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ARTICLE I.

MEDIÆVAL AND MODERN MYSTICS.

1. *Ullman's Reformers before the Reformation.* Translated by Rev. ROBERT MENZIES. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
2. *The History and Life of the Rev. Dr. John Tauler,* with twenty-five of his Sermons. Translated by SUSANNA WINKWORTH; Preface by Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY; Introduction by Rev. ROSWELL D. HITCHCOCK, D. D., Washburn Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Union Theological Seminary (New York). New York: Wiley & Halsted.
3. *Madame Guyon and Fenelon.* By THOS. C. UPHAM, Professor in Bowdoin College. Harper & Bros., New York.

WHAT MYSTICISM IS.

Difficult indeed would be the task of defining the undefinable. Mysticism is not like the sun, the moon, the planets, all which give the telescopic observer a sharp-edged disk; not even like the fixed stars which present glittering points, or at least approximations thereto; but like the zodiacal light stretching back from the sun just after nightfall in long vagueness of splendor; or the nebula in Andromeda shining yonder from age to age, an undefined luminosity. Like the nebula, it is, however, a reality; it has a central aggregation from which on all sides it passes away gradually into utter faintness.

We take this nucleus to be an aspiration after an intuition; a longing for immediate communion with the Greatest and the Best. Ullman says of John Wessel that he "has also a mystical element. . . . He strives, like the mystics, to break through the limits of the finite, to blend himself in love and longing with God, and, as the principal means of union with him, employs contemplation and prayer." Dr. Hitchcock characterises the mystics as "inordinately bent on hiding their lives in God." Kingsley says they are "all inclined to claim some illumination, intuition, or direct vision of eternal truth, eternal good, eternal beauty, even of that eternal Father in whom all live and move and have their being."

PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF MYSTICISM.

A phenomenon which has appeared and re-appeared so often in the Church, must find something within man to which it appeals. We might almost say a man is a born mystic, or else he never becomes one; *nascitur, non fit*. To be more exact, there are some persons, who, like George Fox, spontaneously develop into mystics; others, like the excellent Penn, easily absorb the infection; then after every conceivable degree of liability to contract the disease, we arrive at mental constitutions so robust as to repel its most powerful attacks.

So far as the intellect is concerned, we apprehend the differences between men in this respect to be closely allied to the different proportions in which the intuitive and the discursive faculties are comprehended in each individual. Every man has both of these faculties, and it must be owned that the discursive is ultimately for the intuitive, and not the intuitive for the discursive. But there may be a just balance of these powers; or the discursive may so predominate as to make the man a mere mathematician, or metaphysician, or dialectician; or the intuitive may be so overshadowing as to produce a dreamer, a theosophist, a mystic.

The common way of expressing this difference in men is to say that the one is a Platonist, the other an Aristotelian. There is a modicum of truth in this statement; only a modicum, for Plato

was a powerful dialectician. He could hardly have been so long under the influence of that cogent and subtle reasoner, Socrates, without cultivating his own discursive faculty to the last degree of which it was susceptible.* On the other hand, Aristotle insists in his *Organum* upon the absolute prior need of first truths, if we would reason at all. Yet we cannot but suspect that the intuitive was paramount in Plato's mental constitution and the discursive in Aristotle's, and that this will explain Dr. Shedd's result (*History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. I., p. 60): "In this way, Platonism, under the treatment of the New-Platonics, degenerated into an imaginative theosophy; and Aristotelianism, in the handling of the later schoolmen, became mere hair-splitting." The trouble in both cases arose, he says, "from an exaggeration of one particular element in each, and its sole employment in philosophising upon Christianity to the neglect of the remaining elements of the system." This, however, could scarcely have happened as it did, unless Plato and Aristotle had differed in their own leanings.

Another phraseology discriminates the Pauline from the Johannean type. Forceful, but inexact concretion of thought, doing injustice to Paul, who was a man of rare intellectual balance. Yet, again, the discursive minds of the Church turn to Paul's writings, and the mystically inclined find refreshment in those of the beloved disciple. The born dialectician will hardly become a mystic. No, their ranks must be recruited from men of imagination, from contemplatists, and from dreamers.

Leaving the intellect now, and seeking for the roots of mysticism in the domain of the sensibilities, we find in all men more or less, in some men a very ardent, longing for repose. The coveted boon may be a rest from the accusations of a guilty conscience and a sense of the just indignation of God. Our Luthers and Bunyans are types of this class, which, however, is not very productive of mystics.

*"The poetical essays of his [Plato's] youth were discontinued after he became more intimately acquainted with Socrates. . . . A young man, endowed with a luxuriant fancy, he received the logical discipline to which Socrates subjected him as a kindness worthy of all gratitude." Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy*, Vol. I., p. 101.

A second class seek for rest from intellectual toil. They are disinclined to research, to laborious comparison of scripture with scripture, to wearisome deduction of one truth from another. It is so much easier to say, "God has revealed this or that truth to me," either as an exposition of scripture or as a strictly new revelation. We speak now not as before of the intellectual ability to reason, but of the slothful aversion to ratiocination; of the desire to grasp the wealth of knowledge without paying the divinely appointed price of labor.

A third class long for rest from the struggle against sin. They would by one *coup de main* of the will, one so-called act of consecration, terminate the battle. They would by one eagle wing-flap soar above the smoke, dust, and din of the Church militant.

A fourth, and it is our last class, are the invalid corps of the Church; the worn, the disappointed, the sick, the aged, the recluses of constraint or of choice. The trumpet no longer summons them to battle. Pæans of victory do not, as once, burst from their lips. Their daily monody is

"I long, oh! I long to be there!"

The gentle mystics come largely from this class. Let us be very tender to them, even as the Shepherd of Israel bears them in his arms.

From this pathology it will appear that objective mysticism is an exaggeration, a want of balance, resulting psychologically from a one-sidedness of original constitution or of development, and admitting of a boundless variety of degree and modification—as a ship may go directly with the wind and thus keep its decks level; or may sail across the wind at various angles and careen accordingly; or may be struck at right angles to its length by a sudden and violent squall throwing it on its beam-ends, and, if it be ill ballasted, causing it to founder in mid ocean.

THREE CLASSES OF MYSTICS.

Dr. Shedd subdivides into these three classes: 1. Mystic Scholastics. 2. Heretical Mystics. 3. Latitudinarian Mystics. "The Mystic Scholastics were those who held the hereditary or-

thodoxy of the Church, and sought to reach the meaning of the old symbols and doctrines by a contemplative and practical method; yet not to the entire exclusion of the speculative and scientific. Such men were Bernard († 1153), Hugh St. Victor († 1141), Richard St. Victor († 1173), William of Champeaux († 1113), Bonaventura († 1274)." *Hist. Chr. Doct., I., 79.*

Christ announced himself as the Truth and the Life. We may fail to render unto the Truth the things which belong unto the Truth; or, on the other hand, to render unto the Life the things that belong to the Life. The former of these is the error of the mystic; the latter, at least a prominent error of many of the scholastics. A man might be both a scholastic and a mystic in one sense of the terms, *i. e.*, by rendering their dues to both the Truth and the Life. But this was an unusual phenomenon. Pronounced mysticism and pronounced scholasticism seem to us to have been natural enemies.

Milman says (*Book XIV., Ch. 3*):

"It is an error to suppose mysticism as the perpetual antagonist of scholasticism; the mystics were often severe logicians: the scholastics had all the passion of mystics. Nor were the scholastics always Aristotelians and nominalists, or the mystics realists and Platonists. The logic was often that of Aristotle, the philosophy that of Plato."

Yet in the same connexion he tells us that

"From the hard and arid system of Peter the Lombard the profound devotion of the Middle Ages took refuge in mysticism. . . . Hugo and Richard de St. Victor (the Abbey of St. Victor at Paris) were the great mystics of this period. The mysticism of Hugo de St. Victor withdrew the contemplator altogether from the outward to the inner world—from God in the works of nature to God in his workings on the soul of man. This contemplation of God, the consummate perfection of man, is immediate, not mediate. Through the angels and the celestial hierarchy of the Areopagite, it aspires to one God, not in his theophany, but in his inmost essence. All ideas and forms of things are latent in the human soul, as in God; only they are manifested to the soul by its own activity, its meditative power. . . . Thus the silent, solemn cloister was as it were constantly balancing the noisy and pugnacious school. The system of the St. Victors is the contemplative philosophy of deep-thinking minds in their profound seclusion, not of intellectual gladiators." (*Latin Chris., Vol. VIII., p. 240-1.*)

If by a scholastic we mean merely a man who spent his life in

reading and writing theology, it is manifest that a scholastic might readily be a mystic. But if we mean by the term one who discussed theology in a scientific way, using a logical method, answering all objectors, thrusting and parrying, we cannot well see how such a man could have been a St. Victor. St. Augustine with his vast territory of intellect may have been a combination of the consummate logician and the profound mystic; but St. Augustines are rare phenomena. Jonathan Edwards, in more recent times, furnishes an instance of subtle ratiocination and ecstatic fervor.

