

THE MYSTICAL ELEMENT IN THE RELIGIOUS POETRY

of the

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY (1600-1660)

by

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INTRODUCTION.

The thesis consists of two parts; the first part deals with "The Mystical Element in the religious poetry of the 17th century (1600-1660);" and the second part consists of "An anthology of Donne's Sermons illustrative of his Theology and Mysticisms."

During the last thirty-five years since Dean Inge delivered his Bampton lectures at Oxford in 1899 on Christian Mysticism, the various aspects of mysticism have received an ever increasing attention by literary critics, Philosophers and Psychologists. The works of scholars like Dean Inge, Baron Von Hügel, Evelyn Underhill, Rufus M. Jones, A.B. Sharp, D.C. Butler, W.K. Fleming and H. Delacroix, to name only a few, have nearly dealt with every aspect of Mystical Philosophy and Psychology. Dean Inge and E. Underhill have studied the mediaeval and modern mystics such as Plotinus, The Blessed Angela of Foligno, Julian Norwich, Walter Hylton, William Law, Wordsworth, Robert Browning and the German mystics like Eckhart, Tauler and Ruysbroek; but so far no attempt has been made to study the mystical poets of the 17th century in a systematic way. The critics and scholars like Prof. H.J.C. Grierson, Dr Jessopp, Edmund Gosse, Courthope, Mario-Praz, George Williamson and Basil Willey have discussed the cross-currents of the Philosophical and Religious thought of the 17th century in relation to the Sacred as well as the Secular poets of the age, and their learned treatises have proved invaluable to us in understanding the mind of the poets as well as the religious, Philosophical and Social background of this complex period in the history of English literature. We have not studied these poets primarily from the point of view of either Mystical Philosophy, or Psychology, though Psychology and Philosophy have been used to illustrate their thought, and we have also avoided the

1. G. Hodgson in his Book "English Mystics" has briefly dealt with these poets and R.M. Jones has included T. Traherne in the "Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th centuries."

discussion of the theories of poetic creation of critics like Henri Bremond¹⁾ who has tried to trace the affinities between mystical experience and poetical inspiration; our main attempt has been to study the mystical element in the religious poetry of the century, and in order to determine the quality of the mystical experience of these poets we have compared them with the typical Christian mystics like St Augustine, St Bernard, St John of the Cross and others.

It is a significant fact of the history of mysticism, as E. Underhill has pointed out,²⁾ that great epochs of mystical activity have followed the great periods of artistic and intellectual civilisation; in the thirteenth century the mediaeval culture had reached its perfection in religion, Philosophy, and arts; it had already built the Gothic Cathedrals, idealised the code of chivalry, and produced the great scholastic Philosophers like St Bona Ventura (1221-1274), and St Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274), when the 14th century produced such a great mystic as Dante (1265-1321), Meister Eckhart (1260-1329), John Ruysbroeck (1293-1381), Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471), Richard Rolle of Hampole (c1300-1349), and Julian of Norwich (1343-died after 1413); so we notice the important fact that when the Renaissance and Humanism had opened a new epoch in the history of human thought, the great mystics appear again in the 16th and 17th centuries, it seems as if at the end and perfection of every great period, the mystic "Snatches the torch, and carries it on."³⁾ The sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries produced such great mystics as St Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), St Teresa (1515-1582), St John of the Cross (1542-1591), Jacob Boehme (1575-1624). In the 17th century the religious ferment and the ardour of the devotional life in England produced such great mystics as George Fox (1624-1690),

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1. See "Prayer and Poetry" by Henri Bremond.
 2. Mysticism by E. Underhill P. 452.
 3. Mysticism by E. Underhill P. 453.

Gentruide More (1606-1633), Augustine Baker (1575-1641); and the religious life of the century flowered into the devotional and Philosophical mysticism of poets like John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, Thomas Vaughan, Thomas Traherne and Henry More who represents the group of the "Cambridge Platonists" like John Smith, Benjamin Whichcote, and John Norris, in whom the mystical tendencies are harmoniously blended with the humanism and piety of the Anglican Church. Though the "Metaphysical Poets," and The "Cambridge Platonists" represent two compact groups as far as the main religious and Philosophical principles and tendencies are concerned, nearly every poet tries to approach mysticism from a different and individual point of view. The definition of mysticism which perhaps applies to all these poets more correctly than any other is that of Rufus M. Jones, who has called it the "Religion in its most acute, intense and living stage,"¹⁾ but it is a religion in which, as Dr Moberly says, God "ceases to be an object and becomes an experience."²⁾

We have shown that John Donne not only outlived the scepticism of his youth, but also the rationalistic element in the Philosophy of St Thomas and became a mystic. He tried to approach God through an agonised sense of Sin and the realisation of the need of Purgation and passionate faith in Christ, as the Saviour of mankind. In George Herbert we find a perfect blend of the institutional and mystical elements of religion; his mind has been declared to be non-mystical because he insists on an implicit obedience to the doctrine and ritual of the Church, but nearly all great mystics like St Augustine, St Bernard, St Thomas Aquinas, and St John of the Cross have been the obedient and faithful Sons of the Church; it is very seldom that we find a great mystic like George Fox, outside the main tradition of the Church. A careful study of George Herbert's Poetry shows

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1. Studies in Mystical Religion by Rufus M. Jones.
 2. Atonement and Personality by Dr Moberly.

that the two sides of his religious genius, the institutional and the mystical, were complementary to each other; while his devotion to his Mother Church found satisfaction in the doctrine and ritual of the Church, his mystical temperament was not satisfied with the mere ethical discipline or outward conformity, but led him to seek a direct communion with God, he himself described his poetry as "a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have past betwixt God and my soul."¹⁾

His individual experience of God is the matter and theme of his religious poetry; Richard Baxter truly said of him "He speaks of God like a man that really believeth in God."²⁾ We have tried to show that while in R. Crashaw's poetry we find a tone of mystical exaltation and joy in a perfect communion with Christ and his Saints, there is little evidence of his ever having attained to direct experience of God in Illumination. We have studied Henry Vaughan as a typical mystic of the Anglican Church and tried to trace the Purgative, Illuminative, and Unitive stages of mystical life in his poetry; we have also shown the influence of Thomas Vaughan's occult Philosophy on Henry Vaughan's conception of God and Nature. We have studied Thomas Traherne and Henry More as Philosophical mystics; the former based his philosophy on the mystical intuitions of his childhood while the latter found satisfaction in the mystical Platonism of his age and used it as a weapon to fight the materialism of Hobbes and Descartes. We have tried to show the mystical element in the poetry of Francis Quarles which otherwise mainly reflects his conception of morality and piety.

These poets are more concerned with describing the first two stages of the mystical life, Purgation and Illumination, but it is only seldom that

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1. The English works of George Herbert edited by G.H. Palmer Vol I. P. 171.
 2. The English works of G. Herbert edited by G.H. Palmer Vol I. P. 109.

they do tell us about any direct vision or experience of God which is the essence of mysticism; and when H. Vaughan has told us "I saw eternity the other night" there is nothing left to be communicated afterwards, for the supreme vision of Reality is not often repeated and moreover it is difficult to convey the richness of this unique experience through language at all. Mystical experience in the language of St John of the Cross is an "obscure contemplation", and its supreme expression in the words of Pseudo-Dionysius is a "ray of Divine darkness." The eyes of the mystic like that of Dante in Paradise can not behold the radiance of God which often appears to him as an "endless light." What we have attempted to do is to discuss the various elements and characteristics of the religious poetry of these poets and to show the mystical element in their religious experience and thought and determine its quality by comparing it to the typical Christian mystics. Dean Inge has admirably defined the scope and nature of religious mysticism as "the attempt to realise the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or more generally, as the attempt to realise, in thought and feeling the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal."¹⁾ The mystical quest of these poets is at best an attempt to apprehend God in a direct mystical experience, and to determine the measure of success achieved in this attempt is the main purpose of this brief thesis.

The second part of the thesis consists of an anthology of Donne's Sermons arranged to illustrate his Theology and Mysticism, the reason for preparing this anthology when we already possess the admirable selection of Donne's Sermons by Logan Pearsall Smith, is that Mr. P. Smith's selection does not give us a comprehensive idea of either Donne's theology or his mysticism; he says "The purpose underlying the selection is not, however theological, didactic, nor ever historical. It is concerned with Donne

1. Christian Mysticism by W.R. Inge. P. 5.

as a man, as an artist and writer, with his personal accent and speaking voice;¹ and therefore he has chosen, as he himself tells us, those passages which in the words of Prof. Grierson illustrate "the Unique quality, the weight, fervour, and wealth of Donne's eloquence."² The other passages which he has selected are those which show Donne's sense of sin, his terror of death, and those in which Donne "preaches to himself"³, and these incidently provide the occasion when Donne's style usually glows into a poetic warmth, and thus his selection reveals the charm and magnificence Donne's prose style rather than illustrate his theology or mysticism.

To read the folio volumes of Donne's sermons, published by his son, John Donne the younger, is, as Mr. P. Smith says "a task not lightly to be undertaken;"⁴ They cover nearly two thousand pages; but we have read each sermon carefully several times before selecting any passage out of it. The anthology is intended to be comprehensive, and therefore we have included nearly all the important passages in which Donne deals with the problems of theology or mysticism; it is hoped that this anthology, if published, would not only facilitate the study of Donne's theology and mysticism on a systematic basis, but would also serve as a reference volume to his sermons. The sermons are arranged according to the subject matter, but the number of the sermon and the folio volume is indicated at the end of each selected passage. We have written an Introduction to the anthology which deals with the following points.

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1. Donne's Sermon's selected by L.P. Smith P. XXIII.
 2. Ibid P. XXIV.
 3. See PP. (XXV-XXI).
 4. Ibid P. XIV.

1. John Donne, the Preacher.
2. Donne's method of scriptural Interpretation.
3. Donne's defence of the Anglican Church.
4. Donne's conception of mystical faith.

We have also written a short note on Donne's method of composing and revising his sermons, and have given a brief description of the various editions of the sermons and the MSS which now exist of Donne's sermons.

No living Scholar has done more to perpetuate Donne's fame as a Poet and Preacher than Prof. Grierson, and no critic has been so successful as he in interpreting the complex nature of the thought and poetry of the 17th century; and it has been a rare privilege for me to have worked under his able guidance. My debt to his scholarship and learning is more than can be acknowledged here; the present form of the thesis owes much to his valuable help and suggestion; he has been kind enough to read all the chapters and has suggested many alterations which have been incorporated therein.

THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS
OF MYSTICISM.

No word in our times has been more misused than Mysticism. It has been applied to theosophy, and spiritualism, to occult Philosophy, to the attempt of man to disclaim the necessity of the doctrine and ritual of the Church, and even to the state of human mind under the effect of intoxicants. "The drunken consciousness" says William James, "is a bit of Mystic consciousness."¹⁾ Some modern writers on mysticism have called the love of God and the extreme form of monastic piety and asceticism as the sum and substance of mysticism.²⁾

Mysticism is not the word used by such great religious mystics as St Augustine and St Bernard; "Contemplation" is the word they employ to denote their unique experience of the Living God. Mysticism historically has associations with the mystery cults of the Greeks, one who had the privilege of having been initiated into the secrets of Divine knowledge was called a gnostic. In the early history of European Mysticism, we find that mystical knowledge was regarded fit to be imparted to the inner circle of the devotees alone; it was revealed rather than acquired through a long process of purgation and moral discipline which we have now come to associate with mysticism. Clement of Alexandria holds that the divine secrets of the faith could be revealed or taught only to those who have already been initiated into the mystery of Divine knowledge;³⁾ thus mystical knowledge became the privilege of the gnostics alone and was denied to the general body of believers.

Pseudo-Dionysius was the first to apply the word mysticism to Christian experience of God in his great treatise "Mystical Theology",

(1) The Varieties of religious Experience, by William James.
 (2) Harnack - cited by Dean Inge - Christian Mysticism.
 (3) See Clement of Alexandria by J.B. Mayor. Chapt-III.

but mystical experience, the attempt of the individual soul to realize the presence of God, is much older than Christianity itself. Some of the most profound forms of mystical thought are to be found in the "upanishads", while the freshness of the joy of the human soul in its apprehension of God can be seen earlier in the Vedic Hymns. The whole philosophy of "upanishads" which was the result of the reaction against the increasing formalism of the Vedic ritual, tends to bring into foreground the central doctrine of mysticism, the union of the soul with God. The upanishads taught the significant fact that in the higher stages of mystical life, the distinction between the subject and the object, the worshipper and the worshipped, disappears.

"If a man worships another divinity with the idea that he and the God are different, ¹⁾ he does not know." And in almost a Christian way the upanishads assert that freedom from the bondage of the self can not be had through any amount of penance and Purification; it is an act of the Grace of God which is called "Devaprasada." "This Atman can not be attained through study or intelligence or much learning - when he wishes to attain by him it can be attained. To him the Atman reveals its true nature." ²⁾ Mysticism is the Key-note of the ³⁾ great hymn of Krishna, the Bhagvat Gita, and then later we find that Buddha taught some of the highest forms of mystical discipline to attain Nirvana, the final absorption of the self in Godhead. And about the same time Lao Tzu summed up the mystical traditions of his ancient race in "Tao TehKing." And two centuries later we find in Platos' Dialogues some of the most sublime thoughts about the relation

1. Brab I.U. 10.
 2. I Mundaka. III. 2. 3.

of the human soul with God, and then we see Plotinus carrying Platos' Philosophy to its mystical conclusions. Between Plato and Plotinus had come the new revelation of Christ which was to give to Western humanity some of its greatest mystics.

And from the first century of the Christian era begins the history of mystical experience which has enriched both life and literature alike, mysticism in the epistles of St John and St Paul reaches the highest flights which Christian mysticism was ever destined to achieve. Till the 7th century before the rise of Islam in the Near East, Christianity had already produced such great mystics as St Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, and St Gregory the great.

In Islam, the great poets have also been great mystics; Rumi, Hafiz Jami, Saadi, are recognised as great religious teachers and mystics. The 12th, and 13th and 14th centuries are perhaps the most important centuries in the history of mysticism in the West and East alike, while this human search for the Eternal Truth through mysticism is carried on till the 17th century with different emphasis but essential unity among the different nations of Europe.

In this imposing array of mystical genius stretched over two thousand years with all the diversity of language and culture, race and religion, one central fact looms large - the essential unity of the Mystic Experience throughout the ages. The Gita says.

"I am the pure fragrance in the earth, I am the light in fire, the life in all creation, and I am the austerity of those who are ascetics. Know, O son of Pritha, I am the eternal seed of all creation. I am the Budhi (intellect) of the intelligent, and I am the glory of those that possess glory."

And we find St Augustine describing the same experience of the Vision of God:

"What is that which gleams through me and strikes my heart without hurting it; and I shudder and I kindle? I shudder in as much as I am unlike it; I kindle in as much as I am like it. It is Wisdom, Wisdom's self, which gleameth through me."¹⁾

Jalaluddin Rumi, the great mystic and poet of Persia, finds freedom from the duality of self in his union with God.

"My place is the Placeless, my trace is the traceless.

'Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved. I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one. One I seek, one I know, one I see, one I call."²⁾

The supreme quest of the spirit of Man in different Countries and Ages have been the search for God, and a yearning of the human soul for a union with Divine Reality. Evelyn Underhill thinks that there are certain characteristics which are common to the great mystics of all countries. "There are certain characteristics which seem common to all such adventures. Their point of departure is the same the desire of spirit for the spiritual, the souls' hunger for its home. Their object is the same, the attainment of that home, the achievement of Reality, union with God."¹⁾

This is the central fact of mysticism which distinguishes it from mystical Philosophy and mystical theology and all other forms which the soul of man has tried to achieve in order to transcend the limitations of "self". Mysticism can be studied as a form of religious Philosophy or Theology, or it can be used as a store house for the study of the Psychology of the mystics, but our main purpose is to describe the characteristics of Christian mysticism as the supreme attempt of the human soul to be united with God.

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1. Evelyn Underhill - Mysticism.
 2. R.A. Nicholson's Translation.

The two essential features of the mystic consciousness, which the study of the life of the great mystics reveal, are the acute consciousness of God and the belief in the capacity of the human soul to realise the living presence of God within it.

The mystic realises that his soul unless it is purified can not have the Vision of the Supreme Reality, God. He who tries to find the one behind the complexities of the multiplicity, believes that for him the real content of things is still hidden, that he lacks the true knowledge of his "self" and his faculty of perception is therefore incomplete, perhaps incorrect. Johannes Tauler expressed the same truth tersely when he said,

"If I were a King and knew it not, then should I be no King. If I do not shine forth for myself I do not exist. But if for myself I do shine out, then I possess also in my perception, in my most deeply original being. There remains no residue of myself left outside of my perception."¹⁾

To have a clear vision and see "into the life of things" is one of the passions of the mystic, but this knowledge for the true religious mystic comes only through the knowledge of God and from no other source as Pantheism, theosophy or Philosophy. The recognition of the fact that there is a Reality higher than the one manifested here constitutes one of the fundamental beliefs of the mystic.

"The strongest power" says Eucken "within the world constitutes in reality the conviction of an overworld."²⁾

1. Mysticism-E. Underhill
2. "The Truth of Religion".

For the mystic the only organ of perception for the spiritual is the soul.

In The New Testament "heart" is made the seat of the Divine essence in man. "With the heart man believeth into righteousness" says St Paul (Rom X. 10) and we are told by St Peter "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."

With the Purification of the Self begins the process which is called the Purgative way. The vision of the Lord is promised in the sermon on the Mount to the Pure in heart alone.

"Blessed are the Pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Thus the soul is recognised to be the dwelling place of God and its purification the first stage of the mystical life.

