

The Scot

"SCOTTISH MYSTICISM IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY."

(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.)

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF Ph. D.

Presented by:

CLIFFORD NORMAN BUTTON, M.A., B.D.

(Travelling Fellow, Presbyterian Theological Hall,
St. Andrew's College, Sydney, and formerly Resident
Fellow, Union Theological Seminary, New York.)

Degree of Ph. D. conferred on 24th March.
1927.



"There is room for a study of Scottish Mysticism,
if only to show how the perfervid spirit of the
Scot is allied to spiritual thought and emotion
throughout history."

(H.M.B.Reid: "The Holy Spirit and the
Mystics," p. 201.)

CONTENTS.

<u>Chapter.</u>		<u>Page.</u>
	Introduction.	1
I	The Time-Spirit in the Seventeenth Century.	5
II	Samuel Rutherford, biographical and psychological.	18
III	Negative Mystical Data in Samuel Rutherford.	42
IV	Positive Mystical Data in Samuel Rutherford.	54
V	The Spiritual Marriage in Rutherford and in the Grand Mystics.	63
VI	Robert Leighton, and Henry Scougal.	106
VII	The Mystical Strain in Barclay, and others.	132
VIII	Summary and Conclusion.	141
	Bibliography.	149

INTRODUCTION.

"Scotland and Mysticism." That is an unusual conjunction of terms! "Scotland has produced very few mystics," says the author of Leighton's "Life and Letters," "and Scottish Church life has not been favourable to their development with the practical problems it has had to face and solve. St. Columba rushing knee-deep into the sea after the sacrilegious robber and pursuing him with curses is more representative of the national religion - 'savage and bare, but infinitely strong' - than Thomas a Kempis." ^① The comparison is probably a considerable over-statement, but the fact is there, and moreover Scottish religion from the days of Knox onwards has been predominantly of a prophetic, if not of an intellectualist type; so that there is some measure of justification for the popular view that Scotland and Mysticism "gae ill thegither." But if many would dismiss the whole subject of Scottish mysticism as though there were no such thing, there have been not a few who hold, somewhat vaguely perhaps, that there is a definite and recognisable strain of mysticism in Scottish religion, and that such mysticism is to be found more especially in the seventeenth century, with Samuel Rutherford as its most typical representative. One of Rutherford's own countrymen, for

① Butler: "Life and Letters of Robert Leighton," p.273.

example, characterises him as "Scotland's greatest scholastic and greatest mystic in one." ⁽¹⁾ Professor W. P. Paterson speaks of "The Love Mysticism of Samuel Rutherford." ⁽²⁾ Professor H. M. B. Reid says "Scotland furnished evidence of the mystic temperament, especially in the seventeenth century"; ⁽³⁾ and other writers refer, more or less casually, to "mysticism," "a strain of mysticism," "ethical mysticism," and "nature mysticism" in different individuals. ⁽⁴⁾

During the last thirty years the subject of Mysticism, in the specialised sense of the term, has been investigated from many different points of view. The mystics have been definitely classified and historically placed. Their individual psychology has been minutely analysed, and in some cases the psychologist, exceeding the proper descriptive limits of his discipline, has attempted to evaluate it. As a result of all this investigation some very definite conclusions have been formed, and though some of these are still the subject of discussion, the general results of the study have been valuable. But in spite of all the work that has been done it would appear that no attempt has been made to deal with the matter of Scottish mysticism in a systematic way. Is it that the great

¹ Gilmour: "Samuel Rutherford, a study." p.23.

² "Nature of Religion," p.295.

³ "Holy Spirit and the Mystics," p.197.

⁴ Macpherson: "The Covenanters under Persecution," pp.61,67,104, and several other writers.

writers on mysticism regard the mysticism of Scotland as non-existent, or as negligible? Or is it that the available evidence is of so slender and elusive a kind that a really systematic treatment is almost impossible? Whatever be the reason, it is noticeable that not a single one, so far as we can gather, of all the recognised writers on mysticism, even mentions Scottish mysticism in general or Samuel Rutherford in particular. Inge, Vaughan, von Hugel, Underhill, Rufus Jones, Leuba, Herman, James, - one looks in vain through the work of these standard writers on mysticism for a reference to Scotland or to Rutherford; but no, not quite in vain, for Herman dismisses Rutherford in two lines as "one of the bitterest opponents of mysticism in his day,"^① Rufus Jones devotes five or six lines to show that Rutherford was definitely anti-mystical,^② and Underhill makes one quotation from Rutherford which has only a remotely mystical bearing.⁽³⁾

In approaching the subject, therefore, one is apt to be haunted by a feeling that he may be looking for something that may not be there; but one need not lose heart in the search, for it is time that we knew a little more definitely whether there is such a thing as Scottish mysticism, and if so what are its characteristics, and who its typical representatives.

1 "Meaning and Value of Mysticism," p. 86.

2 "Studies in Mystical Religion," p. 447.

3 "Mysticism," p. 378.

"There is room," says Professor Reid, "for a study of Scottish Mysticism, if only to show how the perfervid spirit of the Scot is allied to spiritual thought and emotion throughout history." ⁽¹⁾ If, as we proceed with our study, we can show a good deal more than that, so much the better. If we can show only that, then that will be the main value of Scottish mysticism as we find it.

(1) "Holy Spirit and the Mystics," p.201.

CHAPTER II.

THE TIME SPIRIT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

*outwith
the period)* (Books consulted for this chapter are the general and particular histories of the period, - Wodrow, Kirkton, Calderwood, Story, Wodrow Society Publications, Burnet, and [redacted] MacEwen, "History of the Church in Scotland." Also Buckle: "History of Civilisation in England, Vol.III." For the thought of the period: M'Giffert's "Protestant thought before Kant," Walker's "Theology and Theologians of Scotland," and Macpherson's "Covenanters under Persecution." The indebtedness is of so general and obvious a kind as to preclude special reference in most cases.)

CHAPTER I - THE TIME SPIRIT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

The French psychologist Delacroix^① has made it abundantly clear that the experience of the mystic is determined in no small degree by the prevalent ideas of the community and of the period to which he belongs, and before we proceed to the study of Samuel Rutherford in detail, it will be well to recall the general features of the background against which he appears.

The seventeenth century was one in which theological, ecclesiastical, political, and social issues were constantly shading into one another. Fifty years before the century opened the Reformation had, in an incredibly short space of time, changed the whole course of European history. By the end of the sixteenth century some of the problems created by the Reformation had been solved, but the sixteenth century had left many more unsolved problems as a legacy to the seventeenth, more especially those problems arising out of the relation of the State to the Church, and out of the theological formulation which had been rendered necessary by the Reformation. On the one hand, there were the beginnings of the modern State, and on the other, there were a number of churches existing side by side with what was on the Universal

^① "Psychologie du Mysticisme," (throughout)

Catholic Church. By the middle of our century a succession of indecisive struggles, both political and religious, had left Protestantism in Europe on the whole rather weaker, by reason of its subsequent divisions, than at the time of the Reformation, and Roman Catholicism on the whole rather stronger, by reason of the partial success of the Counter-Reformation. Politically the new nationalism had soon developed into a movement towards absolutism, in which the rulers of the time sought to win for themselves powers hitherto held by the Papacy and the Empire. Soon after the beginning of the century, with the coming to the throne of James I, this absolutism had hardened into a principle supported by theories and maxims of its own, finding their most radical expression in the doctrine of the divine right of kings and in the famous declaration of Louis XIV: "L'Etat, c'est moi." For the greater part of the seventeenth century this question of absolutism was the supreme question in politics. ⁽¹⁾

Ecclesiastically speaking, too, the supreme problem of the seventeenth century was that of the relation of State to Church. In England, the Reformation had been achieved by the civil authorities, and the King had been appointed supreme head of the Church; but in Scotland the Reformation had come

⁽¹⁾ Macpherson, op.cit. p.5.

a quarter of a century later, by which time Calvinism had gained such power on the Continent that when John Knox introduced the Calvinistic system into Scotland, it came with the virtual force of a revolution,⁽¹⁾ bringing with it a serious challenge to the power of the ruler in Church affairs. At first the new Reformed Church in Scotland was occupied in a purely ecclesiastical struggle against one enemy, Rome; but almost at the beginning of our century it found itself involved in a political struggle against the pretensions to Absolutism of James VI of Scotland and 1st of England, who sought to place Scotland on the same footing as England with respect to its relation to the monarch, - a policy which was followed in various more or less obvious ways, and with varying results, by all the Stuart kings.

The Calvinistic churches were in a much stronger position than the Lutheran and Anglican, whether for a struggle against Rome, or against the new pretensions of absolutism. In their zeal for the new nationalism, the Lutherans and Anglicans had largely lost sight of the ideal of catholicity, but Calvinism had held to a very definite and clear-cut theory of the Church, which was a very useful weapon both of defence and attack. It was, indeed, used in the latter sense, for Calvin not only

⁽¹⁾ McEwen, "Hist. of Church in Scotland," vol. II p.145.

disputed the Romanist contention that the Reformers had excommunicated themselves, but went so far as to claim that the Church of the Reformers was the true Church.

Theologically, there had been a period of formulation from the days of the Reformation onwards, and a high Calvinism, with the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and predestination as its central tenets, prevailed. But between the time of the Reformation and the Westminster Assembly there had arisen a number of radical sects, or other "heresies" going under such names as Arminianism, Socinianism, Quakerism, and Anabaptism. In the absence of such a final court of appeal as was previously found in the Catholic Church, it became very desirable, especially for the purposes of dealing with these heresies, to have some other court of appeal. This was found in the Bible, considered as verbally inspired, inerrant, all on the same level, and so the comparative freedom with which Luther and his contemporaries had regarded the Bible had passed away by the time of the Westminster Assembly, and the era of Protestant Scholasticism had well begun. "Protestant thought had become fixed and static. Certain views had been clearly marked out as heretical and dangerous, " The appeal

was first to the Bible, regarded as infallible, and finally to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, which became the standards of the Scottish Church, and were looked upon as authoritative for Scottish Presbyterianism.

Taking all the contemporary circumstances into account such a scholasticism was almost inevitable, and on the whole it was distinctly advantageous at the time, for not only did the compact logical system of the Westminster Confession furnish a useful weapon against heresy, it also furnished a useful weapon with which to oppose the dogmatic system which had been formulated at the Council of Trent, and which, in the then existing state of the Roman Church, gave it a great advantage over Protestantism. The clear-cut definite theory of Scripture, and the rigid system of dogma based upon it was jealously regarded by the Covenanters, to whom both were a valuable defence against Roman Catholicism and heresy.

The chief significance of this hard and fast doctrine of Scripture for our present purpose lies in the fact that out of it arose the unyielding attitude of Rutherford and his contemporaries to Quakerism, with its doctrine of the "inner light," and to other sects which appealed to the present leading of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture. The doctrine

of the Holy Spirit which prevailed generally among the Calvinists was, from our modern point of view, quite inadequate. The Spirit was worshipped as the Third Person of the Trinity, and the Scriptures were regarded as being ultimately guaranteed by the Spirit; but beyond this, i.e. to the idea of any new light being cast on the Scriptures by present-day revelation, most of the Covenanters, mainly from fear of undermining the authority of the "infallible word," were not prepared to go.

From the Scriptures thus conceived were deduced the two dominant conceptions of the time, - the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, considered in the most arbitrary way, and that of the Headship of Christ over His Church. This latter, with its direct political implications, was of far greater immediate importance in the prevailing conditions in Scotland than in any other of the Reformed countries.

The main, if not the only, theological modification of the prevailing High Calvinism, was to be found in the direction of the Federal or Covenant Theology, emanating from Holland, which found considerable favour in the seventeenth century, and even won for itself some place in the Westminster Confession. "The old theology of Scotland has been described as a Covenant Theology."⁽¹⁾ This Covenant Theology was "in its essence a

⁽¹⁾ Walker: "Theology and Theologians in Scotland," p.40.

protest against the abstract and speculative nature of High Calvinism and Arminianism alike.....It emphasised God's dealings with men in time, as recorded or hinted at in Scripture, rather than probing too deeply into the mystery of the eternal decrees." "It was on the safe side of the dividing line between Arminianism and Calvinism, for its major premise was the absolute sovereignty of God; but by concentrating more on the concrete than the abstract it was rendered less arbitrary, though also less majestic and awe-inspiring than pure Calvinism". It may be mentioned here that Rutherford was strongly under the influence of this Federal Theology.

Enough has been written to indicate in general outline the controversial issues of the time, and the way in which ecclesiastical and theological questions were always tending to become political questions. It was a time when great causes had to be defended in Church and State, and it was in such defence that the Covenanting movement came into being. In origin and intention a religious movement, it soon became, through force of circumstances, as much political and ecclesiastical as religious. It waged unremitting warfare against episcopacy, Popery, the new heresies, and every kind of absolutism. The movement came to a head with the signing of

(1) Macpherson, op.cit. p.57.

the National Covenant of 1638, which was inspired by the undue lengths to which Charles 1st had carried his absolutist pretensions in Scotland. It continued, with varying fortunes, until soon after the Restoration the Crown adopted the utmost measures of repression. For a period of twenty-eight years (beginning just about the time of Rutherford's death in 1660) the persecution was carried on with great severity. The Crown had everything in its favour at first, for with the Restoration there was a considerable relaxation of restraint, and a movement of reaction against the repressive attitude of the Kirk during the Commonwealth period; but as the persecution increased in intensity it drove into active sympathy with the Covenanters great numbers of people who had hitherto stood aloof, until by the time of the Revolution of 1688 there was a quite unanimous feeling throughout lowland Scotland that this arbitrary tyranny must be brought to an end.

So stern a time as this, when the principles for which men contended had to be eagerly held and bitterly fought for, when the theological and political beliefs which inspired their controversies were such as ought, in theory at least, to make men hard and unrelenting, was not exactly the time in which one would expect to find personal religion of the more intense

experimental kind flourishing. There was little opportunity for the cult of the devotional life, and yet the very sternness of the times drove spiritually minded men further back upon God, and led them to rediscover what fountains of renewal were to be found in their religion on the side of intimate communion with God. The Calvinistic system had the strength, and also the hardness, of wrought iron, and not a few historians, following the false lead of Buckle, have presented a picture of the religion of the time, based rather upon what it ought logically to be than upon what it actually was. If Buckle, and others following him, have represented the God of the Covenanters as a "cruel and remorseless tyrant," and the religion of the Covenanters as one which afforded them little comfort, and their creed as one under the influence of which "the Scotch mind was thrown into such a state that.....some of the noblest feelings of which our nature is capable, the feelings of hope, of love, and of gratitude were set aside, and were replaced by the dictates of a servile and ignominious fear," ⁽¹⁾ there is abundant evidence to tell quite a different story. This evidence is to be found not in any formal ecclesiastical records, but in the "human documents" of the time, documents in which men tell of

(1) "History of Civilisation in England," Vol.III, 239, 247.

the things by which, and the innermost places in which, their spirits lived. The more that such documents are investigated, the more evidence is found to show that though the Covenanters were not only persecuted but persecuting, and though they held a stern creed, there were many of them who were much better than their creed; and, though there was much theological and metaphysical speculation, there was also, in the case of many, an intense personal religion in which the love of God was a motive equally powerful with the motive of the fear of God. Among such men Samuel Rutherford stands supreme. Second after him in this respect come such men as Fraser of Brea, Brown of Wamphray, William Guthrie, Boston of Ettrick, to name only a few, and - in the Episcopal Church - Robert Leighton and Henry Scougal. It is in the personal life and religion of such men as these, rather than in their theological conceptions, that we must look for a true picture of the best of the religious life of the time. In some of these religions rose to such a pitch of intensity that men have not hesitated to call it "mystical." In studying their religion we may well estimate its value as standing out from the stern background of their time, but we must also remember that so far ^{as}/we find it

mystical we must ^{also} expect to find it limited and conditioned in no small degree by the general conditions out of which, and within which, it arose.

Taking the century as a whole it can only be said that the religion of Scotland was at a low ebb, though there were times - notably during the period of the Commonwealth, (when the social power of the Kirk was at its highest,) and during the period of persecution, (when there came a fairly widespread revival through the influence of the ministers who, driven out of their churches, preached the gospel all over the land with renewed enthusiasm,) - when the tide was flowing full and free. What there was of vital personal religion was to be found among the Covenanters, the Quakers, and a small section of Episcopalians of whom Leighton and Scougal are the best known. Among the Covenanters generally, as in the particular case of Samuel Rutherford, where we find vital personal religion we find it acting as a check on Scholasticism. Moreover, since we have spoken of men as being better than their creed, and have by implication spoken in a mildly derogatory sense of that creed - let us here note a point made with some success by Walker (op.cit. p.177) where he traces a relationship between one of the ruling ideas of the time and

this vital personal religion. "The Scottish struggle," he says, "concerning the Headship brought the personal Christ into an exceeding prominence." And again, on the same page, "Now while.....in seasons of religious declension.....we have had these great doctrines among us without a living Christ to animate them, that has certainly not been so in our best days.A living personal Christ was the very soul of the seventeenth century struggle; it was the heart and soul of Marrow divinity and experience."

Rutherford, and some, at least, of the others whom we shall study, are men of their time in respect both of their theology and of their religion, and it will be found that the current theology, taken, at its best, into the hearts as well as the heads of the best men of the day, had no small part in producing the best religion of the day, which, indeed, is not of the day, but of all the Christian centuries.

CHAPTER II.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD: Biographical and Psychological.

"A politician and an ecclesiastic, a dialectician and a polemic, - how came he to be in our literature like an embodied joy, whose race after two centuries is but begun?"

Taylor Innes.

N.B. The references to the Letters of Samuel Rutherford are taken throughout from Bonar's Edition.

CHAPTER II.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD: BIOGRAPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL.

The available details of Samuel Rutherford's life are somewhat meagre, and many of them are contradictory. Even the date of his birth and the social position of his parents are not quite certain. It seems to be generally agreed now that he was born at Nisbet in the parish of Crailing, in the year 1600, though evidence of the social status of his parents varies from M'Ward's description of Rutherford as "a gentleman by extraction", and Wodrow's statement that he was "of mean but honest parents".

For our present purposes it will suffice to give the barest details of the outstanding facts of Rutherford's life.

I.

After receiving his schooling at the Jedburgh Grammar School he entered the University of Edinburgh (the "Town's College") at seventeen years of age, graduating Master of Arts four years later. Two years after graduation he was appointed Regent of Humanity, with prospect of advancement. He held this appointment for two years, when he was forced to resign owing to some matrimonial indiscretion. Among Rutherford's biographers there is considerable difference of opinion about this incident. The present tendency is to regard the offence as a

venial one, and to contend that Rutherford resigned office of his own accord. On the other hand, the Records of the Town Council of Edinburgh, under date of 3rd. February 1626 suggest a contrary view:

"Forasmuch as it being declared by the principal of the College that Mr. Samuel Rutherford, Regent of Humanity, has fallen in fornication with Euphame Hamilton, and has committed a great scandal in the College and.....has since demitted his charge therein....." (1)

Murray, Rutherford's biographer, says:

"The crime.....of which he was guilty cannot have been of so heinous a nature as from Crawford's expression we may be led to suppose. His enemies, notwithstanding the obloquy which they poured upon him, never branded him at any period of his life with this 'scandal'. The Town-Council, the patrons of the University, granted him 'an honest gratification at his dismissal'". (2)

Fortunately we are not called upon to adjudicate in this matter, and it is only mentioned here because some passing reference must be made to it later.

In 1620 Rutherford began to study Theology in the University, taking a two-year course, obtaining license as a preacher of the gospel, and being admitted to his first charge at Anwoth in the year 1627. It is in connection with his work in Anwoth that we get our first clear-cut and abiding impression of the man who was "always praying, always preaching, always

(1) Cf. Crawford's History of University of Edinburgh p.104, also Baillie's Letters and Journals II.342, and Records of City of Edinburgh, XII/323.

(2) "Life of Rutherford," p.19.

visiting the sick, always catechising, always writing and studying", words quoted by all his biographers, and indicating how intensely devoted he was to all sides of his work as pastor and preacher. After nine years of ministry in Anwoth, Rutherford found himself involved in the Covenanting controversy, from which he was never free till the day of his death. The Covenanting movement was shortly to come to a head. The Scottish Church was in danger, and Rutherford was regarded by the episcopal authorities as one of the leaders against the policy of the Government. In July 1636 he was summoned before the High Commission in Edinburgh on a double charge of Nonconformity, and of having written his treatise against Arminianism, his "Exercitationes Apologeticae pro Divina Gratia". After a trial lasting three days he was deposed from his office, forbidden to preach in any part of Scotland, and sentenced to be confined within the town of Aberdeen during the King's pleasure. It was during his exile of a year and a half in Aberdeen that he wrote no less than two hundred and twenty of his Letters, "from Christ's palace in Aberdeen".