Taking the terms, then, in their very best sense, we deem the scholastic mystics the highest style of theologians. Their pathway lies along the lofty summit of a ridge from which there is a too easy descent on either side. Such men never give in to the heresy that the pursuit of truth is better than its possession. They are not guilty of the solecism of pursuing the pursuit of truth. Truth and holiness; truth in order to holiness; holiness by means of the truth; truth sought in order that it may be gained, and when gained, may sanctify: this, in brief, is the purpose and the method of a true theology. This would have preserved the scholastics from their enormous waste of subtlety and logical power on trivial questions. Supplemented by just views of the right methods of acquiring knowledge, it would have spared the Church the evils of mysticism.*

*We have followed Dr. Shedd's classification, although it does not suit our purposes as well as it did his. In giving a history of Christian doctrine one would naturally make orthodoxy the standard, and differentiate heresies and heterodoxies from it by the amount of their divergence from the truth—as though they were so many variations of the needle from the true meridian. Neither is it easy to make a more satisfactory classification on any plan other than Dr. Shedd's. We suggest the following: Our emotional and intellectual natures are so closely related, and the impossibility of experiencing an emotion without a preceding intellection is so utter, that the mystics themselves have been unable to invert or wholly ignore the mental process. Then we may select as the principle of the division, the source of the intellection. When it is derived from the Scripture by a claimed but imaginary illumination of the Holy Spirit, the result may be a sense of measureless repose or of jubilant delight. When the mystic deems himself the recipient of a new revelation, it is a

THE HERETICAL MYSTICS.

It would have been better at once to call these the Pantheistic mystics. Pantheism seems at first sight the most absurd of all imaginable theories of the universe. It emerges, however, in the speculations of the ancient Hindus and Greeks; it has largely influenced the thinkers of Germany; practical, commercial New England has not escaped the malaria. Dr. Emmons unwittingly maintained it; and the Church has had to cry out

“Quo tantum mihi dexter abis?”

even to the astute and most evangelical Jonathan Edwards.

JOHN ERIGENA SCOTUS († 880).

This remarkable man was educated in one of the famous Irish schools, and found a patron in Charles the Bald, King of France. He read not only the Latin, but also the Greek Fathers, and thus fell under the influence of the New-Platonists. The works of the pseudo Dionysius which had appeared first about A. D. 532 were sent by the Greek Emperor to the Emperor Louis the Pious in A. D. 824. They were translated into Latin by the Abbot Hilduin, and again at the instance of Charles the Bald by Scotus. If such a thing be possible, Scotus was both a theist and a pantheist. He prays devoutly to God and to Christ; yet at other times utters pure pantheism. Speaking of God, he says: “Himself alone is truly *per se*, and everything which is truly said to be in those things which are, is himself alone. . . . He is the end of all things, which seek him that they may rest in him eternally and unchangeably.” God, truly speaking (according to Scotus), neither creates nor is created. The creature

case of enthusiasm, properly so called. When the mind evolves from its own depths a consciousness of essential union with the Absolute of which it is only a transient individualisation; when it derives nothing from the Scriptures except some wretched perversions of the mystical and living union of Christ with the Father and with the Church, the phenomenon is Pantheism. Hence using a subordinate principle in subdividing the first into two classes, we have, 1. The Mysticism of Quietism; 2. That of Ecstasy; 3. Of Enthusiasm; 4. Of Pantheism. More than one of these, however, might be found in a single mystic. The Quietist might be an Enthusiast, or even a Pantheist.

subsists in God. In the creature God is created in a wonderful and ineffable manner. The Invisible manifests himself as visible, the Incomprehensible as comprehensible, the Infinite as finite. With other pantheists, he denied the real objective existence of sin. God was all in all, and even the semblance of evil should finally be driven from the universe of creation which was the manifestation form of God.

It is interesting, though not wonderful, that whenever and wherever pantheism appears, the original principle is developed into the same forms. Even the phraseology and the poetical similitudes are strikingly alike. Shedd justly remarks that pantheism may be reached by two routes, the cold dialectic, or "the rejection of all logical methods, and the substitution of mere feelings and intuitions for clear discriminations and conceptions." (P. 80.) The speculative reason finds it hard to explain the nexus of the Infinite with the finite, and the immanence of second causes, while yet "all things consist" in God. This, apart from any professed belief of the Scriptures. But there are passages in the inspired documents of our religion which can be and have been wrested from their proper meaning, as for instance Matt. x. 20: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." This was twisted into a pantheistic sense by Scotus. So also of course the saying of Paul: "In Him we live, move, and have our being."

This loose kind of exposition was in all likelihood fostered by Origen, with whose writings Scotus seems to have been acquainted. Of the second route by which pantheism has been reached, we shall have an example presently; but with regard to this first we may well echo the thought of Neander, that dialecticism and mysticism form "a strange mixture."

MASTER ECKHART.

Eckhart was at one time a Professor in the Dominican Convent of St. Jacques in Paris. This was about the end of the thirteenth century; for in 1304 he was appointed Provincial of the Dominican Order in Saxony. He was esteemed "the most learned man of his day in the Aristotelian philosophy." In him we find again

inconsistencies such as must always arise when a man tries to be a Christian in religion and a pantheist in philosophy. Eckhart longed for peace.

“Dost thou ask me what was the purpose of the Creator when he made the creatures? I answer, Repose. Dost thou ask again what all creatures seek in their spontaneous aspiration? I answer again, Repose. Dost thou ask a third time what the soul seeks in all her motions? I answer, Repose. . . . That word I AM none truly speak but God alone. . . . He has the substance of all things in himself. . . . All things are in God, and all things are God. . . . Simple people conceive that we are to see God as if he stood on that side and we on this. It is not so: God and I are one in the act of my perceiving him.”

These quotations sufficiently exhibit his views.

Prof. Schmidt says:

“Regarding Neo-Platonism as by no means incompatible with Christianity, his philosophical views resemble, in their general tendency, those of Dionysius Areopagiticæ, combining with them the mystical elements contained in the writings of St. Augustine. . . . With Plato himself he is not unacquainted, but cites him several times, calling ‘the Great Parson’ (*Der Grosse Pfaffe*). Scotus Erigena, the translator of the Platonising Dionysius, though not named in his writings, must be regarded as furnishing the starting point for his theories. Of the other mystics of the Middle Ages, he only names St. Bernard. But he has not rested within the systems advanced by any of the philosophies he studied; he made all the ideas that he may have derived from them his own, and gave them a further development, so that his position is that of a thoroughly original thinker.”

Eckhart is interesting also on account of his influence upon John Tauler, who belongs to Dr. Shedd’s third class.

LATITUDINARIAN MYSTICS.

These, says Dr. Shedd, “agreed with the Mystic Scholastics in holding the Church orthodoxy in honor, but from the neglect of scientific investigation lost sight of some parts of the catholic system. The peculiar work of Christ, and the doctrine of justification in particular, were misconceived and sometimes overlooked. The best representatives of this class are Von Cölln († 1329), Tauler († 1361), Suso († 1365), Gerson († 1429), Thomas á Kempis († 1471), and the author of the work which goes under the title of ‘Theologia Germanica.’”

JOHN OF RUYSBROEK († 1384).

Ruysbroek's proper place is here, and not, where Dr. Shedd puts him, among the pantheistical mystics. He was born in Belgium, not far from Brussels, about 1293; was educated in part in that city, and in due time was appointed vicar of the church of St. Gudule. He zealously discharged the duties of a secular priest up to his sixtieth year, and then retired into the Augustinian Monastery of Groenendael, two miles from Brussels, in a vast beech forest which extends to Waterloo. Ullman gives 1381 as the date of his death, instead of 1384, as above, from Shedd. A life-long trait of Ruysbroek was a love for solitude and contemplation. In his later days he would plunge into the depths of the forest to meditate and to write on his waxen tablet. He was visited by multitudes of people, among others by Gerhard Groot and John Tauler; but he retained his humility and modesty to the last. Among his writings are the Commentaries on the Tabernacle of the Covenant, The Mirror of Eternal Salvation, and treatises On the Adornment of the Spiritual Nuptials, On the Progress of Religious (*i. e.*, monks), On the Seven Degrees of Love, On the Four Temptations, On True Contemplation. In the absurd legends of his time, he is said to have been haunted by the devil in the form of a hideous monster; but also to have been visited by Christ, who on one occasion, in the presence of the Virgin Mary appearing as the Regina Cœli, and of all the saints, said to him, Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. We take these stories of course to have been posthumous. Ruysbroek believed in the Trinity of persons in the one divine essence, and repeatedly taught that God never became the creature and the creature never became God. He held to the true objective reality of sin, and the obligation of the law even over the most advanced earthly saints.