St Augustine realises the immanence and transcendence of God when he says "Thou wert more inward to me than my most inward part, and higher than my highest."¹⁾ It is the Paradox of mysticism, that the beyond is within, but before this truth could be realised, the soul must become purified and it must learn the virtues of Humility, obedience and surrender to the Will of God and thus became humble in His sight. Humility, self-surrender and self control are the virtues which the mystic cultivates in The Purgative way. St Bernard in a thoughtful passage has described his conception of Purgation which he holds is essential for a life of "contemplation." He says: "The taste for contemplation is not due except to obedience to God's commandments..... "what then would you have me to do?" In the first place I would have you cleanse your conscience from every defilement of anger and murmuring and envy and dispute In the next place I would wish you to adorn yourself with flowers of good

1. (Confessions iii. ii).

works and laudable studies of every kind, and seek the sweet perfumes of virtuesthat your conscience may everywhere be fragrant with the perfumes of piety, of peace, of gentleness, of justice, of obedience, of cheerfulness, of humility.¹⁾"

St Augustine has elaborately described the Purgative process, and for this purpose he has divided the different faculties of the soul in seven grades; he holds that the soul is the basis of life, of sensation, of intelligence, of morality and the other three stages correspond to the three familiar stages of the mystical life: Purgation, Illumination and union which St Augustine respectively calls "tranquillitas" the calming of passions; the "ingressio", the approach to contemplation, and the last is the contemplation itself.²⁾

Asceticism as an expression of disciplined spiritual life is an essential part of the religious mysticism. Evelyn Underhill says: "This mortifying process is necessary not because the legitimate exercise of the senses is opposed to Divine Reality, but because those senses have usurped a place beyond their station; become the forces of energy, steadily drained the vitality of the self."³⁾

While Dean Inge recognises the necessity of asceticism, he is opposed to the orthodox forms of monkish asceticism of the Middle Ages. He says "Monkish asceticism (so far as it goes beyond the struggle to live unstained) under unnatural conditions rests on a dualistic view of world which does not belong to the essence of mysticism."⁴⁾

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1. (Cant. XLV. 5, 7) - Western Mysticism. by D.C. Butler.
 2. Western Mysticism by D.C. Butler.
 3. Mysticism. E. Underhill P. 220.
 4. Dean Inge "Christian Mysticism" PP 11,12.

The Christian mystic recognises the divine necessity of suffering and pain in this process of "Becoming" and points to the Passion of Christ as proof that the inner process of spiritual perfection involves pain, the way of the cross.

The mystic, like the artist and lover in their intense moods, is unsocial and Plotinus has given reasons for the mystic's desire for seclusion and detachment: He says! "Just as someone waiting to hear a voice that he loves should separate himself from other voices and prepare his ear for the hearing, of the more excellent sound when it comes near; so here it is necessary to neglect sensible sounds, so far as we can keep the Souls' powers of attention pure and ready for the reception of Supernal Sounds." (Enneads VI. 9.)

When the soul of the mystic has been cleansed and purified it begins to have a glimpse of God. A very wide range of mystical experience is perceptible in the Illuminative stage, but we must remember that the mystic has not yet attained the union with God which the Christian mystics call the "spiritual marriage" or what Plotinus called the "flight of the Alone to the Alone." Ruysbroeck distinguishes the "Contemplative life" from the "unitive life" and points out that in the first, one simply passes "into the presence of God" while in the second, "we are swallowed up" in the immensity and the "deep quiet of Godhead."¹⁾

It is a common experience of the mystics that before the soul comes into direct communion with God, a strange quiet and peace pervades their spirit. They call it "introversion" in which the

1. Mysticism. E Underhill chap. IV.

sense - impressions and images are obliterated from the mind to enable the soul to concentrate primarily on God. St Augustine has expressed this sense of the quiet and peace in a passage of rare beauty.

"We said then; If the tumult of the flesh were hushed, hushed the sense impressions of earth, sea, sky; hushed also the heavens yea the very soul be hushed to herself hushed all dreams and revelations which come by imagery; if every tongue, every symbol, and all things subject to transiency were wholly hushed so that we may hear His Word, not through any tongue of flesh nor angels, voice nor sound of thunder nor any similitude, but His voice when we live in these His creatures - may hear His very self without a intermediary.¹⁾

The main characteristic of Illumination is the certitude of the Divine Presence and the Consequent mystical joy of the lover who has won the love of his Beloved; but in all the great Christian mystics the centre of interest is not the mystics' own soul which is thus exalted but God who exalts the soul. St John of the cross says:

"O burn that burns to heal!
 O more than pleasant wound!
 And O soft hand, O touch most delicate
 That dost new life reveal
 That dost in grace abound
 And, staying, dost from death to life translate."⁽²⁾

The characteristic of the Illuminated mystics' love for God is a passionate joy combined with Christian humility.

But Illumination is not a reward, it is a gift from God to man and depends not so much on good works as Divine Grace, which is granted to the mystic in response to his vehement desire for the love of God.

1. Confessions IX. 25
2. St John of the Cross " Llama de Amor Viva) (translated by Arthur Symons).

"The grace of contemplation" says St Bernard "is granted only in response to a longing and importunate desire: Nevertheless He will not present Himself, even in passing, to every soul, but to the soul only which is shown by great devotion, vehement desire, and tender affection, to be His Bride and to be worthy that the word in all His beauty should visit her as a Bridegroom." ¹⁾

St Bernard has called the Illumination ¹⁾ the Kiss of Christ's hand, the Purgation being the Kiss of his feet, and the unitive life, the Kiss of his Mouth. ²⁾

The Dark night of the Soul is a stage which intervenes between the Illuminative and the unitive stages, and in which God seems to withdraw Himself from the Soul of the mystic. To the mystic God is an object of Love and adoration and there can be no greater source of dejection and suffering for him than the realisation of the fact that He has deserted him.

To some mystics like St John of the cross ^{this} is a state of "Passive Purification" in which the Soul lies like a passive clay in Divine Hands, while mystics like Suso and other mystics of the German school have felt it as a period of intense activity and moral conflict, an actual preparation of the unitive life.

St Teresa describing her own experience says "It is impossible to describe the suffering of the Soul in this state. It goes about in quest of relief, and God suffers it to find none. The light of reason in the freedom of its will, remains but it is not clear, it seems

1. Cant. IX. 7. Western Mysticism by D.C. Butler.
2. (Canticle of Solomon III & IV).

to me as if its eyes were covered with a veil."¹⁾

The classical account, however, of the Dark Night of the Soul, is given by St John of the cross in his treatise called "The Dark Night of the Soul." He says that the soul begins to enter the dark night when God withdraws it out of "the state of beginners"²⁾ into "that of proficients" so that having endured its suffering "they may arrive at the state of the perfect which is that of the divine union with God."²⁾

He has divided the Dark night into two stages a) the Purgation of the senses b) the Purgation of the spirit.³⁾ Speaking of the second and the higher kind of Purgation St John of the cross says "Therefore in this night ensuing both parts of the soul are purified together: this is the end for which it was necessary to have passed through the re-formation of the first night."⁴⁾

He calls the Dark Night an "infused contemplation" which is a Passive state of receptivity when "God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in the perfection of love, without efforts on its own part beyond a loving attention to God."⁵⁾ The sense of alienation from God, of the consequent pain and suffering are the characteristics of the Dark Night of the Soul which is often called the Mystical Death. Eckhart says "He acts as if there were a wall erected between Him and us."⁶⁾

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1. Mysticism - E Underhill P. 393.
 2. "The Dark Night of the Soul" by St John of the Cross translated by David Lewis P.5.
 3. Ibid P 27.
 4. Ibid P 65.
 5. Ibid P 68.
 6. Mysticism - E Underhill P. 389.

In this travail of suffering and privation, the Soul learns the lesson of complete self-surrender to the Will of God, it is in reality the extinction of selfhood, and the final acquiescence in the purpose of God.

Having been thus trained and perfected, the soul now embarks on the last stage of the mystical life. The unitive stage, in which the mystic comes face to face with God. This state is not an illusion because it becomes the permanent possession of the mystic, for it transforms his whole attitude towards life, it is not a mere dream for the mystic is wideawake and conscious of it as an unique experience. It is not a sudden acquirement of spiritual energy but the last stage of the arduous process of self-Purification and the strenuous training of the soul. St Augustine says:

"In this kind of vision is seen the brightness of God, not by some corporally or spiritually figured signification as through a glass in an enigma, but face to face, or as Moses, mouth to mouth; that is by the species by which God is what He is, how little so ever the mind, even when cleansed from all earthly stain and alienated and carried out of all body and image of body is able to grasp him." ¹⁾

This union is essentially a union of oneness in which all sense of duality is obliterated. Ruysbroeck says: "This fruition of God is a still and glorious and essential oneness beyond the differentiation of the Persons." ²⁾ Through an arduous process of spiritual regeneration knowledge becomes vision, vision revelation, revelation contemplation and contemplation existence itself. Jalaluddin Rumi, the great Islamic mystic, expressing the essential oneness of the mystic and God in the

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1. Western Mystician by D.C. Butler.
 2. Mysticism - E Underhill Chap. X

unitive stage says:

"When the spirit became lost in contemplation it said this
None but God has contemplated the beauty of God.
This eye and the lamp are two lights, each individual
When they came together, no one distinguished them."1)

All great mystics have found the unitive life to be a transformation and energisation of life; they can truly say with St Augustine, "When I shall cleave to thee with all my being, then shall I in nothing have pain and labour, and my life shall be a real life, being wholly full of Thee"²⁾ The life of the mystic who has attained this highest stage of the mystic way, is the only real life known to us; life has been raised to the highest levels of Reality and power and the promise "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" (St Paul) has been thus fulfilled. Baron Von Hügel says "The mystics are amongst the great benefactors of our race; for it is especially this presence of the Infinite in Man, and man's universal subjection to an operative consciousness of it, which are the deepest cause and the constant object of the adoring awe of all truly spiritual mystics, in all times and places."³⁾

Mysticism and Poets:-

The characteristics of mysticism which have been described in the foregoing pages are the characteristics of the religious mystics of Christianity. In what relation do they stand with the mystical poets?

It has been often said that the mystic is not bound to reveal his secret; his vision of Reality has been described by Plotinus as

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1. R.A. Nicholson's Translations.
 2. Mysticism by E. Underhill.
 3. The mystical Element of Religion by Baron Von Hügel vol II P. 340.

the "flight of the alone to the Alone," but the important fact of mysticism is that inspite of the difficulties inherent in describing such a unique experience as theirs, mystics have tried through suggestion, symbolism and negative Phraseology to convey to us some idea of the richness of their exalted vision.

There is a great disparity not only between the mystic's own experience and the language he employs to express it but also between his mind and the minds of his audience which must be raised to higher levels of emotion and feelings to understand the significance of his experience. It is here that poetry comes to the aid of the mystic; and it is why artistic language charged with high imaginative power is employed in the Bible especially in the New Testament, the Apocalypse, the prophetic books and the Psalms, while in the Song of Songs the poet and the mystic became one. E. Underhill says "Thus when Clement of Alexandria compares the Logos to a "New Song" when Suso calls the Eternal Wisdom a "Sweet and beautiful wild flower" when Dionysius the Areopagite speaks of the Divine Dark which is the In-accessible Light of Ruysbroeck of "the unwallled world", we recognise a sudden flash of the creative imagination; evoking for us a truth greater, deeper and more fruitful than the merely external parallel which it suggests."¹⁾

It is not only in the use of the poetic language that the mystic comes nearer to the poet, their affinity lies deep in their experience.

"There are certainly" says A.B. Sharpe "striking resemblances between the flashes of inspiration which reveal and define genius, and the mysterious intention of the Divine Presence granted to the mystics."²⁾

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1. The Essentials of Mysticism by E. Underhill.
 2. A.B. Sharpe - Mysticism, its Nature and Value.

Critics like Henri Bremond have tried to understand the mystery of the Poetic experience through the aid of the mystical experience; Bremond says "It is not Shelley's experience that helps me to know better the experience of John of the Cross, but conversely it is the experience of the Saint which makes a little less obscure the mystery of the experience of the poet."¹⁾ But this process of understanding the complexity of the Poetic experience presupposes a close resemblance between the experience of the poet and that of the mystic.

But what we as readers demand from the mystic we do not expect of the poet; the greatness of the mystic rests in the genuineness of his experience, its truth, reality and grandeur; but he is a mystic because of his supreme experience of God, he may convey that experience to us or not, that does not alter the fact of his being a mystic though we will be ignorant of his being a mystic if he does not convey that experience to us, but the poet is a poet because he conveys his experience to us and he is at liberty to alter, modify and transform his experience in thus conveying it to us; while we expect the mystic to give us, his experience in all its richness and complexity unaltered by any other considerations even those of the means of conveying his experience.

The mystical experience is incommunicable, for like St Catherine of Genoa the mystics claim "my Being is God, not by simple participation but by a true transformation of my Being."²⁾

If the purpose of art is to unveil Reality, the mystic and the poet can both claim an identity of purpose. In Blake's words the

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1. Prayer and Poetry by Henri Bremond P. 84.
 2. Mysticism E. Underhill P. 129.

Purpose of art is to "cleanse the doors of perception, so that everything may appear as it is - Infinite"^{2.} and it is the Infinite Himself, God, on whom the gaze of the mystic is fixed.

But the poet cannot say with St. Bernard "My Secret to myself"; the poet is bound to sing otherwise he would no longer be a poet. "He is the mediator" says E. Underhill "between his brethern and the Divine for art is the link between appearance and reality."

The religious mystic and the mystical poet have many things in common, their search for Reality and their method of communicating the richness of their experience through highly imaginative language, for we must remember that the religious mystics have given to the poet a large number of poetic similies and metaphors such as the Desert of Godhead, the Kiss of Christ, the cloud of unknowing, the Marriage of the Soul, the Divine Dark and the Beatific Vision.^{2.}

But when the mystical poet happens to be an ardent religious man like Donne, Vaughan, Traherne and Crashaw, he comes very close to the great religious mystics like St. Augustine or St. Bernard, the difference being of the degrees not of the quality of the mystical experience for we must remember that such great mystics as St. John of the cross, St. Francis of Assisi and Richard Rolle were also poets.

St. John of the Cross says:

"O living flame of love
 How painless is the smart
 They tender wounds create
 Within my very heart;
 O, end at last the weary strife
 And break the web of this, my life;"^{1.}

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1. David Lewis' Translation.
 2. The Essentials of Mysticism by E. Underhill.

Almost in a similar strain, Henry Vaughan declared.

"O what high joys
The turtle voice
And songs I hear! O quickening showers
Of my Lords below'd
You make rocks bud 1)
And crown dry hills with wells and flowers!"

The mystical poets like Blake have thought that their mission was to bring their mystical illumination within the range of their average fellow men ".....I rest not upon my great task, to open the Eternal Worlds, to open the Immortal Eyes of Man inwards into the Worlds of thought, into Eternity Ever Expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination."²⁾

E. Underhill maintains that the apprehension of the Infinite life immanent in all living things by poets like Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, Whitman is a form of mysticism but when this power is raised to its "highest denomination" and "faith has vanished into sight"³⁾ she says then "we reach the point at which the mystic swallows up the poet."³⁾ And the poet becomes the mystic.

Jacques Maritain holds that all Christian art contains the elements which we find in the life of saints and mystics.

"I do not mean that in order to do Christian work the artist must be a Saint who might be canonised or a mystic who has attained to transforming union. I mean that, strictly speaking, mystic contemplation and sanctity in the artist are the goal to which the

1. The works of Henry Vaughan edited by L.C. Martin 11, (P 535)
2. Jerusalem.
3. Mysticism. E. Underhill P 235.

the formal exigencies of a Christian work as such spontaneously tend and I say that a work is in fact Christian so far as some element derived from the life which makes saints and contemplatives is transmitted - howsoever and with whatsoever deficiencies - through the soul of the artist.¹⁾"

The work of the Christian may contain the elements which are the characteristics of the mystics and the contemplatives, but when the poets happen to be religious men like the metaphysical poets, Donne, Herbert Crashaw, Vaughan and Traherne, the mystical element in their poetry bears close resemblance to the mystical experience of such typical mystics as St Augustine, St Bernard, and St John of the Cross, and it is from this point of view that we shall study them in the following pages.

We have mainly relied for our interpretation of the Christian mystics on the authority of Dean Inge and Evelyn Underhill.

1. Art and Scholasticism by J. Maritain.

THE SCEPTICAL, SCHOLASTIC AND MYSTICAL ELEMENTS

IN DONNE'S THOUGHT.

John Donne's relation to scholastic Philosophy is one of the most difficult problems of the criticism of his poetry and thought; that Donne's knowledge of the schoolmen was wide, deep, and acute and that he recognised the value of their intellectual discipline and the peculiar role which Thomist Philosophy had played in the history of mediaeval thought, has been accepted by all his modern critics.

Donne was profoundly impressed by the encyclopaedic learning and the keen, penetrating, and subtle intellect of St Thomas Aquinas whom he called: "another instrument and engine of Thine whom Thou hadst so enabled that nothing was too ⁽¹⁾ mineral nor centric for the search and reach of his wit." Donne was conversant with the whole field of scholastic Philosophy and theology and knew such contemporary Schoolmen as Dominicans Victoria Soto, and Bannes, the last surviving as late as 1604.

Donne's learning had attracted wide attention and won recognition and respect even in an age of such learned theologians and divines as Parker, Hooker and Andrews; but his contemporaries like Ben Jonson, Walton, Carew and Bishop King, themselves men of learning and taste, did not characterise Donne's thought as essentially mediaeval or scholastic; his asceticism and saintliness of later years reminded his contemporaries of the piety of the Early Fathers of the Church, but his learning or Philosophy, as we will show, did not appear to them as mediaeval; in fact what impressed them was the originality and freshness of his wit, his freedom from the traditional moulds of thought.

In Donne's poetry and Philosophy alike many strands of thought

1. Essays in Divinity Edited by Dr Jessopp P. 37.

meet and illuminate one another; thought in seventeenth century had lost the simple outlines of Platonic abstractions such as we find in the poetry of Spenser, the Renaissance thought had been crossed with the boundless passion of the Reformation for a purer life and religion with the result that Poetic emotion and Philosophical speculation both became more complex, daring and audacious. Donne became the curious explorer of the human soul; the adventures of the spirit became more exciting than Raleighs' voyages of discovery; men became more introspective; intent on self-examination and reform: Donne wrote in one of his letters: "Whilst I have been talking of others, methinks I have opened a casement to gaze upon passengers which I love not much, though it might seem a recreation to such as who have their houses, that is themselves, so narrow and ill furnished, yet I can be content to look inward upon myself."¹⁾

Donnes' contemporaries did not characterise either his poetic conceits or thought as essentially scholastic. Carew wrote his Elegy in 1633, and in 1640 appeared Waltons' life of Donne, that piece of vivid portraiture and delicate etching, which was largely based on the personal observation of Walton, and on those facts which Donne might have from time to time related to his friend in his later years.