He was a member of the famous General Assembly which met in Glasgow in the year 1638, and in 1639 was appointed Professor of Divinity in New College, St. Andrew's, and ministerial colleague

to Robert Blair. It was while he was at St. Andrews that he wrote some of his most notable controversial works. With Baillie, Henderson, Gillespie, and two laymen he was appointed a member of the Westminster Assembly which met in 1643, and which, among other things, subscribed the Solemn League and Covenant, ~~and~~ drew up the Westminster Confession and the Longer and Shorter Catechism, and raised the Scottish Church to the highest position that it had occupied hitherto. With the accession of Charles II to the throne in 1651, the Church of Scotland was soon split in twain over the Protesters and Resolutioners controversy, and Rutherford found himself, as a Protester, in a minority against some of his former friends. But though the last ten years of his life were greatly embittered by the schism in the Church, and Rutherford often showed himself a most prejudiced and violent controversialist, there were times, all through those years, when the saint which he inherently was, showed through all the bitterness. The "Drunken Parliament" of 1661 which succeeded in carrying absolutism to its final triumph, cancelling the Presbyterian polity, and preparing the way for the restoration of Episcopacy, resolved to be rid of the four most distinguished leaders of the Covenanting cause. Argyle and Guthrie were executed. Warriston

escaped, but Rutherford had meanwhile fallen ill; when messengers came to summon him to appear on a charge of high treason he was on his deathbed. "Tell them", he is reported to have said, "I have got a summons already before a superior Judge and Judicatory". Thus he passed, on 28th. March 1661, to a tribunal "where his Judge was his friend".

Such was Samuel Rutherford, a man of remarkable versatility, keen student and man of letters, pastor, preacher, theologian, lonely exile, staunch covenanter, fierce and often bitter controversialist, yet above all a Saint, "a figure of rugged strength and passion, and yet, withal, of a wonderful grace and sweetness too".

II.

When we pass from the consideration of these general external circumstances of his life to the more particular consideration of his character and personality, we are at once confronted with a problem which has confounded all his critics.

(1) "I am made of extremes", he said of himself, in a letter to his friend Dickson. If he so characterised himself, it is little wonder that his friends and his enemies gave the most varying estimates of his character, or that later critics have always found him a puzzle. The man who was a paradox to himself was

(1) Let. 168.

a greater paradox to others. The fact is that statements concerning him of a directly contradictory, and apparently irreconcilable kind, are often both true. "He was at once most attractive and most repellent, most loving and most quarrelsome, a persecutor and a martyr, a grim bigot and a patient sufferer",⁽¹⁾ "He was a magnificent combination of fiery intellectual force, subtle logic, and spiritual piety".⁽²⁾

↳ He was a man with a masculine and aggressive mind, and yet he indulged constantly in language which gives a strong suggestion of effeminacy.

The contrast in the outward life was paralleled by a still deeper contrast in his inner life.

He has been characterised as "a monk in a Scottish manse," and the comparison has been still further pursued until he has been likened in turn to "Thomas and Francis under one hood", to Bernard of Clairvaux, "the self-denying monk, the spiritual director, the mystical expounder of the Scripture, loving solitude, but forced into publicity, ruthlessly sundering family ties, combating incipient heresies, etc.," and to St. Francis de Sales, "the laborious Bishop, the spiritual letter writer, the 'sweet' confessor, the stern persecutor of the heretics on whom his proselytising suavity was lost." A comparison has also been made between Rutherford and Bishop Hall, the saint whose "divine

⁽¹⁾ "Scottish Divines," St. Giles Lectures.

⁽²⁾ Taylor Innes.

breathings" lift the ravished soul to heaven, the bitter satirist whose writings must "in the interests of propriety" be left unquoted, whose desire was, with Noah's dove, "to bring an olive branch to the tossed ark", but whose olive branch at times assumed the dimensions of a bludgeon, and whose only arguments were "dark lodgings and hellebore."

It is obvious that we are dealing with a most incongruous combination of qualities in his personality. "However comes it, (the critics ask) "that the author of the Letters should also be the author of Lex Rex? Or the question is put the other way. How is it possible that the author of a book "tediously pedantic", a book "containing as much emotion as the multiplication table", should also have "carelessly flung out upon his age the most seraphic book in our literature?"⁽¹⁾ This problem "stares all his critics in the face."⁽²⁾ Gilmour makes an acute remark when he says "The critic's solution of the problem is after all but a very clever amplification of the problem to be solved; and the problem itself is a purely fictitious one, the creation of the critical imagination." The problem, if problem there be at all, is, I should say, rather to account for the fact that the generality of men develop in the one direction alone or never develop at all, than to marvel or carp at the many-sidedness of the man who

(1) Gilmour, op.cit.p.17. (2) p.22.

is admittedly great, and therefore exceptional." If there were two men, and not one, in Rutherford, this fact is due, in great measure, to the condition of the time; and it is to be remembered that it was the same with some much greater men, e.g. St. Augustine, and St. Bernard, John Milton, and Cardinal Newman. In all great men there is some factor which defies explanation or analysis. We shall content ourselves, then, with saying, for the present, that he was "a sort of intellectual, theological, and religious prodigy,"⁽¹⁾ - in a word a genius, and if we are now considering him, as it were, in a cross-section of his complicated personality, as a religious genius, on his more mystical and saintly side, it may turn out after all that this is the most important cross section, for this is "where he lived," and this aspect of his character is a truer key to his personality than all the other aspects put together.

III.

When we come to a more detailed study of Rutherford's personality along strictly psychological lines we find the same meagreness of data that we have already noticed so far as the external facts of his life are concerned. There are, however, one or two specific incidents, which have to be examined, for

⁽¹⁾ Walker, op.cit. p. 12.

what they are worth, in view of their possible bearing on Rutherford's alleged mysticism.

1. First, there is an incident of his childhood, upon which Bonar, the author of the St. Giles Lectures on Scottish Divines, and others have fixed as giving evidence of early mystical tendencies. The incident is thus recorded in Wodrow's *Analecta*, (Vol.1, page 57:)

"When about four years old he was playing about his father's house and a sister.....with him. Mr. Rutherford fell into a well severall fathomes deep, and not full, but faced about with heuen stone, soe that it was not possible for anybody to get up almost, far less a child. When he fell in, his sister ran into the house near by and told that Samuell was fallen into the well; upon which his father and mother ran out, and found him sitting on the grasse beside the well: and when they asked him hou he gote out? he said that after he was once at the bottome he came up to the tope and ther was a bonny young (?white) man pulled him out by the hand. Ther was noe body near by at the time: and soe they concluded that it was noe dout ane angell."

The incident is variously recorded, - sometimes stated "a bonnie white man,". Wodrow's account of the popular conclusion that it was an angel is a fair index of the kind of superstition which prevailed among all classes in the seventeenth century, and as for the subsequent idea, which has had much vogue, that the incident gives evidence of a mystical tendency this is surely making too much out of a little. It

is possible, in the absence of fuller details, to explain it on a purely naturalistic basis, and so, indeed, it has been subsequently explained, the boy's recovery from the well having been attributed to the work of a passing baker. Here, surely, there is no datum upon which to found a theory of mysticism in the boy's make-up.

2. Other data of a more definitely psychological import may with greater reason be deduced from certain passages in the letters, and these, though they are not of a particularly pleasant kind, must also be examined, in view of the tendency of modern psychology to make much of the sexual factor as an explanation of religious experience.

i. In several of his letters to young men he expatiates at some length on the dangers of youthful lusts, but also makes admissions of his own temptations in this regard.

Thus, to young Earlston he writes: ⁽¹⁾

"Study above anything to mortify your lusts."

And to Lord Boyd: ⁽²⁾

"It is easy to master an arrow and to set it right, ere the string be drawn; but when once it is shot and in the air, and the flight begun, then ye have no more power at all to command it.

...Then (in youth) the affections are on horseback, lofty and stirring; then the old man hath blood, lust, much will, and little wit....."

...And therefore, oh, what a sweet couple, what a glorious yoke, are youth and grace, Christ and a young man."

⁽¹⁾ Let. 99. ⁽²⁾ Let. 232.

Or again, by way of personal confession:

"The old ashes of the sins of my youth are new fire of sorrow to me. I have seen the devil, as it were, dead and buried, and yet rise again, and be a worse devil than ever he was; therefore, my brother beware of a green young devil, that hath never been buried. The devil in his flowers (I mean the hot, fiery lusts and passions of youth) is much to be feared, etc....." (1)

"I never took it to be so hard to be dead to my lusts." (2)

"I cannot learn, but I desire to learn, to bring my thoughts, will, and lusts, in under Christ's feet, that He may trample upon them." (3)

Many more passages of the same kind might be cited from the letters, but to what purpose?

The Freudian psychology, linking such warnings and confessions with the reported case of immorality to which we have already referred, might make much of them by way of explaining, not only the characteristic use of erotic symbolism in the letters, but also such mysticism as he might find in Rutherford's nature. We are on safer and saner ground, however, if we content ourselves with saying that these passages warrant us in assuming at the most that Rutherford was a strongly-sexed man, who needed to wage, and did wage, a constant warfare against the flesh, that he had probably learned a bitter lesson by his own experience, and that out of that experience, as well as from his

1. Let. 181.

2. Let. 99.

3. Let. 260

deep experimental knowledge of Christ he wished, as a Christian pastor, to warn young men of their dangers and point them to the way of salvation. But there is a deeper thing that may be said, - and it is the kind of thing of which the new psychology takes little cognisance, - that is, that if Rutherford was a saint he had that strong consciousness of sin which is characteristic of the saint, in a word that he knew himself to be a sinner, and that he was the object of a great redemption. Indeed, immediately after one of these warnings to young men he almost says as much, though he is not at the time giving a modern psychological analysis of himself.

"Yet I must tell you, that the whole saints now triumphant in heaven, and standing before the throne, are nothing but Christ's forlorn and beggarly dyvours. What are they but a pack of redeemed sinners? But their redemption is not only past the seals, but completed; and yours is on the wheels, and in doing."⁽¹⁾

If we are determined to find some positive psychological datum from these repeated warnings and confessions, there are one or two of them which may fairly be taken as indicating a definite crisis of his inner life, as, e.g. when he writes to Robert Stuart:

"Like a fool, as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven, and near afternoon, before ever I took the gate by the end."⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Let.181.

⁽²⁾ Let. 186.

Passages of this kind may fairly be taken to point to a late conversion, but they do not give us sufficient evidence to point to a definite time, or to a definite external circumstance.

ii. Rutherford's friendships with women.

Since it is the fashion of modern psychology not to overlook any detail of this kind, it may be pointed out that Rutherford numbered two women among his intimate friends, - Marion McNaught and Viscountess Kenmure. To these he writes many letters. Especially intimate does he seem to be with Marion McNaught, but the basis of the intimacy is her altogether exceptional devotion to the cause of Christ. "Blessed be the Lord", Rutherford says, "that in God's mercy I found in this country such a woman to whom Jesus is dearer than her own heart, when there be so many that cast Christ over their shoulder." (1)

Once again, it is not possible to make much of these things, and indeed, one would gladly pass them over without mention, but for the excessive importance attached to them by certain schools of psychology, as represented by Leuba, when in somewhat sarcastic vein, and after dealing with the "spiritual marriage" in the case of the grand mystics, he notes the "significant discrepancy" between the protestation of all the divine

(1) Let. 22.
"Psychology of Religious Mysticism,"

lovers that God alone is sufficient for them, and the "bonds of close friendship and pure love" which most of them seem unable to avoid with at least some one human being of the opposite sex". Without anticipating unduly what we shall have to say later of the "spiritual marriage" in Rutherford, it may be said here that these friendships with women are on quite a different plane from the friendships of most of the grand mystics (as discussed by Delacroix and Leuba) with persons of the opposite sex. These friendships were carried on almost entirely by correspondence which has been published to the world. Their friendship was not a stepping-stone to any sort of "spiritual union" for either partner; it was based purely on a common love for Christ, and there is not a particle of evidence (as there is in the case of some of the grand mystics), that there was anything in them but "close friendship and pure love." Such friendships were, as Gilmour says, "perhaps characteristic of the man as they were certainly characteristic of the times." (1)

Moreover, Rutherford was a married man, - twice married, indeed, - and the father of nine children. There is no evidence (as there is in the case of some of the grand mystics) that his married life was unsatisfactory. Taylor Innes has made much of the fact that from Rutherford's letters "we know more of the

(1) p.47 op.cit.

birds who built in the kirk of Anwoth, than of the bairns who played in the manse," and says, - what is, in point of fact, not true, - that "of these three women (his mother, his first and second wives) "that indefatigable pen reveals absolutely nothing"; but it was no part of the purpose of these letters to give these domestic details. Nearly all of them are long already, and they were written to meet specific needs of consolation or encouragement or advice, and not with a view to future publication for the benefit of his biographers. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the times were times of stern controversy, and it was hardly possible for Rutherford with his multifarious occupations to be the beau-ideal of a family man. We have already said, - and though it is no excuse, it is at least some explanation, - that Rutherford was a genius, and in this connection the words of a woman writer in a recent article, if somewhat flippant, are not without point:

"Ordinary marriage is child's play compared to marriage with a genius. It is a job for a fully grown woman..... The only thing a woman cannot, in any circumstances do, is to turn a genius into a husband. Even ordinary men are not husbands by nature, though they can by kindness be made so. A genius never can".

iii. The question of "sublimation".

There are not a few references in the "Letters" which

convey some very distinct suggestion of what the psychologists call "sublimation", especially with reference to the sex instinct, and on a basis of modern psychology it would be quite permissible to see in these references evidence of repression.

We quote several:

To Lady Kenmure:

"If ye can in faith lean down your head upon the breast of Jesus Christ: and till this be, ye shall never get a sound sleep. Jesus, Jesus, be your shadow and covering. It is a sweet soul-sleep to lie in the arms of Christ, for His breath is very sweet." ⁽¹⁾

(It is noteworthy that immediately after this he says: "Pray for poor friendless Zion. Alas, no man will speak for her now, although at home in her own country she hath good friends, her husband Christ, and His Father her Father-in-law. Beseech your husband to be a friend to Zion, and pray for her". Note the immediate change from the idea of Christ as Husband of an individual, to the idea of Christ as Husband of the Church, and the relationship is further pursued until God is brought into it as Father-in-law. Note also the transfer of thought from the husband Christ to the woman's own husband, with whom evidently Rutherford is in as much sympathy as he is with Lady Kenmure herself).

To Lady Kenmure, on the death of Lord Kenmure: ⁽²⁾

"....your dearest Lord hath made you a widow, that ye may be a free woman for Christ, who is now suiting for marriage love of you. And therefore, since you lie alone in your bed, let Christ be as a bundle of myrrh, to sleep and lie all the night betwixt your breasts, and then your bed is better filled

¹ Let. 5.

² Let. 37.

than before.. Let your faith and patience be seen, that it may be known your only beloved first and last hath been Christ. And therefore now ware your whole love upon Him; He alone is a suitable object for your love..... God hath dried up one channel of your love by the removal of your husband. Let now that speat run upon Christ."

(Then again, having talked in such erotic language, he goes on immediately, as though his Calvinism were calling him to order, to refer to the "terrible sin-revenging Judge of the world." This sudden change of metaphor is a characteristic of the letters to which we shall refer later.)

To Lady Kilconquhair. (1)

"Means are used in the Gospel to draw on a meeting betwixt Christ and you.I know that other lovers beside Christ are in suit of you, and your soul hath many wooers; but I pray you to make a chaste virgin of your soul, and let it love but one..... Many, alas, too many, make a common strumpet of their soul for every lover that cometh to the house. Marriage with Christ would put your love and your heart by the gate, out of the way, and out of the eye of all other unlawful suitors; and then you have a ready answer for all others 'I am already promised away to Christ; the match is concluded, my soul hath a husband already, and it cannot have two husbands.'"

Or take (as a corrective to the possible suggestion of sublimation of marital love) this, written to Lady Kenmure on the death of her child:

"The withering of the bloom is for no other end than to buy out at the ground (to the very foundation) the reversion of your heart and love." And later, "We see not the ground of the Almighty's sovereignty." (2)

¹ Let.226

² Let. 287.

Or this, to a Christian brother, who has lost his daughter:

"Ye cannot now say that she is married against the will of her parents. She might more readily, if alive, fall into the hands of a worse husband; but can ye think that she could have fallen into the hands of a better? And if Christ marry with your house, it is your honour, not any cause of grief." (1)

Illustrations of this kind might be multiplied ad nauseam. From one point of view they may be said to be illustrations of advice to sublimate; so far as they reveal the inner psychology of the writer it would probably be truer to say that they point to the expression of something higher and deeper, more intimately related to the personality as a whole, than to the repression of one particular instinct.

These particular letters give evidence of a higher moral and spiritual attitude, and a broader and truer religious psychology, than the oft-quoted similar expressions of sublimation, etc., in the grand mystics. It may be quite true, - as Leuba says, that "auto-erotic phenomena are much more likely to occur in persons deprived of normal sexual satisfaction than in others," and that "when the free play of sexual impulses is restrained auto-erotic phenomena inevitably spring up on every side," but in Rutherford we have nothing more than erotic

(1) Let. 316.

(2) Op.cit. p. 142

language, and, once more, it is to be borne in mind, when the psychologists would push explanation by one instinct too far, that Rutherford was not only married, but (so far as the evidence goes) happily married, and most of the mystics were either unmarried or unhappily married.

At a later stage we shall have to enquire how far current psychological explanations account for the sheer eroticism of the letters as a whole. In the meantime we pass to a brief notice of certain other psychological data afforded by the Letters.

iv. Other psychological data from the letters;

i. Depression.

"I have been and am exceedingly cast down, and am fighting against a malicious devil, of whom I can win little ground." (1)

"I am put often to ask, if Christ and I did ever shake hands together in earnest... I am made of extremes." (2)

"I am so comfortless, and so full of heaviness, that I am not able to stand under the burthen any longer.." (This in reference to his wife's illness)..
"If He would be pleased to remove His hand, I have a purpose to seek Him more than I have done." (3)

ii. Assurance. (or belief in it).

"I beseech you in the Lord to give your soul no rest till ye have real assurance, and Christ's rights confirmed and sealed to your soul." (4)

¹ Let.18. ² Let.168. ³ Let. 6. ⁴ Let. 190.

iii. Growth in Christian Experience.

From February 16th. 1637, for more than a year, he frequently refers to having arrived at a particular "nick" in Christianity, in such a way as to suggest that he has been through a definite crisis in his spiritual development. His first use of this term is noteworthy:

"I verily think now, that Christ hath led me up to a nick in Christianity that I was never at before; I think all before was but childhood and bairn's play." (1)

Further specifications of this:

"He hath led me up to such a pitch and nick of joyful communion with Himself, as I never knew before. When I look back to by-gones, I judge myself to have been a child at A,B,C, with Christ. Worthy, Sir, pardon me, I dare not conceal it from you; it is as a fire in my bowels." (2)

"He smileth more cheerfully, His kisses are more sweet and soul-refreshing than the kisses of the Christ I saw before were, though He be the same. Or rather, the King hath led me up to a measure of joy and communion with my Bridegroom that I never attained to before." (3)

To Lady Boyd:

"I rejoyce exceedingly that the Father of lights hath made you see that there is a nick in Christianity, which ye contend to be at; and that is, to quit the right eye, and the right hand, and to keep the Son of God." (4)

"I never before came to that nick or pitch of communion with Christ that I have now attained to." (5)

Here at least we have something definite to go upon.

Though Rutherford does not tell us much, we know that at this time, if he did not pass through a definite psychological "crisis", he at least entered into such an enrichment of his Christian experience, and a deepening of his Christian communion, as to make him feel that anything he had hitherto attained was as nothing, and that this new experience was so supremely desirable that he could not refrain from making frequent reference to it.

IV.

We may now sum up the general results of our psychological investigation so far.

We are dealing with a man who was a consummate religious genius, yet withal a most contradictory and paradoxical personality. He has his moments of exaltation and of depression, as others do, but the predominant sentiment is one of joy in God and love to God. The data for a strict psychological investigation along modern technical lines are too few to yield any very definite results. We know nothing of the dominant sentiments of his childhood, of heredity tendencies, or the circumstances of his upbringing. We cannot say with certainty when, or how, he experienced conversion. We may with some justification allege that he was a man of strong sexual instincts, though it is quite impossible to say how far such factors operated to

determine his religious attitudes, in view of the fact that for the greater part of his life he was a married man, and that the ruggedness of his character and his masculine and aggressive mentality are in marked contrast to the eroticism of his language. We cannot say that he had any premonitions, literal visions, auditions, sudden illuminations, mystic ecstasy, or sense of being inspired in speech or writing. There is no talk of a *via negativa*, or glorifying of abstraction, and all the usual accompaniments of mysticism in the technical sense are absent, except the mystical language. But we can say, on the evidence of history, and his letters, that he had a very keen sense of sin, a strong supernatural assurance of salvation, and the "witness of the Spirit". We can say that he had great intuitions of Divine Truth, though these were rather by way of corroboration of truths already revealed, than discovery of new ones. We can say that he had a very intimate sense of the immediate presence of God, and that this was a growing and deepening sense. We can further say that the manner in which he expresses his intense spiritual experience is determined for him, in great measure, by the theological and religious conventions of his day, though that experience, by its very intensity is constantly breaking all bounds of expression.

