposition on the right use of money. This practical nature is also indirectly proved by another fact. I have tried to find out if in his Letters there are no mystical ideas. Yet they are all of an essentially practical nature and no trace of mysticism is to be found in them. In this respect he greatly differs from such mystics as St. Theresa whose letters continually breathe a mystical spirit. Then, too, the writings of him on missionwork and also those on love, in which he never wearies of reiterating the necessity of brotherly love, show that religion was for him something practical, something under than a mere attending to subjective feelings. His whole life, characterized by activity, as we have pointed out, was a protest against the contemplation and inactivity of many forms of mysticism. To him we can thus unhesitatingly apply the title of "practical mystic".

His life and writings are admirably described in the words of Klingworth: "Such is the result of mysticism that is founded upon personal love to make men real definite, effective separate practical intense, whereas the mysticism of abstraction withdraws men from the world to be in the language of Neo-Platonism, 'alone with the Alone'".