Though Walton compared Donnes' life to St Augustine: "Now the English Church had gained a second St Austin, for, I think none was so like him before his conversion; none so like St Ambrose after it."²⁾ and his preaching to St Paul,³⁾ he did not label Donnes' thought as mediaeval; in fact Walton, like his other contemporaries, has laid

1. The Life and Letters of John Donne by E. Gosse. Vol II Page 16.
2.3. "Waltons' Lives" Edited by T. Zouch 1817. Pages 90, 91.

emphasis not on the mediaeval cast of Donnes' mind but on "his sharp wit and high fancy" and "choice metaphors" in which both Nature and all the Arts joined to assist him with their utmost skill.¹⁾ While discussing Donnes' learning ("for he left the resultance of 1400 authors, most of them abridged and analysed with his own hand"), Walton is careful to stress the universality of Donnes' interest in literature and Philosophy. Donne was not only a great scholar of the civil and canon Law but also of "many other studies and arguments, as enter into the consideration of many, that labour to be thought great clerks and pretend to know all things."²⁾ Prof. Grierson in his instructive chapter on Donnes' learning has shown to what uncommon and obscure corners did his "immoderate desire of human learning and languages"³⁾ lead him.

Thomas Fuller in his worthies (1662) and John Aubry in his "Lives" (1669 -96) did not display any critical acumen in treating Donnes' Poetry and Philosophy; they praised him as "one of excellent wit" and as one of the greatest preachers of his day; it was Edward Phillips who in his "Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum." (1675) characterised Donnes' learning to be of the "Politer Kind" and thus not essentially theological. He says: "John Donne accomplished himself with the politer kind of learning.....; and frequented good company, to which the sharpness of his wit and the gaiety of fancy, rendered him not a little grateful."⁴⁾

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1. "Waltons' Lives" Edited by T. Zouch 1817. Page 120.
 2. Waltons' Lives Edited by Zouch Page 134.
 3. The Poems of John Donne Edited by H.J.C. Grierson Vol. II.
 4. E. Phillips - Theab. Poe. Anglic. C Geneva 1824 Vol II, PP. 2-3.

William Winstanleys' life of Donne (in his "The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets"¹⁾ (1687) and in his "Englands' Worthies) (1689) was largely based on Walton and Phillips' lives, but he declared "This pleasant poet, painful preacher, and pious person " being "an eminent poet he became a much more eminent preacher."

What Winstanley noted was not the Scholastic element but the poetic quality of Donnes" thought "for he improved rather than relinquished his poetical fancy only converting it from humane and wordly to divine and heavenly subjects."¹⁾

Anthony a wood in his "Athenae Oxonienses" (1691 -92) noted the wide learning of Donne "a person sometimes noted for his divinity, knowledge in several languages and other learning". Thus it is obvious that neither Donnes' contemporaries nor his immediate successors characterised his thought as mediaeval, metaphysical and scholastic.

John Dryden was the first critic to call Donne and his followers Metaphysical in his famous dedication of "A Discourse concerning the origin and Process of Satire." to the Earl of Dorset in 1693, but Dryden had only Donnes' conceits and not his Philosophy in mind when he penned his criticism of Donnes' Poetry.

Dryden had already in his essay on Dramatic Poësy (1668) defined the style of a poet whom he does not name (perhaps John Cleveland)

"'Tis easy to guess whom you intend said Lisideius; 'and without naming them I ask you, if one of them does not perpetually pay us with clenches upon words, and a certain clownish kind of raillery? if now and

1. W. Winstanley "The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets"
-(1687) pages 117, 119, 120.

then he does not offer at a catachresis or clevelandism, wrestling and torturing a word into another meaning.¹⁾ Dryden who himself had "affected the metaphysical" in his "stanzas on Cromwell" had now become the herald of the age of reason and correctness; he disapproved of the metaphysical conceits which tortured an image unless the whole content of feeling was made available to poetic image. One year before writing his dedication to the Earl of Dorset, Dryden had already (in his dedication of *Eleanore*) separated the two inseparable elements of Donne's style, his wit and poetic feeling. He styled Donne "the greatest wit, tho' not the greatest poet of our nation," and in 1668 he had said in his criticism of *Clevelands'* satires, "..... so that there is this difference betwixt his satire and doctor Donnes; that the one gives us deep thoughts in common language, though rough cadence; the other gives us common thoughts in abstruse words."

Drydens' reaction to Donnes' poetry varied as he advanced in years and as the age of reason and correctness became more pronounced in his criticism and poetry alike. In 1668 Dryden had admired Donne for giving "deep thoughts in common language," in 1692 he still thought Donne to be "the greatest wit" though not "the greatest poet," but in 1693 he wrote to the Earl of Dorset: "Donne alone of all your countrymen had your talent; but was not happy enough to arrive at your versification; and were he translated into numbers, and English, he would yet be wanting in the dignity of expression," which he declared to be "the prime virtue and chief ornament of Virgil." Donne, Dryden thought, fell short of these classical standards, and so could not be compared to the Earl of Dorset who excelled him "in the manner and words."²⁾

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1. "An Essay on Dramatic Poesy (Essays of John Dryden Edited by W.P. Kerr Vol. 1. p. 31.)"
 2. It is interesting to note here that Walton thought that Donne would be better understood in an age of classicism: "As times grow better, grow more classical?" (*Izaak Walton's* *Elegy on John Donne.*)

It is significant that throughout this important passage Dryden has been discoursing on the quality of Donnes' conceits - his "manners and words," - he applied the term metaphysical not to the Philosophy of Donne but to his conceits "concetti metapysici ed ideali," a term which the Italian poet Testi (1593 - 1646) had used earlier in the century.¹⁾

Dryden said of Donnes' love poetry: "He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of Philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softness of love."²⁾ Prof. Grierson thinks that the term Metaphysical here only means Philosophical.

Dryden with his new ideals of correctness and reason could not appreciate the naked realism, the harsh tone of Donnes' passion and the mere display of learning more sportive than serious in his songs and satires. He points out that Donne "perplexes" the minds of women with his subtle scholastic distinctions while he should engage their hearts with sweet compliments expressing "the softness of love."²⁾

Donne was anything but "soft" in love; to express the woes of love in poetry, according to the Elizabethan tradition, was to Donne, unmanly.

"Let me not know that others know
That she knowes my paines, lest that so
A tender shame make me mine owne new woe."
(Loes' Exchange)

and in the same poem he declared;

"Such in Loves warfare is my case
I may not article for grace,
Having put Love at last to shew this face."

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1. See Grierson Donne. Vol II. page 2.
 2. Drydens' Essays Edited by W.P. Ker Page 19.

That Dryden is referring to Donnes' conceits in love poems and not to his Philosophy is proved by the few succeeding lines of the passage quoted above. Dryden in comparing Cowley with Donne says: "In this (if I may be pardoned for so bold a truth) Mr. Cowley copied him to a fault so great a one, in my opinion, that it throws his Mistress infinitely below his Pindarics which are undoubtedly the best of his poems and the most correct."

As long as "wit" and "conceit" meant "intellect" and "imagination", the metaphysical poets were held in high esteem, but in the age of reason new theories of wit, style and form became popular in England, and wit and conceit were reduced to the position of "fancy" and "ingenuity" and the metaphysical poets were censured for the exercise of their wit which was declared to be unnatural, far fetched, and divorced from poetic emotion.

Johnold Mixon in his "Arts of Logic and Rhetorick" (1728) realised the true significance of Drydens' remarks, when he wrote "Dryden tells us, in his Preface to Juvenal, that Cowley copied Dr Donne to a Fault in his Metaphysicks, which his love verses abound with"

It is thus evident that till the age of Dryden, Donnes' Philosophy was hardly commented upon, it were his poetic conceits, and their "Metaphysicks" which were made the subject of criticism, his learning was recognised to be unusual in an age of encyclopaedic learning, but even in this respect, the universality of his knowledge was emphasised and the mediaeval and scholastic aspect of his thought was not yet discovered!

It is significant that the reaction against the English Metaphysical poets was accompanied with a pronounced reaction against Petrarch in whose love poetry also "concetti metapysici" abound. Mario Praz has traced the metaphysical cast of some of the lyrics of Spenser, Wyatt and Donne to Petrarch. He says "As we survey Donnes' Poetry after such

a distance of time, we can hardly fail to notice how much this poet who in a sense led the reaction against Petrarchism in England, was himself a Petrarchist, thanks to his mediaevally trained mind.¹⁾

In the reaction against Donne and his followers, Petrarch also fell from the high position he had occupied in the love-poetry of the Elizabethan poets. Joseph Warton in his "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope" (1756) made a significant remark about Petrarch which shows the tendency of the age: He says "Indeed to speak the truth, there appears to be little valuable in Petrarch, except the purity of his diction. His sentiments even of love, are metaphysical and far-fetched.."²⁾

And these were the qualities of metaphysical poetry, its far-fetched conceits drawn from the storehouse of mediaeval learning and modern Science, which Johnson singled out, for censure and condemnation. Dryden had the classical poets in mind when he wrote the famous passage about Donnes' metaphysics in his dedication of "A Discourse concerning the origin and Progress of Satire" to the Earl of Dorset as is shown from his reference to Virgil whose "prime virtue" he declared to be the "Dignity of expression" which Donne did not possess. His characterisation of Donnes' conceits in his satires and amorous verses as Metaphysical is generally held by critics to be erroneous but it really connected Donne with the Metaphysical poetry of Dante and his circle and his conceits with Marino and his schools; whether it was the intention of Dryden is doubtful; but that Johnson had Marini in mind is proved by his remark on Donne: "This Kind of Writing, which was, I believe, borrowed from Marini and his followers had been recommended by the example of Donne, a man of

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1. Donnes' Relation "To The Poetry of His Time" - A Garland For John Donne pages 65, 66.
 2. Joseph Wartons' Essay on the writing and Genius of Pope (1756) Page 66.

very extensive and various knowledge;"¹⁾ Prof. Grierson has also pointed out Donnes' affinity with the Italian Metaphysical poets. "But it was in Italy in the "dolce stil nuovo" of Guido Guini celli, and Dante, that the "Metaphysical" element first appeared in Love-poetry, "Learning" says Adolf Gaspary, "is the distinctive feature of the new school."²⁾ It is thus evident that Drydens' and Johnsons' application of the term Metaphysical to the poetry of Donne and his school is not incorrect as had been generally assumed; but we must remember that Dryden and Johnson had only the conceits, the wit, and the poetic imagery of Donne and his followers in mind, and they did not characterise Donnes' Philosophy but his wit to be unnatural and unpoetic.

Johnson, however distinguished between the subtlety of Donne as applied to "Scholastic speculation" and as applied to "common subjects." He pointed out: "It must be however confessed of these writers, that if they are upon common subjects often unnecessarily and unpoetically subtle, yet where scholastic speculation can be properly admitted their copiousness and acuteness may justly be admired."³⁾

Johnsons' celebrated discourse on Metaphysical Poets is largely based on his judgment of their wit, and the incorporation of learning in the poetic sensibility of these poets; though he recognised the scholastic subtlety of Donne and Cowley, he did not characterise their thought or Philosophy as mediaeval and scholastic. He is silent on this point, he only exhibited "a general representation of the style and sentiments of the Metaphysical poets."⁴⁾

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1. Samuel Johnsons' Life of Cowley. Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets by Samuel Johnson Edited by W.E. Henley 1896. Vol I. p. 15
 2. The first half of the seventeenth century - H.J.C. Grierson page 157.
 - 3&4 Johnsons' Life of Cowley Edited by W.E. Henley 1896 pages 27. 29.

Donne loved to be subtle to plague himself, he was a curious explorer of the human soul, and possessed the most acute and analytical mind of the century, and these were the qualities which could not appeal to Johnson. Johnson condemned the analytical quality of the wit of these poets:

"Their attempts were always analytical they broke every image into fragments; and could no more represent by their slender conceits and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life than he who dissects a sunbeam with a prism can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon."

He also recognized that "Metaphysical poets were men of learning" but he was wrong when he declared that "to show their learning was their whole endeavour," and though Johnson could not talk of the Metaphysical poets in a contemptuous vein as Quiller Couch thinks,¹⁾ Johnson failed to recognize the importance of the elements of erudition in Donnes' poetic emotion, and the beauty of the argumentative evolution of his lyrics. He knew that "to write on their plan, it was at least necessary to read and think," but he did not realize that Donnes' thought modified his poetic sensibility as T.S. Eliot has remarked that "A thought to Donne was an experience, it modified his sensibility."²⁾

Dryden and Johnson both condemned Donnes' wit and separated it from his poetic thought. Dryden called him "The greatest wit, though not the greatest poet of our nation," and Johnson mainly concentrated his criticism on defining the quality of his wit to show that Donne was not

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1. Q says "He (Johnson) meant something like fiddle sticks" something contemptuous. He makes admirable play with a number of things that do not matter. But he never gets near what does matter."
 2. The Essays of T.S. Eliot - "The Metaphysical Poets."

even a great wit; it is this trend of thought which determined the attitude of Johnson.¹⁾ The rough and rugged satires of Donne, the edge and point of his poetic wit, the subtle quality of Donnes' intellect which could not be reduced to Drydens' ideal of "Natural" and "Smooth", were the things which annoyed both Dryden and Johnson.

Dryden disapproved of Donnes' "nice speculations of Philosophy" by which he meant Donnes' subtle distinctions in his poetic conceits in his love poems like "The Dream" and the "The Extasie," and Johnson applied the term Metaphysical in the sense of "learned," but these were the qualities of his wit; thus no attempt was made to recognize the true significance of Donnes' "Philosophy" either in relation to the scholastic thought or the Renaissance Philosophy.

We are not here concerned with the problem whether conceits should be drawn from "nature" or from "the depths of Science," our aim is to point out that Dryden and Johnson both considered the presence of Philosophy and learning a defect in Donnes' poetic art. This opinion was transmitted through Johnson to the nineteenth century when attempts were made by Coleridge and De Quincey to revive the interest in Donne.

Coleridge also refers to "the utmost boundless stores of a capacious memory, and exercised on subjects where we have no right to expect it," and it is clear that he also agreed with Johnson that Donne, misapplied his learning. Coleridge in his notes on Donnes' sermons again pointed out that Donne derived his taste for far-fetched conceits from the schoolmen and the early Fathers of the Church.

This tradition of exploring and estimating the element of "learning" has passed on to the men and women who have helped in the phenomenal

1. See Johnsons' Life of Cowley.

revival of interest in Donnes' life and works. Miss P. Ramsay¹⁾ and Mrs. Simpson²⁾ both have declared Donne to be a schoolman in theology and Philosophy alike with some modern faculty of self-analysis and tolerance in religion. They have neglected the strain of sceptical thought in his Philosophy nor have they tried to determine the nature of his scepticism. This however is not the view of such great critics as Courthope and Prof. Grierson. Courthope traced the origin of Metaphysical wit to the disintegration of mediaeval thought and to the rise of scepticism in the Renaissance literature. He says! "Sceptic as he was, Donne never formed any organic idea of nature as a whole, and his sole aim, as a poet, was to associate the isolated details of his accumulation of learning with Paradoxes and conceits, which are of no permanent value."³⁾

Prof. Grierson has also emphasised the sceptical strains in Donnes' poetry:-

"A spirit of scepticism and paradox plays through and disturbs almost everything he wrote except at moments when an intense mood of feeling, whether love or devotion, begets faith, and silences, the sceptical and destructive wit by the power of vision rather than of intellectual conviction."⁴⁾ The rise of Pyrrhonism in the Renaissance literature deeply influenced Donne and the later Elizabethans; and to neglect this strain in Donnes' thought is to reduce his complex and rich personality to a simplicity which it does not possess.

Montaignes' sceptical thought not only influenced Bacon and Shakespeare but also Nash and Donne; and even the Cambridge Platonists

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1. See Les Doctrines Médiévales chez Donne (Oxford 1917)
 2. See Study of the Prose Works of John Donne (Oxford 1929 Chap V.)
 3. Courthopes' History of English Poetry vol III, P. 162
 4. The Poems of Donne edited by H.J.C. Grierson - Introduction P. X.

like Chillingworth did not escape the influence of Sextus Empiricus. The publication of the Hypotyposes of Sextus Empiricus with a Latin translation, by Henri Estienne, was an important event in the history of the Renaissance thought for the writings of this ancient sceptical Philosopher deeply influenced Montaigne and sent a wave of scepticism and doubt abroad.

Montaigne and Donne as Sceptics.

Montaignes' essays were published by John Florio in 1603, and till 1632 two editions had appeared. That Donne had read Montaigne is proved by a letter which he wrote to Sir George More. He is saying that "no other kind of conveyance is better for knowledge, or love "than letters" and points out that: "The Italians, which are most discursive and think the world owes them all wisdom abound so much in this kind of expressing, that Michel Montaigne says, he hath seen (as I remember) 400 volumes of Italian letters. But it is the other capacity which must make mine acceptable, that they are also the best conveyers of love." ¹⁾ In the original sense of the word Montaigne was a "sceptic" for in his Apology of Raymond Sebonds he brought all his power of learning and intellect to bear on his main purpose which was to discredit reason and shake all certainty. Pascal defined the character of Montaignes' thought when he censured him for "putting all things in doubt."

"Montaigne" points out J. Robertson "at this stage full of Pyrrhonism he had drawn from Sextus Empiricus will allow no virtue to reason save as a means of discrediting reason."