If we would classify him according to modern psychological methods, we find that he refuses to be held within any of the traditional classifications. If we take Pratt's classification we must call him both a "traditionalist" and a "rationalist", and it remains to be found that there was also a strong "ethical" and "mystical" strain in him. If we take Adams Brown's classification, we find that he fits into at least two of Brown's three classes, - he is both "individualist" and "democratic". Jung might be justified for classifying him as a religious introvert.

We may now examine more particularly the specific evidence for the alleged mysticism of Rutherford. We have seen enough, however, of the man, and of the theological, religious, and political influences which surrounded him, to make us expect that if we find him to be a mystic it will be a mysticism of a kind different from that of the grand mystics.

CHAPTER III

NEGATIVE MYSTICAL DATA IN SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

NEGATIVE MYSTICAL DATA in SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

The objective data for the alleged mysticism of Samuel Rutherford are of two kinds, - negative, and positive. We may take a brief glance at the former first.

We have already noticed that Mrs. Herman and Rufus Jones both regard Rutherford as definitely anti-mystical, the former even regarding him as "one of the bitterest opponents of mysticism in his day."⁽¹⁾ Is this true, and if so, how is it accounted for? That is the problem which we now confront.

The "Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist opening the Secrets of Familisme and Antinomianisme in the Antichristian Doctrine of John Saltmarsh, and Will. Del, etc. etc." is the only document in which we have direct evidence of a definite anti-mystical attitude. It reveals a very different **Rutherford** from that of the Letters. It is written in a very bitter tone and breathes a spirit of bigotry and intolerance; moreover, according to Rufus Jones, the attack is lamentable, not only on account of the manner of it, but also because it is made "in ignorance of the real teaching of the persons whom he assails."⁽²⁾ We are here concerned, however, not with the allegation of ignorance, but

1 op.cit. 86.
2 op.cit. 447.

with the allegation that Rutherford was definitely anti-mystical.

It must be said at once that the scope of the attack is distinctly limited to the Familists and Antinomians, and to the Theologica Germanica. No other specific mystical teachings come within the purview of the book, and so far we are not warranted in inferring, as Mrs. Herman evidently does, that because Rutherford opposes the mysticism of the Familists and the Theologica Germanica, he was, ipso facto, opposed to every kind of mysticism. As we shall see later, there is some reason to suppose, from his general theological position, that Rutherford would have little sympathy with mysticism as commonly understood, but at least we are not entitled to infer that from the "Spiritual Antichrist". On the other hand, if we are to accept Jones' definition of Mysticism⁽¹⁾ as "the type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, a direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine Presence it is religion in its most acute, living sense," then Rutherford's intense spiritual experience would make him a supreme mystic, and the "Spiritual Antichrist" would in that case be an instance of one kind of mystic attacking a mysticism of a kind which, by comparison with "grand mysticism" is much

¹ op.cit. Intro.p.xv.

akin to his own; Rufus Jones should then have given Rutherford a chapter to himself instead of dismissing him in five lines as anti-mystical.

But why the attack? The answer is easily deduced from an examination of the nature of the attack itself, in which Rutherford shows himself a true man of his time. The attack upon the Familists rests almost entirely upon two grounds: (1) Their "allegorick" use of the Scriptures, (2) Their false conception of the union of Christ with the "beleever." Rutherford will have nothing of a union which is fusion or identity, nor will he countenance the specific~~ally~~ly mystic idea in the Theologica Germanica that the soul is of "the very essence of God." A scarcely less important ground of objection than these others lies in the Familists' disparagement of ordinances. But everywhere, whether he be attacking a particular doctrine, or defending a particular doctrine, the attack or defence is based on an appeal to the Scriptures, interpreted literally as the word of God, and finally, to exclude all possibility of further revelation.

" p.139. "The literall sense of the Scriptures is the whole substance of Christian faith and divinity, which only carrieth a man out in tentation.
Allegories are empty speculations, and the

" "Survey of the Spiritual Antichrist."

froath of Scripture.

An allegory is a faire whore that cannot but be loved for the present by idle men.

Only the Historicall sense doth rightly and solidly instruct, fight, defend, conquer, edifie."

Such a protest as this is almost amusing to the modern mind, in view of Rutherford's own highly allegorical use of the Song of Solomon; but such a use is quite characteristic of the time, in which all the Scriptures were placed on the same level of authority, and subjected to the same "literal" interpretation, which, more often than not, especially in the case of the Song of Solomon, was what in point of fact we should to-day call "allegorical" interpretation.

It is also interesting in this connection to notice how Rutherford, while stoutly defending the current view of the Scriptures as the supreme and final revelation of God, defends the use of the "sciences, arts and tongues" for the understanding of the Scriptures, in opposition to the teaching of the Familists that "because the Spirit acts them immediately, that 1, All humane industry and endeavours of free will are vain, and 2, That arts and sciences have nothing to do with the right understanding of the Scriptures." (1)

On the question of evidence for an anti-mystical attitude on the part of Rutherford, we cannot say much more

(1) Op.cit. p.45.

than that in so far as Familism and the other objects of attack in the "Spiritual Antichrist" are mystical, he is against them; and he is against them mainly in the interests of a thoroughgoing Scriptural literalism; which in his day, was very suspicious of any conception of the guidance of the Spirit which left the doctrines of the Scriptures in any doubt, or left a loophole for Romanism or Antinomianism. This attitude towards the Scriptures and towards the question of the guidance of the Spirit is of much more significance than is the actual attack upon the book, limited as it is to certain specific forms of mysticism.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III.

Rutherford's attack on Familism and the Theologica Germanica in the "Spiritual Antichrist."

The following quotations illustrate the general line of attack.

Rutherford complains of the objects of his attack that "They spake in darke, obscure, mystick, and sublime words, not with the Scriptures." p.3. He does not hesitate to use the most abusive of epithets, speaking of his opponents as "unclean Sects."etc. p.1.

p.13. "David Georgiuswas the son of Mountebank or Jugler say some, by trade a painted...he was a composed plaistered hypocrite, austerer than any barefooted Fryer or Capucian, did often fast three dayes together....(Note: anti-ascetic). He transformed the Scriptures in allegories, said angels were but motions in the minds of men, so do Familists and Antinomians. Randel the Familist preached that because Christ preached parables, therefore it is lawfull to expound the Scriptures in allegories, and that all things in nature and art were sacraments of the supernaturall mysteries of the Gospell, therefore they expound God manifested in the flesh to be a believer Godded and Christed with the being of God in Faith and love."

p.16. "Who is such a stranger in the writings of Familists and Antinomians, who readeth not these blasphemies, the Saints are Christed and Goded, a beleever is Christ, a beleever is partaker of the Godhead..... "

Familists make God in his nature and essence to dwell and work in all creatures especially in the regenerate. But these are but fancies.

Note Scr. proofs given for everything. Always appeals to Scripture. "The Scripture is the word of God against Swenckfeldians and Antinomians."

On the question of Revelation.

Ch. 7, p.38. "There is a twofold revelation, one of the letter of the word and Gospell, this is nothing but the Lords

active uttering of his will and Gospell which was hid before..... This is a revelation proper and immunicable to any, for God onely did devise the Gospell;This revelation of the letter of the Gospell is made to thousands, that never beleeve, and therefore though it be but literall and externall, yet none could thus reveale the minde of God to Prophets and Apostles, but God onely, none were inspired of God, as none were inspired of God, but writers of Canonnick Scripture, and Scripture onely is given by divine inspirationand as this revelation active is Gods/only, and from him as the author and fountaine, men doe as Herolds carry this message of revelation to others; so passively, it is common to beleevers and unbelevers, for the letter of the Gospell may be revealed to all within the visibible Church, and yet the most part are destituted of an internall revelation. Therefore there is an internall revelation, of things that men beleeve. And this I conceave to be foure-fold.

1. Propheticall.
2. Speciall to the elect only.
3. Of some facts peculiar to Godly men.
4. False and Satanicall.

p.41. The Holy Ghost speaking of a Collective Body the Church and spouse of Christ in Solomons Song, in the book of the Psalms, and of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, shewes us of the outgoings, incommings of the beloved in the soule, of his cloudings and outshings of free love, of the acts of the hands of Christ. (Can.5)*

Touching the handles of the barre, and the smel of the myrrhe of Christ, that he leavés behind him when he is departed, of the soules feelings of the impressions, or the withdrawings of Christ, as if the whole Church Catholicke of Invisible beleevers (for so the Church is taken especially, Psal.45, and in the booke of Solomons Song) were but one particular beleever, which is a demonstration that the particular actings of the spirit of grace cannot be written in the Scriptures, yet are they not to be thought unlawfull revelations, and destitute of the word, not more then we can say, all the particular actings of Devills and of all wicked men, since the creation, of whoring, swearing, Idol-

worship, lying, stealing, oppressing, mis-beleeving &c. are not contrary to the expresse law of the Holy Ghost speaking in the word, because these shamefull actes are not particularly all specified and written in Scriptures, with the names of the actors.

Ch. 8. Of Humane Industry, Arts, Sciences, Tongues, and if they be lawfull and necessary to the opening and supernaturall knowledge of the Scripture.

p.45.....Famillists teach, because the Spirit acts them immediatly, that 1, All humane indistry and endeavours of free will are vain, 2, That Arts and sciences have nothing to doe with the right understanding of the Scriptures.

He asks the question: How far arts, sciences, and knowledge of tongues, Hebrew, Greeke, and Latine, are to be acknowledged the good gifts of God, and how far they are to be rejected.

Conclusion is that Sciences, arts and tongues, in their nature, though not in manner of acquiring them are necessary for understanding of the Scriptures and both wayes they are the good gifts.

67. DOCTRINE OF FAMILISTS THAT ALL THE SCRIPTURES ARE TO BE EXPONED BY ALLEGORIES.

This makes (1) The Scripture a mass of contradictions and lyes. (2) This turns our faith and knowledge into a phancie, for the Scripture itselfe cannot be a rule of expounding scripture, if the glosse destroy the text. (3) The scripture shall not Judge all controversies, as Christ referres the gravest question that ever was, whether he be the sonns of God or no, to this tribunall: Search the Scriptures for they testifie of me. (4) All the articles touching Christ his birth, life, death, buriall, resurrection, ascending to heaven, sitting at Gods right hand, his second comming &c. Creation, providence, histories shall teach nothing, an Allegory shall cause scripture say the contrary. Antinomians call all their allegories the spirituall sense of Scripture. Bread may in an allegory signifie comfort, then the love of God dwells in a brother, who seeth his poore brother famishing



and gives him neither cloathing nor bread, but onely faith in good words, Brother goe in peace and be warmed, and cloathed, and feed, for he gives the poore man allegorically bread, and cloathing contrary to James 2.14,15,16,17, 1 John 3. 17,18, yea so all scripture shall be turned over in lyes, dreames, and phancies, all covenants violated, all faith private and publike among Christians may be broken, and yet truth kept in an allegoricall sense according to Scripture. A man may murther his brother, and have life eternall. Contrary to Jo. 3.15, in regard that killing him, he saves him from sinning any more, and so does not murther him, though violently he take away his life; for the scriptures calls the soule the man.

139. The literall sense of the Scriptures is the whole substance of Christian faith and divinity, which only carrieth out in tentation.

Allegories are empty speculations, and the froath of Scr.

An allegory is a faire whore that cannot but be loved for the present by idle men, that are not tempted.

Only the historicall sense doth rightly and solidly instruct, fight, defend, conquer edifie.

Ch.14. p.163. Of other Fountains and Springs of Familists, and Antinomians, and of the Treatise called the Divinity of Germany, or Theologia Germanica, and that called The Bright-Starre.

The Gnosticks.....said the Soule was made of the substance of God, or, It was the very essence of God. I conceive the Monkish Familists had their rise from the Gnosticks, and Manicheans, who sprang from the Gnosticks. The Libertines, David George, and H. Nicholas seeme to have their first spring from these two, to wit, Theologia Germanica, and the Bright Starre. For Philosophy and Divinity dissected, is but a rude, foolish, and unlearned Pamphlet, of late penned, and changing as Familists and Antinomians doe,

Scripture, and God, and Christ, into Metaphors and vaine Allegories.

242. Ch.29. The scope of Saltmarsh his book, called Sparkles of Glory, and of his denying Christ to be anything but a man figuratively and mystically.

245. H.N.1. Exh. c.16. The Elders of love are godded with God, incorporated to God in all love, with whom God in one being, and power of his holy Spirit, is homified or become man; and this is their God incarnate.

Saltmarsh with H. Nicholas teacheth that every creature is God, or a substantial part of God.

CHAPTER IV.

POSITIVE MYSTICAL DATA IN SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.
the love-ring, as used by Mother Cecilia and others (Watkins
Philosophy of Mysticism)

Letter 122. "We have gotten the New Heavens, as
as a pledge of that, the Bridegroom's love-ring."
But there is no evidence whatsoever to show that this symbol
had the same significance as it had for the Roman Catholic
mystics, or indeed, what its real significance is. It is
of many illustrations of the fact that Rutherford just
himself sometimes to reveal in the love-symbolism without any
consistently thought-out doctrine.

VI. SYMBOLISM

At one point Rutherford uses the highly mystical conception of the Love-ring, as used by Mother Cecilia and others (Watkin: Philosophy of Mysticism)

Letter 152. "We have gotten the New Heavens, and as a pledge of that, the Bridegroom's love-ring." But there is no evidence whatsoever to show that this symbol had the same significance as it had for the Roman Catholic mystics, or indeed, what its real significance is. It is one of many illustrations of the fact that Rutherford just allowed himself sometimes to revel in the love-symbolism without any consistently thought-out doctrine.

CHAPTER IV.

POSITIVE MYSTICAL DATA IN SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

There is an abundance of positive data of possible mystical significance to be found in the Letters. It will be convenient to divide these data into classes, and to give illustrations of each:

I. The use of the Bride of Christ metaphor.

No figure is used with greater frequency than this. This theme, in various aspects, forms a kind of leit-motif to the letters as a whole. But the figure is used in a great variety of ways, and without any attempt at consistency. Christ is sometimes:

i. The Husband of the Church.

"Our dear Husband, is wooing His kirk." (1)

"Our Lord...is sending the kirk the gate she is going....seeing that she hath given up with Christ her Husband." (2) (and many other places.)

ii. ~~The Husband of Scotland, (or Scotland as Bride of Christ.)~~

~~"False and declining Scotland, whom our Lord ...made a fair bride to Himself, hath broken her faith to her sweet Husband."~~

NOTE:- (1) Let.15. (2) Let.94. Let.

Rutherford uses the term "mystical" several times, both in the Letters, and in his other writings, but always apparently in the loose, general sense of "inexplicable," or "inexpressible," "mysterious."

ii. The Husband of Scotland, (or Scotland as Bride of Christ.)

"False and declining Scotland, whom our Lord
....made a fair bride to Himself, hath broken
her faith to her sweet Husband." (1)

"Scotland, dead and buried with her dear
Bridegroom." (2)

"Scotland's day of visitation is come. It is
time for the Bride to weep, while Christ is
a-saying that He will choose another wife." (3)

iii. The Husband of individual believers.

(To Jean Brown)

"Christ, your last-living and longest-living
Husband." (4)

"That ye may be at last decored and trimmed as a
bride for Christ." (5)
(and instances innumerable of the same kind.)

iv. The Husband of a particular congregation.

(To his parishioners)

"The match betwixt you and Christ." and
"a fair contract of marriage betwixt you and
Christ." (6)

"I have espoused and shall present a Bride to
Christ in that congregation." (7)

As evidence of the sheer inconsistency with which the
metaphor of the Bride (and kindred ideas) is used, note the
following typical quotations:

~~The Lord as Suitor: (of the individual, or of the
Church.)~~

~~"The Lord who is suiting you in marriage."~~

¹ Let. 28. ² Let. 50. ³ Let. 90. ⁴ Let. 131. ⁵ Let. 42.

⁶ Let. 225. ⁷ Let. 166.

The Lord as Suitor: (of the individual, or
of the Church.)

"The Lord who is suiting you in marriage." (1)
Contrasted with the world as suitor:

"This busy wooer, a beguiling world, is now
coming in to suit." (2)

The individual as suitor to Christ:

"Your only errand to the world is to woo Christ."

The kirk as Christ's Mother:

"His mother, the kirk." (3)

Kirk as mother of an individual:

"She is your mother (to Lady Kenmure); forget her
not." (4)

Contrast much typical references as these:

"I bless him for this honour, to be yoked with (5)
Christ and married to Him in suffering."

"The Bible among you is the contract of marriage." (6)

"Troubles are Christ's wooers, sent to speak for you
to Himself."

Or note the use of quite different metaphors immediately
following the use of marital symbolism:

"Let Christ be crowned King in Scotland," immediately
after the use of the bride metaphor.

The point of all this comparison and contrast is to show,
for use later, when we come to discuss the idea of the
"Spiritual Marriage" in Rutherford, that the inconsistency
with which he uses this idea is such, that the analogy between
Rutherford and the grand mystics in this respect cannot be pressed
very far, and that Rutherford's use of the idea not only arises
from causes entirely different from those which gave rise to it
in the grand mystics, but stands for something different.

II. Closely connected with the Bride of Christ idea is

¹Let.7. ²Let. 23. ³Let. 14. ⁴Let.21. ⁵Let.202.

⁶Let.286

the use of:

i. Imagery that is sensuous, sometimes to the point of sexuality, (Right throughout the letters, cases too numerous to quote.) He speaks constantly of Christ's "love, kisses and embraces." His "love-blinks", of "the sweet smell of His breath, and of His garments", - language mainly based on the Song of Solomon, and distinctly reminiscent of St. Bernard and other mystics. In this use, too, he is just as inconsistent as in the former. Sometimes the initial act of love is on the side of Christ, and sometimes on the side of the believer. Sometimes he is "in Christ's arms," sometimes Christ is in his arms. And then again, "Christ hath put the Father and me into each other's arms."

ii. Language taken from the realm of beauty.

In this matter his sources seem to be mainly the Song of Solomon, but he uses the metaphors in quite his own way, sometimes replacing the sensuous images of the Song by more directly concrete adjectives of his own.

The one great theme of the letters is the loveliness of Christ, and he strains language to its utmost point in

¹ Let.163. ² Let. 259. ³ Let.142.

order to express this loveliness. Bonar aptly remarks "The Person of Him who gave Himself for His Church is held up in all its attractiveness. With him, it is ever the Person as much as the work done; or rather, never the one apart from the other. Like Paul, he would fain know Him, as well as the power of His resurrection." ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Vol. I, Letters, pp. 29-30 (Sketch).

(iii) The idea of progress and growth in religious experience.

We have already spoken of this on page 38. Here is something remotely corresponding to the "stages" of the mystic experience, but the parallel cannot be pushed very far. The idea suggested is that of a deepening affection which may come quite spontaneously rather than by way of any definite process. In a word it is a growth from a life that is already within. Rutherford more than once uses the simile of the vine and branches as opposed to being "in Christ by way of adhesion only."

"There are infinite plies in His love which the saints will never win to unfold." (Let.152) ⁽¹⁾

(iv) A distinctly mystical note is found in the constantly recurring idea of "Pain," as accompanying certain spiritual states. Pain is spoken of in at least two distinct ways.

(1) The pain of longing for the love of Christ.

"My greatest pain is the want of Him, not of His joys and comforts, but of a near union and communion." ⁽²⁾

"If He leave me He leaveth me in pain and sick of love; and yet my sickness is my life and health." ⁽³⁾

"O Well-beloved, why doest Thou pain a poor soul with delays?" ⁽⁴⁾

Sometimes this pain is spoken of under the figure of a love-sickness or love-fever, in a way which suggests more strongly

Let. 212. ⁽⁴⁾ Let. 152, Bk. I. ⁽²⁾ Let. 280 Let. 126 ⁽³⁾

(iii) The idea of progress and growth in religious experience
We have already spoken of this on page 58. Here is
something merely corresponding to the "stages" of the

But compare:

"Oh, what pain is it to see Christ in His beauty, and
then to want a heart and love for Him." Let.204.

"I cannot tell you what sweet pain and delightful
torments are in Christ's love.....I have no ease, while (ti
I be over head and ears in love's ocean." (Let.180.)

"I have a dawning, sickly, and pained life, for a real
possession of Him; and am troubled with love-brashes and
love-fevers; but it is a sweet pain." (Let.186).

of adhesion only."

"There are infinite bliss in His love which the
saints will never win to unfold." (Let.152)

(iv) A distinctly mystical note is found in the constant
recurrent idea of "pain" as accompanying certain spiritual
stages. Pain is spoken of in at least two distinct ways

(i) The pain of longing for the love of Christ.

"My greatest pain is the want of Him, not of His
and comforts, but of a near union and communion." (Let.152)

"If He leave me He leaves me in pain and sick of
love; and yet my sickness is my life and health." (Let.152)

"O Well-beloved, why dost Thou pain a poor soul
with delay?" (Let.152)

Sometimes this pain is spoken of under the figure of a love
sickness or love-fever, in a way which suggests more strongly

Let.152, Bk. I. (2) Let.280
Let.212

"They are happy for evermore who know no sickness but love-sickness for Christ, and feel no pain but the pain of an absent and hidden Well-beloved." (Let. 87)

(2) The pain caused by the nearer approach, and deeper experience, of Christ.