He lays down three great steps toward unity with God, viz., the active, the inward, and the contemplative life. The active life consists in abstinence, penitence, good morals, holy actions, denying ourselves, and taking up the cross, even as Christ did for us. The inward life is one of love, of dissatisfaction with our attainments in spirituality, of longing, of aspiration. Nothing

but God pleases us. "This oneness with a perpetual hunger and intense desire, consumes the object of its love, and constantly gives birth to a new fervor, in which the spirit offers her highest sacrifice." (Quoted by Ullman from Engelhardt's Monograph.) The contemplative life consists in going out of ourselves and becoming one spirit with God. He abides in us and we in him. Our contemplation of him is not unreasonable, but it transcends reason in its mode, and also in its object, which is the absolute. There is a lower stage of this, wherein God flashes like lightning into the heart that has been opened to him, and floods it with an ineffable joy. But in the highest stage there is no mental action, only a pure rest in God, the soul no longer conscious of its own existence, forgetting itself, forgetting all things in the calm repose of celestial love.

Some of Ruysbroek's expressions bordered so nearly on pantheism that even Gerson, himself a mystic, directly charged him with that heresy. His theory of the spirit of man's existing eternally in God, being an image of God, as the image of a natural object is reflected from a mirror, approaches closely to pantheism, particularly because he uses the same figure to express the Son's relation to the Father in the Godhead. "The spirit becomes the very truth which it apprehends: God is apprehended by God. We become one with the same light with which we see, and which is both the medium and the object of our vision."

No theist *ought* to use such phrases, for their most natural interpretation is pantheistic. But Ruysbroek avows over and again that God and the creature never can become the same.

No fitter place may occur for the remark that the rhapsodies of many mystics often fail to cohere with their everyday, sober declarations. They revel in ambiguous, overwrought, easily misunderstood, and self-contradictory expressions. John of Schoenhoeften, an admirer of Ruysbroek, and a canon of Groenendael, it seems defended the great mystic so successfully that Gerson substantially withdrew his accusation.

We must not omit to state that for all his mysticism, Ruysbroek was an energetic reformer of morals, and chastised the sloth, the dancing, the gluttony, and the debauchery of convent

and nunnery with an unsparing hand. He does not exempt prelates and Popes if they are worldly-minded and covetous. A pure, good, humble, and holy man, this priest and monk of the Netherlands.

GERHARD GROOT (1340-84).

Among those who personally knew, admired, loved, and were profoundly affected by Ruysbroek, was Gerhard Groot. Born in 1340 in Deventer, educated there first, and afterwards at the University of Paris, and again at Cologne, where he became a Professor; next receiving high preferments at home, rich, talented, fashionable, he stands one day looking at some public game. An unnamed person regards him with interest and says to him, "Why do you stand here intent on vanities? You must become another man!"

Moreover, an old friend of the former years at Paris, Henry Aeger, now prior of a Carthusian monastery, subsequently admonishes him of the vanity of earthly things, of death, of eternity, of the chief good. From that hour Groot is a transformed man. One trait of the mystics is a peculiar impressibility, as we shall note again. They have all the ordinary traits of mankind, but some almost obliterated, others exaggerated greatly.

Gerhard fears to take orders as a priest, but he becomes an eloquent preacher, being first licensed by the Bishop of Utrecht, as the day of Lay Evangelism had hardly dawned then. His ease, his copiousness, his eloquence, above all, his heartfelt love for souls, made him a power wherever he preached.

Owing, it is said, to his attacks on the vices of the clergy, complaint was lodged against him with the bishop, who withdrew the license he had given him to preach in his diocese. Gerhard then became a teacher in his native city of Deventer. He employed clerks to copy the Scriptures and the ancient fathers. One of his intimate friends, Florentius, then vicar at Deventer, said to him, on a day, "Dear Master, what harm would it do were I and these clerks who are here copying, to put our weekly earnings into a common fund and live together?"

"Live together?—the mendicant monks would never permit it; they would do their worst to prevent us."

“But what,” said Florentius, “is to prevent our making the trial? Perhaps God would give us success.”

“Well, then,” said Gerhard, “in God’s name commence. I will be your advocate and faithfully defend you against all who rise up against you.”

Thus arose the society of the Brethren of the Common Lot. It spread far and wide and became a powerful instrument for good. The Brethren were not monks, took no monastic vow, could quit the Brotherhood if they desired, did not segregate themselves from the world, except that they lived in Brother Houses; yet they maintained a community of goods, lived according to rule, and “for God’s sake” yielded an unconditional obedience to their superiors.

Gerhard having some knowledge of medicine, hastened to the help of a friend who had been struck with the plague. He contracted the disease himself, and died in Deventer August 20, 1384, aged forty-four. He was cheerful, affable, modest, prudent, and sagacious; had a vein of humor; dressed in grey, with great plainness; was an exceeding lover of books; and left behind him a few old articles of furniture, his library, a fur mantle, and a hair cloth shirt; “an example to the devout,” says good Thomas à Kempis, who wrote his life, “and a holy memorial to posterity.”

His “Rules of Life” and “Moral Sayings” are mildly flavored with mysticism. He exhorts to turn away the heart even with violence from the creatures, that we may conquer ourselves and point our minds continually to God; to be humble, chiefly within, in the heart; never to show yourself off as very pious or very learned; and never to study, write, journey, or labor to extend your fame, to obtain promotion or gratitude, or to leave a memorial behind you among men. His spiritual kinship to à Kempis is thus very apparent. He evidently was a link between à Kempis and Ruysbroek.

JOHN TAULER (1290–1361).

Another man who was somewhat influenced by Ruysbroek was the celebrated John Tauler; born at Strasburg, of independent worldly estate, becoming a Dominican monk probably in the year

1308, a student of theology in the Dominican College of St. Jacques in Paris, and a famous preacher in Strasburg. In the troublous times resulting from the conflicts between the Pope and the Emperor, Tauler did the work of an evangelist at Cologne, Basle, and the regions along the Rhine.

He was an earnest, useful preacher of the gospel in Strasburg in the prime of his powers, when he attracted the attention of a layman who was destined to affect him profoundly. We have the singular advantage here of an autobiographical account of the matter, which was confided in manuscript by Tauler himself to the layman. The existence of this manuscript has been known to a few learned persons for some time, but it has been brought into publicity quite lately by Prof. Schmidt. A large folio volume also has been discovered in the archives of Strasburg. It formerly belonged to the Convent of the Knights of St. John, and its existence was a secret intrusted to only a few, as it contained some private papers. Among other things it contains a manuscript called *The Book of the Five Men*, which gives an account of the layman and his four friends; so that, as the translator of *Tauler's Life*, etc., remarks, we know more of these worthies now, after the lapse of five hundred years, than was known to their contemporaries. Ullman quotes from the autobiographical sketch, but it is extremely gratifying to have the sketch itself in our own hands. Isaac Taylor says that more Church History is to be learned from a single original tractate than by a far larger amount at second hand. The quaint style, the illuminated initials, the antique head and tail pieces, and the marginal notes, transport us into the past.

“In the year of our Lord 1340 it came to pass,” so the account begins, “that a master in Holy Scripture preached oftentimes in a certain city.” A layman was warned three times in his sleep to go and hear him. He went and heard him five times; sought him personally; made confession to him and received the Lord's Body from him. He next, that is twelve weeks after his arrival in Strasburg, said to the Master: “I beg you for God's sake to preach us a sermon, showing us how a man may attain to the highest and utmost point it is given to us to reach in this present

time." Tauler complied with the request, and took for a text John i. 47: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." The sermon, as given by Tauler, is short, but is divided into no less than twenty-four heads or articles, as he denominates them. It inculcates submission to God's will, a single eye to God's glory, humility, and the imitation of Christ. The layman heard it, returned to his lodgings, and from memory wrote out the whole discourse with surprising exactitude. He told Tauler that it was a "good lesson," but moreover charged him with not living up to his own preaching. "Your vessel is unclean and much lees are cleaving to it. . . . You are indeed able to understand the letter, but have not yet tasted the sweetness of the Holy Ghost; and withal you are yet a Pharisee."