Sextus Empiricus was also translated into English, for Nash refers to a translation now lost. R.B. McKerrow in his notes on Nashs'

1. The Life and Letters of John Donne, by E. Gosse page 122.

(Summers' Last Will) says: "The whole of this (lines 670-735) comes ultimately from the Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes, of Sextus Empiricus, though not of course directly from the Greek, nor even, I believe, from the Latin translation of Henri Estienne. In 1591 Nash spoke of the works of Sextus having been "latelie translated into English for the benefit of unlearned writers" (III. 332. 31 - 4) and in 1.174.4 and 185.8, where quoting from him, he wrongly substitutes "ashes" for "asses" and "bones" for "beans", we seem to have evidence that he was himself using such a translation, and incorrect copy of it. I have however, failed to discover any early Englishing of the work." ¹⁾ MacKerrow has pointed out that S. Rowland in his tract entitled "Brieves' Ghost Haunting Conycatchers" borrowed the whole of his Discourse from Sextus on "A notable scholarlike discourse upon the nature of Dogges." ¹⁾

Donne, it is important to note, knew the Hypotyposes of Sextus as well as the account of the famous Greek Sceptic Pyrrho (in Diognes Laeritus) about whom Sextus says "In the definition of the sceptic system there is also implicetly included that of the Pyrrhonean Philosopher: he is the man who participates in this "ability" ²⁾

Donne refers to Sextus in his Essays of Divinity; Donne is discussing, the "boldness" which the causists, sceptics and schoolmen have taken with the "words", and he refers to Sextus:

"But therefore we may spare Divine authority and ease our Faith too, because it is present to our reason. For omitting the quarrelsome contending of Sextus Empiricus the Pyrrhonian, (of the author of which Sect Laeritius says, that he handled Philosophy bravely, having invented a way by which a man should determine nothing of everything), who with his ordinary weapon, a two-edged sword, thinks he cuts off all arguments

1. See - Works of Thomas Nash Edited by R.B. MacKerrow Vol IV PP. 428-431.
 2. Outlines of Pyrrhonism, Translated by Rev. R.G. Bury 1933 page 9.

against production of nothing, by this Non sit quod jam est, nec quod non est; nam non patitur mutationem quod non est; and omitting those idolaters of nature, the Eupicureans, who pretending a mannerly lothness to trouble God, because Nec bene Promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira, indeed out of their pride are loth to beholden to God, say that we are sick of the fear of God Quo morbo mentem concussa Timore Deorum."⁽¹⁾ It is significant that Donne just before he became a priest remembered the sceptical Philosophers in his study of the Holy Scriptures only to discredit them. Donne brought the accumulated learning of centuries to bear upon his reading of the Holy Scriptures, and nothing reveals to us the mind of Donne, the theologian, better than these curious, learned but sincere Essays in Divinity.

In one of his Sermons Preached at White-Hall April 12, 1618 Donne again referred to the sceptical Philosophers who undermined all certainty and doubted the truth of all things. "Those Sceptic Philosophers that doubted of all, though they affirmed nothing, yet they denied nothing neither, but they saw no reason in the opinion of others,"²⁾ and here it is important to remember that the central problem in faith to Donne was the "certainty" of salvation, it is a theme which he has treated with a wealth of learning and imagination in his poems as well as in his sermons.

That Donne was attracted by the sceptical Philosophy which has left its mark on his early writings is beyond doubt. The spirit of scepticism, of doubt is present in his "paradoxes and problems" as well as in his Satires and love poems; and this is significant for Donnes'

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1. Essays in Divinity edited by Dr Jessopp 70-71.
 2. Donnes' Sermons Vol V page 562 edited by Henry Alford.

early training was in the hands of the Jesuits, his uncle himself being a well known Jesuit, Father Jasper Haywood, who succeeded Father Parsons, as the head of the English Jesuit Mission, and Donne was thus familiar from his early youth ¹⁾ with the scholastic system of thought when as he himself tells us (in "Pseudo-Martyr") he "surveyed and digested the whole body of divinity Controverted between ours and the Roman Church." The Cardinal principle of the scholastic system is that it affords "certainty" in belief and it is what we do not find in Donnes' early work "for, as Pope Leo XIII has said that St Thomas' "method of Philosophising, not only in teaching the truth, but also ²⁾ in refuting error, he has gained this prerogative for himself."

It is thus evident that poets like Nash, Shakespeare, and Donne were interested in the Philosophy of Scepticism. Bacon made it fashionable in his Essays; Montaigne, the great sceptic of the Renaissance, was very popular in the Renaissance England, Ben Jonson (in his Volpone Act III. C. II) declared that "all our English writers will deign to steal..... from Montaigne" and J.M. Robertson ³⁾ has shown the curious borrowings of Shakespeare from Montaigne; but Donne had read Sextus Empiricus, and the other ancient Greek sceptics in Latin, and though Montaignes' subtle and discursive intellect might have fascinated him, his search for truth is far more serious and Philosophical than that of Montaigne. Montaigne doubted even the immortality of the soul; ³⁾ but Donne is a more serious enquirer about truth than Montaigne: the third satire becomes a sermon; it opens with a serious inquiring note:

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1. Walton tells us that "about the nineteenth year" Donne began to study the works of Cardinal Bellarmine but Dr Jessop has pointed that Walton was wrong for the Cardinals' "Disputations" were not published till 1593.
 2. Summa Theologica of St Thomas Aquinas (Dominican Fathers' Translation) Vol. I. No. I. page XXIV
 3. See Montaigne and Shakespeare - by J.M. Robertson.

"Is not our Mistresse fair Religion,
As worthy of all our soules devotion,
As virtue was to the first blinded age."

Montaignes' retreat from Paris into the quiet of his magnificent library in the village of his birth presents a strange contrast to Donnes' conception of life as a continual warfare in which all the energies of mans' soul and intellect should be cast on the side of goodness.

Montaigne wrote in his essay on "Solitude."

"We should reserve a storehouse for ourselves altogether ours, and wholly free, wherein we may hoard up and establish our true liberty, the principal retreat and solitariness, wherein we must go alone to ourselves We have lived long enough for others; let us live for ourselves at least this latter end of our life; let us bring our thoughts and our purposes home to ourselves, and for our full content".

A resolution of quite another kind breathes through Donnes' early writings; even in his Paradox 9, where scepticism and cynicism cross and illumine each other, Donne declared: "Truly this life is a Tempest and a Warfare, and he which dares dye, to escape the Anguish of it, seems to me but so valiant, as he which dares hang for himself, lest he bee prest to the wars". and in one of his sermons he again declared: "Militia Vita
1)
our whole life is a warfare, God would not chuse cowards."

Donne could not retire into "the insipid country" and devote himself to the culture of his soul and rejoice like Montaigne in "his liberty and tranquillity and leisure"²⁾, Donne had a horror of

1. L. Sermons. p. 436.

inactivity and idle leisure as is evidently shown in his letters from his "dungeon of Mitcham;"¹⁾ his inactivity was the cause of his "melancholy" during his residence at Mitcham; "for to this hour I am nothing, or so little, that I scarce subject and argument good enough for one of mine own letters;" Donne ridiculed the life of leisure, and benevolent passive "goodness": "But if I ask myself what I have done in the last watch, or would do in the next, I can say nothing; if I say that I have passed without hurting any, so may the spider in my window."²⁾ The resolve to do something worthy of his high intellectual capacities is ever with him in his darkest hour of gloom; "yet I would live, and be some such thing as you might not be ashamed to love,"²⁾ he wrote to Goodyer.

Nothing illustrates the difference between the mind of Donne and Montaigne better than their attitude towards their own death. Montaigne declared that "among the number of several other offices which the general and principal character of knowing how to live includes, is this article of knowing how to die, and it is amongst the lightest, if our fears did not give weight to it;"³⁾ and in one of his essays Montaigne declared in a personal tone that "In judging another's life I observe always how its close has borne itself, and my chief endeavour regarding my own end is that it may carry itself well, that is to say, quietly and insensibly."⁴⁾ Donnes' elaborate preparation to meet his death is quite well known to be related here; the intellectual quality of Donnes'

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1. See Donnes' Letter to Sir Henry Goodyer. Gosse Page 194.
 2. Letter to Sir H. Goodyer September 1608 - Gosse page 192.
 3. See Montaignes' Essays "of Physiognomy" Book III Chapter 12 - The H Essays of Montaigne Translated by G.B. Ives (1925). Pascal criticised Montaignes' conception of death, and said that "his wholly pagan feeling about death cannot be excused for one must relinquish all piety, if one does not desire to die, at least, in a Christian manner; now throughout his book he has in mind only to die weakly and gently." see Essays Ives page 106.
 4. Montaignes' Essays - Ives page 104.

mind, and the sombre majesty of his imagination, is nowhere so vividly revealed as in his Meditations on Death in his poems, sermons and Devotions; his conception of his manner of death written as early as 1608 provides us with an interesting contrast with Montaignes' desire to die "quietly and insensibly."

"I would not that death should take me asleep, I would not have him merely seize me, and only declare me to be dead, but win me and overcome me."¹⁾

Montaigne considered the day of death to be the day of Judgment, while to Donne every day of life is critical for it helps or retards the growth of man in goodness, and sanctification; Montaigne said "It is thus that all the other days of our lives must be put to the touch and tested by this last stroke. It is the masterday, it is the day that is the judge of all other days. It is the day, says one of the ancients,²⁾ which is to pass judgment on all my past years."

Donne in his last sermon passionately declared: "our criticall day is not the very day of our death; but the whole course of our life. I thank him that prayers for me when the Bell tolles, but I thank him much more that catechises mee or preaches to mee, or instructs mee how to live."³⁾

Donnes' humanism is made of a richer texture than that of Montaigne, it was enriched by the passionate ardour of his souls' attempt to apprehend God; an attempt which Montaigne ruled out of his scheme of life. Though Donne was interested in the sceptical Philosophers, in fact he is not

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1. Donnes' letter to Sir Henry Goodyer - Gosse Vol I. 191.
 2. Montaignes' Essay - Ives page 103.
 3. Complete Poetry and selected Prose by John Hayward P 752.

a sceptic in the literal sense of the word. The main weapon in the hands of the Renaissance sceptics like Montaigne and the ancient sceptics like Sextus Empiricus, was to discredit reason, suspend judgment, and undermine all certainty.

That Donne played with these ideas which have left their impression on his early writings is beyond doubt, but that he seriously believed in them at any stage of his life is improbable. It must be remembered that in the third satire before he counsels us to "doubt wisely", he has proved the futility of the various Christian Churches which do not embody the spirit of Christ. Religion was no longer to be found at Rome where "..... shee was a thousand years agoe;" nor could Donne love the Calvinistic church

"..... who at Geneva is call'd

Religion, plain, simple, sullen, young, contemptuous, yet unhansome." Nor the Angelican Church nearer home appealed to Donne; for he was in search of the one universal catholic church, the one true church of Christ, which like the idealists in every age, he was not destined to find. In his characteristic manner Donne declared:

..... though truth and falsehood bee
Neare twins, yet truth a little elder is,
Be busie to seeke her, believe me this
Hee's not of none, nor worst, that seekes the best."

This is not the language of scepticism but of an earnest inquirer about truth, who has embarked on that odyssey of spirit, the search of a "true religion."

Donne could not say with Montaigne "Que sais je" - what do I know? he was intent on finding truth for himself; and instead of adoration, or scorn, ("To adore, or scorn an image, or protest, may all be bad;") he discovered another way of search;

"..... doubt wisely; in strange way
 To stand inquiring, is not to stray;
 To sleepe, or runne wrong, is."1)

To inquire in a wise manner and the right spirit was to Donne a better course than to neglect truth or to be afraid of facing it; and that he proceeded in this search not with any cynical disregard of the opposite points of view, or with the essential purpose of searching all things with the eye of a sceptic, is told by him in his preface to Pseudo-Martyr. "In which search and disquisition, that God which awakened me then, and hath never forsaken men in that industry, as He is the author of that purpose, so is He a witness of this protestation, that I behaved myself, and proceeded therein with humility and diffidence in myself, and by that which by His grace I took to be the ordinary means, which is frequent prayer and indifferent affections." It was Donnes' earnest desire to "use no inordinate haste nor precipitation in binding my conscience to any real religion" that led him to "doubt wisely" and "inquire rightly"; in this satire an important element has often been neglected; Donne definitely expresses himself against accepting any interpretation of religious truth on the authority of the temporal powers, and it implies his distrust at this stage of his life of the principles on which he thought Roman catholic as well as the Reformed Churches were based - Donne says,

"Foole and wretch, wilt thou let thy soule be tyed
 To mans laws, by which she shall not be tryed
 At the last Day? oh will it then boot thee
 To say a Philip or a Gregory,
 A Harry or a Martin taught thee this?
 Is not this excuse for mere contraires 1)
 Equally strong? can not both sides say so?"

and it is interesting to compare Montaignes' view in such matters who advised complete obedience to the ecclesiastical government. "We must either submit altogether to the authority of our ecclesiastical

1. The poetical work of J. Donne edited by Prof. Grierson Vol I. P157.
 2. Donne edited by H.J.C. Grierson P 157.

governments or dispense with it altogether: it is not for us to fix
 how much obedience we owe it?"¹⁾

It is thus evident that when Montaigne declared "what do I know?" and when Donne advised us to "doubt wisely" they were expressing two different types of minds, one that of the sceptic and the other that of an earnest seeker after truth, who at the same time was fully alive in his age and interested in its Philosophical speculations and scientific discoveries; that Donne was attracted by the scepticism of Sextus and of Montaigne is true and we should recognize the importance of this phase of Donnes' thought for it marks a point of departure in his spiritual development; it was the knowledge of the "sceptical Philosophers" which showed to him the dangers of their knowledge and taught him to distrust reason in the interest of what Donne called "spiritual reason" which is a faculty of vision given to "regenerate Christian" and which "natural man" does not possess.

²⁾
 Rev. R.G. Bury, has defined scepticism thus: "A "sceptic" in the original sense of the Greek term, is simply an inquirer or investigator. But inquiry often leads to an impasse and ends in credulity or despair of solution; so that the "inquirer" becomes a "doubter" or a "disbeliever"."

Donne inquired and sometimes perhaps doubted but he never disbelieved, he was not a sceptic in the Philosophical sense of the word. Sextus declared that "scepticism is an ability or mental attitude, which opposes appearance to judgments in any way whatsoever, with the result that, owing to the equipollence of the objects and reasons thus opposed, we are brought forcibly to a state of mental suspense and next to a

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1. Montaignes' Essays - Ives - 242.
 2. Sextus Empiricus. Vol I. page XXIX.

*It = finite spec of recursion - a result of disillusionment,
Welt of Sense.*

state of "unperturbedness" or quietude ¹⁾ and he further defined "suspense" and "quietude" ingeniously: "suspense is a state of mental rest owing to which we neither deny nor affirm anything. "quietude" is an untroubled and tranquil condition of soul" ¹⁾

It was in this spirit of scepticism that Montaigne inscribed on the walls of his library "I determine nothing: I do not comprehend things; I suspend judgment; I examine." This attitude of mind, to examine in order to determine nothing, is foreign to Donne's mind. T.S. Eliot has declared that Donne "was more interested in ideas themselves as objects than he was in the truth of ideas." ²⁾ But the whole endeavour of Donne's learning and devotion seems to us to apprehend the "truth of ideas" as objective realities, his distrust of rationalism being based on the inadequacy of ideas as such; "controverted divinity" failed to satisfy his intellect and the soul alike, and "for the agony and exercise of our sense and spirit" ³⁾ - as Donne himself describes his search - he had to go as he tells us, to "prayer and meditation." ³⁾ Donne was fascinated with ideas which he came across in his "immoderate desire of human learning and languages," and he played with them dialectically "catlike" as T.S. Eliot puts it; but ideas in themselves never satisfied the eager curiosity of his intellect or the hunger of his soul. He was fascinated with the theme of scepticism of Sextus, and Montaigne's negative attitude towards Philosophical truth must have interested him, for he says:

"There is nothing simply good, nor ill alone
Of every quality comparison,
The onely measure is, and judge, opinion."
(The Progress of the Soul.)

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1. Outlines of Pyrrhonism, I, page 9 Rev. Bury's' Translation.
 2. A Garland for John Donne page 11
 3. See Gosse page 190.

Montaigne had also said "That the taste of Good and Evil depends for a good part, upon the opinion we have of them." These ideas were in the air, and the Elizabethan poets were "playing" with them as Donne did in his early writings. Hamlet had said "there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so" and Marston (in "what you will"¹⁾) had also declared:

"..... all that exists
Takes valuation from opinion."

Donne was interested in scepticism as he was interested in the scientific discoveries and concepts of his age, but we can not agree with Brevold when he says "yet his youthful scepticism profoundly influenced him."¹⁾ His scepticism was a passing phase in the development of his religious life and he used it in the body of his poetry as he did the dialectics of the schoolmen and the astronomical concepts of Kepler.

The scientific discoveries of his age like those of Kepler, Copernicus, and Galileo, not only altered his mediaeval conception of the physical universe, but also undermined "certainty" in philosophy and helped him to assume a sceptical attitude towards Philosophy in his early years. In his *Biathanatos*, written in 1608, he refers to Keplers' "De stella Nova in Pede serpentarii," published in 1606 and in his "conclave Ignatii," he tells us of his study of copernicus and Galileo, "who of late both summoned the other worlds, the stars to come nearer to him and to give him an account of themselves,"²⁾ and again in the following well-known lines he described the disintegrating influence of the New Astronomy on his mind.

"New Philosophy calls all in doubt
The Element of fire is quite put out;
The sun is lost, and th'Earth, and no mans wit
Can well direct him where to looke for it."

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1. The Naturalism of Donne in relation to some Renaissance Tradition - The Jour of English and Germanic Philology 1923.
 2. Donne edited by J. Hayward. P. 539.

and he realised that

'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply, and all Relation."

Prof. Grierson has admirably treated the effect of the New Astronomy on Donnes' poetic sensibility,¹⁾ his imagination never lost the impress of the New Astronomical thought of Kepler and Galileo; "copernicism in the mathematics" wrote Donne in a letter in 1615 "hath carried earth farthur up, from the stupid centre; and yet not honoured it, nor advantaged it, because for the necessity of appearance, it hath carried heaven so much higher from it."²⁾ Donne even remembered "the new Philosophy" in his devotions: "I am up, and I seem to stand, and I goe round; and I am a new Argument of the new Philosophie. That the Earth moves round; why may I not believe, that the whole earth moves in round motion, though that seeme to mee to stand, when as I seeme to stand to my company and yet am carried, in a giddy, and circular motion as I stand?"³⁾

This brief account shows Donnes' scepticism in relation to the Renaissance Tradition of scepticism and Naturalism; Courthope as well as Grierson recognised, as we have pointed out, the significance of Donnes' reading of sceptical Philosophers; but Miss Ramsays' study of the Philosophy of Donne has completely neglected this phase of Donnes' thought; Donnes' dissatisfaction with reason and intellect has a deeper significance for our study of Donnes' relation to scholastic Philosophy, for it had raised intellect to a power of vision which the mediaeval mystics seem to have possessed. Miss Ramsay has declared Scholastic Philosophy to be an integral part of Donnes' thought; but she has neglected the Renaissance Tradition of Scepticism in Donnes' Philosophy;

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1. See Grierson. Vol I. Introduction P XXVIII
 2. Gosse. II. 78-79
 3. Donnes' Devotions - edited by John Sparrow - 128.

to her Donne was essentially a Neo-Platonist undisturbed by any Philosophical doubts.¹⁾ Prof. Picavet has emphasised the Plotinian element in mediaeval Philosophy and following him Miss Ramsay resolved the complex and rich personality of Donne into the simplicity of mediaeval doctrines of unquestioning faith.