"I am pained, pained with the love of Christ; he hath made me sick, and wounded me."

"He paineth my soul so sometimes with His love that I have been nigh to pass modesty, and cry out." (Let. 107.)

(He speaks once in a similar way concerning the comforts of Christ, -"His comforts to me have almost put me beyond the bounds of modesty.") Let. 62.

"He hath left a dart and love-arrow in my soul, and it paineth me till He come and take it out." (Several references akin to this.)

"His love paineth me more than prison and banishment." (Let. 119)

(v) Rutherford frequently speaks of the love of God as a "mystery," and of "mystical" Christ, (by which he generally means Christ's mystical body).

"This world knoweth not the sweetness of Christ's love. It is a mystery to them." Let. 66

"There is a mystery in Christ which I never saw, - a mystery of love." Let. 160

"I behoved to come to Aberdeen to learn a new mystery in Christ, that His promise is better to be believed than His looks." Let. 99

"While there is one member of mystical Christ out of heaven, that member must suffer strokes." Let. 214

Note. Rutherford often takes up a particular idea or symbol of Christ and uses it for a little while in a few letters written about the same time, and then drops it for another, as though the later one more adequately expressed his then feelings. This habit may afford some indication of the value we are to attach to his use of metaphors.

(vi) Quite apart from symbolism, Rutherford often gives expression to certain "insights" ^{and aspirations} which have a distinctly mystical flavour, so much so, indeed, as to make them worthy of a place alongside some of the best insights of the mystics proper.

"Love nothing for itself, but only God for Himself."

"Come and see will tell you much: come nearer will say more."

"Ye are as near heaven as ye are far from yourself."

Gems of this kind are scattered freely throughout the Letters.

These six points of contact with Mysticism proper, to which we have briefly referred, are all subordinate in value to what we may regard as the main point of contact, viz. the idea of something very much akin to what has been called, in the technical language of Mysticism "the spiritual marriage." We must now enquire whether Rutherford has any kind of doctrine of the spiritual marriage in any way comparable to that which is found, sometimes in highly elaborate form, in the mystics, and if so, what "union with Christ" signified to Rutherford.

CHAPTER V.

THE "SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE" IN RUTHERFORD

AND IN THE GRAND MYSTICS.

CHAPTER V.

THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE IN RUTHERFORD

AND IN THE GRAND MYSTICS.

We begin this subject by remarking that whatever our sense of disgust at the use of nauseatingly erotic language, or of the dangers involved in its use, we must investigate the matter with one main question continually before us: Does this language stand for any definite experience, and if so, can we state what that experience is?

I. Throughout the letters there runs some idea of a union between Christ, or God, and the soul, which is most usually, (though, it is important to note, by no means always) described in terms of marital symbolism. The spiritual life seems to be conceived as a kind of romance so closely akin to the romantic love of man and woman that the language used to describe it speaks of all the familiar developments of the earthly parallel. We read of the coming of love to the soul, of the wonderful attractiveness of the object of love, of the hindrances to true love, of the vicissitudes of love, of the doings of the lovers, of absence and presence, of the nuptials, and of the conjugal relation between the bride and the spouse. It would seem as though all the love-passages, in their varying degrees of intensity, are tending towards the ultimate consummation of something which is conceived of, and often spoken of, as "union."

This, beyond all doubt, is mystical language, and it stands for an idea which is definitely mystical. In less important things the mystics may differ, but they are all at one in the desire for something which is conceived as "union," be that union with the One, or the All, or the Absolute, or God, as the case may be. An examination of a large number of typical references, selecting from each type, will enable us to trace certain definite characteristics of this union. Thus

- (1) It appears as a union of spiritual sympathy.

"I am glad to hear that Christ and ye are one, and that ye have made him your 'one thing'".

- (2) As a union which, from the side of Christ, is unbreakable.

"I wish that the first news I hear of him and you, and all that love our common Saviour...may be, that they are so knot and linked, and kindly fastened in love with the Son of God, that ye may say 'Now if ye would ever so fain escape out of Christ's hands, yet love hath so bound us, that we cannot get our hands free again; He hath so ravished our hearts, that there is no loosening of His grips; the chains of His soul-ravishing love are so strong, that neither the grave nor death will break them.'"

- (3) But it is also a union concerning which it is possible to deceive oneself.

"If any beginners fall off Christ again, and miss Him, they never lighted upon Christ as Christ; it was but an idol, like Jesus, which they took for Him." (Here we have a definitely mystical Christ, apparently conceived in antithesis to the historical Jesus. This is different from the characteristic utterances of the Covenanters in most of the sermons of the time.)

(4) It is sometimes equated with communion.

"Love would have the company of the party loved; and my greatest pain is the want of Him, not of His joys and comforts, but of a near union and communion.

"I urge upon you a nearer communion with Christ, and a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn by in Christ, that we never saw, and new foldings of love in Him.... He will be won by labour."

(5) It is sometimes conceived in marital terms where we must keep a distinction between metaphor and symbolism.

"I know that your heart and Christ are married together; it were not good to make a divorce. Rue not of that meeting and marriage with such a Husband."

(6) This union, or communion, is not to be regarded as an end in itself.

"His comforts to me are not dealt with a niggard's hand; but I would fain learn not to idolize comfort, sense, joy, and sweet, felt presence.....Now, I would not so much have these as God Himself, and to be swallowed up of love to Christ. I see that in delighting in a communion with Christ we may make more gods than one."

(7) It is sometimes conceived in terms of sex imagery which point beyond mere metaphor, and give ground for the modern psychological tendency to claim that the idea of union not only has a sexual basis, but produces actual physical reactions. (espec. Leuba).

"I confidently believe that there is a bed made for Christ and me, and that we shall take our fill of love in it."

"Sometimes, while I have Christ in my arms, I fall asleep in the sweetness of His presence, and He, in my sleep, stealeth away out of my arms; and when I awake, I miss Him."

(8) It is a union to be conceived as capable of consummation in this life.

"Since I came to this prison, I have conceived a new and extraordinary opinion of Christ....For, I perceive, we first (defer) all our joys to Christ, till He and we be in our own house above, as married parties." (But against this error Rutherford says:

at cf.(11)
infra.

"But I find that it is possible to find young glory, and a young green paradise of joy, even here."

(9) It is a union which is sometimes conceived as having God, and not Christ, as its object:

"I am sure that my Well-Beloved is God, and when I say that Christ is God, and that my Christ is God, I.... can say no more. I would that I could build as much on this 'My Christ is God' as it would bear. I might lay all the world on it."

Yet he distinguishes between Christ and God:

"A straw for all that God hath made, to my soul's liking, except God, and that lovely One, Jesus Christ."

"I thank God that God is God, and Christ is Christ."

"Christ hath put me into my Father's arms."

(10) It is conceived in Johannine terms:

"If I had been in Christ by way of adhesion only, as many branches are, I should have been burnt to ashes."

(11) It is conceived in Pauline terms, as a mystic faith union, or as = Paul's "in Christ."

"It is not for nothing that it is said, Christ in you the hope of glory....for Christ possessed by faith here, is young heaven and glory in the bud....All that we have here is.....the picture of glory."

"So cold is northern love; but Christ and I will bear it."

"Would to the Lord that I had not a myself, but Christ, nor a my lust, but Christ.....O sweet word, I live no more, but Christ liveth in me."

"Christ triumpheth in me."

We have cited enough references from the Letters to show that though there is more reference to union in them than in all the rest of Rutherford's works put together, we cannot look in that direction for any consistent, developed, doctrine of union. These letters, in all their spontaneity, and covering a long period, show the man of intense religious experience trying to find suitable language to express the intimate nearness of God to his soul. He uses, in the main, the language already to his hand in the ^{Song} Book of Solomon, and less frequently language from other parts of the Scripture. If we are to discover anything of a definite doctrine of union we must let the other man in Rutherford speak. The mystic must be checked by the theologian and controversialist.

II. In the "Spiritual Antichrist" where Rutherford vindicates Luther against the misrepresentations of the Antinomians, we have more precise evidence of Rutherford's conception of Union; he appears to agree heartily with Luther.

The general position is given on page 123 of the book, where the "conclusion" is as follows:-

"In regard of the strict union between Christ and a beleever, Luther hath many pithy and hyperbolic expressions, that made Antinomians, as they pervert Scripture to their own destruction, to pervert Luther's doctrine, to say that a beleever is Godded with God, and Christed with Christ, and that God is manned, and humanized by a beleever."

The general position taken by Rutherford in this work is equal to Paul's "in Christ," a union by faith. (For full quotation see Appendix.)

III. In the Epistle Dedicatory to the "Trial and Triumph of Faith" there is a reference to Union under the figure of Rose, Stalk, and Root, which is more akin to the Johannine simile of the Vine and its Branches. (See Appendix).

IV. In considering what Rutherford understood by union, we must also take into account, as an offset to the excessive use of the love-symbolism in the Letters, the fact that in these same Letters he uses a great variety of other titles for Christ. (See Appendix). It has been said that the sermons constitute the bridge between the theological works and the letters. It seems to have been Rutherford's habit in preaching to go over all the titles of Christ (not a few of which express the idea of union under other metaphors) as though he would exhaust language to express what Christ was, what He had done, and He would be.

Wodrow's Analecta III.76 records the account of a visit when Rutherford preached in Edinburgh. After he had been discoursing for a while about the differences between Protesters and Resolutioners "he fell out in commending of Christ, going over all his precious titles and stiles for half a quarter or a quarter of an hour."

Though it was predominantly under the love-symbolism that Rutherford loved to dwell upon Christ, he could wax equally

fervent over other conceptions of Christ, and even in the letters it would seem, from references to the sovereignty of God, God the Supreme Disposer, the angry God, the striking God, the wrath of God, the dreadful name of God, and similar terms, that Rutherford the Calvinist theologian, ever in the background, was constantly coming forward to save Rutherford the mystic from running away with Rutherford the whole man. When he leaves the love-symbolism for a while, as he often does, to write in non-figurative, yet very intense language, about the love of Christ, he breaks out into rhapsodies which are nothing if not Pauline:-

"Oh, the depths of Christ's love, it hath neither brim nor bottom."

"This love would keep all created tongues of men and angels in exercise, and busy night and day, to speak of it."

"I must give over all attempts to fathom the depth of His love."

"I wish it were in my power to cry down all love but the love of Christ, and to cry down all gods but Christ, all saviours but Christ, all well-beloveds but Christ, etc."

"Christ, Christ, who but Christ? All lovers blush when ye stand beside Christ. Woe upon all love but the love of Christ."

After this general summary of Rutherford's views of union, we may pass to some typical accounts of the Spiritual Marriage in some of the grand mystics, to discover some points of affinity and of contrast.

"The great principle which appears to have actuated all mystics was a desire for union with God." ⁽¹⁾ This is true alike of pagan and of Christian mystics. In Plotinus, the father of Western mysticism, who places Christian mystics of all kinds under tribute to himself, we find a doctrine of union which is a kind of foundation on which subsequent mystics, though with differing materials, erect their structure of "union" or "spiritual marriage." We shall now indicate the general characteristics of several typical doctrines of union, reserving some quotations, from primary or secondary sources, for appendices to the chapter.

In Plotinus the ground of union lies in the fact that "God is not external to anyone." He is "the root of the soul," the "centre" of the mind, and the way home to Him is within every man. This is common ground to all the mystics. Union is conceived as the apprehension of the infinite by a faculty which is superior to reason. As God or "The One" is above thought and being, and without predicates, He cannot be ranked among the objects of reason. By following the mystic way the mind is at last liberated from its finite consciousness, and thus ceasing to be finite it becomes one with the infinite. In the reduction of the soul to its simplest self (ἐπιλογισ) its divine essence) this union or identity (ένωσις) is realised.

(1) Vaughan: "Hours with Mystics." Intro.xx.

But this sublime condition is not one of permanent duration. It is only now and then that this elevation above the limits of the body and the world can be enjoyed. Plotinus claimed to have realised it three times. This conception of Plotinus is at the root of the Christian mystic's doctrine of ecstasy. In Plotinus union is achieved in ecstasy.

Augustine does not elaborate an actual doctrine of union; he is mainly concerned with the vision of God, but "the vision...is not the goal and end of his mystical striving. His highest word is union - union of being with the Eternal Reality: I heard, as the heart heareth, Thy voice, 'I am the food of them that are full grown; grow and thou shalt feed upon Me, nor shalt thou transmute Me into thee, as thou didst food into thy flesh, but thou shalt be transmuted into Me.' In the City of God he says that "the man Christ Jesus became a partaker of our own mortality that He might make us partakers of His divinity." Again he says, commenting on Psalm xlix: 'He called men gods as being deified by His grace, not as born of His substance.'"

(1) Vaughan: Hours with the Mystics 81 f.

(2) Rufus Jones: Studies in Mystical Religion p.95 f.

In St. Bernard we have a doctrine of union which is definitely called the spiritual marriage, and which is traceable to two sources, 1st, the influence of Plotinus,⁽¹⁾ 2nd, the language of the Song of Songs. The doctrine is developed first of all in the "De diligendo deo," and subsequently carried to a much further point in terms of the Song in the sermons. (Sermones in Cantica Canticorum). There are three stages of approach to the beloved. The first stage is to kiss his feet, which is the preparation of repentance, the second is to kiss his knees, which is the preparation of sanctification, and upon this follows the union, "let me kiss him with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is better than wine." The doctrine is otherwise stated in the De Diligendo Deo, in terms of "the four degrees of love." In the first degree a man loves himself for his own sake, in the second degree he loves God, but still for a while for his own sake, not for Himself; in the third stage he loves God purely, "for His very self," "not otherwise than as he is loved, himself seeking in turn not the things that are his, but those that are of Jesus Christ, even as he sought ours, or rather, ourselves, and not His own." In the fourth degree, (which is union, consummated b-y love) man loves not even himself, except for the sake of God.

(1) Gardner: "The Book of St. Bernard on the Love of God." pp.95, 97, 99.

Bernard questions whether the fourth degree can be perfectly attained by any soul in this life. It is impossible except at rare intervals, and, by way of anticipation, for some brief moment of ecstatic exaltation. "It is of this brief, ineffable experience that he uses the striking phrase: sic affici, deificari est; "to be thus touched, is to become godlike." ⁽¹⁾ The burden of the flesh cuts short the ecstatic moment, and the soul of the mystic is recalled by the needs of charity to his neighbour. "His doctrine of union with God does not surrender our personality or substitute God for the soul in man." ⁽²⁾

In the "Spiritual Castle" St. Theresa distinguishes seven mansions of the soul, describing the sixth as the place of complete union and ecstasies, accompanied by the vision of the humanity of Christ, the pangs of desire, and the wounds of love, and thus the soul passes to the highest mansion in which the heavenly marriage is celebrated. "All that I can say of it, and all that I understand of it," says St. Theresa (Ch.II) "is that the soul, or rather the Spirit of the Soul (the divine spark, or part) becomes one thing with God." ⁽³⁾ In the case of St. Theresa the process is accompanied by certain psycho-physical effects such as levitation, or complete entrancement. "Sometimes it is

⁽¹⁾Gardner op.cit.13. ⁽²⁾Vaughan op.cit.144.

⁽³⁾ Underhill, "Mysticism," 165.

difficult to know whether one still breathes?"

Richard of St. Victor, "troubadour of the spiritual marriage," goes further than any other mystic in his use of nuptial symbolism. He divides his "Steep Stairway of Love" into four stages by which the mystic attains union with the absolute, - the betrothal, the marriage, the wedlock, and the fruitfulness of the soul. "Where most mystical diagrams leave off, Richard of St. Victor's Steep Stairway of Love goes on.....He saw clearly that the union of the soul with its source could not be a barren ecstasy.....Therefore he says that in the fourth degree, the bride who has been so greatly honoured....sinks her own will, and is 'humiliated below herself.' She accepts the pains and duties in place of the raptures of love; and becomes a source, a 'parent' of fresh spiritual life. The Sponsa Dei develops into the Mater Divinae gratiae." (1)

Eckhart speaks thus of Union: "Oh, wonder of wonders, when I think of the union the soul has with God! He makes the enraptured soul to flee out of herself, for she is no more satisfied with anything that can be named. The spring of Divine Love flows out of the soul and draws her out of herself

(1) Herman: Meaning and Value of Mysticism p.81.

(2) Underhill: Op.cit. 166.

into the unnamed Being, into her first source, which is God alone." ⁽¹⁾ In Eckhart the language of deification assumes its extreme form. "If I am to know God directly, I must become completely He and He I: so that this He and this I become and are one I." ⁽²⁾ "The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which He sees me." "God brings to birth His Son in Himself and in me." ⁽³⁾ But he saves himself from sheer pantheism, by a subtle distinction between God, as self-realisation or revelation of the Godhead, and the Godhead as the "unnatured Nature," i.e. the unoriginated Reality, the ground of all revelation. (Herman, in a general defence of the mystics against Pantheism, says that "their attitude when taken in the larger context of their teaching as a whole, must be described as Panentheism rather than Pantheism.") ⁽⁴⁾

In Ruysbroeck we have a doctrine of union with many points of similarity to that of the other mystics whom we have quoted, but a much more definite insistence on the perpetual distinction of God from the creator. In "The Sparkling Stone" he makes this point the title of a separate chapter: "How we, though one with God, must eternally remain other than God." ("Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, etc." trans. C.A. Wynschenk Dom, p.208.) Union is conceived as

⁽¹⁾ Underhill op.cit.p.441. ⁽²⁾ Quoted by Underhill p.502.

⁽³⁾ Quoted by Jones, op.cit.231-3. ⁽⁴⁾ op.cit.p.304.

self-loss in the "Ocean Pacific" of God, - "the spirit is caught by a simple rapture to the Trinity and by a threefold rapture to the Unity, and yet never does the creature become God; never is she confounded with Him. The union is brought about by Love; but the creature sees and feels between God and herself an eternal and invincible distinction." (1)

For our last illustration we take Suso, who, according to Rufus Jones, may be taken as the exponent of "the extreme doctrine of ultimate Divine and human oneness." (2)

"This highest state of union is an indescribable experience in which all idea of images and forms and differences has vanished. All consciousness of self and all things has gone, and the soul is plunged into the abyss of the Godhead, and the spirit has become one with God....In this highest state God becomes the inner essence, the life and activity within, so that whatever the person does, it does as an instrument."

But it is very doubtful whether Jones is correct in this estimate. Suso's doctrine is one of extreme complication, and if there is much that might support Jones' view, there is not a little which might be taken to support a contrary view, e.g. , "His (man's) being remains, but in another form, in another glory, and in another power." (3)

(1) Dialogo, lxxviii. (2) Jones op.cit. p.290.

(3) Quoted by Underhill p.507. op.cit.

1.

I.

From the foregoing account of some typical views of the Spiritual Marriage in the grand mystics, it will be seen that in spite of superficial differences they are more or less at one as to

- (1) The desire for union; though it is conceived as an union now with the All, or the One, or the Absolute, and now with God or Christ, (and in some cases the Spirit or the Trinity.)⁽¹⁾
- (2) As to the ground of union - the Divine spark, the natural kinship of the soul with God, etc.
- (3) As to a technique, - spiritual ladder, unitive way, via negative, etc., by which this union is achieved.
- (4) As to the fact that the attainment of ecstasy, or other degrees of union, are accompanied by certain specific psycho-physical changes, variously described.
- (5) As to the use of marital symbolism. This is found even in a pagan mystic such as Plotinus; but in the Christian mystics the symbolism of the Song of Solomon is most used.
- (6) As to the employment of a special mystical faculty, such as intuition, variously named, (though a more complete psychological analysis would probably show that, granting the reality of the experience, all the psychic factors are involved).
- (7) As to the use of language which, pace the defences raised by writers like Underhill and Herman, is either definitely pantheistic or scarcely distinguishable from pantheistic language, or in danger of pantheism.
- (8) As to the language of "deification."
- (9) As to the place of love, both as received and as given.

They differ considerably as to the degree of permanence of the mystic state.

⁽¹⁾ Watkin: "Philosophy of Mysticism," ch. "The Transforming Union."

(1) It cannot be too strongly emphasised that Rutherford, in contradistinction to the mystics, is utterly inconsistent in all his talk about union in the Letters, and thus we find in him no clearly developed doctrine of union. Union, in Rutherford, is generally, but by no means entirely, conceived as union with Christ.

(2) Though Rutherford does not speak of a "Divine spark" or any kindred conception, as the ground of union, from his general theological position we may say that he believed in the natural kinship of the soul with God, though he would object to the notion that the soul was "of the very essence of God." (Theologica Germanica).

(3) Though he speaks of a growth of Christian experience he elaborates no technique whereby it may be attained.

(4) Apart from the "love-pains" and "love-fevers" to which we have already referred, and which are very indefinitely described, there is no evidence of any specific psychophysical changes being brought about by increase of spiritual experience. There is no ecstasy, though there is something akin to rapture.