Tauler replied that he had never before been spoken to in this way. "The man said, Where is your preaching now? . . . You are in truth guilty of all that I have said. . . ." He went on, however, to explain that he did not mean by "Pharisee" a hypocrite, but one who loved and sought himself in all things, and not the glory of God. He then, at Tauler's request, gave a short history of God's dealings with him. "The first thing that helped me was, that God found in me a sincere and utterly self-surrendering humility." He practised austerities until he was brought to death's door. He sank into a sleep, and seemed to hear a voice upbraiding him for following his own or "the devil's counsel. When I heard speak of the devil, I awoke in a great fright, rose, up, and walked out into a wood nigh to the town." He consulted a well known old hermit, who advised him to give up his austere practices and yield himself entirely to God. One morning at 3 o'clock he was saying his matins, when "an ardent longing came over me, so that I said, O eternal and merciful God, that it were thy will to give me to discover something that should be above all our sensual reason." He was sorely affrighted at the thought of having offered such a petition when so unworthy. He confessed his sinfulness, and then punished his body for his sin. "With that I threw off my garments and scourged myself till the blood ran down my shoulders. . . . And in that same hour I was deprived of all my natural reason; but the time seemed

all too short to me. And when I was left to myself again, I saw a supernatural mighty wonder and sign, insomuch that I could have cried with St. Peter, 'Lord, it is good for me to be here.' Now know, dear sir, that in that self-same short hour I received more truth and more illumination in my understanding than all the teachers could ever teach me, from now till the Judgment Day by word of mouth, and with all their natural learning and science."

Time would fail to recount the whole history. Suffice it to say that the layman took the learned and eloquent Dr. Tauler under his instruction; urged him to follow Christ's example, to spend much time in meditation and contemplation, and to abstain for some time from preaching. Tauler suffered greatly for two years and fell into poverty; lay sick in his cell and meditated on our Lord's sufferings; heard a wondrous voice and was straightway healed in body and mind; sent for the layman, who rejoiced much that the master had been enlightened of the Holy Ghost, and counselled him to preach again. He agreed to do so, and on the appointed day a large audience assembled to hear him; but when he attempted to speak from the pulpit, "his eyes overflowed with tears of tenderness, and this lasted so long that the people grew angry. At last a man spoke out of the crowd, 'Sir, how long are we to stand here? It is getting late: if you do not mean to preach, let us go home.'" In the end he found himself so overcome with weeping that he was compelled to dismiss the congregation. "This tale was spread abroad and resounded through the whole city, so that he became a public laughing stock, despised by all; and the people said, 'Now we all see that he is a downright fool.'"

But he did preach again, and his words produced an impression not unlike what was witnessed in our own land in the Revival of 1800. A man hearing him speak of the joy the Bride (the Church) has with the Bridegroom (Christ), cried out with a loud voice, "It is true!" and fell down as if he were dead. It is certain that from this time onward he preached with new unction, and with the greatest acceptance.

Tauler was evidently a man of very tender feelings, and quite

impressible from without. He was fond of spiritualising upon a text, which is always attended with more or less danger. As we are not making history, but writing it, we have given a picture of the times as they were. There was much in these men that the Church of the present day would look very askance upon, and justly so. Yet Tauler truly loved, devoutly worshipped, and most faithfully and courageously served the divine Redeemer. With a leaning towards mysticism, and with the idea of following Christ in his poverty and humiliation as well as his holiness, he yet was violently hostile to the pantheism of the Beghards of his time. Witness an extract from one of his sermons: "From these two errors proceedeth the third, which is the worst of all; the persons who are entangled therein call themselves beholders of God, and they may be known through the carnal peace which they have through their emptiness. They think that they are free from sin, and are united to God without any means whatsoever, and that they have got above all subjection to the Church, and above the commandments of God, and above all works of virtue." He proceeds to speak of their desire to be free, and obedient to none, neither the Pope, nor the bishop, nor the pastor. The fourth error he characterises as that of those who think themselves "empty of all works, and tools of God, by whom God works whatsoever he will, and they merely suffer him without working themselves. . . . Inwardly they are passive, and live without care for anything. . . . In this they are false that they hold everything whereunto they are inwardly impelled, whether good or bad, to proceed from the Holy Spirit." These notions of the pantheistical Beghards may be compared with some things heard at the present time.

While Tauler was a monk, he did not carry his monachism to as great an extreme as some. In his sermons we find much of self-renunciation, even the Hopkinsian sentiment of being willing to be damned for the glory of God, as in the remark with which he ends his story of the young maiden who "resigned herself humbly to the will of God, content to bear an eternity of pain in hell, if God in his righteousness saw fit to condemn her thereunto." (Sermon for the second Sunday in Lent, p. 314.)

But there appears little of the swallowing up of the soul in an ecstasy of immediate communion with the Infinite Spirit. In his sermon for the fourth Sunday after Trinity this passage occurs: "It flows back into its source without channel or means, and loses itself altogether; will, knowledge, love, perception, are all swallowed up and lost in God, and become one with him." This, however, should be taken in connexion with what follows, where he says that the gush and outflowing of this love gives a man a yearning desire for the salvation of sinners. Tauler's favorite authors would seem, from his quotations to have been Augustine and Bernard; and on the whole he was—if a mystic at all—one of the mildest and best.

In the year 1361, after a painful illness of twenty weeks, in which he was cared for by his aged sister, who was a nun, he felt that death was approaching, and sent for the Layman, who lived a considerable distance away. The Layman was glad to find him still alive, and said, "Dear Master, how fares it with thee?" Then said the Master, "Dear son, I believe the time is near when God is minded to take me from this world; therefore, dear son, it is a great comfort to me that thou shouldst be here at my departure." He then gave him some papers on which he had preserved the account of their interviews twenty years before, and asked him to make a little book of them, but by all means conceal both their names, substituting the Master and the Man. For eleven days longer Tauler lived, and had much discourse with the Layman; then, on the 16th of June, 1361, he yielded up his spirit to God.

THE LAYMAN.

After great research, Prof. Schmidt has succeeded in identifying the Layman with Nicholas of Basle, a man of considerable wealth, fair education, and good abilities, but not very notable save for an intense consecration to Christ. He became the head of a society of *Gottesfreunde* or Friends of God, which was not a sect, but an association of devout men in the fourteenth century. Did space permit we would give some details of his life. It is enough to say that in extreme old age he received the crown of martyrdom at the hands of the Inquisition in the diocese of

Poitiers. Johann Niederus writes that he publicly avowed to the inquisitors that Christ was in him actually (actu) and he in Christ. This would appear to have been taken in a pantheistic sense by his stupid judges. Nieder winds up the recital by saying, "secularium potestati juste traditus est, qui cum incinerarunt," *i. e.*, burnt him to ashes!

THOMAS A KEMPIS (1380-1471).

It is remarkable that so much obscurity has rested upon the authorship of "The Imitation of Christ." Dr. Ullman and his English translator, Rev. Robert Menzies, have thrown all needful light upon both authorship and author.

Thomas Hammerken (in Latin *Malleolus*, a diminutive of Hammer), was a native of Kempen or Kampen, a small town not far from Cologne, and in the valley of the Rhine. His father was a mechanic, and a good workman, his mother of humble family, but very pious. As the Brethren of the Common Lot established schools everywhere and aided the indigent, Thomas was sent at the age of thirteen to the famous academy at Deventer. He was filled with admiration at the sight of the piety of the Brethren, and in due time entered the order. His time was occupied in devotion, in reading, and in copying the Scriptures. The superintendent of a monastery at Windesheim in connexion with the Society of the Common Lot, was Florentius, a very kindly, venerable man, whose influence on Thomas was great and happy. Thomas afterwards wrote a grateful, loving Life of Florentius. This excellent man advised him to enter the order of the Canons of St. Augustine, instituted by Gerhard Groot. They had lately erected two colleges, and to one of these, the Convent of St. Agnes, near the town of Zwolle, young Thomas went. Here he passed his long life, industriously copying the Bible, and some of St. Bernard's works, and writing various devotional books, of which his "Imitation of Christ" is considered the best. He was for a while steward, but the duties were found to take too much time from his hours of meditation and authorship, and he resumed his former position of sub-prior. Thomas was one of those who long for tranquillity; he avoided great and honorable men; he

loved solitude and meditation; he usually wore a placid exterior, but would warm into eloquence in speaking of heavenly things. It is to be regretted that he used the scourge upon himself while singing the hymn *Stetit Jesus*. In person he was rather small, but shapely, and had eyes of piercing brightness, that never needed the aid of spectacles. His pen was not idle; he wrote large biographies of Gerhard and Florentius, and smaller ones of several less noted Brethren of the Common Lot; Sermons to Novices and Discourses to Conventual Brethren; the Soliloquy of the Soul, the Garden of Roses, the Valley of Lilies, or a tract on the Three Tabernacles, and some minor pieces, part of which are poetical.

After a laborious life, passed largely in his cell, he died at the age of ninety-one. His bones were exhumed in 1672 and reinterred in Zwolle.