Prof. Grierson has traced Donnes' hesitation to become a priest to his Renaissance temperament. "When this was pressed upon him by Morton or by the King it brought him into conflict with something deeper and more fundamental than theological doctrines, namely, a temperament which was rather that of the Renaissance than that either of Puritan England or of the Counter - Reformation - whether in Catholic countries or in the Anglican Church - the temperament of Raleigh and Bacon rather than of Herbert or Crashaw"²⁾

This temperament of the Renaissance is expressed in Donnes' search for the truth, in his eagerness to examine all forms of faith impartially, in his passion for learning and languages; and the result was that Donne began to doubt if anything could be proved on the basis of "sense knowledge" alone. "Except demonstrations (and perchance there are very few of them) I find nothing without perplexities)..... Even the least of our actions suffer and taste thereof,"³⁾ and earlier he had declared⁴⁾ "Divers minds out of the same thing often draw contrary conclusions."

Greville and Chapman like Donne had also realised, though not in such an acute form, the disturbing influence of the New Astronomy on the thoughts of their age.

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1. See Les Doctrines Médiévales chez Donne (oxford 1917) page 18.
 2. Grierson Donne Vol II Introduction page 4.
 3. Gosse Vol II page 16.
 4. Gosse. Vol. P. 184.



"Heaven moves so far off that men say it stands;
 And Earth is turned the true and moving Heaven;
 And so 'tis left; and so is all Truth driven
 From her false bosom; all is left alone,
 Till all be ordered with confusion."1)

but Donne found a way out of this chaos in Philosophy, and this he found in mysticism; he had expressed the disillusion, the cynicism of his age, and now he expressed that mood of godliness, of humility, of passionate awareness of God which was to give to the century a long line of great mystical poets. Donne had himself summed up his attitude (in his Preface to Pseudo-Martyr) towards the different systems of Philosophy when he wrote:

"My natural impatience not to dig painfully in deep and stony and sullen learnings; my indulgence to my freedom and liberty, as in all indifferent things, so in my studies also, not to betroth or enthrall myself to any one Science, which should possess or dominate me."²⁾

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1. "The Tears of Peace" - Chapmans' Poems edited by Shepherd P 114.
 2. Gosse. 249.

Donne knew how the light of reason goes out leaving a man helpless in matters of faith, and how God damps the understanding and darkens the intellect. He knew that the greatest affliction comes when "God worketh upon the spirit itself and damps that, that he casts a sooty cloud upon the understanding and darkens that;"¹⁾ Donne gained, as we shall see, the "modest assurance" of his Salvation not through intellectual conviction and Philosophical reasoning but through mystical faith.

Miss Ramsay has exhaustively quoted from his works to prove that Donnes' conception of God and Nature is essentially Scholastic. E. Simpson in summarising Miss Ramsays' conclusions says: "Miss M.P. Ramsay has shown that this thought belongs to the Middle Ages rather than to the Renaissance. She shows that Donnes' thought is marked by three characteristics - it is fundamentally theological, its attitude towards Science and the knowledge of the external world is in harmony with that of the Middle Ages, and it assigns to authority a place very similar to that given to it by mediaeval times. Though he often criticises the super-subtlety of the schoolmen, he accepts their fundamental doctrines, their point of view, and their vocabulary. His Philosophy starts from an unshakeable belief in the existence of God and he sees God everywhere in the Universe.

In his method of expounding this great reality he followed the schoolmen in their respect for the past, in the constant appeal to authority and in the frequent use of the allegorical system of interpretation."²⁾

1. Alford. V. 320

2, A study of the Prose works of John Donne by E.M. Simpson P 94

Prof. Grierson thinks that Donne became acquainted with the Philosophy of Plato through the theology of the schools, he says: "The question of the influence of Plato on the poets of the Renaissance has been discussed of recent years but generally without a sufficient preliminary inquiry as to the scholastic inheritance of these poets. Doctrines that derive ultimately, it may be from Plato and Aristotle were familiar to Donne and others in the first place from Aquinas and the theology of the schools, and as Prof. Picavet has insisted they entered the scholastic Philosophy through Plotinus and were modified in the passage."¹⁾

It was through St Augustine, Boethius and Pseudo-Dionysius that the Neo-Platonic Philosophy became an element in the theology of the schoolmen; but we are not concerned here with this problem; our limited purpose is to determine how far Donne who was steeped in the Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas agreed with the Scholastic conception of God, Intellect, Knowledge, faith and reason?

Donnes' acceptance of the scholastic doctrines of St Thomas has been assumed to be an established fact; Mrs. Simpson has even asserted that "he accepts their fundamental doctrines, their point of view, and their vocabulary."²⁾

He is represented as still believing and preaching a Philosophy which in the seventeenth century had fallen into disrepute, and whose citadel had been stormed by the "new Philosophy" of Bacon.³⁾ Donne really did not exclusively belong to one system of thought; his great passion for learning and languages, as well as his restless curiosity had led him to a large number of mediaeval Philosophers of various schools

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1. Donnes' Poetical Works edited by H.J.C. Grierson Vol II P. 5.
 2. A study of the Prose works of John Donne by E.M. Simpson.
 3. Prof. Basil Willey has written an instructive chapter on "Bacon and the Rehabilitation of Nature" in "The Seventeenth century Background." Chatto and Windus 1934.

and denominations, and he quoted them freely in his poems, devotions and sermons.

The fact that Donne has been supposed to belong exclusively to the scholastic Philosophy of St Thomas, has led to much confusion and we are still far from having a clear and definite view of his philosophy and mysticism.

If we take for example the different views which E. Simpson has expressed about the scholastic and mystical element in Donnes' thought we do not get any clear statement and exposition of the Philosophy of Donne and the school to which he belongs. She has no doubt about his having been brought up in the scholastic system of thought.

"Thus he was reared in the Philosophical and theological system of St. Thomas Aquinas and his followers, so that he was in full sympathy with scholastic method of argument."¹⁾

Then she says: "His thought is mediaeval in character and most of his ideas can be traced back through Aquinas to St. Augustine and other early Christian writers who brought into the Catholic Church much of the Philosophy of Neo-Platonism."¹⁾

She further makes mysticism to be an integral part of Donnes' thought: "Donnes mysticism can not be isolated from the rest of his thought; for his whole Philosophy is that of a Christian mystic reared in the Neo-Platonic tradition which the scholastic writers of the Middle Ages had inherited."²⁾

The fact is that Mrs. Simpson apparently equates scholasticism with Thomism and accepts Prof. Picavets' exaggerated view about the influence of Plotinus.

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1. The study of the Prose works of Jonne Donne by E.M. Simpson P 88.
 2. Ibid P. 97.

scholasticism is not one continuous and compact system of Philosophy in the Middle Ages. It dominated the imagination of the Christian Philosophers from the 9th A.D. to the 14th A.D. when its decay began, during these long five centuries of Philosophical speculation, many modifications and additions were made to scholastic Philosophy. The scientific writings of Aristotle came into the hands of European Philosophers only in the later half of the 12th century and so it was only in the thirteenth century after the assimilation of the Philosophy of Aristotle, that scholasticism, in the hands of St Thomas, attained perfection. This period can be divided as follows:-

1. The 8th, 9th and 10th centuries form a period in which we find only the beginnings of those controversies and problems which were to occupy the minds of the schoolmen in the later ages.

2. It was in the 11th and the 12th centuries that schoolmen began to apply the conclusions of metaphysical logic to explain the theological dogma.

3. The 13th century is the great age of scholasticism when St Thomas tried to build a comprehensive system based on the alliance of Philosophy and Theology.

The 14th and the 15th centuries saw the decline of scholastic Philosophy under the influence of Duns Scotus and Occam who tried to separate Philosophical speculation from theology.¹⁾

1. The literature on the scholastic Philosophy is very extensive but the following books have a special bearing on our subject.
- a. The Scholastic Philosophy in its Relation to Christian Theology. B. L. Hereford.
 - b. Scholasticism by J. Rickaby.
 - c. K. R. Hagenbach. A History of Christian Doctrine.
 - d. The Conception of God in the Philosophy of Aquinas by R.L. Patterson.
 - e. St Thomas Aquinas by J. Maritain.

St Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274) great achievement was that he wove the Philosophy of Aristotle into the fabric of the Church dogma. In seventeen folio volumes he tried to systematise the teachings of Aristotle, St Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius, with the doctrine and teaching of the Church.¹⁾ In the fertile mind of the Angelic Doctor, the Scholastic system assumed a universality and completeness seldom attained by any school of Philosophy; he had synthesised many streams of thought, like that of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and Dionysius the Areopagite with the revelation of Christian dogma as embodied in the teachings of the Church.

The aim of the encyclopaedic learning of the schoolmen was to obtain a unification of knowledge; a "summa" was the end to be achieved and every branch of human thought was to have its relation to the whole defined and this whole in turn to be related to God and His Church. But in Donnes' Age, humanism and new learning were aiming to secularise human knowledge, to discover a beauty that was essentially of this earth and a pagan strain runs through all the Renaissance Literature in England.

Jusserand speaking of the influence of the Renaissance on European Literature and arts says:

"Christian and Pagan ideas mingle, the notion of Sacrilege fades, men of culture call the mass "sacra Deorum"; Pulci dedicates his second canto to the "sovereign Jupiter crucified for us," Michael Angelo paints²⁾ in the sixtine chapel a Christ who seems to be hurling thunderbolts,"

In Donnes' early Poetry, his love songs and Elegies, he is a typical child of the Renaissance, eager for the adventures of the body and the mind alike. The Naturalism and sceptical strain in his poetry reveals an attitude of mind towards life and religion which is far removed from

1. See the Philosophy of St Thomas by A.E. Taylor.

2. Jusserand, A Literary History of the English People Vol I. P 15.

that of the schoolmen of his times; and the importance of this way of thinking is further enhanced when we remember that Donne had been educated by the Jesuits, who were trained in the system of St Thomas Aquinas and were themselves the product of the great movement of the Counter Reformation started after The Council of Trent where the "summa" was placed on the altar with the Bible. Pope Leo XIII said:

"But we now come to the greatest glory of Thomas - a glory which is altogether his own, and shared with no other catholic Doctor. In the midst of the Council of Trent, the assembled Fathers so willing it, the summa of Thomas Aquinas lay open on the altar, with the Holy Scriptures and the decrees of the supreme Pontiffs that from it might be sought counsel and reasons and answers."¹⁾

Donne has himself related the story of his struggles and intellectual effort to free himself from "The Roman Religion," and Donnes' rejection of the Roman Catholic religion could not but effect his view of the scholastic theology which was still the main weapon of defence of the Catholic faith.²⁾ Donne says:

"I had a longer work to do than many other men, for I was first to blot out certain impressions of the Roman religion, and to wrestle both against the examples and against the reasons by which some hold was taken and some anticipations early laid upon my conscience, both by persons who by nature had a power and superiority over my will, and others who by their learning and good life seemed to me justly to claim an interest³⁾ for the guiding and rectifying of mine understanding in these matters."

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1. "Summa Theologica" - Dominican Fathers' Translation. page XXVI.
 2. See A.L. Moore - History of the Reformation in England and on the Continent - page 304-5.
 3. See Preface to Psuedo-Martyr.

It is thus evident that Donne had to wrestle not only against the heroic examples of the catholic martyrs of his own family and of his living Jesuit Uncle, Jasper Haywood, men learned, honest, sincere fearless and bold, but also against "the reasons by which some hold was taken" upon his conscience", and these reasons perhaps included the theology of the great schoolmen of the Middle Ages who had defended the dogma of the church which so much learning and Philosophical subtlety and ingenuity which could not but interest Donne.

Miss Ramsay has pointed out that amongst other things which the system of St Thomas Aquinas offered to Christian believers was "certainty" She says "The second quality I would emphasise is its certainty; it offers certainty, and indeed lays it on man as a duty to attain Certainty." ¹⁾

But for Donne as soon as he had succeeded in blotting out of his memory "certain impressions of the Roman Religion," there was no certainty.

"'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply, and all Relation."

Though Donne believed that religious toleration and intellectual conviction were necessary for the healthy growth of religious life, he was against showing any wavering when one has accepted a certain form of faith only to show ones' tolerance and broadmindedness. In an interesting letter to Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne rebuked him for creating an impression on the Puritans and the Papists alike that he could be converted. Donne had the humanists' broad outlook on life and morals to recognise that "The channels of God's mercies run through both fields; and they are sister teats of His graces," ²⁾ but he could not approve

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1. Donne's Relation to Philosophy - A Garland for John Donne. page 105. This is not a correct view of St Thomas' views about the certainty of Salvation; in fact he declared that it was not possible to be certain of salvation in this life .see Summa 1^a 2^{ae}. Qu 112. Art 5.
 2. Gosse Vol II Page 781.

that tolerance should create an impression of the weakness of faith. He says; "yet let me bold to fear, that sound true opinion, that in all Christain professions there is way to Salvation, (which I think you think), may have been so incommodiously or intempestively sometimes uttered by you; or else your having friends equally near you of all the impressions of religion, may have testified such an indifferency, as hath occasioned some to further such inclinations as they have mistaken to be in you.

This I have feared, because heretofore the inobedient puritans and now over-obedient Papists, attempt you." ¹⁾

DONNE AND ST THOMAS' CONCEPTION OF INTELLECT, WORD AND REASON.

Donne realised the need of intellectual conviction but it was through faith and not reason that he found it. St Thomas Aquinas has emphasised the power of intellect in the Process of "Knowing;" and has related it to the soul. He says:

"In our intellect three things exist, viz: The power of the intellect; the idea (species) of the thing understood, which is its form, related to the intellect itself as the colour is to the eye; and the act of understanding, which is the operation of the intellect. None of these is signified by the exterior word pronounced by the voice The word inwardly conceived proceeds outwardly, as is proved by the exterior word which is its sign, proceeds vocally from the one who utters it inwardly. That therefore is properly called the interior word which the intelligent agent forms by the understanding." ^{2 1)} St Thomas now shows how the "intellect" works and how the operations of the "intellect" are related to the "exterior word."

"And the intellect forms two things, according to its two operations; for by its operation which is called the intelligence of invisible things

it forms definition; and by the operation whereby it compares and divides, it forms enunciation or something similar; and therefore what is formed and expressed by the operation of the intellect, either defining or enunciating signifies something by the exterior word." ¹⁾

St Thomas Aquinas proceeds to relate intellect to the soul on one side and the exterior word on the other "what therefore is formed and expressed in the soul is called the interior word; and is therefore related to the intellect, not as that which it understands but as that in which it understands; because in what is thus expressed it sees the nature of what it understands. From these premises, therefore, we can see these two things concerning the word, viz, that the word always proceeds from the intellect and exists in the intellect; and that the word is the idea (ratio) and likeness of what is Understood." ¹⁾

It is instructive to compare Donne's view about the certainty of the operations of intellectual of which he thinks there is no criterion. In a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne says:

"we consist of three parts, a soul, a body and mind: which I call those thoughts and affections, and passions, which neither soul nor body hath alone, but have been begotten by their communication, as music results out of our breath and a cornet."

Donne points out that the diseases of the soul which are sins, and the diseases of the bodies to which we fall a victim can be known with certainty for "our knowledge therefore is also certain." ²⁾

But of the diseases of the mind, which are doubt and uncertainty, there is no cure; Donne does not refer his doubts to be cleared and silenced by the dogmas of the church but goes to human reason and intellect

1. Summa Theologica - Introduction, opuscle No XIII.
2. Gosse Vol I PP. 184, 185.

to which, unlike St Thomas, he does not assign any certainty.

"But of the diseases of the mind there is no criterion, no canon, no rule, for our own taste and interpretation should be the judge, and that is the disease itself."¹⁾

Donne realises, as St Thomas often says, that the interpretation of a "thing" varies according to the capacity of the individual mind, but what St Thomas calls "the nature of what it understands" has to Donne no ultimate criterion of truth. He says:

"And I still vex myself with this, because if I know it not, nobody can know it and I comfort myself because I see dispassioned men are subject to the like ignorances. For divers minds out of the same thing often draw contrary conclusions, as Augustine thought devout Anthony to be therefore full of the Holy Ghost, because not being able to read, he could say the whole Bible, and interpret it; and Thyreus the Jesuit, for the same reason doth think all the Anabaptists to be possessed. And as often out of contrary things men draw one conclusion.

"As to the Roman Church, magnificence and splendour hath ever been an argument of God's favour, and poverty and affliction to the Greek."²⁾

Donne gives to the knowledge of the soul, and the knowledge of the senses a certain amount of certainty, but to the apprehensions of Intellect, he assigns no certainty and this is a principle quite different from that which underlies the whole majestic system of the "summa".

Donne points out:

"out of this variety of minds it proceeds that though our souls would go to one end, heaven, and all our bodies must go to one end, the earth; yet our third part, the mind, which is our natural guide here, chooses

1. Gosse Vol I, PP 184, 185.

2. Donnes' Letter to Sir H.G. see Gosse Vol I p 184 185, Life and Letters of Donne. Gosse assigns this letter to the Spring of 1608!

to every man a several way: Scarce anyman likes what another doth, nor advisedly that which himself.¹⁾"

Aquinas, following Aristotle, had laid a great emphasis on exact definition, and shown the relation of the word, verbum, to the intellect, he had declared that "the word always proceeds from the intellect and exists in the intellect." The Metaphysical poets like Donne who were learned in the Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas also related the word to the intellect rather than to emotion and this may explain the fusion of the poetic emotion with the intellect in the Metaphysical Poetry; though to Donne word was a significant and important thing, he could hardly give it the same authority which St Thomas has given to it in his Philosophy, for Donne thought that the "word" could not express "the nature of what it Understands." He says in one of his letters:

"yea, words which are our subtlest and delicatest outward creatures, being composed of thoughts, and breath, are so muddy, so thick, that our thoughts themselves are so, because (except at the first rising) they are ever leavened with passions and affections."²⁾

Donne could not conceive of words in an abstract sense, pure words, separated from thoughts (which are ever "leavened with human passions and affections") subsisting in the realm of intelligence as St Thomas did.³⁾

Miss Ramsay has given a quotation from Donnes' Sermons where Donne's imagination plays on the four elements of the mediaeval Physics to prove that "he continues to think in terms of the old system, his reason continues to work upon the old notions he still lets himself, lets the discursive reason work on the notion of the four

1. Donnes' Letter to Sir H.G. see Gosse Vol 1 184, 185, Life and Letters of John Donne. Gosse assigns this letter to the Spring of 1608.
2. Donnes' Letter to Sir Henry Goodyer - see Gosse Vol Page 228.
3. St Thomas' use of his vocabulary is judicious and scientific. In "summa" alone there are one million and half words.

elements; fire plays its constant part. In the quotation above - water, earth, fire, air - he passes each in review in reference to the dead body.