Rutherford is other-worldly, but not ascetic, and he is otherworldly because the sense of the love of God has lifted him into a state of mind at which he finds his supreme joy in the things that are not of this world.

in him no clearly developed doctrine of union. Rutherford, is generally, but by no means entirely, conceived as a union with Christ.

(2) Though Rutherford does not speak of a "Divine spark" or any kindred conception, as the ground of union, from his general theological position we may say that he believed in the natural kinship of the soul with God, though he would object to the notion that the soul was "of the very essence of God." (Theologia Germanica).

(3) Though he speaks of a growth of Christian experience he elaborates no technique whereby it may be attained.

(4) Apart from the "love-pains" and "love-lovers" to which we have already referred, and which are very indistinctly described, there is no evidence of any specific psycho-physical changes being brought about by increase of spiritual experience. There is no ecstasy, though there is something akin to rapture.

(5) The language used by Rutherford does not once permit of a pantheistic interpretation, nor does Rutherford ever speak of anything like deification. There is no talk of fusion, absorption, or identity.

(6) Union in Rutherford is predominantly conceived as having been accomplished already by faith in Christ, and as awaiting its full consummation in the hereafter. It is a permanent union (there are traces of the idea of the "perseverance of the saints" even in the letters.)

II.

If it is sought to place Rutherford in any vital relationship to grand mysticism, then the chief ground for so doing must be the fact that he uses the marital symbolism; but whether or no this is a sufficient ground will depend entirely upon the meaning which Rutherford attaches to the use of this language, and the end which the union so conceived was intended to serve. The mere use of the language of the Canticles will not make Rutherford a mystic. Let it be said here, that in respect of the use of marital symbolism, if Rutherford is really akin to any one of the great mystics,

that one is St. Bernard. There is no direct evidence from Rutherford's writings that he was even acquainted with the work of St. Bernard, but the probabilities are that he was. At any rate, he seems to have imbibed the spirit of Bernard very deeply, and for all his use of the marital symbolism the idea of union underlying it, like that of Bernard, is, by comparison with other mystics, a very sane and sober one. As in Bernard's conception of union, so in Rutherford's, there is no idea of the surrender of human personality, or of the substitution of God for the soul in man. The coming of Christ to the soul is attested, not by visions or ecstasy, but by a new, over-flowing joy, a deepened sense of the intimacy of the Divine companionship, and a new power to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. As there is definite evidence that Rutherford was acquainted with the *Theologica Germanica* one might hazard a guess that he was also acquainted with most of the other mystical writings, and if so, that Bernard was the immediate inspirer of the mystical language, and that, if not directly, at least indirectly through Bernard, Rutherford had come into touch with some of the great ideas of Plotinus. But if Plotinus influenced the thinking of the mediaeval mystics, the Song of Solomon more directly moulded their

expression of their experience, and this because, in accordance with the methods of Biblical interpretation prevailing in their day, they interpreted that book not as the voice of God to a nation but as the word of God spoken to an individual soul. The Song thus conceived; there could be no more realistic way of expressing the intimacy of union than under the image of the spiritual nuptials. It is along these lines that we find the main point of contact between Rutherford and the mystics; but we are not entitled to go further. We must not reason, from use of similar language, to similar ideal content of language, nor must we infer that the end to be achieved is necessarily the same. Indeed, the main point of difference between Rutherford and the mystics, is, in our view, a difference in which means and end change places. With the typical mystic purgation and sanctification are valued as means to achieving the end of union with God. With Rutherford, - and in this respect he is a true evangelical - union with God is valued for the purgation and sanctification which it brings with it. With Rutherford union is generally conceived as the beginning of a process and an experience which is capable of endless intensification; with the mystics union

is generally conceived as the end of a process and the most intense moment of an experience, (though it must be said, in all fairness, that many of the mystics see clearly that union must not be regarded as an end in itself.)

Having made this distinction, we must elaborate the point a little, to state the meaning of what we have called, because of certain points of similarity, the "Spiritual Marriage" in Rutherford.

III.

Taking the Letters as a whole, and checking them by such references to union as we find in the theological works and the sermons, we may say that whatever affinity Rutherford may have with the mystics he has a far deeper affinity - not of language, but of idea, - with St. Paul, in respect of the intimacy of the relation between Christ and the Church, and between Christ and the individual believer. There is no "doctrine" of "the spiritual marriage" in Rutherford, though there is all the language of it. To deduce such a doctrine from the Letters is to "press a figure till it squeals." Provided however, we remember that we are talking only in figures of speech, we may

say that for Rutherford the heart of religion is conceived as involving so intimate a relation between God (or Christ) and man, that it may most fittingly (though all inadequately) be represented under the figure of the marriage of the soul with God, a union which is a reunion. When he came to dilate on the intimacy of this union, the Song of Songs, interpreted after the fashion of his day, was ready to his hand, and he used it unceasingly; but not so as to lose sight altogether of the reality (much more nearly expressed by Paul) for which this language stood. Sometimes, indeed, he seems to let the love-symbolism run away with him altogether, but that tendency is constantly checked as Rutherford the theologian, ever in the background, suddenly steps forward to save Rutherford the mystic from running away with Rutherford the whole man. When he leaves the love-symbolism for a while, as he often does, to write in non-figurative, yet very intense language about the love of Christ he breaks into outbursts which are nothing if not Pauline:

"Oh, the depths of Christ's love, it hath neither brim nor bottom."

"It is so sweet that next to Christ Himself nothing can match it."

"This love would keep all created tongues of men and angels in exercise, and busy night and day, to speak of it."

"I must give over all attempts to fathom the depth of his love."

"I wish it were in my power to cry down all love but the love of Christ, and to cry down all gods but Christ, all saviours but Christ, all well-beloveds but Christ, etc.

"Christ, Christ, who but Christ?"

"All lovers blush when ye stand beside Christ. Woe upon all love but the love of Christ."

Considering the spontaneity of the letters, and remembering that they are not theological treatises at all, but the natural overflow of religious feeling, we must, if we desire to press this idea of union at all, be careful to understand it against the background of his more rational, definitely theological utterances outside of the letters. In the letters we see Rutherford at his most intense on the side of feeling; in the theological works we see him at his most intense as a scholastic; and the latter leave us in doubt at all that, in spite of his erotic language, when it comes to a definite, clear-cut conception of what union means, he is a thorough-going evangelical. The symbolism is used to express thoughts "which broke through language and escaped." No language is adequate to them.

Moreover, the symbolism in Rutherford, in spite of its constant use, is much more incidental ~~in Rutherford~~ than in the mystics. If the love-symbolism were abandoned altogether in Rutherford, the great fact for which it stands, as we shall see later would remain, capable of being expressed almost equally well by other symbols. It must not be forgotten that Rutherford has an infinite variety of names for Christ, many of which express the intimacy of relationship. (See Appendix to this chapter.) The marital symbolism is not nearly so prominent in the sermons as in these intimate personal letters to friends, in which he was under no constraint of utterance. It seems to have been his fashion in preaching to go over all the titles of Christ that he could imagine, as though he would exhaust language to express what Christ was, what He had done, and what He would be.

"One day when Mr Dunlop.....and some other worthy Ministers and elders were present, hearing Mr R. preach in Edinburgh, he fell upon these..... differences between Protestation and Public Resolutions. After he had been a while discoursing on these differences, he breaks out in these expressions: Wo is us for these differences and devices that make us lose the fair scent of the Rose of Sharon, and then he fell out in commending of Christ, going over all his precious titles and stiles for half a quarter or a quarter of an hour." (1)

(1) Wodrow: "Analecta," III.76. *in context.*
88

Not a few of these titles are of more specifically current theological import than the Bride of Christ symbolism; and the gentler elements suggested by the marital language are often used over against the background of much sterner conceptions associated with the sovereignty of God, the angry God, the striking God, the Supreme Disposer, the wrath of God, the dreadful name of God.

IV.

When we pass beyond symbolic language to the underlying reality we come to the kind of intimacy which Paul expressed by his favourite phrase "in Christ." (Faith-systicism). But it must not be forgotten that Paul also, though with far less frequency, uses the marital symbolism to express the intimacy between the Church and Christ or between individual believers and Christ. He had a desire to present one company of believers to Christ as a chaste virgin. The man who was joined to the Lord is "one spirit with him." And this marital symbolism is found right through the Scriptures to signify the relation between God and Israel, or God and the

individual soul. Though no prophet of the individual soul as the wooer or the bride of God, the prophets often spoke of the love of God to Israel under the simile of the bride and bridegroom, or as a wooing love. "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and talk to her," For Hosea, God was the Husband, and Israel the adulterous wife. There is a clear doctrine of Israel as the bride of Jehovah in the Old Testament. He had united Himself to her in a covenant of love. John the Baptist spoke of himself as the "friend of the Bridegroom," and Jesus not only takes up the figure of a marriage to illustrate the invitation of the Gospel, but represents the oneness between man and God under the figure of the bridegroom and bride, transforming the Old Testament doctrine so that instead of Israel being the bride of Jehovah, we are in the place of Israel, and He Himself is in the place of God. Is it any wonder then, that considering the intimacy of the union taught by Jesus, known and felt by Paul, and others of the early Christians, the great mystics should run their thought largely into the marriage symbolism, which, however inadequate, is possibly the best fitted (even if the most

dangerous) to express this intimacy of oneness? And is it any wonder that a man of such intense religious feeling as Rutherford, should use the same language? The language may be repellent to our modern taste, but let us at least say this in defence of Rutherford, that he found his sources not alone in the Song of Solomon as interpreted in his day, but in the Bible as a whole, and that if he uses the erotic symbolism which is with a frequency/repellent, he has in a most remarkable way escaped its dangers. His language, while extrinsically erotic, is not intrinsically so. Rutherford has transformed the language of *ἔρως* into the language of *ἀγάπη*, and has spoken not of the love which links us to the animals, but of the love which links us to God. Gilmour may well say; "In all his use of the language he never allows it to be degraded; the letters breathe not one unhallowed desire, and exhibit not a symptom of any feeling but such as every good man would be proud to know." Some words of Rutherford's Episcopalian contemporary, written in quite another connection, are strangely applicable here. In his essay on "The Advantages of Divine Love". Scougal says:

"Man's duty and happiness consist in the right placing of his love, and this noble affection can have no such suitable/ suitable/

suitable, no such adequate object as God....The flattering and almost blasphemous terms of admiration wherewith lovers court one another are the language of that affection which was made and designed for God....." (1)

This language, then, is the language of love, directed towards its one proper object, and if it be alleged against it that Rutherford is unduly familiar with God in his use of it, then it is well to recall the point made by Scougal.

Mrs. Herman also speaks very finely to this point:

"Coventry Patmore recalls us.....to the fact that behind the unhealthiness and the ofttimes painful immodesty which disfigure so much of erotic Mysticism there lies the simple truth that love between man and woman is the sacrament of that great mystery which is the 'burning heart' and 'celestial decorum' of the universe. He insists with compelling power that not earthly but heavenly marriage is the original. In applying the language of earthly love to the soul's communion with God we are not dealing in an alien and questionable terminology, but speaking in the very mother-tongue of the Spirit; it is when we apply it to human marriage that we translate. No abuse, therefore, nor any lurking danger need deter us from speaking of God and the soul in terms which were coined in Heaven to fit that supreme relationship before ever they were borrowed on earth to glorify its human symbol." (2)

V/

(1) Scougal: Works, 409-10, Essay: "The Advantages of Divine Love."

(2) op.cit. 223.

V.

As, then, the experience of great religious genius always tends to express itself predominantly under some particular category such as Love, Light, Life, in the case of Samuel Rutherford we have that experience expressed predominantly under the category of Love. His mysticism is one of affectionate joyousness, using the Song of Solomon for its chief form of expression, because this song was most ready to hand. Possibly influenced thereto by knowledge of the works of some of the great mystics, more particularly St. Bernard, but not limited thereby, and certainly not developing the idea of the Spiritual Marriage, except in a superficial way, along the line of grand mysticism. If he uses the same language, **he** does not carry it to the same extremes, for he himself lives in a different world altogether from the mystics.

Then can we further characterise what Rutherford means by the use of this language of the Spiritual Marriage? We think so.

The experience which is described by Rutherford under all this symbolism may, in our opinion, be fitly designated as "The Evangelical Love of Christ," Such a love rests, of course, on certain theological conceptions of His work, but it rests far more deeply on attachment to His Person. It is much more than a mere admiration of, or reverence for Christ, more than mere trust and obedience. It begins in a prior sense of His love to us. He has been envisaged as embodying in Himself an union of truth, goodness, and beauty; (not, of course, necessarily thought-out explicitly in these terms) but the starting-point of this love is Christ's felt love for us. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." This prior love begets an answering love which grows and deepens in contemplation and experience of the Divine love; and it rallies all the forces of the personality into new vigour, and at last takes possession of the soul so completely that it attains a depth and intensity akin to the human passion, and even transcending it. It gathers up all lesser loves into itself. Christ is felt as constantly and really present. There is abiding commerce between the soul and its redeemer. This love is a passionate love, and the intimacy of the union is such that at last the believer can only say

"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "My life is 'hid with Christ in God.'" "I am 'in Christ.'" Having said that, he can say no more. The union of the believer with Christ is a mystery which no language can express, and it is the ultimate mystery of the Christian faith on its experimental side.

VI

If this account of the experience for which Rutherford's language stands, we may now give our final characterisation of Rutherford as mystic. His mysticism is one of style and language only, not of process or of technique. In respect of style and language he is linked with the mystics proper, possibly influenced directly by them. In respect of the experience for which his language stands he is a true evangelical, and a man of his time. His mysticism is held in check to some extent by his general theological position. It is at once Biblical and Christo-centric. So far as mysticism professes to be extra-Biblical, or anything but Christo-centric, he would repudiate it utterly. So far as mysticism claimed to be guided by any internal light, intuition, revelation arising from one's own self-consciousness, he would reject it; for Rutherford

all revelation came directly through Christ and through the duly-authenticated "word of God." The idea of any unmediated approach to God would be anathema to him. He knows nothing at all of any speculative or philosophical mysticism such as is common to many of the mystics. At the risk of speaking paradoxically it may be said that he was primarily a theologian and controversialist, and quite secondarily a mystic, and yet that his mysticism was the dominating element in his life. It was this that saved him from himself in the midst of the hard controversies of his time; it was this that sustained him in a life of much trial and difficulty; and it is by this, rather than by his theology and polemics that he lives today. He was a man "far ben with God," and his letters may always be read with profit by the devotionally-minded who would themselves be "further ben" with God. So far as there was a tendency - and there was such a tendency -- during the two centuries following the Reformation, for the living, personal Christ to be lost sight of in a hard, dry metaphysics and theology, Rutherford is a supreme illustration of the fact that this tendency did not go nearly so far as has sometimes been alleged. He, and others like him kept the experimental side

(let us call it frankly the "mystical" side) of Scottish religion to the front; but let us say also that the very tendency in Scottish religion against which this experimentalism was in reaction saved the reaction itself from some of the worst aberrations of mysticism properly so called, and kept it sane and well-balanced. The experience for which Rutherford's symbolic language stands has its deepest affinities with the experience of St. John and St. Paul. As to the reality of that experience - conceive it in what metaphors one will - the pragmatic test is sufficient. It carried Rutherford all through a life-time in which the reality of Christ's presence in his soul was severely tested, and as he lay upon his death-bed the love of Christ was still for him the supreme and abiding value, and he looked forward eagerly to explore this love further "In Immanuel's land." Rutherford's experience will not be understood of the Philistine anymore than the typically mystic experience will be understood of the Philistine. "What is the matter with these critics," says Chesterton, speaking of the love of St. Francis and St. Clare, "is that they will not believe that a heavenly love can be as real as an earthly love. The moment it is treated as real, like an earthly love, their whole riddle is easily solved." (1)

(1) "St. Francis," p.126.

When we pass beyond the erotic language used by Rutherford or the mystics, forgetting its vagaries and its extravagances, to the life underlying it, we see that for all the differences the life is one of continual fellowship with Christ. "It is a single life; it is an association of lives; it is the life of two in one; of a saint and his Saviour, it is a marriage of lives and spirits." ⁽¹⁾

We may well give up any attempt to define mysticism. To define it is at once fatally easy and exceedingly difficult. "No word in our language, - not even 'Socialism,' - says Dean Inge, "has been employed more loosely than 'Mysticism.' " ⁽²⁾ But this we may say, that so far ^{and only in so far,} as mysticism is a spirit, rather than a form or a method, Rutherford was a mystic, and in this respect typical of such mysticism as is to be found in Scotland (not even excluding the mysticism of Robert Leighton, of whom we shall speak in the next chapter.) If we particularise further, and attempt to give that spirit form, saying, in the over-simplified definition of Joly, that "Mysticism is the love of God," ⁽³⁾ then, once again, Rutherford is a mystic, and by this definition he is linked, if somewhat loosely, to the great Christian mystics of the ages, who lived in the light of "the love that knows."

⁽¹⁾ Peter Sterry, quoted by Major Scott: "Aspects of Christian Mysticism," p. 159. ⁽²⁾ "Christian Mysticism," p. 3.

⁽³⁾ "Psychology of the Saints," p. 38, quoting Abbe Huvelin.

A P P E N D I X. I.

Re "The Spiritual Antichrist."

Luther's doctrine of union is categorically set out thus:

"Whatever is said of Christ, may be said of every living and true member of his; so every Christian is a Lambe, just, holy, a rocke, a foundation.

The life of a Christian or a beleever, is not his owne, but the life of Christ living in him.

A Christian is the Sonne of God, heire of the Kingdome, brother of Christ, a fellow of Angels, Lord of the world, partaker of the divine nature.

The Christian man liveth not, speaketh not, acteth nothing, suffereth nothing, but Christ in him, all his workes are the works of Christ, so invaluable and incomparable is the grace of faith.

Then are good works done when God himselfe only, and wholly doth them in us, so that no part of them belongeth to us.

Christ therefore (saith Paul) so remaining in, and glewed to me liveth in me, the life that I live, yea the life by which I live, is Christ himselfe, therefore Christ and I am one in this part, or respect; then we are not one simply.

A man by beleiving becometh God.

It is true a man helped by the grace of God, is more, yea and more excellent than a man and therefore the grace of God maketh him of the forme of God, and as it were Goddeth him, so as the Scripture calleth him, the Lord, and Sonne of God.

And this is Rutherford's comment:

Such hyperbolick and Rhetoricall passages in Luther, which he softned with a (quasi) and a (ut ita loquor) that I may so speak, as Catachresticall and hard sounding speeches, have driven blasphemous Familists to think and say, as the Bright Starre, Theologia Germanica, Hen. Nicholas, Dav. Georgius say, Christ incarnate, or God manifested

in the flesh, is nothing but a beleever doing by grace greater workes than Christ, and that the Saints have by love and faith communicated to them the being, essence, and nature of God, that H. Nicholas that so was Godded with the being of God, That every Saint hath a more excellent Spirit of grace than Christ, etc. etc.

126. But Luther exponeth himself in what sense he meaneth Christ and a beleever is one, and a beleever is God, and as it were Christed, to wit, in regard of the union of the grace of Faith, and the marriage between a beleever and Christ, and the legall interest that the broken man hath in Christ his surety, and of the new birth, so saith Luther, *Fides est res omnipotens et virtus ejus inestimabilis, et infinita.* Now faith is not Christed, nor Godded with the infinite essence of God or Christ, no more is a beleever.

Luther, Faith is purely to bee taught, because by it thou art so glewed to Christ, that of thee and Christ, there is as it were quasi, made one person, which cannot be segregated, so that with confidence thou may say, I am Christ, that is, Christs righteousness, victory, and life is mine, and againe, Christ may say I am that sinner, that is, his sin and death are mine, because he adhereth to me, and I to him. Ee are conjoynd by faith, in one flesh and bone, so that this faith does more neerly couple Christ and mee, then the husband to the wife.

127. So incomparable is the grace of faith, that it conjoyneth the soule with Christ, as the Bride with the Bridegroom, by which mystery Christ and the Soule are made one flesh, and if they be one flesh, then are all things common, whether good or evill things, and what ever Christ hath, the beleiving soule may presume and glory in them, as its own, and what-ever things are the soules own, Christ may ascribe these to himself.

Luther, Faith in Christ causeth him live in me, and move, and work as a saving oyntment worketh on a diseased body, and is made with Christ one flesh, one body, by an intimate and unspeakable transmutation of our sin into his righteousness.

Faith bringeth us to Christ, that is, makes us one flesh with him, bone of our bone, and makes all things common

with him.

A man in faith may glory in Christ, and say, it is mine that Christ lived, did, said, suffered, died, no otherwise then if I had lived, done, spoken, suffered, died, as the Bridegroom hath all the Brides, and the Bride all the Bridegroomes, for all are common to both, they are one flesh, so Christ and his Church are one spirit.

"TRIAL AND TRIUMPH OF FAITH", Glasgow, 1743.

p.3, Epistle Dedicatory. The Rose is surest in being, in beauty on its own Stalk and Root; let Life and Sap be eternally in the Stalk and Root, and the Rose keep its first Union with the Root, and it shall never wither, never cast its Blossom nor Greenness of Beauty. Tis Violence for a gracious Spirit to be out of his Stalk and Root: Union here is Life and Happiness; therefore the Church's last prayer in Canonick Scripture is for Union, Rev. 22.20.