Thomas à Kempis is usually classed among the mystics. Most of his works are inaccessible to the American student, but so far as we can judge from his *Imitation of Christ*, and from Ullman's copious citations from his other writings, he was far more of an ascetic than a mystic. While he did not, like Florentius and Gerhard, injure himself by fastings and vigils, or indeed by his weekly scourgings, yet he always advocates the strictest obedience to conventual superiors, the most total self-abnegation, and the uttermost humility. Give up the world was his maxim; for truth, freedom, peace, and blessedness are to be sought in God alone. He only can quiet the longing of the heart, and give it perfect tranquillity. *Quicquid Deus non est, nihil est*. Whatever is not God is nothing. That man will long remain little and grovelling himself who esteems anything great save the one infinite and eternal good. His whole rule was condensed into the aphorism, "Part with all, and thou wilt find all." Forsake thyself, and thou shalt find God. Die to thyself, and thou shalt live to God. Whosoever loves himself will never find God.

All this is monachism, though in its longing for peace and tranquillity it touches upon mysticism. A monk could well be a mystic too, and was certainly in danger of becoming one, if he were not so when he entered the cloister.

Bodily penances have a double outlook: they may be intended as the punishment of sin, in order to justification; or as the subjugation of the flesh, in order to sanctification. In the latter of these, as we conceive, they partake of a mystical character. The mystic seeks for holiness in an unscriptural manner. Thomas seems not to have laid special weight on these personal chastisements as means of grace. For instance, he says that Florentius too rigorously chastised himself with fasting and vigils. But according to the Gnostic dualism, which entered so largely into mysticism, the greater the chastisement the higher the attained degree of holiness. Otherwise, he insists on resisting sensuality, and therefore guarding all the avenues of temptation. An excess of this is ascetic rather than mystic.

Again, his directions to the monks favor our view. He prescribes solitude, silence, fasting, prayer, copying the Scriptures and other good books, submission to the superior, self-examination, recollection of God, eternity, heaven and hell, and unremitted bodily or mental occupation from the earliest to the latest hour of the day. In addition, attendance on public worship, a zealous observance of sacred rites and seasons, the faithful adoration of Mary and the saints, and a frequent partaking of the Holy Supper. "Rise early, watch, pray, labor, read, write, be silent, sigh, and bravely endure all adversity." In his "*Vita boni Monachi*," which is in rhyme, these lines occur—

"Sustine vim patiens.
Tace, ut sis sapiens.
Mores rege, aures tege.
Saepe ora, saepe lege.
Omni die, omni hora,
Te resigna sine mora."

In all which there is hardly an allusion to any rapt intuition of Deity. In fact, he dissuades from metaphysical and transcendental inquiries into the nature of God, but advises to know God as he is in us.

If prolonged contemplation on the divine word and works be mysticism, then all the higher attainments in religion should be called mystical. The piety of the present day needs just this contemplative cast. Not less action, but more meditation;

spiritual mountain-tops of prayer amid the calm of nightly seclusion. We need to be more with God, that from this holy communion we may go forth to faith's battles and victories.

We must not omit one feature in Thomas: he did not expect to become holy by any one act, or in a single hour. "Not by a sudden conversion," says he of the Apostles. "nor in one day only, did they rise to so great perfection." "Little by little a man advances, and that by daily exercises." The conflict is a life long one. "A man should extirpate a vice every year." *Quamdiu in hoc mundo sum, mundus non sum.* So that he cannot be claimed very strongly by the mystics of our day.

Yet after all, there is a tinge of mysticism in Thomas, as when he speaks of our being at length wholly dissolved and swallowed up in the divine love, and of God's being one and all. His attention is withdrawn too much from Christ's work for us, and our appropriation thereof by faith; to the Spirit's work in us, and to our responsive love to God. Sanctification rather than justification; love rather than faith. This is a mystical leaning, and we shall find Madame Guyon following closely in his footsteps.

HENRY SUSO († 1365).

This poetical mystic was a Swabian by birth, and of the family of the Bergers or de Berg. He took his mother's name of Sues or Seuss, Latinised into Suso. From his mother he derived an ardor in religious matters; from his father a chivalrous turn. He entered the Dominican Convent at Constance as a pupil at the age of thirteen. In his eighteenth year he was strongly drawn to a spiritual life. Eternal wisdom appeared to his impassioned mind as a beautiful female. "She floated high above him in the vaulted choir, she shone like the morning star, and seemed as the sun sporting in the dawn. Her crown was eternity, her robe was bliss. . . . She accosted him affectionately, and gently said, Give me thy heart, my child! He knelt at her feet and thanked her from his inmost heart, and in deep humility. Such was his vision, and none greater could he have received."

Suso went to the University of Cologne, studied the scholastic theology and philosophy, and became specially acquainted with

Aristotle. He also fell under the influence of Eckhart, and from some rapt expressions would appear to have adopted his pantheistic views. For instance: "Thus man is exalted to spiritual perfection, is made free by the son and is the son. Above time and space, and in close and loving vision, he has vanished into God." Again he makes God say, "I will embrace them so closely and lovingly that they and I, I and they, and all of us together, shall continue a single unit forever and ever." Once more: "The dying of the spirit consists in this, that in its transition into the Godhead, it perceives no distinction in the proper essence." No one who is not a pantheist should express himself in this way. It will have, we suppose, to be charged to mystico-poetic license. Elsewhere he avows distinctly that in all this there is no transmutation of the human into the divine; everything continues to be what it is in its natural being; the spirit is a real existence created out of nothing.

Suso was an exceedingly attractive man, very sympathetic, very kind to the afflicted, who regularly sought his counsel; a truly good man and an eloquent preacher. From his eighteenth to his fortieth year he was extremely rigorous in his penances; so much so indeed that he was forced to desist or die. Ullman claims him as a Reformer before the Reformation, partly because he "instituted fellowships among godly people, which inevitably led to *their disconnecting themselves from the Church* and the control which she exercised in all spiritual affairs"—the italics are our own—partly because he resolutely attacked the sins of the clergy and the laity.

MADAME GUYON (1648-1717).

This remarkable woman, whose life no one can read without being aroused to the desire of greater holiness, was born at Montargis in France, about fifty miles south of Paris. Her maiden name was Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Mothe. She was talented, beautiful, charming in conversation, an heiress, and married early in life to M. Jacques Guyon, a gentleman of rank and great wealth. She was educated as well as women of her rank usually were, chiefly in a convent of the Benedictines, but

for some months also in a Dominican convent. Her favorite religious authors seem to have been A Kempis, Molinos, and Francis de Sales. The influence of A Kempis is very marked, although she did not adopt the ascetic rigor at all, and, in fact, considered outward penances comparatively unimportant. Of Francis de Sales it will be sufficient to state that he was a Bishop of Geneva, and died in 1622. He strongly urged the renunciation of human will.

At the age of twenty-two she was seized with small-pox, which disfigured her for life—the more so, as from a false notion of duty she refused to employ the means offered to diminish the marks of the disease. At twenty-eight she was left a widow, and after settling her husband's estate, and placing her children at school, she began, in 1681, her travels and more extended spiritual labors in France, Switzerland, and Italy. She at length returned to Paris, fell under the displeasure of Bossuet, but seems to have affected powerfully the religious opinions and career of Fenelon. She was imprisoned twice by order of Louis XIV., the last time in the Bastille and for four years. In 1703 she was banished to Blois, a city on the Loire, one hundred miles southwest from Paris, where she died in great peace in June, 1717.

Madame Guyon's mind was of a susceptible and imaginative type; not of the exact and the systematic. The salient features of her system were the annihilation of self, the losing of our will in that of God, uncomplaining resignation, absorbing love to God, and Christian perfection.

As to her impressibility—she consulted at her father's house a devout Franciscan monk, who after remaining silent for some time in inward prayer and meditation, said, "Your efforts have been unsuccessful, madame, because you have sought without what you can only find within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and you will not fail to find him." She says these words were to her like the stroke of a dart, which pierced her heart asunder. "I felt at this instant deeply wounded with the love of God—a wound so delightful that I desired it never might be healed."

She often speaks of her soul being "absorbed in God," but

never seems to have thought of pantheism. So to lose our will in God's as to be wholly passive in his hands, and to move only as we are moved upon by him, was a favorite thought with her. If it verged upon a denial of second causes and contained a germ of pantheism, she does not appear to have been aware of it. She advocated a high communion with God in which both intellect and desire were in abeyance. This she denominated the "Prayer of Silence," in which the soul no longer desired aught, because it possessed all things in God. We imagine that perception or intuition was allowed to remain in action, that is, in a calm appropriation of God, but that the ratiocinative faculty was to be wholly inert.