Water, and earth and fire and air, are the proper boxes in which God lays up our bodies for the resurrection.¹⁾

A criticism of Donnes' Philosophy which is based on referring his images to their mediaeval sources is destined to lead us nowhere; for it reveals Donnes' method and not his thought. Donne for the illustration and citation of his views and arguments drew from the mediaeval learning as well as from the New Philosophy, it can be easily shown that it was his method in Poetry as well in his sermons. In the following passage Donne uses the New Astronomy to prove mans' nearness to Heaven as he had used the mediaeval Physics to show where God shall deposit our ashes after the dissolution of the body.

"And I think, that as copernicism in the mathematics hath carried earth farther up, from the stupid centre; and yet not honoured it, nor advantaged it, because for the necessity of appearances, it hath carried heaven so much higher from it; so the Roman profession seems to exhale, and refine our wills from earthly drugs and lees, more than the Reformed, and so seems to bring us nearer heaven; but then that carries heaven farther from us, by making us pass so many courts, and offices of saints in this life in all our petitions, and lying in a painful prison in the next, during the pleasure, not of Him to whom we go, and who must be our Judge, but of them from whom we come, we know not our case."²⁾

This method of illustrating his arguments was familiar to Donne and

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1. Donnes' Relation to Philosophy page 115 - A Garland for John Donne.
 2. Gosse. vol II Page 7a - Letters to Sir Henry Goodyer.

therefore we should be very careful in examining his views with reference to his mediaevalism or scepticism. Donne, as we have pointed out, was interested in sceptical Philosophers as he was interested in mediaeval medicine and the New Astronomy and the New Philosophy seems to have created a void in his imagination:

"The sun is lost, and th' earth, and no mans wit
Can well direct him where to look for it."

but this did not give rise to scepticism in the original sense of the word, for Donne ever fervently believed in God and recognised the need of religion and the Church; while the sceptics had adopted a negative attitude even in their theory of the existence of God. Sextus Empiricus asks: "how shall we be able to reach a conception of God when we have no agreement about his substance or his form or his place of abode?..... consequently, the existence of God can not be proved from any other fact. But if Gods' existence is neither automatically pre-evident nor proved from another fact, it will be inapprehensible." ¹⁾

This negative attitude of mind could not satisfy Donnes' intellect which was essentially positive. Donne is perhaps referring to the sceptical Philosophers when in one of his sermons he said: "one Philosopher thinks he is dived to the bottome when he says, he knowes nothing, but this, that he knows nothing; and yet another thinks that he hath expressed more knowledge than he, in saying that he knows not so much as that, That he knows nothing."

It has become a common place of the criticism of Donnes' Philosophy to quote the following lines from his III satire to prove his scepticism in his early years;

1. Sextus Empiricus 9 outlines of Pyrrhonism - III - Rev. R.G. Bury - page 330-31.

"Doubt wisely; in a strange way,
To stand enquiring right, is not stray;
To sleep, or run, wrong, is."

(III satire).

but it has not yet been noticed that Donne was echoing St Thomas Aquinas who has expressed almost the same view in his commentary on Aristotles' Metaphysics:- St Thomas says:

"Any one who seeks after truth must begin by doubting stoutly, because the finding of truth is nothing else but the solving of doubt It is clear that anyone who does not know where he is going cannot go straight except by chance. Hence no one can keep on the right path in the search for truth unless he knows before hand the doubt of the question just as in the courts no one can act as judge who has not heard all sides, so that hearer of Philosophy is better able to act as umpire if he has been told all that the doubting adversaries have to say for themselves..... Those whose aim is to discuss truth and truth only must not take up an attitude of hostility to any of the disputants on whose claims they are about to sit in judgment. Their proper attitude towards all parties is that of impartial investigation." And Aquinas quotes Aristotle "to those who wish to investigate truth it belongs to doubt rightly."

Donne seems to have literally followed the advice of the Angelic Doctor in his search for Truth, for he doubted wisely and inquired rightly and with strict impartiality surveyed the whole body of "controverted divinity."

1. In Metap. lect I also see The Catholic Church and Philosophy by V. MacNabb. pages 64, 65.

DONNE AND SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY

Aristotle and the Church.

The significance of the presence of Aristotle in the Philosophy of St Aquinas has not been fully realised in discussing the scholastic element in Donnes' Philosophy. E.M. Simpson has declared Donne to be a "Christian mystic reared in the Neoplatonic tradition," and also characterised his thoughts as "mediaeval in character, most of his ideas can be traced back through Aquinas to St Augustine, the Pseudo-Dionysius and other early Christian writers who brought into the Catholic Church much of the Philosophy of Neoplatonism."¹⁾

If we accept the Philosophy of Donne to be largely Neo-Platonic, we cannot easily trace back "most of his ideas" through St Thomas Aquinas to such great Christian mystics as St Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius because Aquinas himself differs in many respects (take the theory of Predestination) from St Augustine and the Neoplatonic Philosophers.

The Neoplatonic element in the system of St Thomas Aquinas is not the one which Plotinus originally preached. It was considerably modified due to the predominant influence of Aristotle on the Scholastic Philosophy. Neoplatonism and scholasticism are not interchangeable terms.

The great achievement of St Thomas Aquinas consists in having Aristotlianised the whole Philosophy of the Church.¹⁾

Wicksteed says. "The feat is the more interesting and instructive because on many points the Aristotelian Philosophy appears to be alien alike to the history and genius of Christianity, whereas there is a natural affinity between Christian thought and Platonism."³⁾

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1. A Study of the Prose works of John Donne P. 88
 2. See Prof. A.E. Taylors' Lecture on St Thomas Aquinas as a Philosopher. He has argued for an untraditional use of Aristotle by Aquinas.
 3. The Reactions between Dogma and Philosophy - by Philip H. Wicksteed. 1920 Page 7.

It was Neoplatonism which had helped in the crystallisation of Christian Philosophy and theology in the formative period of the Church; it is significant that St Augustine who dominated the Church Philosophy before Aquinas was thoroughly imbued with Platonism. Let us examine how the influence of Aristotle came to be imbibed in the church and how much of the scholastic element is to be found in the Philosophy of the Christian mystics whom Donne, as has been accepted, generally follows. The rise of Aristotle in the Philosophy of the church was a slow process. Aristotles' Philosophy was introduced to Europe through the translation of the Arabic commentaries of Avicenna; the Physical books were translated from the Arabic Version into Latin by M.C. Toledo. The synod of Paris officially condemned in 1210 the application of the logic of Aristotle to the theology of the Church. "Theologians ought to expound theology according to the approved tradition of the saints" (Gregory IX). The discovery of Aristotle tinged as it was with the sceptical thought of Averroes, sent abroad a wave of scepticism which the Church could not but condemn. From the 6th to the early 12th century, the Christianity had no rival Philosophical thought to question the authority of the Scriptures or the Christian conception of the soul, mind and Intelligence. Wicksteed has pointed out that "It was not till times approaching those of Thomas himself that contact with the high culture of Islam again compelled the Christian thinkers explicitly to face the necessity not only of finding a base for their belief in any divine revelation at all but also of vindicating by an appeal to the common ground of human reason, the credit of the actual revelation that they accepted, against the scepticism of believers in a rival."¹⁾

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- 1a. P. Wicksteed - The Reactions between Dogma and Philosophy - page 41.
 b. See also - "The Catholic Church and Theology" - by Fr. Vincet MacNabb. O.P. 1927. page 31 to 37.
 c. See also - "Arabic Thought and Its Place in History." by De Lacy O'Leary - 31.

The intense Philosophical activity which followed the discovery of Aristotle had a lasting influence on the Philosophy of the Catholic Church. In the beginning the church resisted the influence of Aristotle; the use of Aristotelian logic was declared to be as of "carnal weapons." In 1210 David of Dinan who, followed Averroes declared that "God, intelligence, and matter are a single thing, one and the same," was strongly condemned by the Church.

It was left to the genius of St Thomas to effect a synthesis between the theology on one hand and Philosophy on the other.

The Ages of mediaeval Philosophy may be Chronologically divided as follows:

1. The formative Period of theology before the council of Nice (A.D. 325) Clement and the school of Alexandria.
2. The period of Platonic agnosticism - 4th century A.D. Gregory of Nazianzus.
3. The Age of Christian Neo-Platonic mysticism - 5th century A.D. to 7th century. Pseudo - Areopagite and Maximus (622).
4. The Period of Platonic mystical Philosophy and Christian theology - John of Damascus (8th century) Erigena (9th century), who translated the Areopagite.
5. Vincet of Beauvais, Albert, and Thomas.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, Platos' influence in the Philosophy of the church was supreme. H.B. Workman has pointed out that "The Aristotle whom the East had neglected became in due course the great doctor of the Latin church. At the same time though for theologians this is a minor matter, the church inverted the Position which Plato and Aristotle had held in the development of Philosophy."¹⁾

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1. Christian thought to the Reformation by H.B. Workman.

This change in Philosophical authorities had a deeper significance for the organisation of the church. Platos' theory of the immanence of God leads to mysticism which at its best tries to break off the shackles of ecclesiastical authority in favour of the individual soul life; Platos' conception of the soul and the Fall and the Physical world found a sympathetic exponent in St Paul. Dean Inge says that "the whole doctrine of the spirit in his (St Pauls') epistles corresponds closely to the Platonic Noûs,¹⁾ and that St Pauls' words "the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal," are pure Platonism. Platos' dreams of an ideal Republic and the Perfect Man set men thinking about their own imperfections and the imperfections of the temporal and spiritual organisations under which they live and thus Platos' authority could not help in the consolidation of the ecclesiastical power of the Popes; Plato stands for soul-life, while to Aristotle reason is supreme. Aristotle is not concerned with the ultimate origin of things, he is interested in the examination and analysis of the existing Nature, and he does not recognize Platos' conception of the illusory character of the world of senses. To Aristotle the world of Abstractions is not a world of Prototypes of which the existing actual world is a reflection and shadow but a "conceptual world," not existing apart from things but in them; but it was in his "Theory of the soul" expounded in his "De animã", that Aristotle came nearer to Christian conception of the soul and its life; and this was an aspect which attracted the keen intellect of St Thomas Aquinas. St Aquinas' objections to Platos' theory of body and soul have a peculiar interest for the students of Donne, for Donne, like Aquinas, realises, the oneness, and the interdependence of body and soul. St Thomas says:

1. See Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought - W.R. Inge. P 9-10.

"Plato therefore and his followers laid it down that the intellectual soul is not united with the body as form with matter, but only as the mover is with the moved, saying that the soul is in the body, as a sailor in his boat: thus the union of soul and body would be virtual contact, only. But as such contact does not produce absolute oneness, this statement leads to the awkward consequences that man is not absolutely one, nor absolutely a being at all, but is a being only accidentally. To escape this conclusion, Plato laid it down that man is not a compound of soul and body, but that the soul using the body is man." 1)

Plato gave to material substances in his conception of the world a lower place, and did not like the soul to be bound up with matter, to be degraded. Spirit was to rule matter and when in man it was united with matter as the result of the Fall, it should try to live a life apart from the pleasure of the senses. St Thomas Aquinas largely based his arguments on Aristotles' (De Anima II) which he quotes; St Thomas' arguments against Platonic theory are ingenius, sound and interesting. St Thomas says:

"Abody moved does not take its species according to the Power that moves it. If therefore the soul is united to the body as mover to moved the body and its parts do not take their species from the soul: therefore when the soul departs, the body and the parts thereof will remain of the same species. But this is manifestly false: for flesh and bone and hands and such parts, after the departure of the soul, do not retain their own names except by a facon de Parler; 2) since none of these parts retains its proper activity, and activity follows species. Therefore the union of soul and body is not that of mover with moved, or of man with his dress.

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1. Of God and His creatures trans. by J. Rickaby. P. 118.
 2. See Aristotle De Anima II 1^o 8 -10: Politica l.P. 1253, a 20.

If the soul is united with the body only as mover with moved, it will be in the power of the soul to go out of the body when it wishes, and, when it wishes, to reunite itself with the body. That the soul is united with the body as the proper form of the same, is thus proved. That whereby a thing emerges from potential to actual being is its form and actuality: for the being of a living thing is its life: moreover the seed before animation is only potentially alive, and by the soul it is made actually alive, the soul therefore is the form of the animated body.

Again, as part is to part, so is the whole sentient soul to the whole body. But sight is the form and actuality of the eye: therefore the soul is the form and actuality of the body.¹⁾"

The interdependence of body and soul is the constant theme of Donnes' poetry and prose alike. Prof. Grierson commenting on Donnes' verse letter to the Countess of Bedford says:

"Thus the deepest thought of Donnes' poetry, his love poetry and his religious poetry, emerges here again. He will not accept the antithesis between soul and body. The dignity of the body is hardly less than that of the soul.....In the highest spiritual life, as in the fullest and most perfect love, body and soul are complimentary, are merged in each other; and after death the life of the soul is in same measure incomplete, the end for which it was created is not obtained until it is reunited to the body."

Donne thought that God dignified and exalted the body when His Son assumed it; he says:

"That God, all spirit, served with spirits, associated to spirits, should have such an affection, such a love to this body, this earthly body, this deserves wonder. The father was pleased to breathe into this

1. "Of God and His creatures" edited by J. Rickaby PP. 119,120.

body, at first, in the creation. The Son was pleased to assume this body himself, after, in the Redemption; The Holy Ghost is pleased to consecrate the body and make it his Temple, by this sanctification..... thou wilt not dishonour this body as it is Christs body, nor deform it as it is thine owne, with intemperance, but thou wilt behave thyself towards it so, as towards one, whom it hath pleased the King to honour, with a resurrection.¹⁾"

It was this conception of the dignity of the body which led him to justify the physical love on an ethical basis.

"Loves mysteries in souls doe grow
But yet the body is his book."

Though Donne followed St Thomas Aquinas in his conception of body and soul, he could not give to reason and intellect the supreme place Aquinas had given in his system of Philosophy. St Thomas declared that Gods' existence could be proved by reason,²⁾ and that Gods' knowledge could be acquired through Intellect and Reason: St Thomas says: "Nor is it necessary for something greater than God to be conceivable if His non-existence is conceivable. For the possibility of conceiving Him not to exist does not arise from the imperfection or uncertainty of His Being, since His Being is of itself manifest, but from the infirmity of our understanding, which cannot discern Him as He is of Himself, but only by the effects which He produces; and so it is bought by reasoning to the knowledge of Him."

Donne began his search of Truth by giving reason a high place in his thoughts, (it was "Gods' viceroy" in him), but he soon discovered that reason, and intellect, necessary as they are for the proper understanding of faith, could never lead a man to the higher realms of religious life, when the knowledge of God is revealed to Man. In a letter to the

1. LXXX Sermon 20, 194-7 For a fuller treatment of this aspect of Donnes' love poetry see Prof. Griersons' Introduction to the Poetical works of John Donne. Vol III PXXXV.
2. See "Of God and His creatures" by J. Rickaby PII.

Countess of Bedford which belongs to his early years (1600-1614),
Donne gives a subordinate place to Reason.

Reason is our soules left hand, Faith her right
By these we reach divinity."

Aristotle conceives the Acts of God as that of a Pure intelligence;
God to him is Pure thought, Noesis, and "Thought", "thinks himself, and
the thinking is a thinking of thought." (Metaphysics chapter XII).
But Plato insists on the nobility of great passions like love, that
control our life and become a stepping stone for the higher stages of
spiritual life. It is here that Plato comes so near to the Christian
mystic's idea of God as Pure love. In Plato from beauty of body and Form
we rise to the beauty of soul and spirit, and thence to the Highest Beauty,
God Himself. Plato says:

"He who under the influence of true love rising upward from these
begins to see that beauty is not far from the end. And the true order
of going or being led by another to the things of love is to use the
beauties of earth as steps along which mounts upwards for the sake of
that other beauty going from one to two, and from two to all fair forms,
and from fair forms to fair Practices, and from fair Practices to fair
notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of Absolute
Beauty and at last knows what the essence of beauty is. This is that
life above all others which man should live, in the contemplation of
beauty absolute." (symposium 211,212, Jewett).

St Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, conceived God more as a
Pure Intelligence than Love. "Gods' Intelligence" he declared is "His
substance." and to him even Beautitude "consists essentially in the
action of the intellect; and only accidentally in the action of the will."

Rudolf Steiner, himself a profound thinker, has summed up the scholastic conception of God when he declared.

"Thus what was for the ancients vision and appeared as a reality of the spiritual world, became for scholasticism something, to be decided by all that acuteness of thought, all that suppleness and nice logic of which I have spoken to you to-day. The problem which formerly was solved by vision, is brought down into the sphere of thought and reason. That is the essence of Thomism, the essence of "Albertinism", the essence of scholasticism."¹⁾

Donne, like the mystics in all ages, believed that the Problem of the knowledge of God could not be solved through reason, intellect and philosophy and that it could only be attained after a prolonged exercise of "sense and spirit" in Illumination alone. To Donne, as to all the great Christian mystics, God is Love; Donne says:

"That God, who is Almighty, Alpha and Omega, First and Last, that God is also Love itself; and therefore this Love is Alpha and Omega, First and last too," and he also declared that "Nor can this pureness of heart, though by these means attained to, be preserved, but by this noble and incorruptible affection of Love, that puts a true value upon it, and therefore prefers it above all other things."²⁾

This conception of infinite Love permeating the Universe is absent from the Philosophy of Aristotle who with the acceptance of the system of St Thomas Aquinas superceded Plato in the Philosophy of the Church. There are no visions and dreams in Aristotle which constantly warm and kindle the imagination of Plato.