It shall not be well while the Father, and Christ the prime Heir, and all the weeping Children be under one Roof in the Palace Royal. Tis a sort of mystical lameness, and that the Head wanteth an Arm or a Finger; and tis a violent and forced Condition for Arm and Finger to be separated from the Head. The Saints are little Pieces of mystical Christ, sick of Love for Union, the Wife of Youth that wants her Husband some years, and expects he shall return to her from over-sea lands, is often on the shore.

APPENDIX re Names of Christ. II.

He is the Forerunner, the Caution (Surety), Son of God Creator, His Son Jesus, God's eldest son and heir Jesus; "Our Master, Jesus, Prince of Salvation"; the sweetest apple in God's Heavenly Paradise; your Life and your Lord; King; Lord and Redeemer; our Steward; the sweet Guest; our Saviour Jesus; Lord Keeper of your Life; Your Guide; the Gardener; Prince of Renown; Judge; Dear Friend; Goodman; the great fair Loaf (at Communion Season); Husbandman; Chief Corner Stone; the man Christ; Ransomer; Brother Ransomer, Our Blessed Match, Our Marrow, and our Fellow-Friend; Chief of the House, our elder Brother, our Lord Jesus; Standard Bearer among 10,000; Ancient of Days; Lion of Tribe of Judah; Captain; Skilled Master Builder; the Branch and God's Fellow; the Corner Stone; the Plant of Renown, the man whose name is the Branch; our dear Chief; Flower of Jesse; the Winnowing; Master of the Vineyard; Great Master of the Feast; your Rock that is higher than yourself; Watchman of Israel; the Eternal Wisdom of the Father; Lord and Master of the Inns; (Ct. as Book-keeper). "Write up your depursements for your Master Christ." "Let Christ be the whole play-maker, ... the lender, and you the borrower, not an owner." My liberal Lord; my Physician; the Lamb; King of Saints; our weeping Lord Jesus; your lovely Forerunner; His Majesty; great Angel of the Covenant.

APPENDIX III. SOME SUPPLEMENTARY PASSAGES ON "UNION"
OR "THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE" IN THE GRAND MYSTICS.

Plotinus. "Even as the eye could not behold the sun unless it were itself sunlike, so neither could the soul behold God if it were not Godlike."⁽¹⁾

"You can only apprehend the Infinite by a faculty superior to reason, by entering into a state in which you are your finite self no longer, in which the Divine Essence is communicated to you. This is Ecstasy. It is the liberation of your mind from its finite consciousness. Like only can apprehend like; when you thus cease to be finite, you become one with the Infinite."⁽²⁾

"The One is a Unity above all difference, an Absolute who transcends all thought, who is, in fact, even beyond Being....The Perfect God must be above all division of known and knower....From him there flows or radiates out a succession of emanations of decreasing splendour and reality. The first emanation from the One is Mind (Nous)....It is the Over-Mind of the Universe of whom all minds partake and in whom is everything which is real and intelligible. Mind overflows into a second sphere of being - Soul. This is Universal Soul, or Oversoul, and enfolds in itself all individual souls, so that all souls are both distinct and yet one.It is possible for every soul to retrace the process of its descent and return home. The first step on "the way upward" is for the soul to come to itself.....The next step is to rise to Mind (or Nous). By withdrawal from desires and from objects of sense to the contemplation of the true patterns of things, i.e. to the world of pure thought, one reaches a higher unity than was possible to the soul.The first manifestation of God is thought, and so too the summit of human consciousness is thought, by which man arrives at the height of thinking God's thoughts. In this realm of pure thought the self finds its true ground of unity with the All. But this is not the end; the soul is not yet at home. But where is the ladder to mount above thought, and so become one with the One? The last stage of the journey cannot be told in plain words. It can be divulged only to those who are initiated. There is in everybody a centre at the summit of the mind which is inalienably conjoined with the One....so that the last mount is the complete return to this Divine centre, to a vision in which subject and object, known and knower, are one. But this is a state beyond consciousness, "a mode of vision which is ecstasy." It is 'the flight of the alone to the Alone,' and in this highest experience of actual contact and union with God self-consciousness is transcended."⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Ennead 1.6.9.

⁽²⁾ Vaughan 81.

⁽³⁾ Jones 75f.

ST. BERNARD. (Bridegroom as Divine Word, Bride as individual, human soul). "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." Who is it speaks these words? It is the Bride. Who is the Bride? It is the soul thirsting for God..... Of all the sentiments of nature, this of love is the most excellent, especially when it is rendered back to Him who is the principle and fountain of it, - that is, God. Nor are there found any expressions equally sweet to signify the mutual affection between the Word of God and the soul, as those of Bridegroom and of Bride.....If, then, mutual love is especially fitting to a bride and bridegroom, it is not unfitting that the name of Bride is given to a soul which loves." (1)

(On the Fourth degree of love.)

"When shall the mind experience affection like this, so that, inebriated with divine love, forgetful of self, it may utterly pass over into God, and, adhering to God, become one spirit with Him."Blessed and holy should I call one to whom it has been granted to experience such a thing in this mortal life at rare intervals, or even once, and this suddenly, and for the space of hardly a moment. For in a certain manner to lose thyself as though thou wert not, and to be utterly unconscious of thyself, and to be emptied of thyself, and, as it were, brought to nothing, pertains to celestial conversation, not to human affection. And if, indeed, any mortal is suddenly,.....and for a moment, admitted to this, straightway.....he is compelled to return into himself, to fall back into his own..... Nevertheless.....it will surely be that the creature will, at some time, conform and harmonise itself with its Author.Verily, I think not that the commandment will be perfectly fulfilled: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength, until the heart itself is no longer compelled to take thought for the body, and the soul ceases ministering to its life and senses in this state....For it is impossible totally to draw all these together to God, and fix them upon the Divine Countenance, as long as it is necessary for them to be bent and distracted in serving this frail and afflicted body. Therefore in a spiritual and immortal body, a body perfect, calm and acceptable, and in all things subject to the spirit, let the soul hope to apprehend the fourth degree of love, or rather, to be apprehended in it.Then she will easily obtain the supreme degree, when no enticement of the flesh will now draw her back." (2)

(1) Cantica Canticorum, sermn.7. Gardner:Book of St. Bernard, p.99f⁽²⁾

RUYSBROECK. "On the road which man has to traverse in attaining to perfection Ruysbroeck distinguishes seven stages: 1. The identification of our will with the divine will. 2, voluntary poverty. 3, purity of soul and chastity of body. 4, the intimate consciousness of our own baseness, 5, delight in God alone, 6, a clear intuition into purity of thought, 7, not-knowing in limitless repose. ⁽¹⁾

"Of a Divine Meeting which takes place in the Hiddenness of our Spirit." "When the inward and God-seeing man has thus attained to his Eternal Image, and in this clearness, through the Son, has entered into the bosom of the Father: then he is enlightened by Divine truth, and he receives anew, every moment, the Eternal Birth, and he goes forth according to the way of the light, in a Divine contemplation. And here there begins the fourth and last point, namely, a loving meeting, in which, above all else, our highest blessedness consists.

.....This rapturous meeting is incessantly and actively renewed in us.....For like as the Father incessantly beholds all things in the birth of His Son, so all things are loved anew by the Father and the Son in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. And this is the active meeting of the Father and of the Son, in which we are lovingly embraced by the Holy Ghost in eternal love.

Now this active meeting and this loving embrace are in their ground fruitive and wayless; for the abysmal Waylessness of God is so dark and so unconditioned that it swallows up in itself every Divine way and activity, and all the attributes of the Persons, within the rich compass of the essential Unity; and it brings about a Divine fruition in the abyss of the Ineffable. And here there is a death in fruition, and a melting and dying into the Essential Nudity, where all the Divine names, and all conditions, and all the living images which are reflected in the mirror of Divine Truth, lapse in the Onefold and Ineffable,

in waylessness and without reason. For in this unfathomable abyss of the Simplicity, all things are wrapped in fruitive bliss; and the abyss itself may not be comprehended, unless by the Essential Unity. To this the Persons, and all that lives in God, must give place; for here there is nought else but an eternal rest in the fruitive embrace of an outpouring Love.

...This is the dark silence in which all lovers lose themselves. But if we would prepare ourselves for it by means of the virtues, we should strip ourselves of all but our very bodies, and should flee forth into the wild Sea, whence no created thing can draw us back again. ⁽²⁾

(1) P. Aygalliers: "Ruysbroeck the Admirable," 1925, p.182.
(2) "Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage." (Trans. Wynschenk Dom,) p.177-8.

RICHARD OF ST. VICTOR.

In the third Degree of Ardent Love, says Richard, love paralyses action. Union (copula) is the symbol of this state: ecstasy is its expression. The desirous soul, he says finely, no longer thirsts for God but into God. The pull of its desire draws it into the Infinite Sea. In this state all earthly desire is absorbed in the heavenly glory. "Whilst the mind is separated from itself, and whilst it is borne away into the secret place of the divine mystery and is surrounded on all sides by the fire of divine love, it is inwardly penetrated and inflamed by this fire, and utterly puts off itself and puts on a divine love: and being conformed to that Beauty which it has beheld, it passes utterly into that other glory".

Thus does the state of ecstasy contribute to the business of deification; of the remaking of the soul's substance in conformity with the goodness, truth, and beauty which is God. "Being conformed to that beauty which it has beheld, it passes utterly into that other glory", into the flaming heart of Reality, the deep but dazzling darkness of its home.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

"The central principle of St. John's teaching is that of complete detachment from the things of the world. Unless the soul cuts itself away from these, the mystic ascent is an impossible ideal. He says expressly that in order to unite ourselves to the Infinite we must surrender finite things without reserve. It is not possible that created things should serve as a ladder to the Uncreated Source of all - they are only a hindrance and a snare, and the moment the soul attempts to rest in them it ceases to advance towards the Infinite. When the soul begins to dwell upon anything, it ceases to cast itself upon the All.If we empty our spirit of all created things, we shall then walk in the divine light, for God bears no resemblance to any created thing. The soul must go forth, abandoning itself in pure faith to darkness. ...First the soul must pass through the obscure night of the sense, an experience which comes to many. ...(This stage) is frequently characterised by anxiety lest the soul should be turning back from God...Yet at times the soul is visited by wondrous raptures and delights, even no enjoying a foretaste of those pleasures which are for evermore. ... The second stage is the night of the spirit.. During this second night the purification of the spirit takes place. 'Infused contemplation or mystical theology' is a distinguishing feature of this state. Wondrous visions and beatific manifestations visit the soul, inflaming it with 'a passion of divine love.' We see the glow of a rosy dawn....The third stage is the night of the memory and the will, to which not many attain....the will 'has gone out of itself, and become in a sort divine'; it now 'sinks into profound oblivion.'

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS (cont'd).

The mystic now becomes the possessor of the highest mystical wisdom, and attains a knowledge of 'things so sublime that their proper idiom is for them to be perceived, felt, and wrapped in silence. He passes from this oblivion into a supernatural state, in which his powers are transformed into divine activities. His going forth into the divine dark has crowned him with happiness, for he has been 'straightway elevated to operations entirely divine - to most familiar intercourse with God.' His understanding, once wrapped in darkness, 'has passed from a human to a divine condition. From the night of his spirit and of his natural powers he has been delivered into the uncreated light."

.....As in the night of the spirit, all the mystic's powers and affections were renovated by 'the despoliation of the old man' to such a degree that their very nature seemed changed so that they relished only spiritual and divine delights, so now, in the night of the memory and the will, the mystic's energies are changed into the Divine. Having lost entirely human knowledge and human feelings, the mystic receives divine knowledge and divine feelings. Of this state St. John writes: 'One might say in a sense that the soul gives God to God, for she gives to God all that she receives of God, and He gives Himself to her. This is the mystical love-gift, wherewith the soul repayeth all her debt."

"Without the love of God, union with God is impossible..... 'Love,' says St. John, 'unites the soul to God, and the more degrees of love the soul holds, so much the more deeply does it enter into God, and is concentrated into Him.' By love, the soul finds its way back to its centre, and 'we call that the soul's deepest centre which is the furthest goal to which its essence, virtue, and power of movement and operation can reach; and this centre is God."

St. John: "The journey of the soul to the Divine union is called night for three reasons: the point of departure is privation of all desire, and complete detachment from the world; the road is by faith, which is like night to the intellect; the Goal, which is God, is incomprehensible while we are in this life."

CHAPTER VI.

ROBERT LEIGHTON

and

HENRY SCOUGAL.

ROBERT LEIGHTON.

Biographical sketch.

Robert Leighton was born in 1611, at a place unknown. He was the son of one Dr. Alexander Leighton, a Scotsman and Presbyterian minister in London and Utrecht, a Puritan of the Puritans. His mother is characterised as a "sweet-blooded Christian" who, as appears from Robert Leighton's letters, left an abiding influence for good upon his life. At the age of sixteen he entered the University of Edinburgh; after graduation he spent about ten years in travel, mainly in France, where he came much under the influence of the Jansenist movement. Returning to Scotland at the age of thirty, at a time when Presbytery was in the ascendant, he was licensed in 1641, his first charge being the parish of Newbattle, where he began his ministry "with mind thoroughly disciplined, liberalised, widened by observation, culture, and experience, his heart having found its centre and true balance in the cardinal verities of the Gospel, and the whole man breathing the air of habitual fellowship with God."

Through all the controversy of the Great Rebellion Leighton kept himself as far as possible free from every kind of bitterness, taking a middle course, and acting in the spirit of one of his favourite mottoes, *nec tumide, nec timide*. His deepest sympathies were with the best of Mediaevalism; a Protestant and Presbyterian he was yet a true Catholic, and his inner life was fed by study of the great mystics, especially Thomas a Kempis. He resigned his charge at Newbattle to become Principal of Edinburgh University, which office he held for nine years, renewing his acquaintance with the Jansenists by frequent visits to the Continent during recess. When Archbishop Sharp became Primate of Scotland, Leighton was appointed by Charles II to the Bishopric of Dunblane, one of the four which was to be the beginning of a new order. After ten stormy years in Dunblane he became Archbishop of Glasgow, from which position he retired in 1674, to spend the remaining ten years of his life in retirement, at first within the precincts of the Town's College of Edinburgh, and finally at Broadhurst in Sussex, in the home of his sister. He died on the occasion of a visit to London, at the age of seventy-four, and was buried in the parish of Horsted Keynes where he had spent the latter years of his life.

CHAPTER VI.

ROBERT LEIGHTON.

When we come to Rutherford's great contemporary, Leighton, we find ourselves in a different atmosphere altogether. Here is a personality far less complex. By nature a lover of peace, Leighton took part in the controversies of his day only in so far as they were forced upon him. Dr. Stoughton has said that no passage of Scripture could be more appropriate as a motto for Leighton's life than that of one of his texts: "In returning and in rest shall ye be saved: in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Leighton was, indeed, a man clearly in great measure out of sympathy with the time-spirit. A celibate, with a confessed admiration for the great mystical writers, a man of recluse tendencies who practised severe mortifications and recommended them to others, he had in him all the qualities that go to make a certain type of mystic. Let us say at once that he was a mystic by temperament, and that this native tendency was greatly fed and fostered by the influences which played upon his early life. The influence of Jansenism remained with him all his days, and it was revived from time to time by constant visits to Fort Royal during his later years. From his student days he fed his mind upon the writings of the Christian mystics of all the ages. His constant recommendation of his favourite author, Thomas a Kempis

to the students, while Principal of Edinburgh University, caused consternation in his colleague, David Dickson, who flatly refused either to teach or to recommend Thomas a Kempis, "among other reasons from some Popish doctrines contained in it," and because "neither Christ's satisfaction, nor the doctrine of grace, but self and merit ran throw it."

But Leighton was not only a mystic by temperament and sympathy. He was the founder of a definite school of mystical piety which, as such, is unique in Scottish history. In his case we have not to balance negative evidence for mysticism against positive evidence; the positive evidence comes out to meet us. The element of mysticism which breathes through all his writings is elaborated into a definite technique in his "Counsels of Perfection, or Rules and Instructions for Spiritual Exercises." This book is divided into eight sections, each of which is suffused with mystical ideas. It is necessary to make some kind of summary of the book to indicate both what the teaching is, and how it is expressed, though it is impossible to summarise or to select without doing an injustice to the book as a whole. At the close of each section we call attention to certain characteristic notes of Leighton's mysticism.

SUMMARY OF LEIGHTON'S "COUNSELS OF PERFECTION".

Introduction.

Perfection (not absolute, but the high degrees of "that spiritual and divine life which is always growing and tending toward the full perfection above") not attained by mere use of Exercises; it is the gift of God. The exercises are but "devout petitions, seekings and spiritual pulsations for the merciful help of God." No Exercise to stand in way of public duty. Exercises to be pursued in spite of all discouragement or leanness of soul, for their reward is assured.

Section I.

The excellence of God is to be meditated upon, and the knowledge of Him will be attained rather by fervent desire and devout prayer than by high study and outward labour. Prayer for enlightenment of heart and mind. The power, wisdom, goodness and love of God are to be contemplated. God is to be considered as "the true natural place, the centre and rest of the soul, Jesus as the Redeemer and Husband of souls. "Walk with Him as becomes a chaste spouse, with reverence and lowly shamefulness, obedience and submission. After this the aspirant is to consider himself, his own nothingness and defilement, "and that thou must, by conversion to Him again, and union with Him, be made happy." Follows a prayer including the petitions: "Grant that I may be so ravished in the wonder and love of Thee that I may forget myself and all things..... Let me find Thee more inwardly present with me than I am with myself". Observe the prayer reminiscent of the mystic (Augustine??) "Thou lovest us each one as though there but one to love." "A love thou bearest towards me.....as though Thou hadst no more creatures in heaven or earth besides me." Then aspire to great contrition for sin. Offer thyself and all thou hast to be used only for His honour and glory. Consider the passion of thy Lord. Prayer for grace.

Note: Contemplation, need for enlightenment, God the Home of the Soul, Bride of Christ symbolism, self-abasement, and (at the beginning) anti-intellectualist attitude strongly characteristic of Leighton.

Cf. the following, taken from "Letters of Comfort and Counsel": "When the mind is in a sober temper, there is nothing so suitable to its strongest reason, nothing so wise and noble as religion: and to believe it is so rational, that as now I am framed, I am afraid that my belief proceeds too much from reason, and is not so divine and spiritual as I would have it; only when I find....that it hath some real virtue and influence upon my affections and tract of life, I hope there is somewhat of a higher tincture in it." (Note the antithesis between the rational and the spiritual).

Section II.

Mortify "thy senses or five wits". "Learn to have a continual eye inwardly to thy soul and spiritual life. "Give thyself up to the discipline of Jesus and become his scholar... And even the most necessary actions of thy life, though lawful, yet must be thus offered up with a true intention unto God in the union of the most holy works and blessed merits of Christ. Prayer: "Bind up....all my wits and senses, that I hereafter never use them to any sensuality." Then labour to come unto this union and knitting up of thy senses in God and Thy Lord Jesus Christ.....And thus mayest thou come to wonderful illumination and spiritual influences from the Lord thy God, if for His love, thou canst crucify, renounce and forsake perfectly thyself and all things. Thou must so crucify thyself to all things and love and desire God with thy whole heart that in this most strong and steadfast knot and union unto the will of God, if He would create Hell in thee, or put thee therein, thou mightest be ready to offer thyself, by His grace, for His eternal honour and glory to suffer it, purely for His will and pleasure. Endeavour after cleanness of thought. Prayer for cleansing.

Note: Mortification of the flesh, utter crucifixion of self as steps to illumination. Need for purification. Calvinistic note.

Section III.

Further process of mortification. "Mortify everything

in Thee that is not God nor for God.... Put away superfluous and unnecessary things and affect not even things necessary. Mortify all affection to thyself and seeking thyself....and inordinate love of the gifts and graces of God instead of Himself, which engenders spiritual pride. "Print in thine heart the image of Jesus Christ crucified....Let thy thoughts of him turn into affection and thy knowledge into love. For the love of God doth most powerfully work the mortification of nature and the life of the spirit."

"Solitude, silence and the straight keeping of the heart are the foundations and grounds of spiritual life." ... "The pure love of God maketh the spirit pure and simple, and so free, that without any pain and labour it can at all times turn and recollect itself in God. Mortify all bitterness of heart towards thy neighbour, and all forms of self-conceit. "Mortify all curious investigation or search, all speculation and knowledge of unnecessary things, human or divine: for the perfect life consisteth not in high knowledge, but in profound meekness, in holy simplicity and in the ardent love of God: wherein we ought to desire to die to all affection to ourselves and all things below God: yea, to sustain pain and dereliction, that we may be perfectly knit and united unto God, and be swallowed up altogether in Him.

In sum: mortify thy own will in all things, with full resignation of thyself to suffer all dereliction, outward and inward, all pain and pressures and desolations, and that for the pure love of God: for from self-love and self-will spring all sin and all pain. Prayer which includes a distinctly A Kempis note: "I am nought, I have nought, I can do nought, and I desire nought but One."