In the office of love in religious experience, she closely follows A Kempis. In her external activity, she is like Tauler, combining her spiritual elevations with honest toil in the vineyard. We need not therefore speak particularly of these points, but will confine our attention to her views of Christian Perfection, the more so as they are making a stir in our own day. But to give these views from her own writings would be a difficult task. Prof. Upham says (Vol. II., p. 371-2): "It is often necessary to compare one passage with another, and sometimes to modify the expressions in order to reach the true meaning."

Fortunately we have the subject of the inner life, or as it would be styled to-day, the Higher Life, treated by Fenelon, the Archbishop of Cambray, but most widely known in America as the author of *Telemaque*. Fenelon became acquainted with Madame Guyon's character and writings during his mission in Poitou, 1685-8. He then met her for the first time at the country residence of the Duchess of Charost, not far from Versailles. They had several conversations with each other and exchanged a number of letters. Under date of August 11, 1689, he draws out in a number of particulars the way to the inward life. The first step after conversion is to bring our natural appetites and propensities under subjection. The second, to cease to rest on the pleasures of inward sensibility. The struggle here is more severe and prolonged than in the first step. Third, an entire crucifixion to any reliance upon our own virtues; to become dead

not to the practice of the virtues, but to a secret satisfaction in them, as if they were self-originated. Fourth, a death to our aversions, a kissing of the divine hand that smites us. Fifth, the New Life, not merely the *beginning* of a new life, but a new life in the higher sense of the terms. God smites all that joy and prosperity which the creature has in anything out of himself, that the soul may be brought into perfect union and communion with God. The soul has this new life by ceasing from its own action, that is to say, from all action except that which is in coöperation with God, and letting God live and act in it. Sixth, this life becomes a truly transformed life. The soul now acts or suffers, acts or is inactive, just as God would have it to be. It does this without the trouble of first overcoming contrary dispositions. All selfishness and all tendency thereto is taken away. But this transformed soul does not cease to advance in holiness; its life is love, all love, but the capacity of its love continually increases.

In this statement we have given almost *verbatim* Fenelon's understanding of Mme. Guyon's views. He adopted them with a few unimportant explanations. Upham says that at this time Fenelon had not much acquaintance with A Kempis, Tauler, Ruysbroek, and other mystical writers, but learned these lessons in the inward life from Mme. Guyon. Possibly so.

Meanwhile Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, spent some eight months in carefully reading up the whole subject, and finally produced his very able work, "Instructions sur les Etats d'Oraison" (Instructions on the States of Prayer). He regarded Mme. Guyon's views as heretical on two points mainly, the needlessness of the austerities and mortifications of the Church, and the possibility or even actuality of attaining on earth to a life without sin. Having prepared his MS. thus laboriously, Bossuet submitted it to a number of distinguished men for their approbation; among others to Fenelon, who declined to approve and was dragged into the controversy. "The Maxims of the Saints" published by Fenelon in January, 1697, professed to be drawn from previous devout minds of the Church. The synopsis of this work, given in the second volume of Prof. Upham's "Mme. Guyon and Fenelon" (pp. 209-253), contains probably as guarded

and strong a defence of Perfectionism as can be found in any language. It defines three stages of love to God. 1st. The mercenary or selfish, originating in an exclusive and sole regard to our own happiness. This is described in the language of St. Francis de Sales as "sacrilegious and impious." 2d. Mixed love, involving a regard to our own happiness, and also a regard to God's glory as its chief element. It is loving God as he ought to be loved, and ourselves no more than we ought. 3d. Pure love. In this our own happiness becomes so small and so recedes from our view as to be practically annihilated. Our own happiness and all that regards ourselves is entirely lost sight of in a simple and fixed look to God's will and God's glory.

We are to advance to this high state step by step. Love is not the only virtue, but it is the fountain of all others, as temperance, chastity, truth, justice. The perfect in love desire their own salvation chiefly because it is God's pleasure that they shall be saved, and because he is glorified thereby. If it should be his pleasure to separate them forever from the enjoyments of his presence, their language is, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Fenelon accepts the Arminian view of universal grace. "To every one under the new dispensation, the covenant founded in the blood of the Cross, God gives grace."

We love ourselves and our neighbor in and for God. Self-love is innocent when kept in due bounds. When it goes beyond these bounds it becomes selfishness, which was the sin of the first angel. The perfect in love, forgetting the nothingness of the creature in the infinitude of the Creator, love God for his own glory alone.

In the prayer of silence we have God. What else can we have? What else can we ask for? In this state the soul is so occupied with God as to be hardly conscious of its own existence. It does not stop to think and reason; it looks and loves. In the contemplative state we find ourselves incapable of profitably employing our minds in meditative and discursive acts. All our time cannot be spent in this contemplative state, but much may and ought to be. Having God, the soul has everything and rests there. Dionysius the Areopagite is quoted in favor of the view

that in the exalted state of contemplation, the holy soul is occupied with the pure or spiritual Divinity; with God, and not with any sensible image or conception of him. Fenelon adds that the soul is not satisfied with the attributes of God, but seeks and unites itself with the God of the attributes. Persons arrived at the state of divine union are made one with Christ in God; they no longer seem to put forth distinct inward acts, but their state appears to be characterised by a deep and divine repose. Hence St. Francis of Assisi and others have said that souls in this state are no longer able to perform distinct acts. The highest state is not characterised by excitements, raptures, ecstasies, but by peace. Holy souls are allowed a familiarity with God, not deficient, however, in reverence, like that of a child with a parent, like that of a bride with a bridegroom.

The perfect in love do not sin deliberately and knowingly, but can still say, "Forgive us our trespasses;" for their former state of sin can never be forgotten. . . . There are sins, properly so called, and there are mere venial transgressions which are termed faults (such as imperfections of manner, errors of judgment, an unintentional wrong word, and the like). . . . When devout writers speak of an essential and substantial union with God, they mean not a literal union of essence or substance, but only a firm, established union.

This a very brief *résumé* of the Maxims of the Saints. It will be observed that the precise nature of the impeccability sought is not very fully defined. A few extracts from other parts of the Memoir will make it plainer.

The new creature may love God without selfishness and with entire purity, yea. with all the heart. The voice has gone forth : Put away all sin; Be like Christ; BE YE HOLY. Beginners in the Christian life, Mme. Guyon conceived it to be her mission to lead into what might perhaps be called a perfect conversion. "My soul, as it seems to me, is united to God in such a manner, that my own will is entirely lost in the divine will. . . . The creature is nothing (I speak now of myself); God is ALL." "So easy, so natural, so prompt, are the decisions of the sanctified soul on all moral and religious subjects, that it seems to reach its

conclusions intuitively. And if such a person is asked for the reason of the opinion which he gives, it is not always easy for him to analyse his mental operations and to give it. At the same time, he retains great confidence in the opinion itself, as being the true voice of God in the soul, although it may not be an audible one." The love of the sanctified one may become stronger, but not purer; its increased exercise will be the result exclusively of its increased capacity; it will not render him more acceptable to God, who requires from us according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. . . . My state has become simple and without any variations. It is a profound annihilation. I find nothing in myself to which I can give a name." The holy are free from the mixed life of faith and doubt, of love and aversion. Is it our destiny to be always sinning and always repenting? Is there really no hope of deliverance from transgression till we find it in the grave? No; amid all the temptations of this world we may live wholly to God, and in some true sense an entire surrender, not excluding, however, a constant sense of demerit and of dependence upon God, and the constant need of the application of Christ's blood, is in reality not less practicable than it is obligatory. We are to receive Christ as a Saviour, moment by moment, from sin. Here on earth, at least, we must rest, so far as rest is given us, with our armor on.

From the above it will be seen that perfect sanctification was, and again was not, claimed by the older advocates of the Higher Life. If we have been able to frame an intelligible statement from their inconsistent ones, it would be that the principle of sin was not wholly eradicated from their natures, but its manifestation, or natural fruit, was kept down so far that they did not knowingly or willingly commit actual transgressions.

Let us see now how this state of holiness is to be reached. Not exactly at a leap; not by springing across a line that separates two states. Yet the trouble with most Christians is that while they *desire*, they do not *will* to be holy; the will is wanting, therefore the man is wanting. They are not willing to die the *second death*, so as to be truly sanctified. They do not make an act of consecration, and thus place themselves so that God can

consistently and effectually operate upon them by his Holy Spirit, and complete the great work. Fenelon urges the thought that no one should lightly conceive himself to have attained the "fixed" or "transformed" estate. "Strive after it; but do not too readily or easily believe that you have attained to it."

There is at least a touch of sobriety in this, as compared with the recent extravaganza of seizing upon the Higher Life by one vigorous clutch, and of indubitably and at once believing that you have it.