1. The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas by Rudolf Steiner. 1932 p. 69
2. XXVI Sermons No. 24.

To Aristotle "the high priest of common sense" the Problem of life is to adjust the life of the soul to the needs of a practical world. It was precisely his Philosophy which St Thomas incorporated in his "summa" which the church needed to complete its process of systematisation of the spiritual Kingdom in the Image of Caesars' Empire. St Thomas' vast intellect effected the synthesis between Aristotles' Philosophy and the dogmas of the Church. Pope Leo XIII has truly said, "Thomas gathered together their doctrines like the scattered limbs of a body and moulded them into a whole. He arranged them in so wonderful order, and increasing them with such great additions, that rightly and deservedly he is reckoned a singular safeguard and glory of the catholic church."¹⁾

England and the Break up of Scholasticism.

The break up of scholasticism has a significance for the theology of the Church and Christian mysticism alike. Leaving the great controversy of Nominalism and Thomism, the real cause of the decay of scholasticism was its failure to adjust Christian ideals of life to the Aristotelian theories of Natural Man and the world.

Scholasticism under St Thomas had tried to evolve a sublime and harmonious system out of such diverse elements as Neo-Platonism, the teachings of St Augustine, and the Philosophy of Aristotle; and in his conquest of the church it appeared that he had succeeded; but says Prof. A.S. Pringle Pattison "Indeed no sooner was the harmony apparently established by Aquinas than Duns Scotus began the negative criticism which is carried much farther by William Occam. But this is equivalent to confessing that scholasticism had failed in its task which was to rationalise the doctrines of the church. The Aristotelian form refused to fit a matter for which it was never intended; the matter of Christian theology refused to be forced into an alien form.

1. See the Encyclical of Leo XIII.

The end of the period was thus brought about by the internal decay of its method as by the variety of external causes which contributed to transfer mens' interest to other objects." ¹⁾ England played an important part in the break up of scholasticism.

Roger Bacon, a monk of the thirteenth century, tried to substitute a scientific method of observation and collection of facts for an appeal to authority. He said "If we wish to have complete and thoroughly varified knowledge we must proceed by the method of experimental science." But Philosophical speculation has for him a moral rather than a scientific interest. He has been called a "Progressive schoolman." ²⁾ The first great critic of St Thomas Aquinas was Duns Scotus, who held that God is not Absolute Intelligence but Absolute Will. In twelve volumes he criticised the system of Thomas Aquinas and his rational ground of faith. He thus hastened the separation of Philosophy from theology. He asserted that reason should not be applied to theology and that his belief in the Gospels wholly rested on the authority of the church. Occam further broadened the breach between faith and reason. He claimed that the truth of theology could not be proved by Philosophy, and that the apprehension of God was to be achieved through faith and not through reason. He also asserted that knowledge is never abstract, but is based on experience, and maintained, like a true nominalist, that the universal could not be known through the individual; but his main interest in separating faith from reason is not so much to advocate the scientific method as to reform the church. He is the last of the great Schoolmen,

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1. Encyclopaedia Brittanica 11th edition - Article on Scholasticism.
 2. English Philosophers like Erigena had played an important part in the Philosophical speculations of the Middle Ages. John Hales is claimed to be the first scholar of Aristotelian logic who applied it to Christian theology.

for his destructive criticism marks the beginning of the end of scholastic Philosophy. These critics of scholasticism, though they undermined its authority and weakened its influence, are still schoolmen. The continuity of the influence of scholasticism in England till the sixteenth century is a fact we must bear in mind when we study Donne as a Schoolman. Between 1580-1600, an acute controversy was being waged about the logic of Aristotle whose influence in spite of the "humanistic studies" was still strong at the universities.

John Case, an Oxford graduate (D1600) issued between 1584-1599 a series of seven text-books dealing comprehensively with the logic, ethics, Politics, and economics of Aristotle.

John Sanderson, a graduate of Trinity College Cambridge, wrote his "Institutin^om Dialecticarum Libri^oquater" (Printed Antwerp 1589, Oxford 1594).

While the two younger men Digby, and William Temple were carrying on the serious controversy about the respective claims of the old and the New Logic, Digby delivered a course of lectures on the logic of Aristotle, shortly after 1573, which might have been heard by Bacon, who was an undergraduate at Trinity college. He held Aristotle to be supreme and authoritative and conducted the controversy with fine scholastic skill.

It was Temple, once secretary to Sir Philip Sidney, who popularised the Dialectics of Ramus in England. Ramus was the greatest opponent of scholastics and Aristotelians in France, and his influence was felt at Cambridge as early as 1573 and the Dialectic of Ramus took the place of Aristotles' "organan". The old problem of the universal and Particular was also a point of contention between Digby and Temple, and this was mainly a problem of Scholastic Philosophy.

Bacon and Donne as Schoolmen.

It is with the scientific method of Bacon, and in the heat and dust of the theological controversies of the Reformation, that the enquiry into

into the nature of faith, Knowledge and reason begins anew. His was perhaps the first intellect to conceive the reconstruction of knowledge on a scientific and experimental basis. It is with him that we shall now compare Donnes' position as a schoolman.

Though Donne was eleven years younger than Bacon, their period of activity nearly coincided. When Donne was acting as secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton (1598-1602), Bacon was constantly employed by Elizabeth as a learned counsel; moreover as Prof. Grierson has pointed out Bacon and Donne both composed poems on the same theme, "which kind of life is best, that of Court, country or city?"¹⁾ It was in 1596 that Egerton was made Lord Keeper, and soon after he tried to restrain the fees of the clerk of the star chamber; and Bacon in a long letter to Sir Thomas Egerton discussed the whole question of the claimed fees. Donne also makes a reference to this in his V satire. Donne as Egertons' secretary must have handled the correspondence which was protracted for a long time and in this way might have come in personal contact with Bacon. We know that Donne read Bacons' reasoned and well-balanced Discourse on Ecclesiastical matters in 1603 or 1604. In a letter which has been attributed to Christopher Brooke, who writes:

"Sir Henry Goodyer is well, but no better than when you saw him. When I was at Pyrford, I left behind me Mr Bacons' Discourse of matters Ecclesiastical; I pray you return it by this bearer."²⁾

Bacon was appointed Privy Counsellor in 1616 by King James and the same King ordered Donne in 1615 to take orders. Bacon was created Viscount of St Albans in 1621, Donne was appointed the Dean of St Paul

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1. Donnes' Poetical works edited by Prof H.J.C. Grierson Vol II P. 140.
 2. See Gosse, Life and Letters of John Donne Vol I P. 126.

in the same year. When Bacon Published his "Advancement of Learning" in 1605, Donne was helping Thomas Mortan in his controversies with the Jesuits. Bacon Published "Novum organum" in 1620, "De Augmentis" in 1623, and "New Atlantis" in 1624, and these were the years when Donne made his mark as a great preacher and theologian.

We know definitely from a contemporary record that Bacon heard Donne Preaching at St Pauls' in March 29, John Chamberlain wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton: "I had almost forgotten, that on Monday the 27th (24th) of this month 1616-7 being the Kings' day, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Keeper (Bacon), Lord Privy seal were at Pauls' cross and heard Donne, who made a dainty sermon upon the 11th verse of the 22nd Proverbs and was exceedingly well liked"¹⁾ (The Court and Times of James I).

And when we remember Donnes' habit of reading which lasted all his life, it is almost certain that he must have read the works of his great contemporary.

To Aristotle knowledge was an end in itself it showed the reach of human intellect, while Bacon regarded knowledge as of Practical importance. Knowledge, Bacon says "is not like a lark which can mount and sing and please itself and nothing else. The real value of knowledge lies in the fact that it is "fruit-bearing." Bacon differed from Aristotle not only in his view of knowledge but also from his method. He tried to substitute the inductive and experimental method for the deductive and speculative method of Aristotle.

"I am building" he says in Novum organum "in the human understanding a true model of the world, such as it is in fact not such as mans' own reason would have it." Bacon called schoolmans' learning as "degenerate learning," and he says:

1. Court and Times of James I. II. 4.

"Schoolmen having strong and sharp wits, and abundance of leisure, and small variety of learning; but their wits being shut up in the cell of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle their dictator) as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges; and knowing little history, either of nature or time, did out of no great quantity of matter, and infinite agitation of wit spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extent in their books. For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself as the spider worketh his web than it is endless, and brings forth indeed cowebs of learning, admirable for the fairness of thread and work but of not substance or profit."¹⁾

It is a remarkable coincidence that what strikes us first in Donnes' attitude towards Scholastic Philosophy is his revulsion against the subtlety, and minute distinctions of the schoolmen about "indifferent things" what Bacon calls the "covebs of learning."

(1) "O wrangling schooles, that search what fire
Shall burn this world....."

(A Feaver.)

(2) and in one of his earliest letters to Countess of Bedford, Donne identifies the scholastic Philosophy with the Roman theology:

"As all which goe to Rome, doe not thereby
Esteeme religions, and hold fast the best,
But serve discourse, and curiosity,
With that which doth religion but invest,
And shunne th' entangling laborinths of schooles,
And make it wit, to thinke the wiser fooles." (2)

This note of his disapproval of the scholastic method, of the entangling cowebs of learning, is too persistent in Donnes' Poetry and sermons alike to be lightly dismissed, for it is a condemnation of the

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1. Also see chapters I and II - The Seventeenth Century Background by Basil Willey. 1934.
 2. Donne edited by J.C. Grierson Vol I P. 192.

scholastic method which is the keystone to the Philosophy of Aquinas;
in fact Miss Ramsay calls it more a method than a system.¹⁾

Donne says in one of his sermons:

"Let the Schoole dispute infinitely, (for he that will not content himself with means of salvation, till all schoole points be reconciled, will come too late), let Scotus and his Heard think, that Angels, and separate soules have a naturall power to understand thoughts, though God for his particular glory restrains the exercise of that power in them and let Aquinas present his arguments to the contrary, that those spirits have no naturall power to know thoughts; we seek no farther, but that Christ Jesus himself thought it argument enough to convince the Scribes and Pharisees, and prove himselfe God, by knowing their Thoughts"²⁾

Donne, as we have seen, was closely following the scientific thought of his day and he could not but realise that scholastic method had become obsolete in his day:

"Young men mend not their sight by using old men's spectacles, and yet we look upon Nature, but with Aristotle's spectacles and upon the body of man with Glens, and upon the world with 'Ptolomies' spectacles"³⁾

And yet Pearsall Smith thinks that Donne's "Mind had its habitation in the smaller earth-centred Ptolemaic creation."⁴⁾

Donne's condemnation of the scholastic method of building an edifice of argument out of the strict analysis of minute details is significant for the determination of his relation to scholastic Philosophy.

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1. See Miss Ramsay - Donne's Relation to Philosophy - P. 105.
 2. LXXX Sermons.
 3. Donne's Sermons, Pearsall Smith P. 93.
 4. Introduction to Donne's Sermons - Selected Passages.

Donne says:

"We see Authors, too stiffe to recant
A hundred controversies of an Ant;
And yet one watches, starves, freezes, and sweats,
To know but catechismes and Alphabets
To know concerning things, matters of fact."

(The Second Anniversary).

Speaking about the "school-divinity" of the Roman Catholic Church just before the Reformation, Donne says:

"When for the art and science of Divinity itself, they had buried it in the darknesse of the schoole, and wrapped up that, that should save our soules, in those perplexed and inextricable clouds of schoole-divinity, and their School-Divinite subject to such changes as that a Jesuit professes, that in the compasse but of thirty years, since Gregory de Valentia writ
We may truly say, that we have a new art of Divinity risen amongst us." ¹⁾

This clearly shows that Donne didn't either approve of the scholastic divinity or the scholastic method of conducting a controversy with super-subtlety.

Donne's Conception of Reason, Faith and Knowledge:-

The dispute between reason and faith has figured prominently in the history of mediaeval thought, especially in the great controversy between Nominalism and the scholasticism of St Thomas Aquinas. In the Nominalism which Occam developed the distinction between reason and faith was given an important place; Occam denied that God could be known through intellect and thus denied the whole basis on which the "summa" was based; the truth of theology was thus separated from the truth of Philosophy and this phase of mediaeval Philosophy was carried to its logical conclusions by

Peter D'Ailly (1350-1425) and John Gerson (1363-1429): It is interesting to note here that Donne was deeply learned in the opponents of the Thomists, the Nominalists, and the Sceptics alike. Donne in his *Bianthanatos* calls Pomponatius (1462-1526) an "excellent Philosopher." He was the Professor of Philosophy at Bologna and when he was accused of heresy for doubting the immortality of the soul, perhaps under the influence of the Philosophy of Averroes, he declared "I believe as a Christian what I can not believe as a Philosopher." The Lateran council in 1512 condemned this ingenious statement of Pompanatius as heretical and it was declared that "what is true can never contradict what is true, we determine that every proposition which is contrary to the truth of the revealed faith is entirely false."¹⁾

The conception of the identity of the content of faith with that of knowledge (or reason and faith) which achieved its triumph in the Philosophy of Aquinas was thus attacked by Nominalists and other independent Philosophers alike.

Donne had started his search for truth with an implicit confidence in the power of knowledge to give satisfaction; and with this aim in view, he had, as he tells us, "surveyed and digested the whole body of Divinity controverted between ours and the Roman Church."²⁾

But Donne's study of the ancient and modern Philosophers, as well as his realisation of the significance of love in the higher stages of religious life, must have convinced him that though religion does not contradict reason, the truth of religion can not be comprehended through reason and intellect alone, and therefore, long before he became a priest, he began to assign a subordinate place to reason. In one of his letters to The Countess of Bedford (1607-8), he says:

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1. Pungier - History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion. 1887
pp. 50 - 52.
 2. E. Gosse - P. 250 Vol I.

"Reason is our soules left hand, Faith her right,
 By these we reach divinity that's you;
 Their loves, who have the blessings of your light,
 Grew from their reason, mine from faith grew."

A careful study of Donne's religious life bears out the fact that the "modest assurance" of Salvation which he possessed in the later years of his saintly life grew not out of reason but faith; he says that to search the mysteries of religion by the help of reason is to adopt a wrongway: he says "so this eternall, and this supernaturall light, Christ and faith, enlightens, warmes, purges, and doth all the profitable offices of fire, and light if we keep it in the right spheare, in the proper place, (that is, if wee consist in points necessary to Salvation, and revealed in the Scriptures) but when wee bring this light to the common light of reason, to our inferences, and consequencies, it may be in danger to vanish itselife, and perchance extinguish our reason too; we may search so far, and reason so long of faith and grace, as that we may lose not only them, but even our reason too, and sooner become mad than good".¹⁾

St Thomas Aquinas has given to intelligence a marvellous power not only in what he calls "order and control" of the world but also in the comprehension of Truth and the acquisition of the knowledge of God.

In defining "The Function of the Wise Man", St Thomas says:
 "Now the last end of everything is that which is intended by the prime author or mover thereof. The prime author and mover of the universe is intelligence Therefore the last end of the Universe must be the good of intelligence, and that is truth;"²⁾ and it was with this confidence in the power of the intellect that St Thomas proceeded to build up his Philosophy which to him was "the science of truth."²⁾

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1. L Sermons, 36th Sermon.
 2. See St Thomas Aquinas-of God as He is in Himself - ("Summa Contra Gentiles") Translated J. Rickaby Page 1.

St Thomas further justified the use of reason in determining the truth of faith on the ground that his aim was also to convince the Gentiles who did not believe in the revelation of the Scriptures. He says "Secondly, because some of them, as Mohammedans and Pagans, do not agree with us in recognising the authority of any Scripture, available for their conviction, as we can argue against the Jews from the old Testament, and against heretics from the New. But these receive neither, hence it is necessary to have recourse to natural reason, which all are obliged to assent to."¹⁾

It is instructive to quote a passage from Donne's Sermons where he is also discussing the problem of the application of reason to prove the truth of the Holy Scriptures: Donne compares them to a net:

"The Gospel of Christ Jesus is a net..... A net is res nodosa, a knotty thing; and so is the Scriptures, full of knots, of scruple, of perplexity, and anxiety and vexation if thou wilt go about to entangle thyself in those things, which appertain not to thy Salvation The Scriptures will be out of thy reach and out of thy use, if thou cast and scatter them upon reason, upon Philosophy, upon morality, to try how the Scriptures will fit all them, and believe them but so far as they agree with thy reason; but draw the scripture to thine own heart, and to thine own actions, and thou shalt find it made for that; all the promises of the old Testament made, and all accomplished in the New Testament, for the Salvation of thy soul hereafter, and for thy consolation in the present application of them."²⁾

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1. Of God and His creatures. Translated by J. Rickaby. P. 2.
 2. See Alford page 302. Vol III.

Donne did not advocate blind faith, reason could help us up to a certain extent and that extent was to Donne a well defined limit; but within this limit Donne recognised the value of reason. His mind was so agile and alert that he could not rest content in mere imitation and acceptance of the opinion of others. In one of his letters to Sir Henry Goodyer he complains that "we are patterns, copies, we inform or imitate;"¹⁾ and to Sir T. Lucy, he wrote "But as sometimes we had rather believe a travellers' lie than go to disprove him, so men rather cleave to these ways than seek new."²⁾

Donne even speaks with reverence of the deep searching but heretical wit of Averroes (whom he calls "a very subtle but very deep wit"), and in the same letter he said "And it is as imperfect which is taught by that religion which is most accommodate to sense (I dare not say to reason, though it have appearance of that too, because none may doubt but that religion is certainly best which is reasonablest."³⁾

But Donne gave a subordinate place to reason which in his later years he grew to distrust altogether; in his elegy on Prince Henry (1612), he calls faith "a centre of greatness" while reason is a centre of "waight" only.

Look to mee faith, and looke to my faith God;
 For both my centres feel this period.
 Of waight one centre, one of greatness is;
 And Reason is that centre, Faith is this.

St Thomas has given a marvellous power to "sensé" in acquiring the knowledge of God, for reason and intelligence can only work with the help of the senses, though intelligence, he claims does not subsist in matter.⁴⁾

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1. Gosse - I page 177.
 2. Gosse Vol I page 176.
 3. Gosse II page 8.
 4. See Contra Gentiles. Page 117.