Note: God to be sought, not for his gifts, but for Himself, a characteristically mystical note which is found even in Rutherford. Cult of solitude. Again an anti-intellectualist note. Idea of union becomes closely akin to absorption. Suggestion of St. Bernard re "the pure love of God."

Section IV.

"If thou aspire to attain the perfect knitting or union

with God, know that it requireth a perfect exspoliation and denudation or bare nakedness, and utter forsaking of all sin, yea of all creatures and of thyself particularly: even that thy mind and understanding, thy affections and desires, thy memory and fancy, be made bare of all things in the world, and all sensual pleasures in them, so as thou wouldst be content that the bread which thou eatest had no more savour than a stone, and yet, for His honour and glory who created bread, thou art pleased that it savoureth well: but yet, from the delectation thou findest in it turn thy heart to the praise and love of Him who made it."

"The more perfectly thou livest in the abstraction and departure and bare nakedness of thy mind from all creatures, the more nakedly and purely shalt thou have the fruition of the Lord thy God." Deliverance will come along this path, and earthly affections can "by no better means be put away than by the continual and fervent desire of the love of Jesus". "The more perfectly (thou dost) forsake thine own will, and the love of thyself, and of all worldly things, so much the more deeply and safely shalt thou be knit unto God, and increase in His true and pure love.

Note: We approach here the unitive stage, in which the emphasis is laid on purity and singleness of heart, love, contemplation of God.

Section V.

Accept whatever befalls as a token of the love of God. Let it be your great joy and comfort to have God's pleasure done in you. Trials are "purposes of kindness to enrich thee and increase more plentifully in thee His blessed gifts and spiritual graces, if thou persevere faithfully unto the end, not leaving the vehement desire of His love and perfection." "Offer up thyself wholly unto Him, and fix the point of thy love upon His most blessed and uncreated love: and there let thy soul and heart rest and delight, and be as it were dissolved and melted most happily into the blessed Godhead. "If thou hast in any measure attained to live and abide in God, then must thou as much as possible keep the powers of thy soul and thy

senses from gadding out to any worldly thing or vanity, as it were, shut up in God, where they have a joyful security and safeness. Satisfy thy soul in Him, and in all other things still see His blessed presence."

"When thou perceivest thyself thus knit to God, and thy soul more fast and joined nearer to Him than to thine own body, then shalt thou know His everlasting, incomprehensible and ineffable goodness, and the true nobleness of thy soul, that came from Him, and was made to be reunited to Him."

"Entering into Jesus, thou castest thyself into an Infinite Sea of Goodness, that more easily drowns and swallows thee up, than the ocean does a drop of water. Then shalt thou be hid in and transformed into Him, and shalt often be as thinking without thought and knowing without knowledge, and loving without love, comprehended of Him whom thou canst not comprehend."

Note: Idea of union with God, and with Jesus, saved from "absorption" in the first case by an "as it were", and in the second, savouring strongly of the Pauline "in Christ" on the one hand, and of pure speculative mysticism on the other.

From sections 6,7 and 8 we quote more briefly certain passages:-

Section 6. "Keep silence and retirement as much as thou canst, and, through God's grace, they will keep thee from many snares and offences.Let thy heart be filled and wholly taken up with the love of God, and of thy neighbour: and do all thou doest in that sincere charity and love."

Section 7. "Wherever thou be, let this voice of God be still in thine ear: My son, return inwardly to thy heart, abstract thyself from all things, and mind Me only. Thus, with a pure mind in God, clean and bare from the memory of all things, remaining immovable in Him, thou shalt think and desire nothing but Him only, as though there were nothing else in this world,

This rough summary will suffice to show that in this book we have the notes of a genuine mysticism (asceticism, - not mere otherworldliness as in Rutherford, - contemplation, abstraction, desire for union, and so forth) together with an actual technique closely akin to that of the grand mystics; indeed, it would not be unduly straining language to say that the "Counsels of Perfection" describe the three typical stages, - purgative, contemplative, and unitive, - though the stages are not marked out with the precision that we find in the mystics; and these stages could be further subdivided. The reason for the lack of precision is probably to be sought in the fact that the book was apparently never intended for publication; the Rules were drawn up for Leighton's own use, and possibly for the use of a few kindred spirits.

We find also in this book the philosophical and religious basis of the technique. There is the typically mystic trichotomy of human nature, - sense, mind, and soul, - this latter being equal to the mystic "spark" or "potential divinity" which is the ground of possible union with God. There is also the underlying mystic principle that man is far from home, has lost his way, and must

return to God by a definite process. As soon as we come to examine this process we find that we are very definitely in the world of the great mystics, and we hear the language which, though with different accents, they all speak. Whatever room there may be for difference of opinion about Samuel Rutherford, no man who has once read Leighton's "Spiritual Counsels" can say afterwards that "there is no such thing as Scottish mysticism." Here we have, beyond all possibility of dispute, a veritable mysticism, which is Scottish; it would be quite another thing, however, to say that this mysticism is "typically" Scottish, for, loyal Presbyterian as he was in his earlier years, Leighton's deeper affinities were always with "The Holy Catholic Church throughout all the world,"-a note of which, in spite of the Calvinistic theory of the Church, we hear very little during the seventeenth century; the struggle against Romanism and Episcopacy was far too severe for that note to be sounded very strongly by the Covenanters. But the extra-Presbyterian, and extra-Scottish influences which moulded Leighton's formative years were far too pronounced for him to be a typical Scot in his religion. As a mystic he is far more in sympathy with the best of Catholicism than most men of his day, and even during his Presbyterian years these extra-Presbyterian sympathies are very largely

determinative of his inner life.

Though the evidence is not sufficient for us to discuss Leighton's mysticism with that measure of detail which is permitted by the much fuller writings and greater self-revelations of the famous mystics (perhaps just because Leighton was a Scot, and not given to revealing the innermost secrets of his soul, perhaps because of the Presbyterian strain in him) it is enough for us to make some definite characterisations of it.

1. Not only has it a philosophy and a technique which link it with grand mysticism, but it finds its sources in the grand mystics. The constant references to the great mystical writers in his Commentary on 1st Peter, and in his other writings, show, quite apart from what we know of his early training, how much he had nourished his piety on the mystics. He borrows their language, especially that of St. Bernard, though he is not so prone as St. Bernard to use the imagery of the Canticles.

2. For all Leighton's indebtedness to the mystics, however, and for all his sympathy, both in language and in spirit, with the best in Catholicism, his mysticism owes *much*

to the fact that he was a Scotsman. He has no visions or ecstasies to record. His mysticism is in no way esoteric. It is always well-balanced and sane, free from any kind of aberration, and, -most significant of all for a mysticism so strongly akin to that of the grand mystics, -his mysticism, pronounced as it is, is so related to other elements of the religious life as to maintain a proper proportion to the whole. In a somewhat unsympathetic preface to the Third Edition of Vaughan's "Hours with the Mystics," Wycliffe Vaughan says: "They neglected social duties and fled away into monasteries and deserts; and sometimes their practical life was not equal in holiness to the reported spirituality of their ecstasies. Their excesses of mortification appear almost ludicrous when they themselves alone are concerned, but when their mad conduct is seen affecting others our feelings grow stronger. But let us speak gently of such eccentricities. These good people, for good they certainly were, could not appreciate the fact that God was in the busy town as well as in the lonely desert. They heard no voice within them urging them to treat a beggar kindly for the sake of the Son of God," (and much more in this vein)." The injustice of this criticism, in face of the facts, is obvious; but that

many of the mystics were guilty of eccentricities, and to that extent laid themselves open to such criticism, is also obvious. No such criticism, however, is possible, with regard to the mysticism of Robert Leighton. While we freely admit the charge of a certain lack of righteous indignation which has often been brought against Leighton, we may say that this is more properly chargeable to his natural aversion both from controversy and from the controversial issues of the time, than to his mysticism as such. It was a blind judgment which led him to say of the later Covenanting period that it was "only a drunken scuffle in the dark," but the remark was made from want of sympathy with the struggle rather than from asceticism. The fact is that whereas all the mystics see the affairs of their time sub specie aeternitatis, sometimes to the detriment of their proper share in those affairs, Leighton took his full share in the affairs of his time, discharging those affairs sub specie aeternitatis, and perhaps in so far seeing the controversies of his day in a better perspective than his contemporaries.

The significance of Leighton's mysticism lies, however, not in any characterisation that we might make of it, but in its subsequent influence. In its own day it fulfilled a

fulfilled a useful function as mediating between Calvinism and that larger catholicity to which controversy temporarily blinded many of Leighton's contemporaries; but it did more than that, by way of direct influence on the lives of his students. Leighton's biographer tells us that there is not sufficient evident to judge how far he influenced his students, "but that many were profoundly impressed by him there is no reason to doubt." Among those so impressed was Henry Scougal, who caught much of his master's spirit, and who, with that master, might almost be called the founder of a school of mystical piety. But Leighton also made contact with subsequent mysticism (of the more philosophic kind) in Coleridge, who, fascinated by his style and by his thought, founded his "Aids to Reflection" chiefly on aphorisms from Leighton, and elsewhere speaks of him thus:

"Surely if ever work not in the Sacred Canon might suggest a belief of inspiration - of something more than human - this it is..... I bless the hour that introduced me to the knowledge of the evangelical apostolical Archbishop Leighton. Next to the inspired Scriptures - yea, and as the vibration of that once struck hour remaining on the air, stands Leighton's Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Peter."

His biographer gives illustrations, far too long to quote here, of his influence upon minds so far apart as those of

"Life and Letters," p.281.

"Notes on English Divines," Vol.II p.120.

Doddridge, Wesley, McLeod Campbell, Dean Stanley, John Caird, and Robert Flint. Of these influences we have space to speak only of that upon John Wesley, which is of especial importance from the fact that this was an influence which Leighton, as "founder of a school of mystical piety," shared with Scougal, and by which he contributed largely to a great evangelical movement. Wesley published a selection from the writings of Leighton in his "Christian Library," and thus the influence of Leighton was carried over into the great Methodist revival of the eighteenth century. But the influence of Scougal in that movement was far more pronounced than that of Leighton, and of this we shall say more later.

II

HENRY SCOUGAL.

Henry Scougal was born in the year 1650, his father being Patrick Scougal, subsequently Bishop of Aberdeen. At fifteen years of age he entered King's College, Aberdeen, and after a brilliant career as student he was settled as minister at Auchterlees, where he remained for five years, until he became Professor of Divinity in Aberdeen, an office which he held for only three years, for he died prematurely in the year 1678. He is best remembered on account of the

two books which he wrote during his short life of twenty-eight years, - "Private Reflexions and Occasional Maxims," written at the age of eighteen, and "The Life of God in the Soul of Man." We shall concern ourselves almost entirely with the latter.

In this little book we have a clear exposition of what Scougal regards as the essence of religion. First, in opposition to prevailing views, he insists that the seat of religion is not in the understanding, nor does it consist in orthodoxy, (which leads to sectarianism) or in the performance of outward duties, or in the enjoyment of spiritual emotions and ecstasies.

...."Others put all religion in the affections, in rapturous heat and ecstatic devotion, and all they aim at is to pray with passion, and think of Heaven with pleasure, and to be affected with those kind and melting expressions wherewith they court their Saviour, till they perswade themselves that they are mightily in love with Him, and from thence assume a great assurance of their salvation, which they esteem the chief of Christian graces. Thus are these things which have any resemblance of Piety, and at the best are but means for obtaining it, or particular exercises of it, frequently mistaken for the whole of Religion."

For Scougal, religion is quite another thing.

"Those who are acquainted with it...know by experience that True Religion is an union of the soul with God, a real participation of the Divine Nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul, or, in the Apostle's phrase, it is Christ formed within us. Briefly, I know not how the nature of religion can be more fully expressed than by calling it a Divine life.

Thus, at the outset, Scougal makes religion, by definition, an essentially mystical thing. He is by no means indifferent to good works or to external acts of devotion, but the essence of religion does not lie in these things. They are but means to an end.

Scougal elaborates his theme thus. Religion is a life because it is permanent and stable, free and unconstrained; it is a divine life because it has God for its author, and it bears a resemblance to the Divine perfection. Whereas the natural life has its root in sense, the religious life has its root in faith, and its chief branches are love to God, charity, purity, and humility. For the cultivation of these graces there is constant necessity for turning to Christ for inspiration; the life of Christ exhibits these graces in their perfection. When religion is so nourished in the soul, elevation of soul and happiness follows. The affections are purified by the divine love, all the dispensations of God become sweet, and religious duties a delight. The growth of the divine life in the soul is to be fostered by specific means, for which Scougal gives directions: Watchfulness, self-examination, resistance to temptation, self-restraint even in things lawful,

and the practice of inward devotion and outward virtue are counselled. Especially is the mind to be exercised in the contemplation of the excellency of the divine nature, and in meditation on the goodness and love of God. But the dignity of human nature is also a fitting theme of meditation, for all men are nearly related to God, and carry His image upon them, - this consideration will help to beget purity in the soul. Prayer is to be used often as an instrument of religion, and the same means proposed at the beginning of the book for the begetting of "this divine temper, must still be practised for strengthening and advancing it", and finally one thing is recommended as "peculiarly appropriate to nourish and increase the Spiritual Life when once it is begotten in the soul," i.e. "the frequent and conscientious use of the Holy Sacrament".

"All the Instruments of Religion do meet together in this Ordinance; and while we address ourselves unto it we are put to practice all the Rules which were mentioned before: Then it is, that we make the severest survey of our actions, and lay the strictest obligations on ourselves: Then are our Minds raised to the highest contempt of the World, and every Grace doth exercise itself with the greatest activity and vigour; all the subjects of contemplation do there present themselves unto us with the greatest advantage; and then, if ever, doth the soul make its most powerful sallies towards heaven, and assault it with a holy and acceptable force. And certainly the

neglect or careless performance of this Duty, is one of the chief causes that be-dwarfs our religion, and makes us continue of so low a size."

In this book we find ourselves in an atmosphere very much akin to that of Leighton's "Spiritual Counsels". The same ideas of Contemplation, and Purgation are there, but the whole thesis of the book bears a different Emphasis. For Scougal religion begins with an union between the Soul and God, and the function of the discipline is to maintain, foster, and deepen this union. With Leighton, union is an end to be achieved as the result of the mystic discipline.

The book does not impress a modern mind as containing anything very original, beyond, perhaps, the definition of religion. But in Scougal's day, given current conceptions of religion, it must have come to many with the force of something like a new revelation, and, by comparison with prevailing ideas of religion the book is mystical in a very high degree.

But the book is of still more importance on quite another account. Its influence upon the Wesleyan movement in England was very profound. George Whitefield made no secret of the fact that the reading of the book brought about a crisis in his spiritual life:-

"In a short time he (Charles Wesley) let me have another book entitled 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man' (and though I had fasted, watched, and prayed, and received the sacrament so long, yet I NEVER KNEW WHAT TRUE RELIGION WAS TILL GOD SENT ME THAT EXCELLENT TREATISE BY THE HANDS OF MY NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN FRIEND).

"At my first reading I wondered what the author meant by saying 'that some falsely placed religion in going to church, doing hurt to no one, being constant in the duties of the closet, and now and then reaching out their hands to give alms to their poor neighbours.' 'Alas', thought I, 'If this be not religion, what is?' God soon showed me; for in reading a few lines further, that 'true religion was a union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us', a ray of divine light was instantaneously darted in upon my soul".

And later, in one of his sermons, Whitefield says:

"He (Charles Wesley) put a book into my hands called 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man', whereby God showed me that I must be born again or be damned..... I learned that a man may go to Church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet not be a Christian. How did my heart rise and shudder like a poor man that is afraid to look into his ledger lest he should find himself a bankrupt. 'Shall I burn this book? shall I throw it down? or shall I search it?' I did search it.

".....I read a little further, and discovered that they who know anything of religion know it is a vital union with the Son of God - Christ formed in the heart. O what a ray of divine life did then break in upon my soul..... From that moment God has been carrying on His blessed work in my soul."

Tyerman, Whitefield's biographer, shows how this inward view of religion affected all Whitefield's subsequent outlook, and became the characteristic note of his preaching.

That Scougal's book had a powerful influence on the brothers Wesley is also evident. John Wesley refers to the book several times in his "Journal" with evident appreciation; it seems to have been a kind of devotional classic with him in America, and in later years he published an abridged edition and also Scougal's sermons. Apart from direct references to the book in John Wesley's Journal, we may note the following paragraph by Butler, who is perhaps over-eager to make a case for the place of Scougal's influence in the Wesleyan revival. (Butler cites authorities for some of his statements, but he is somewhat apt to link together in a relation of cause and effect things which merely occur simultaneously).

"In 1725 the thought of taking Orders occurred to him, and during this early period he was much influenced by the 'De Imitatione' and Scougal's 'Life of God in the Soul of Man,' - a book recommended to him by his mother. This book.....had an influence over John Wesley which has not been sufficiently noticed. His mother recommended it as 'an excellent good book,' and as 'an acquaintance of mine many years ago,' and John Wesley studied it very carefully during the Christ Church days."

Whatever may be said about the value of the historical evidence it is pretty plain that the emphasis on the inward and experimental view of religion which was to characteristic of the Wesleyan movement was also the emphasis of Scougal's book, and it is clear that in his Oxford days this book, with others of a similar emphasis, profoundly influenced John Wesley.

⁽¹⁾ "Wesley and Whitefield in Scotland," p.67 f.

To say, however, as Butler does in his other book, that "Scougal's book supplied the basis of religious experience for which Wesley throughout his honoured ministry so efficiently contended," is perhaps to go too far.

The influence of Scougal on Charles Wesley has been suggested already in the reference to Whitefield; but there is another aspect of this influence which must receive a brief mention. When Scougal was a student in Aberdeen he found time, amid intense application to study, for the cultivation of the inner life. He originated a devotional club in the College much after the style of the subsequent "Holy Club" instituted in Oxford, out of which the Methodist movement arose in later years. Butler makes a fairly strong case for his contention that this club was probably the prototype of the Oxford Club:

"Just now we have to consider this work of Scougal's in connection with the origin of the similar society at Oxford; and if a true historical perspective be maintained, and it be recalled that just at the period, and before it, when the Oxford Club was formed, Scougal was a favourite religious author of the Wesleys, and his saintly life, work, and religious society at King's College, Aberdeen, were all familiarly known to them through the evidence brought forward in the previous chapters, - is it not most probable that the very suggestion of the Society may have come to Charles Wesley through Henry Scougal?" (1)

(1) "Henry Scougal and the Oxford Methodists." p.120. Ib. p.140.

Elsewhere Butler says:

"Charles Wesley was the founder of the club, when his brother, John Wesley, was at Epworth; and if we again recall that he was profoundly influenced by Scougal's book, that he believed in it so much as to give it to George Whitefield when he was in religious doubt; that it was a constant companion of his throughout this formative period of his life; that Scougal's example, as a young saint, inspired with the loftiest ideal, shaped him, - then what more natural or probable than that the society over which Scougal was president for years at Aberdeen should suggest to his mind the idea of a similar society at Oxford, and that the Aberdeen society is after all the prototype of the Oxford club in its early form?.....
...Taking all the evidence into consideration, it seems to be a very probable inference that, both in spirit and conception, the Oxford club owes its inspiration to Henry Scougal, and that the early origin of Methodism is to be found in the northern University town. Scougal inspired it, but Leighton's honoured name must be recalled in connection with Scougal, who was his pupil; and so the early impulse of Oxford Methodism, and of the great Church and religious revival which it afterwards created, gladdening the City of God, is to be traced to Scotland, through one of the saintliest of her sons." (1)

At the very best the full claim is but a conjecture with a strong degree of probability; but of the influence of Scougal on the Wesleyan movement there can be no doubt; just what the extent of that influence was cannot be said with certainty. We may add that Scougal directly influences the religious life of today, also, through several of Charles Wesley's hymns, which are the common property of all the churches, and have precisely that strong inward and experimental note which was somewhat uncommon in Scougal's day until he emphasised it.

(1) "Henry Scougal and the Oxford Methodists," p.141 f.

The philosophical influence which determined Scougal's experimentalism was undoubtedly that of Bacon. One of those present at the Westminster Assembly complained of "Master Samuel's" (Rutherford's) continual use of syllogisms; in the use of the syllogism Rutherford was true to his Scholasticism; but Scougal, who, according to Butler, was "the first to teach the Baconian philosophy in Scotland," was also, "with his spiritual teacher, Leighton, prominent in translating its underlying fact into religion." Empiricism in philosophy led to empiricism in religion. Scougal pre-eminently "brought religion away from fruitless speculations and reasonings upon imaginary or impossible suppositions to man's own heart; from opinions and controversies to the two eternal certitudes on which it rests, God and the soul; from secondary questions, - and centred it on a Divine Person."