We have stated Mme. Guyon's views partly in her own language, partly in that of Fenelon, and partly in that of Upham. Our object in adhering so closely to their words, and introducing so few of our own, is that the readers of this article may be able to compare the phraseology of earlier mystics with those of our own day. Verily there is nothing new under the sun.

Before passing on, let us make a few remarks on Mme. Guyon and her system.

1. The fundamental error is that all sin consists in selfishness. This heresy in morals is always detrimental to religious experience.

2. While the conception of justice is not entirely wanting in this system, it is obscured. We become just—so they say—by loving. Hence little or no place is left for justice pure and simple.

3. While admiring beyond expression the zeal and almost superhuman resignation of Mme. Guyon, we cannot regard with any satisfaction her extreme consciousness of spiritual elevation. Read the following quotations.

"The fervency of my love allowed me no intermission. . . . The taste of God was so great, so pure, unblended and uninterrupted, that it drew and absorbed the powers of the soul into a profound recollection, a state of confiding and affectionate rest in God. . . . This immersion in God absorbed all things. . . . A lady of rank . . . said that she observed in me something extraordinary and uncommon. My impression is that my spiritual taste reacted upon my physical nature, and that the inward attraction of my soul appeared on my very countenance. . . . A gentleman of fashion one day said to my husband's aunt, 'I saw the lady your niece, and it is very visible that she lives in the presence of God.' . . . She was surprised at my expressing things to her so much above what is considered the ordinary range of woman's capacity.

. . . It was God who gave me the gift of perception and utterance for her sake. . . . That heart (her own) where I had formerly detected in their secret places so many evil motives, was now, so far as I was enabled to perceive, made pure. I did all sorts of good, as it were by a new and imperative law, written in my heart, naturally, easily, without premeditation, as it was without selfishness.

. . . I no longer felt myself obliged to say, 'When I would do good, evil is present with me.' . . . How could such a soul (as her own) have other than a deep peace. . . . One characteristic of this higher degree of experience was a sense of inward purity. My mind had such a oneness with God, such a unity with the divine nature, that nothing seemed to have power to soil it and to diminish its purity. . . . The dark and impure mud does not defile the sunbeams that shine upon it. . . . The person who is truly pure, may see sinful acts, may hear impure and sinful conversation, or may otherwise be brought providentially and in the discharge of duty into connection with impurities, without contracting any stain from them. . . . I did not practise the virtues *as virtues*. That is to say, I did not . . . endeavor to practise them as a person generally does in the beginnings of a Christian life. . . . The *effort*, if I had made one, would have been to do otherwise." And so on.

4. Some psychological errors might be expected in an untrained thinker; such as exalting the will, exclusive of the affections, into a controller of the whole man. The will in this sense is itself controlled by the affections and desires.

5. Her imaginative and poetical temperament did not fit her to be an expositor of the prose parts of Scripture. Neither did her ignorance of Greek and Hebrew.

6. The duty of loving the God of the attributes rather than the attributes of God is either a truism or an absurdity. Love always terminates upon an entity as its object, but never on an entity abstracted from its qualities or attributes.

7. All of which goes to show that real godliness can live and be fruitful in the midst of some very unpropitious surroundings. Yet we must say that imitators are in peril of copying the worst parts of a model.

GEORGE FOX. (1624-1691.)

This famous founder of the Society of Friends or Quakers was born in Leicestershire, England; was the son of a pious weaver;

was apprenticed to a grazier; had a natural turn for mysticism; gave up laboring for a support at the age of nineteen, as he conceived that he was called of God to devote himself exclusively to a religious life; commenced preaching in 1648; visited America in 1671 and remained here two years; twice visited the continent of Europe: was persecuted; was discharged from custody by Oliver Cromwell, who seems to have had somewhat of a liking to him; and at last ended his days in 1691. From this brief *résumé*, it is seen that he appeared in a stormy period of English history, his life extending from the last year of James I., through the reign of Charles I., the Commonwealth, the reigns of Charles II., James II., and to the third year of William and Mary. It was also the era of the large proprietary settlements in America. Wm. Penn introduced his views into Pennsylvania; and as the Quakers organised themselves without disregarding family ties into societies, and have recognised all the local societies as constituting a general Society, they have not frittered away like the Beghards, Beguins, Lollards, Friends of God, Brethren of the Common Lot, and other loosely constructed sodalities of the Middle Ages. Beside a powerful political friend in Wm. Penn, Quakerism found a learned expositor and apologist in Robert Barclay (1648-1690), a native of Gordonstown, Scotland, educated at a Scotch college in Paris, where he became a Roman Catholic, but after his return home followed his father into Quakerism. His celebrated "Apology for the True Christian Divinity, being an Explanation and Vindication of the Principles and Doctrines of the People called Quakers," is said on the title-page of my copy to have been "Written in Latin and English by Robert Barclay and since translated into High Dutch, Low Dutch, French, and Spanish, for the information of Strangers." A rather sonorous title.

Barclay lays down in the beginning Fifteen Propositions, which he, then takes up seriatim and maintains, citing and responding to objections, and quoting Church Fathers from Polycarp down, Bellarmine and the Council of Trent, Luther, Calvin, Carlstadt, and Oslander, besides various other Councils and several Confessions. From these Propositions we select what is to our purpose.

“The testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed. . . . These divine inward revelations which we make absolutely necessary for the building up of true faith neither do nor can ever contradict the outward testimony of the Scriptures, or right and sound reason. Yet from hence it will not follow that these divine revelations are to be subjected to the examination either of the outward testimony of the Scriptures, or of the natural reason of man, as to a more noble or certain rule or touchstone.”

Hence, he holds that every man is or at least may be as truly inspired as the apostles and the prophets.

Of the Scriptures he says, “Nevertheless because they are only a declaration of the fountain, and not the fountain itself, therefore they are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners. Nevertheless as that which giveth a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty.” He holds also a “saving and spiritual light wherewith every man is enlightened.”

Under the 10th proposition as expounded p. 287, we find—

“There may be members therefore of this catholic Church both among heathens, Turks, Jews, and all the several sects of Christians, men and women of integrity and simplicity of heart, who though blinded in some things in their understanding and perhaps burdened with the superstitions and formality of the several sects in which they are ingrossed, yet being upright in their hearts before the Lord, chiefly aiming and laboring to be delivered from iniquity, and loving to follow righteousness, are by the secret touches of this holy light in their souls enlivened and quickened, thereby secretly united to God, and therethrough become true members of this catholic Church.”

By the catholic or universal Church he means the invisible Church, including the Church triumphant. So that our old friend Haroun Al Raschid may have been a spiritual Christian, or at least a living member of Christ's body, without knowing it.

“By this gift or light of God . . . every true minister of the gospel is ordained, prepared, and supplied in the work of the ministry. . . . Moreover, those who have this authority, may and ought to preach the gospel, though without human commission or literature.” The sacraments of Baptism and the

Lord's Supper are to be taken only in a spiritual sense, there being no need of the outward ordinances, which are, accordingly, not in use among the Friends.

Touching a learned ministry he says: "As for letter learning, we judge it not so much necessary to the well-being of one, though accidentally sometimes in some respects it may concur, but more frequently it is hurtful than helpful, as appeared in the example of Taulerus, who being a learned man, and who could make an eloquent preaching, needed nevertheless to be instructed in the way of the Lord by a poor laick." He commends the knowledge of languages and schools, but "the Spirit is the truest interpreter of the Scriptures, whether from the original languages or without them. . . . A poor shoemaker that could not read, refuted a professor of divinity's false assertions of Scripture. . . . If ye would make a man a fool to purpose, that is not very wise, do but teach him logic and philosophy." "Natural logic" however was "useful. . . . Ethics is not so necessary to Christians. . . . Physics and the metaphysics make no preachers of the truth. The school divinity is a monster," and ruined Origen and Arius. Satan invented it. "The devil may be as good and able a minister as the best of them; for he has better skill in languages, and more logic, philosophy, and school divinity than any of them, and knows the truth in the notion better than they all, and can talk more eloquently than all those preachers." Ordination is solely by the Spirit. "When they assemble together to wait upon God, and to worship and adore him, then such as the Spirit sets apart for the ministry, by its divine power and influence opening their mouths, and giving them to exhort, reprove, and instruct with virtue and power—these are thus ordained of God, and admitted into the ministry, and their brethren cannot but hear them, receive them, and also honor them for their work's sake. . . . It is left to the free gift of God to choose any whom he seeth meet thereunto, whether rich or poor, servant or master, young or old, yea, male or female. . . . The distinction of clergy and laity is not to be found in the Scripture. . . . When God moved by his Spirit in a woman, we judge it no ways unlaw-

ful for her to preach in the assemblies of God's people." Ministers may receive free gifts, but not salaries, for that makes them hirelings. Tithes are specially abominable. "I know myself a poor widow, that for the tithes of her geese, which amounted not to five shillings, was about four years kept in prison, thirty miles from her house."

