

Notes on Mystics - posted by docs (), on: 2008/3/10 8:33

I am reading a devotional book, "The Hidden Life", (Adolph Saphir) based on James 4:8 - "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." I came across a few interesting pages on mystics I thought I would share for whatever it's worth. "Note on Mystics" is the title of the little section.

(1) The dangerous tendencies of Christian mystics (I use no stronger expression, because I do not think the more important and best-known of these writers have fallen into errors) seem to be towards Pantheism. They dwell much on the Scriptural truth, that all things are of God and through Him and to Him. They love to contemplate the union between God and man, between Christ and the believer - a union real and essential, and not merely ethical. It is here that sometimes they use unguarded expressions, of our being Engoded (vergottet) - "God so unites Himself with the soul, that they become one Spirit, one Substance" (Makarius) - and terms still more vague and misleading. Yet this ought not to prevent our appreciating their testimony of the truth of the indwelling of God in us, and our indwelling in Him.

(2) They tend to divert the attention from Christ to the soul, in which God and Christ dwell; so that self (renewed and God-influenced, yet self) becomes the object of contemplation. This tendency is subtle, attractive, and dangerous. "I have a suspicion about the mystics," says Theremin; "they never are in a peculiar state of mind, but they immediately reflect on it and describe it." There is, contrary to their own theory, much of their own willing in their states and phases. To contemplate what Christ effects in us, instead of what Christ is - to dwell on what He has given us, instead of the unsearchable riches and fullness of the Lord - will produce self-deception instead of self-judgment, and can only lower the standard of Perfectness, which is none other but Christ Himself.

One great and constant desire ought to be to know Christ, and, having no confidence in the flesh, to rejoice in Him, waiting for His coming, when, delivered from the body of sin, we shall be like Him. The constant watching of the growth of the inner man leads us also "to mistake passing emotions for real and abiding love of good," and to exalt any peculiar intuition into a source of self-glorification.

(3) The objection most frequently urged, that they encourage a morbid quietism, a merely passive and receptive attitude, is true only to a limited degree. The mystics were driven into solitude by the mechanical and unspiritual externalism of works which surround them. This evil is not confined to any period or church. It is always man's tendency to work and speak and run, whether sent or not, and whether or not 'the hour is come.' Against this the mystics protested; but they did not encourage false quietism may be seen from such passages as the following, from Tauer: "The righteous exercise themselves inwardly and outwardly; they endure in all paths into which God leads them, in temptation and in darkness, and do not pretend that they have reached the state of quietude. Works of love are more pleasing to God than great contemplativeness. If thou art in spiritual devotion, and God sends thee to go out and preach or to serve a sick brother, God will be more present to thee than if thou remainest in secret contemplation."

The mystic writers will always be a useful protest against the mere 'form of godliness,' and the letter that killeth; but the minds that feel most attracted by them need most to be on their guard in reading them. Let everything lead us to spiritual and diligent study of the perfect, healthful, and precious word of God.

Me: Well, not so bad I think.

:-)

Re: Notes on Mystics - posted by Ruach34 (), on: 2008/3/10 11:30

Good. A good check to all who 'lean' to this persuasion.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...

Re: Notes on Mystics, on: 2008/3/10 14:35

Quote:

docs wrote:

The mystic writers will always be a useful protest against the mere 'form of godliness,' and the letter that killeth; but the minds that feel most attracted by them need most to be on their guard in reading them. **Let everything lead us to spiritual and diligent study of the perfect, healthful, and precious word of God.**

Very good Docs. Thanks!

Many types of mystics but then the Christian - posted by docs (), on: 2008/3/12 11:38

Indian and Christian mystics contain many suprising glimpses of the highest truth. The deep desire and thirst of the human heart after the Eternal Origin and Fountain, expresses itself in their words with singular force and beauty. What can be more profound than the description of God-given, God-wrought prayer, in the lines of a Mohammedan saint:

"This prayer is not his own: God Himself is speaking.
See, God prays in him, and he stands in deep contemplation.
God has given him both the contemplation and the answer,"

Quoted by Tholuck on Romans 8:26: "The Spirit makes intercession for us."

There is truth and error in the remark of Schopenhauer on Christian and Indian 'penninents': "We are greatly struck by their similiarity. With an utter dissimilarity of dogmas, customs, and external circumstances, their aspirations and inner life are identical. Quietism, or renunciation of all will; askesis, or voluntary mortifying of the self-will; and mysticism, or the recognition of the identity with the all or the root of the universe; these stand in closest connection." The Christian knows not only wherein religion consists, but he also knows the source and power of the true life. The mystics outside of Christianity have truly felt the necessity of death, of hating our own will and life, and in this respect put to shame many Christians who mind earthly things, and are enemies of the cross of Christ. But they did not know: "Ye have died with Christ, and your life is hid with Christ in God." They did not know the power of Christ's resurrection, and the constraining love of the Divine Savior, who for us died and lived again, that we henceforth may live unto Him. They may therefore be viewed as resembling those who, through the law, have become dead and long for life.

(Adolph Saphir)

Me: That's all folks. Just a few more thoughts on mystics. Now carry on with blessings.

"Doc"

Re: Many types of mystics but then the Christian - posted by destinysweet (), on: 2008/3/13 18:13

There have been times that I have asked the Potter..why did you make me like this? You give me these experiences that can only be described as mystical,this does make me accepted very easily by those who have no point of reference in their lives..they are suspicious of me..I am a 'reluctant mystic'! He shows me that there is much mystery in His Way..even the work of the Cross is a mystical thing to consider..a mystery unveiled.

Mystical/mystic is not any more a 'dirty word'..than mystery is..when it is wrought in Him..it is in setting our eyes/ears/hearts and minds solely upon Jesus,becoming rooted and grounded,firmly planted in His love,surrendered and obedient,that He protects us..He is our protection..regardless of how He made us.