Taking Rutherford, Leighton, and Scougal together, we may say, in conclusion, that Rutherford is a scholastic in whom the heart is always challenging the head, and with a deeply experimental religion which finds its most fitting expression in language which had hitherto been largely used by the mystics, a man whose mysticism is of a simple, naive, and unreflecting kind; and that in Leighton and Scougal we have a genuine but sober mysticism definitely thought out upon the basis of an empirical philosophy, and so blended with

the intellectual elements of religion as to safeguard it from the particular dangers which are always inherent in mysticism. In Rutherford, head and heart seem to be always at war; in Leighton and Scougal they are allies, and together they contribute to Scotland a specific mysticism which, rare as it is in Scotland, stands out in contrast from the typical religion of the day, keeps close touch with the larger religious life of the Christian centuries, and at the same broadens and deepens the stream of Scottish evangelicalism.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTICAL STRAIN

IN

ROBERT BARCLAY AND OTHERS.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTICAL STRAIN IN ROBERT BARCLAY, AND OTHERS.

While there are distinct traces of mysticism in the Scottish religion of the seventeenth century, apart from those we have already noticed, these remaining traces are very vague and indistinct. The one exception in this regard is the case of Robert Barclay, the Quaker, who represented that kind of Mysticism against which Rutherford inveighed so bitterly in the "Spiritual Antichrist." Its importance from our present point of view is not sufficient to warrant any detailed discussion. It is enough to indicate its general character in reaction against the orthodoxy of the day.

Its broad outlines are clearly given in Barclay's "Apology for the True Christian Divinity as professed by the people called Quakers." The "Apology" is mildly polemical as well as apologetic. It sets out the Quaker position in fifteen propositions, of which Propositions II and III ("Of Immediate Revelation," and "Concerning the Scriptures") alone concern us here.

The whole question involved in this discussion is as to the primacy of the Spirit's guidance, - immediate, - or

of the Scriptures, - mediated guidance and revelation. The issue as against the hard and fast doctrine of the Scriptures to which we have referred in chapter II is clear.

The first proposition, "Of immediate Revelation," is stated in part thus:

"Seeing no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him; and seeing the revelation of the Son is in and by the Spirit; therefore the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be revealed. Moreover, 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 test, either of the outward testimony of the Scriptures, or of the natural reason of man, as to a more noble or certain rule and touchstone; for this divine revelation, and inward illumination, is that which is evident and clear of itself....."

During the course of the argument in support of this first proposition Barclay distinguishes between "the certain knowledge of God, and the uncertain, the spiritual knowledge and the literal, the saving heart-knowledge, and the airy head-knowledge," the last of which "may be divers ways obtained", but the first, by no other way than the immediate manifestation and revelation of God's Spirit, shining in and upon the heart, and enlightening the understanding."

He soon comes to grip with his opponents' position,-

"Such as deny this proposition now-a-days use here a distinction; granting that God is to be known by his spirit, but again denying that it is immediate or inward, but in and by the Scriptures; in which the mind of the Spirit (as they say) being fully expressed, we are thereby to know God, and be led in all things."

Barclay's main contention is "That Christians now are to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God, even in the same manner (though it befall not many to be led in the same measure) as the saints were of old."

"And for the Protestants and Socinians, both which acknowledge the Scriptures to be the foundation and rule of their faith; the one as subjectively influenced by the Spirit of God to use them, the other as managing them with and by their own reason; ask both or either of them, Why they trust in the Scriptures and take them to be their rule? Their answer is, Because we have in them the mind of God delivered unto us by those to whom these things were inwardly, immediately, and objectively revealed by the Spirit of God; and not because this or that man wrote them, but because the Spirit of God dictated them."

When he comes to the second proposition "Concerning the Scriptures," he bases the authority of the Scriptures on these "revelations of the Spirit of God" from which they have proceeded. They have the greatest value historically, prophetically, and doctrinally, but "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.....Yet because they give 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.....
Seeing then that we do therefore receive and believe the
Scriptures because they proceeded from the Spirit, for the
very same reason is the Spirit more originally and principally
the rule."

It is obvious that such a view of the Scriptures as
that outlined by Barclay, (in contradistinction to the rigid
Biblicism and somewhat inadequate appreciation of the Spirit's
present guidance which was so characteristic of the Covenanters),
made possible and actual a mystical religion of a far more
intense type than was possible, at least in theory, to any
hyper-Calvinist. In Barclay, and in the rest of the Quakers,
who are not very prominent in Scotland, it produced a simple
but positive mysticism not unlike what we have found to exist
in Rutherford in spite of the latter's theology; but, unlike
the mysticism of Rutherford it did not express itself in the
language of the Song of Songs, nor, for all its inwardness
and experimentalism did it talk in terms of union. It was
a mysticism of the Spirit, above all else.

II

So far as the rest of Scottish religion in the seventeenth century is concerned, it cannot be said that it is in any distinctive way mystical. There are, of course, occasional evidences of mystical import to be found in not a few of the writers of the day, and when these occur they stand out in relief against the general background of a religion in which mysticism was certainly not the predominant note. Macpherson, in his "Covenanters under Persecution," refers casually every now and again to a "Nature mysticism" which he finds in Hutcheson and Peden and Cameron, and one or two others, to a "distinctly mystical strain" in the thought of William Guthrie, and to a conception of religion in Michael Bruce "which may be defined as a sort of ethical mysticism," but in all these cases the word "mysticism" is used in the vaguest possible way, and what we actually find in these men, while it may fully justify Macpherson's description, bears such a small relationship to the rest of the evidence about their religion, that it is impossible,--and indeed, of little worth for our present purpose, if it were possible,--to say very much more about it. In point of fact, after searching carefully through a veritable haystack of pamphlets, sermons, tracts, etc. of the period, we have been successful only in the occasional discovery of one or two stray mystic needles.

p.65

p.61

p.104

We find them in Fraser of Brea, Brown of Wamphray, Boston of Ettrick, Forbes of Corse, and even in the Cameronian Renwick; but that is only to say, in the hackneyed fashion, that there is a mystical element in all religion, and in the religion of Scottish evangelicalism no less than any other. The experimental strain is there, more or less, in all these men, but in our judgment it is ^{no} in one of them sufficiently pronounced for us to call them mystics. Among these men whom we have named, and others in a like category, if there is one more than another concerning whom we are in doubt as to whether to call him a mystic or not, that one would be William Guthrie, who, in "The Christian's Great Interest" devotes a whole chapter to an experimental proof of a saving interest in Christ, and who goes further in his explicit statements about the relation of the Spirit to the Scripture than his contemporaries. Barclay, as we have seen, taxes his opponents that for them the Scriptures are, in the last resort, guaranteed by the Spirit, - a statement with which they would agree, - but Guthrie explicitly states:

"There is a threefold operation of the Spirit, or three operations rather. The first is a beam of divine light upon the first proposition, convincing of the divine authority of it, as the word of God. The Spirit of the Lord must witness the divinity of the Scripture, and that it is the infallible word of God, far beyond all other arguments that can be used for it."

It is not surprising that one who went so much further, in explicit statement, regarding the relation of the Spirit to the Scriptures, than his contemporaries, should also be, among the men of his own category (those who have a more or less strong mystical strain) the one whom we would single out as being more markedly mystical than the others; and such Guthrie appears to be, speaking as he does so often in "The Christian's Great Interest" about the operations of the Spirit and the intimacy of the Christian's communion with God. But we would not go further than to say that among his own class he is the one in whom the mystical strain is the most pronounced.

For the rest, the kind of evidence available is only in the way of occasional quotations, of which the following are taken at random:-

From the diary of Thos. Boston of Ettrick.
Dedicatory address to his children:

"Labour for the experience of religion in your own souls, that you may have an argument for the reality of it from your spiritual sense and feeling."

There is also in Boston some tendency to the marital symbolism, as, e.g., the desire expressed to preach from the Canticles, or "On the 1st of February I observed that when I am most heavenly in frame of my heart, my love to Him is least shaken, and I am most satisfied in my choice, - and that when I am most carnal and earthly it is otherwise.

"Memoir of the Life, Time, and Writings of the Reverend and Learned Thomas Boston, A.M.," with Intro. and Notes by Rev. G.H.Morrison, M.A., pp. 131, f., and 60.

James Renwick:

"Since I came to prison the Lord hath been wonderfully kind. He hath made His word to give me light, life, joy, courage, yea, it hath dropped the sweet-smelling myrrh unto me."

Ebenezer Erskine:

"Once I was without Christ, knew not His excellence, and saw no form nor comeliness in Him that He should be desired; but now He is to me the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely."

-141-

CHAPTER VIII.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER VIII - CONCLUSION.

If the result of our enquiries, especially in the case of Robert Leighton, has been to establish the baselessness of the fairly common opinion that there is no such thing as Scottish mysticism, it has also left it open to those who are of the contrary opinion to say that our findings are of a somewhat vague character and of a doubtful usefulness. In this connection we can only say that we are dealing with a subject which is of necessity vague, and which becomes all the vaguer against the background of the religious life of Scotland in the seventeenth century, for the theology and religion of that period were intensely preoccupied with certain very practical considerations, and are constantly acting as a check upon any tendency to mysticism that may appear. Hence much of the "mysticism" of Scotland is latent rather than patent; it exists largely as a temperament peculiar to certain individuals, and constantly subject to restraints which prevent it from going further. When we consider what Mrs. Herman has called "the conflicting jumble of opinion" which exists among the authorities on the subject of Mysticism, and remember that "the contradictions of those who essay to define mysticism are but echoes of more vital contradictions in the thing defined, - contradictions which

are not, indeed, outside logic, but which demand a larger logic than mere ratiocination to resolve them", it is idle to cavil about vagueness.

If we apply to such mysticism as we have found, some of the less precise of the many definitions of mysticism, we find Scottish mysticism fairly capable of inclusion within them. Of such definitions we take that of Rufus Jones as typical, - mysticism is "the type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine Presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense, and living stage." By such a test we find abundance of Mysticism in Scotland; but on the other hand what we have called Scottish mysticism hardly answers at all to the numerous definitions of a more precise and detailed kind, such as those given at the end of Dean Inge's "Christian Mysticism", or those given either explicitly or implicitly in the standard works on the subject. If we apply the criteria given by such a writer as Underhill, or by a psychologist like James, we find that Scottish mysticism answers to some of the criteria in each case, but not to others. Leuba, who dissents from the commonly held view that mysticism is of the very essence of religion, nevertheless regards the mystical tendency as characteristic of whatever is best and

most vital in religion, and we should be prepared to say that in spite of certain excesses of language in which the mystical tendency reveals itself in such a man as Rutherford, Leuba's judgment holds true of Scottish religion. (It may be noted here, that even Calvin shows a strongly experimental note in his sermons.)

We claim, however, not merely to have established a direct negative to an erroneous popular opinion, concerning Scottish religion, but also to have estimated and characterised as far as possible certain positive mystical elements and strains in the religious life of the seventeenth century. With what result? We have found in Rutherford a deep experimental knowledge of Christ, interpreted in the mystical language of love, and saved from sheer eroticism by other counter-balancing elements; an experimental knowledge in virtue of which he stands out clearly from most of his contemporaries as embodying in an unique degree that depth of inwardness which belongs to true religion, - whatever be the underlying theology, - at its best; and at the same time if he is in so far mystical, his mysticism also avoids that weakening of the intellectual and practical side of religion to which mysticism per se always tends.

We have found in Leighton mysticism of a more definite

kind, though here again we are confronted with a difficulty of precise characterisation, largely through want of documents of sufficient detail. We have found in Scougal a mysticism which has points of affinity with, and points of difference from, his spiritual teacher, Leighton. But we have also found that it is by virtue of the varying mystical strains in the three men, Rutherford, Leighton, and Scougal, that they most influenced their own day, and still influence ours. We have also noticed, what is being more abundantly demonstrated now than formerly, that Scottish religion even in the seventeenth century did not exhaust itself in endless logomachies, and that amid all the controversies of that day there were many leaders among the Covenanters who had a deep, personal experience of the living Christ scarcely less than that of the saintly Rutherford, - all of which is, in its measure and after its kind, mystical. And this finding, though little enough when compared with what is to be found of Christian mysticism in continental Europe, and in a smaller degree in England, is very much when we consider the general characteristics of Scottish religion as a whole; and though what we have found of mysticism in seventeenth century Scotland is intrinsically little enough, yet we have also found that that little is true both to Scottish religion and to Scottish character, for its sheer sanity and balance keep it from the

extreme of false asceticism on the one hand and of false emotionalism on the other. If symbolic language is used, it always shows a healthy tendency towards its own supersession, and if the love of God is a ruling category, it is not a love which, like that of some of the mystics, robs man, whether in Rutherford, Leighton, or Scougal. If there is mysticism in the Scottish religion of the seventeenth century, it conforms very largely to, and is limited by, the type of religion out of which it springs; but it is a reaction, unconscious perhaps, against certain tendencies of that religion, and it recovers some of its temporarily lost emphases.

"If only to show how the perfervid spirit of the Scot is allied to spiritual thought and emotion through history," - that is the modest result to achieve which Professor Reid has urged that "there is room for a study of Scottish Mysticism". That result has been achieved by this enquiry. The alliance, in different degrees of intimacy and of dependence, has been demonstrated, the link has been established. After several rather fruitless visits to Scotland, John Wesley recorded in his Diary that "The Scots hear much, know everything, and feel nothing". Whatever may be said of the indictment as a whole, or of the last count of it in particular, it is certain that the Scot is not greatly given to show, or to record, his feelings; but the best

answer to Wesley lies in Scougal's influence over himself and his brother and Whitefield, and in the fact that, for all the gulf between Calvinism and Arminianism, Rutherford and Wesley are more nearly akin in the deeper matters of experimental religion than are Rutherford and Wesley individually with some of their contemporary co-religionists. So, though the links are not always easy to trace, we have found that Scottish piety "links itself unmistakably with the best spiritual thought and emotion throughout history," - with the great mystics of the Middle Ages, and with the evangelical worthies of every communion. Scottish theology may be a ground of separation from other branches of Catholic Christendom; Scottish piety, in some of the aspects we have studied, constitutes a bond clearly discernible by those of every communion who are big enough to spell "catholicity" with a small "c".

"Among many treasures", says Herman, "the pearl of great price that is hid for us in the field of Mysticism is simple devotion, and humble loving intimacy with Jesus as the secret of the mystic knowledge of God and the mystic communion with God." If these Scottish mystics have been digging in this field at all, it would appear that in their portion of the field they have had occasion to turn over less rubbish than some of their fellow-seekers, less that is of the earth earthy than others,

and that they have certainly come as near to find the pearl as any.

The saints speak with different accents but they speak the same language, and "they do not contradict each other".

B I B L I O G R A P H Y .

-150-
BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Note. A great part of the preliminary work in this thesis consisted of an intensive search among the documents of the time, for evidences of Mysticism, with purely negative results, so that the reading involved cannot be embodied in the work itself, e.g. all the works of Rutherford have been carefully studied, but very few yield useable results. The following list consists of works which have been used either directly or indirectly in the thesis.

- Letters of Samuel Rutherford, Bonar's edition 1863.
Also ed. Thos. Smith, Edinburgh, 1881, and all other available editions.
- Murray: Life of Rutherford, Edin. 1828.
- Joshua Redivivus, or Mr. Rutherford's Letters, 1664.
- Sacramental Sermons, Rutherford.
- Influences of the Life of Grace, 1659.
- Trial and Triumph of Faith, 1645.
- Gilmour: Samuel Rutherford, a study, Edin. 1904.
- Whyte: Samuel Rutherford and some of his Correspondents.
- St. Giles Lectures on Scottish Divines, Rutherford, 3rd series, Edin. 1883.
- Taylor Innes: The Evangelical Succession, 2nd ser. 1883.
- Philip: Devotional Literature of Scotland.
- Survey of the Spiritual Antichrist.
- Scougal: Life of God in the Soul of Man, Ldn. 1739.
- Scougal: Works, with essay by Watson, Glasgow 1830.
- Butler: Wesley and Whitefield in Scotland, Blackwood 1898.
- Butler: Henry Scougal and the Oxford Methodists, 1899.
- Butler: Life and Letters of Robert Leighton, Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.
- Blair: Selections from writings of Abp. Leighton, incl. Sermons, Commentary on 1st Peter, Lectures, and Meditations, Edin. 1883.
- Butler: Leighton's Practice of the Presence of God, Edin. 1911.
- Guthrie: Christian's Great Interest, 1901.
- Memoirs of James Fraser of Brea, in Select Biographies, Wodrow Society.
- Whyte: James Fraser of Brea. Edin. Oliphant 1911.
- Morrison: "Memoir of Life, Time, and Writings of Thos. Boston," Edin. 1899.
- Barclay: Apology for the true Christian Divinity, (ed. Harrison London 1815).

- M'Ward: Earnest Contendings for the Faith.
Life and Letters of James Renwick, ed. Carslaw.
Testimonies of the Scots Worthies, Glasgow 1846.
Sermons in Times of Persecution, (ed. Kerr).
M'Ward: Series of Tracts and Pamphlets, in New College
Library, Edinburgh University Library, and Advocates' Lib.
M'Grie, Confessions of the Church of Scotland. 1907.
Sermons in Times of Persecution, (ed. Kerr).
- Wodrow: History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland.
MacEwen, History of the Church in Scotland, Vol.II.
Kirkton, History of the Church of Scotland.
Row s History of the Kirk of Scotland, (Wodrow Soc. 1842.
Biographia Presbyteriana: Patrick Walker (edn. by Hay Fleming,
"Six Saints of the Covenant.")
Story: Church of Scotland, past and present. Vol.IV.
Burnet: History of his own time, edn. 1838.
Wodrow Society Publications, Vol.1 and 2, "Select Biographies."
Baillie's Letters and Journals, Vol.II.
Wodrow s Analecta, ed. M. Leishman, 4 vols.
Records of the City of Edinburgh, Vol.XII.
Crawfurd's History of University of Edinburgh.
Macpherson: Covenanters under Persecution, 1923, Edin.
Story of the Scottish Covenants, Hay Fleming, 1904.
The Covenants and the Covenanters, Kerr, Edin.
Smellie: Heroes of the Covenant.
The Covenants of Scotland, Lumsden, Paisley, 1914.
Simpson: Traditions of the Covenanters.
Hewison: The Covenanters, 2 vols. Glasgow, 1908.
Buckle: History of Civilisation in England, vol.III.
Walker: Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1872, Edin.T.and
T.Clark.
McGiffert: Protestant Thought before Kant, Duckworth, 1911.
The Scots Worthies, John Howie, revd.by Carslaw, 1870.
Coleridge: Notes on English Divines vol.2.
- Wesley's Journal, Standard Edition.
- Reid: Holy Spirit and the Mystics, 1926.
Underhill: Mysticism, Methuen, 1899.
Encyclopaedia Britannica, art. "Mysticism" by Pringle Patison.
Hastings' Dictionary of Reln. and Ethics:
Articles: Mysticism...Covenanters...Covenant Theology.
Herman: Meaning and Value of Mysticism, Jas.Clark, 1915.
Leuba: Psychology of Religious Mysticism, Kegan Paul 1925.
Inge: Christian Mysticism, Methuen 1899.
Jones: Studies in Mystical Religion, Macmillan 1909.

James: Varieties of Religious Experience
Watkin: The Philosophy of Mysticism, 1920 (chapter on "The Transforming Union.")
Vaughan: Hours with the Mystics, Ldn. 1893.
Paterson: Nature of Religion, 1926.
Recejac: Bases of the Mystic Knowledge, tr. Upton, Ldn. 1899.
Joly: Psychology of the Saints, Ldn. 1898, Duckworth.
Scott: Aspects of Christian Mysticism, Murray 1907.
Delacroix: Etudes d'Histoire et de Psychologie du Mysticisme, Paris: Alcan 1908.
Hughes, (Principal Hywel) Course of lectures on "The Philosophy of Mysticism."

Plotinus: Enneads, Select Works, trans. Taylor, Bohn's edn, 1895
The Book of St. Bernard on the Love of God, ed. with trans and notes, Gardner: London, Dent, 1915.
Also translation by Coventry Patmore, Ldn. 1881.
St. Bernard, Cantica Canticorum, Trans. Eales, Ldn. 1895.
Ruysbroeck: Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, etc. Trans. Wynschenk Dom, Dent 1916.
Maeterlinck: Ruysbroeck and the Mystics, with selections from Ruysbroeck, Trans. Stoddart, Hodder & Stoughton, London 1894.
D'Aygaliers, Ruysbroeck the Admirable, Dent 1925.
Chesterton: St. Francis of Assisi (not read for the purpose for the thesis, but quoted incidentally once.)

Of a large number of books and articles consulted, but not used, the following are cited as typical of the line of reading:

Coats: Types of English Piety.
Coe: "Sources of Mystical Revelation," Hibbert 1907, Vol. 6
Sharpe: Mysticism, its true meaning and value, Ldn. Sands. 1910
von Hugel: Mystical Element of Religion, Dent, 1909.
Coe: Meaning of Mysticism as seen through its Psychology, "Mind," N.S. 21, 1912, pp. 38-61.
Murisier: Les tendances Fondamentales des Mystiques Chretiens et les tendances religieuses chez les Mystiques Chretiens. Revue philosophique, Vol. 54/1902, pp. 1-36 and 441-87.
Numerous works and articles on the psychology of mysticism and philosophy of mysticism, including such recent works as Bennett: Philosophical Study of Mysticism, Yale, 1923