The 8th Proposition of the Apology is one "Concerning Perfection."

"In whom this pure and holy birth is fully brought forth, the body of death and sin comes to be crucified and removed, and their hearts united and subjected to the truth; so as not to obey any suggestions or temptations of the evil one, but to be free from actual sinning and transgressing of the law of God, and in that respect perfect; yet doth this perfection still admit of a growth; and there remaineth always in some part a possibility of sinning, when the mind doth not most diligently and watchfully attend unto the Lord."

Barclay published this Apology when he was twenty-seven years of age. His youth and the times in which he lived may be pleaded in extenuation of some harsh expressions. Moreover the Quakers in England (and in America too) in the seventeenth century were horribly maltreated.

The benevolence, the quaint simplicity of manners, the style of dress, not invented by them but only retained from the time of Fox and Penn, the straightforwardness, and the unaffected piety of the Friends are too well known to require either proof or delineation. But it is not a little surprising to see so many of their minor doctrinal crotchets adopted by religionists far removed from the Quakers in other respects, and apparently in no wise acquainted with the writings of honest Robert Barclay.

GENERAL REMARKS.

1. It would be Utopian to hope to purge out Mysticism absolutely and forever from the Church. Sobriety in doctrine and practice is a great desideratum, but we must not become disheartened if it be not attained as fully as we could wish. The Church still lives, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Of all the millions of the human race, only a few would be pronounced by life insurance examiners physically sound from

head to foot; yet meagre Calvins somehow live on as well as stalwart Luthers, and accomplish much for God and his truth. The gracious Head of the Church works in and by Prelatists and Independents as well as more scriptural Presbyterians; yea, mightily in and by evangelical Arminians, as well as true-blue Calvinists. We would that they were all of them not only almost but altogether Presbyterian in church order, and Augustinian in faith.*

So with the Mystics: in spite of all the miserable errors recited in the foregoing pages, how much worth, spirituality, and tender yearning for souls have we found in them! Of course we exclude Neo-Platonists like Plotinus, and Pantheists like Spinoza, as enemies of Christ. But Tauler may well put our sluggishness to shame, and the one-sided, ascetic, Romish A Kempis may soothe and cheer, when we note the gradual approach of death.

2. Some of the most extravagant features of Mysticism are out of keeping with the spirit of the age. The author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm* has adverted to the boldness and brilliancy of the speculations of the first few centuries after Christ. The cause alleged by him is that Greek was then a spoken language, and the healthful toil of linguistic labor was not needed by the expositor; hence restless Thought ventured into the unreal domain of Speculation, and Gnosticism, Manicheism, and Arianism dazzled and confounded the world. We deem this a cause, possibly, but, compressing all the external causes into one phrase, would say that those glittering heresies were due to the spirit of the age. The same formula will sufficiently express the ground of our conviction that the Pseudo-Dionysius, Scotus Erigena, and Master Eckhart will never again deeply affect, much less dominate, the philosophy of the Church.

3. Some of the elements or frequent concomitants of mysticism are to be feared in our own day; as

* "Altogether Augustinian in faith" will of course be understood as referring to the general system of doctrine styled Augustinian. As to adopting all the opinions of that great man and profound thinker, no Westminsterian could for a moment think of doing so, after the most cursory perusal of the Confessions of St. Augustine or of Wigger's Augustinism and Pelagianism.

(a) Unchurchliness; the disorganising spirit; fostered by Plymouthism; not a necessary element of mysticism, for Bernard, if he may be called a mystic, and A Kempis, were, after the Romish style, strictly churchly. Still mysticism, as Ullman has well shown, is in its own nature introversive and egoistic. The mystic who at all goes to the length of his principles, is occupied with his own mental states; he does not greatly feel the need of external forms and sacraments, but soars into his immediate communion with Deity without the felt coöperation or even the joint presence of a fellow-worshipper. He does not in spirit mingle his adorations with those of the Church militant and the Church triumphant; his voice does not rise together with the voices of the hundred and forty and four thousand. No, the true mystic longs to be alone with God. This solitariness of ecstasy tells upon his practical life. A brotherhood or society is enough for him. He does not consciously need a church. But if he be in outward union with a church, he gives his best affections to a sodality within the Church,—or the Churches.

(b) As closely connected with this, we have reason to apprehend antagonism to an ordained ministry; resistance to all authority in the Church; an undervaluing, if not a blatant decrying of human learning in the clergy; perhaps an intrusting of the administration of the sacraments to the laity.

(c) A wild spiritualising of Scripture; a deriving of strange lessons from the historical parts of the Old Testament, and from colors, buttons, shovels, or what not accessories of the tabernacle in the wilderness; opening thus a flood-gate to extravaganzas in doctrine and worship.

(d) Enthusiasm, *i. e.*, a belief that God makes revelations to us, or at least lets us into the meaning of isolated passages of Scripture, so that we need not disturb ourselves or our interpretations by the fact that studious and learned and also truly pious men dissent strongly from those interpretations. So that, indeed, we can look down from the height of superior spiritual illumination, and smile at arguments that we cannot answer, saying, "We are not logicians, or scholars, but God has *revealed* thus and so to us." Neither shall we be moved by ascertaining that the dif-

ferent parts of our creed will in no wise cohere. If this enthusiasm should turn acrid and become fanaticism, the student of church history will not be surprised.

(e) In our day the old doctrine of Christian Perfection, newly dubbed the Higher Life, threatens the Northern Methodist Church, to a less degree the Southern Methodist, and to some extent the Presbyterian bodies. We fear that it is of a more violent type than it has hitherto assumed since the time of the Stylites; that it is fuller of spiritual pride and irreverence. Why should not those who approach so near to the Unseen One indulge in a little familiarity? Meanwhile a truly reverential soul, prostrate before the throne, but hearing man speak thus, may inwardly ask, "Is this the house of God, and the gate of heaven?"

4. How shall we guard against mysticism? We must begin with the education of our ministry; and here we have not so much to suggest anything new as to commend the wisdom of the fathers.

Let our theological students be well drilled in Greek and Hebrew for sundry weighty reasons. They can form independent opinions as to the real meaning of a passage by examining the originals. This alone will preserve them from numberless false interpretations. Winer has said that many blunders in theology are in truth and at bottom blunders in grammar. This study of language requires and promotes a healthful use of our faculties, and habituates the mind to sobriety.

But of course mere grammar and lexicon work is not all. The mind that utilises the grammar and the word is itself more than the grammatical word. Calvin does not seem to have been at the head of the grammarians, but he stands amazingly near the head of the interpreters. Why? Because he discovered so acutely and held with such tenacity the logical thread of his text.

Then theology, systematic theology, must be stated, proved, and defended. Above all, Westminster theology.* The man

* For instance, the Higher Life vagary of the present day can never live in the atmosphere of sound Presbyterian theology; except perhaps a short sickly life. It is an excrescence which Arminianism or Semi-Pelagianism may foster, but genuine Calvinism rejects and destroys. A

who has ever really understood and embraced this system will never become a mystic—unless he was born one; and the born mystic not once in a myriad of times ever can be made an Old School Westminsterian in theology.

In the department of Church History, the rise, progress, plausibility, error, and evil of mysticism will present a very interesting and a most profitable theme. It is well to teach our young ministry that this or that apparently new experiment is no novelty at all, but has been tried and demonstrated to be a failure by the slow but unerring instructor—Time.

Then as to the pulpit, let us have logical preaching both expository and doctrinal. Be the scabbard gilt, and the handle jewelled, if need be, but oh, let the blade be steel! Dr. Nathan Rice said in his later days that congregations would listen longer to logic, *i. e.*, argumentative preaching, than to anything else. A church trained to think, to compare scripture with scripture, and to connect doctrine with doctrine, will not be easily blown about. The intellectual habits of the preacher, too, will be reproduced in the people.

We say nothing against eloquence, *μη γένοιτο*; but let it fit the definition given by Lyman Beecher, "Logic set on fire!" such as some time fell from the lips of Thornwell.

Last of all be it said, in the pastoral treatment of the mystic, use gentleness. For mysticism, though absurd and hurtful, is an aspiration heavenward, to be guided and purified rather than sternly repressed. It is an infirmity of noble spirits, a weakness of warm and often of generous hearts. Oh for its warmth, its generosity, its aspiration, without its extravagance and its spiritual pride! *

L. G. BARBOUR.

deep Augustinian sense of the spirituality of the law, of the hidden evil of the heart lying below the reach of consciousness, and of the sinfulness of emotions as well as desires and purposes, will leave no room for that self-complacency which is so odious to God and man.

* Our limits forbid a discussion of Swedenborgianism, which alone would require a monograph.