"In the reasoning whereby the existence of God is demonstrated it is not necessary to assume for a premise the essence of quiddity of God; but instead of the quiddity the effect is taken for a premise, as is done in demonstration a Posteriori from effect to cause. All the names of God are imposed either on the principle of denying of God himself certain effects of His power, or from some habitude of God towards those effects. Although God transcends sense and the objects of sense, nevertheless sensible effects are the basis of our demonstration of the existence of God. Thus the origin of our own knowledge is in sense, even of the things that transcend sense."¹⁾

Donne early began to doubt the ability of the senses to comprehend God and this is a belief which animated some of his finest Divine poems and sermons. He argues that natural reason and the senses can only comprehend natural objects and things, they work within a narrow circumference.

"For into our reason flow, and there do end
All, that **this** naturall world doth comprehend:
Quotidian things, and equidistant hence,
Shut in, for man, in one circumference."

(The Elegy on Prince Henry).

And Donne develops his favourite arguments that human reason can not comprehend the essence of God.

"But for th' enormous greatness, which are
So disproportioned, and so angular,
As is God's essence, Place and Providence.
Where, how, when, what soules do, departed hence;
These things (ecentrique else) on faith do strike."

(The Elegy on Prince Henry).

Donne again advanced this argument in one of his sermons.

"God is too large, too immense, and the man is too narrow too little to be considered First for the incomprehensibleness of God, the

1. Of God and His creatures Translated by J. Rickaby P II.

understanding of man, hath a limited, a determined latitude, it is an intelligence able to move in that sphere which it is fixed to, but could not move a greater." ¹⁾ Donne conceives God as beyond the knowledge acquired through reason and understanding. He says:

"I can comprehend naturam, naturatam, created nature, but for that natura naturans, God himself, the Understanding of man cannot comprehend." ²⁾

Nothing could be in a more vivid contrast to St Thomas Aquinas' implicit confidence in the powers of intelligence and reason to comprehend God.

Donne in some of his most impassioned lines distrusted the knowledge acquired through the senses.

"When wilt thou shake off this Pedantry
Of being taught by sense and Fantasie?
Thou look'st through spectacles; small things seeme great
Below; But up unto watch-towre get,
And small things despol'd of fallacies." (1)

(The Second Anniversary.)

In the discussion of Donnes' conception of the relation of reason to faith, it is important to notice that knowledge which was based on natural reason was to him of a limited nature and had no permanent character. Donne points out that we do not know the nature of even common things like grass or blood.

Why grass is green or why our blood is red
Are mysteries which none have read unto.

The Imperfect nature of knowledge is the constant theme of his poetry and prose alike.

"What hope have we to know ourselves, when wee
Know not the least things for our use be."

"What Anatomist" he asks "knows the body of man thorowly, or what casuist the soul? What Politician knowes the distemper of the state

1. St Augustine also distrusted the senses:- "If the tumult of the flesh were hushed; hushed the sense impression..." (Confessions IX.25)
2. Donne edited by J. Haywood P. 593.

thorowly; or what master, the disorders of his own family? Princes glory in Arcanis; that they have secrets which no man shall know, and God knowes, they have hearts which they know not themselves; Thoughts and purposes indigested fall upon them and surprise them. It is so in naturall, in morall, in civill things; we are ignorant of more things than we know." ¹⁾

Bacon wrote to Burgley (in 1592) "I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends as I have moderate civil ends; for I have taken all knowledge to be my Province." But Donne recognised that modern science and Philosophy in the seventeenth century were still in their infancy and could not form a stable basis for the formulation of a theory of knowledge embracing science, ethics and metaphysics. Donne says, "here in this world, knowledge is but as the earth, and ignorance as the sea; there is more sea than earth, more ignorance than knowledge..... and as if the sea do gaine in one place, it loses in another so it is with knowledge too; if new things be found out as many as good, that were known before, are forgotten and lost." ²⁾

Donne, recognised the value of the ancient learning; time divisions are artificial divisions, he had the sanity of a great poet to realise the importance of the Middle Ages in the eternal search of man for God. The craze to say something new to startle appeared to Donne shallow and meaningless:

"For every man alone thinks he hath got
To be a Pheonix, and that then can bee
None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee."

He said in one of his splendid sermons, "Almost all knowledge is rather like a child that is embalmed to make Mummy, then that is nursed to Man...."

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1. Donnes' Sermons, Pearsall Smith P. 93.
 2. Donnes' Sermons, Pearsall Smith PP. 92, 93.

... And if there be any addition to knowledge, it is rather a new knowledge, then a greater knowledge rather a singularity in a desire of proposing something, that was not knowne at all before, then an empowering, and advancing, a multiplying of former inceptions; and that means no knowledge comes to be perfect.¹⁾"

This distrust of knowledge and intellect does not exist in the system of St Thomas; in fact the basis of his Philosophy is a confidence in knowledge acquired though the senses and the operation of the intellect. St Thomas defines truth as a perfection of understanding. "Truth is a perfection of the understanding and of its act,"²⁾ and he holds that intellect cannot err in acquiring knowledge.

"The understanding is not liable to err in its knowledge of abstract being, as neither is sense in dealing with the proper object of each sense."²⁾ Like intellect, understanding also, according to St Thomas, is perfect in as much as it is never false.

"An intellectual virtue is a perfection of the Understanding in Knowing. It never happens that the understanding utters anything false but its utterance is always true, when prompted by any intellectual virtue; for it is the part of virtue to render an act good, and to eternal truth is the good act of the understanding."³⁾

Donne believed that this "perfection of the understanding in knowing" comes not through reason or intellect but faith and grace, he says. "So is it for a Christian to enjoy the working of Gods grace, in a faithful believing the Mysteries of Religion, though he enquire not into Gods bed-chamber, nor seek into his unrevealed Decrees. It is says Luther, A hatefull, a damnable Monosyllable, How, How God doth this or

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1. Donnes' Sermons, Pearsall Smith P. 94.
 2. Contra Gentiles P. 44.
 3. Contra Gentiles P. 45.

that, for, if a man come to the boldness of proposing such a question to himself, he will not give over till he finde some answer; and then, others will not be content with his answer, but every man will have severall one.¹⁾

ST THOMAS' AND DONNES' CONCEPTION OF GRACE.

Donne not only distrusted the power of intellect as an absolute entity not liable to err but he also believed that Salvation came not through intellectual conviction but through the working of grace. "Salvation is the inward means of Salvation, the working of the spirit, that sets a seal to the eternal means: the prope, the nearness lies in this, that this grace which is Salvation in this sense, grows out of that which is in you already, not only of any thing which is in you naturally, but Gods' graces that are in you, grows into more and more grace. Grace does not grow out of nature; for nature in the highest exaltation and rectifying thereof cannot produce grace. Corn does not grow out of the earth, it must be sowed; but corn grows only in the earth; nature, and natural reason do not produce grace, but yet grace cannot take root in any other thing but in the natural and reason of man; whether we consider Gods' subsequent graces, which grow out of his first grace, formerly given to us, and well employed by us or his grace, which works upon our natural faculties and grows there."²⁾ Grace grows not out of nature, or intellectual conviction, but out of the graces that are already within us, but it takes root in reason. Gods' knowledge is a gift, one can not acquire it through one's intellectual effort and so is salvation which Donne defines as "the internal operation of the Holy Ghost in infusing grace."²⁾ Religion in its higher and more spiritual form is thus above reason and rationalism.

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1. LXXX Sermon, No XXX Sermon.
 2. Alford Vol VI PP. 44 and 45.

To St Thomas Aquinas also grace is the divine help which makes a man submit to God and thus prepares his intellect to receive the Word of God. St Thomas says:

"In like manner, before we arrive at our final end, which is the clear vision of the First Truth as it is in itself, the intellect of man must submit to God in readiness to take His Word: and that submission and readiness to believe is the work of divine grace."¹⁾

St Thomas further defines the working and nature of this grace: "And therefore when we say that man needs the aid of grace for final pre-severance, we do not mean that over and above that habitual grace first infused into him for the doing of good acts, there is infused into him another habitual grace enabling him to persevere; but we mean that when he has got all the gratuitous habits that he ever is to have, man still needs some aid of divine Providence governing from without."²⁾

Donne thought that grace does not come so much from "without" as it grows out of "Gods' graces that are in you";³⁾ but he, like the true mystic, went further and declared that grace and faith though superior to reason and natural faculties of the soul, are inferior to the vision of God, which is the final aim of the human quest for God. Discussing the schoolmen's four ways of knowing God; Faith, contemplation, apparition and vision, he says "Their first way of assenting only, and their third way of apparition are weak, and uncertain wayes. The other two present faith and future vision, are safe wayes"⁴⁾ but the object of man is not faith but the vision of God as He is, he says "Faith is a blessed presence but compared with heavenly vision, it is but an absence; though it create and constitute in us a possibility, a probability, a kinde of certainty of Salvation, yet that faith which the best Christian hath, is

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1. Contra Gentiles PP. 323 - 324.
 2. Contra Gentiles P. 327.
 3. Alford Vol VI P. 44.
 4. Sermons LXXX; No XXIII.

not so far beyond that sight of God which the naturall man hath as that sight of God which I shall have in heaven, is above that faith which we have in the highest exaltation."¹⁾

St Thomas also held "That Happiness does not consist in the knowledge of God by Faith,"²⁾ and that "The final happiness of man then will be in the knowledge of God, which the human soul has after this life according to the manner in which pure spirits know him."³⁾

Higher Form of Reason.

Though Donne denied that certainty to reason and intellect which St Thomas had given to them in his Philosophy, we must remember in this connection that St Thomas himself thought that in the higher stages of the religious life, reason unguided by faith or unaided by grace could not comprehend the mysteries of religion and he holds that the points which reason is unable to investigate⁴⁾ should be believed as articles of faith, for he says "There is also another evident advantage in this, that any knowledge, however imperfect, of the noblest objects confers a very high perfection on the soul. And therefore, though reason cannot fully grasp truths above reason, nevertheless it is much perfected by holding such truths after same fashion at least by faith."⁴⁾

L. I. Brevold has neglected this aspect of the Philosophy of St Thomas and has represented him as relying on the powers of "reason"⁵⁾ alone and has contrasted this attitude with Donne's distrust of reason, but this seems to us an incorrect view of St Thomas' conception of reason and faith, for he, like Donne, also believed that reason could not go beyond a certain limit without the help of divine grace; Rudolf Steiner discussing St Thomas' conception of the relation of faith and

1. LXXX Sermons, No. XXIII.
2. Contra Gentiles PP. 213
3. Ibid P. 220.
4. Contra Gentiles PP 5,6.
5. The Religious Thought of Donne in Relation to Mediaeval and Later Tradition by L. I. Brevold P. 218.

reason points out that he held that even the truths which were comprehended as articles of faith, though they could not be investigated by reason, were not contradictory to reason, he says that St Thomas believed that "man penetrates up to a certain point into the spiritual nature of things, but after that point comes faith. And the two must not contradict each other; they must be in harmony."¹⁾

It is also the position which Donne assumed in his explanation of the higher form of reason, which he held is the result of the divine grace granted to the regenerate Christian and therefore not possessed by the natural man as such. This aspect of Donne's views in regard to the relation of faith to reason has so far been neglected by his critics.

The difference between Donnes' and St Thomas' views about the relation of reason and faith is that Donne had no such confidence in the powers of reason as St Thomas had and Donne gave it a subordinate place to faith; nature and reason can at best point to faith; he says:

"The light of nature, in the highest exaltation is not faith, but it bears witness to it,"²⁾ and he recognised the contradiction which exists between reason and faith in the higher stages of religion; and to him the fact that certain doctrines of Christianity were above reason is a proof of its divine origin; Donne says, "If any state, if any convocation, if any wise man, had been to make a religion, a gospel; would he not have proposed a more probable, a more creditable gospel, to mans' reason, than this."³⁾

Donne, as we shall see, maintained that (1) the reason of a natural man has a limited power to understand the mysteries of religion and that (2) the reason of the regenerate Christian is a "new faculty" due to the divine grace which has been granted to him and is therefore superior to

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1. The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas by Rudolf Steiner (1932) P. 77.
 2. Alford V. P. 66.
 3. Ibid V P. 430-431.

the reason of a natural man and that ¹⁾ reason in certain respects was subordinate to faith. Donne divides reason into two forms. The lower form of reason he calls "natural reason" which is applied with profitable results to science and commerce and to the early stages of belief.

Donne says:

"Some men by the benefit of this light of Reason have found out things profitable and useful to the whole world; As in particular printing
"²⁾ It is this natural reason of man which also required satisfaction in the elementary stages of faith. Donne in his inimitable way shows how ridiculous it is to force a man to accept the dogmas of faith without satisfying his reason:

"He that should come to a Heathen man a mere naturall man, unchate-
 chised, uninstructed, in the rudiments of Christian Religion, and should
 at first without any preparation present him first with this necessity;
 thou shalt burn in fire, and brimstone eternally except thou believe
 a Trinitie of Persons, in a unitie of one God, except thou believe the
 Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinitie the Sonne of God, except
 thou believe that a virgin had a Sonne and the same Sonne that God had,
 and that God was man too and being immortall God, yet died, he should be
 so farre from working any spiritual cure upon this poore soule, as that
 he should rather bring the Christian mysteries into scorne, then him
 to a belief."³⁾

The reason and conscience of man are bound to revolt against any process which denies full satisfaction to human reason. The victory of faith to Donne is not the triumph of blind faith and the unreasoning intellect. He declared: "Ignorance is not only the drowsiness, the silliness, but the wickedness of the soul; not only disestimation in

2. See sermon Preached at St Pauls Christmas Day 1621.
 3. Sermon Preached Christmas Day 1621.

this world, and damnification here, but damnation in the next world, proceeds from ignorance Hell is darkness; and the way to it is the cloud of ignorance; hell itself is but condensed Ignorance, multiplied ignorance.¹⁾"

Knowledge, he knew, was essential to the satisfaction of the mind as well as to the health of the soul. He said "Knowledge cannot save us, but we cannot be saved without knowledge. Faith is not on this side knowledge but beyond it; we must necessarily come to knowledge first though we must not stay at it, when we come thither."²⁾

Donne knew that knowledge, reason and intellect though necessary in the initial stages, could not satisfy the hunger of the soul to see God; the real bliss of the mystics' life lies beyond this stage of intellectual satisfaction. Donne knew that intellect and reason are poor guides in the search of the infinite.

"Diverse men may walk by the sea-side, and the same beames of the Sunne giving light to them all, one gathereth by the benefit of that light pebles, or speckled shells, for curious vanitie and another gathers precious Pearle, or medicinall Ambar, by the same light. So the common light of reason illumines us all and wordly men who used only the light of naturall reason would never, reach their destination for when they have gone all these ways by the benefit of this light, they have got no further, then to have walked by a tempestuous sea, and to have gathered pebbles, and speckled cockle shells. Their light seems to be great our of the same reason, that a Torch in a misty night seemeth greater than in a clear, because it hath kindled and inflamed much thicke and grosse Ayre round about it."³⁾

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1. Donne's Sermons, Pearsall Smith P. 93.
 2. Donne's Sermons, Pearsall Smith P. 100.
 3. Donne's Sermons, Pearsall Smith PP. 101,102.

Donne believed that when through the process of self-Purification, the "naturall man" becomes the "regenerate Christian", reason also undergoes a change; new relations with the Infinite are established, and "reason" is no longer a faculty of arguments and understanding, but has been transformed into a faculty of vision.

"For a regenerate Christian" Donne points out "being a new creature hath also a new facultie of Reason; and so believeth Mysteries of Religion out of another Reason, then as a meere naturall Man, he believed Naturall and Morall things"¹⁾

This conception of the transformation of reason into a higher faculty is the unique concept of Donnes' relation of reason to faith.

But Donne believed that the function of natural reason was only to find out "sensible and material things", while Faith alone could lead men to comprehend the Supreme Reality, God.

"Before the sun was made there was a light which did that office of distinguishing night and day; but when the sun was created, that did all the offices of the former light and more. Reason is that first, and primogenial light, and goes no farther in a natural man; but in a man regenerate by faith, that light does all that reason did, and more."²⁾ St Thomas, as we have seen, never doubted the power of intellect to comprehend truth; he declared: "The intellect does not err over first Principles,"³⁾ and also believed that "mind alone can know the divine goodness."⁴⁾ Therefore there needed to be intelligent creatures."

To Donne reason has not only a limited purpose but it is also subordinate to faith. "Men which seek God by reason, and naturall strength (though we do not deny common notions and generall impressions of a sovereign power) are like Mariners which voyaged before the invention

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1. Donnes' Sermons - Pearsall Smith PP. 100,101,102.
 2. Preached at St Paul upon Christmas Day 1621, Alford 46-75.
 3. Contra Gentiles P. 44.
 4. Contra Gentiles P. 109.

of the compass, which were but costers and unwillingly left the sight of the land, such are they which would arrive at God by this world, and contemplate him only in his creatures and seeming demonstration..... But as by the use of the compass, men safely dispatch ulysses, dangerous ten years travell in so many dayes, and have found out a new world richer than the old; so doth Faith, as soon as our hearts are touched with it, direct and inform it in that great search of the discovery of Gods Essence, and the new Hierusalem, which Reason durst not attempt..... For all acquired knowledge is by degrees, and successive; but God is impartible, and only faith which can receive it all at once, can comprehend him.¹⁾

Donne had out grown his belief in reason and knowledge to comprehend God, and like all great mystics, he thought these "helps" to be deceptive which were "deduced from Philosophy and naturall reason,"²⁾ and this defines his philosophical position which is essentially that of a mystic. Donne declared in one of his celebrated sermons that those who believed in the light of reason and knowledge alone to find truth, shall never attain it.

"Their light shall set at noon; even in their light some heavy damp shall cast a damp upon their soul, and cut off all their succours, and divest them of all comforts, and thy light (of faith) shall grow up, from a fair hope, to a modest assurance and infallibility, that, that light shall never go out, nor the works of darkness, nor the prince of darkness ever prevail upon thee, but as thy light of reason is exalted by faith here so thy light of faith shall be exalted into the light of glory, and fruition in the Kingdom of Heaven."³⁾

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1. Essays in Divinity (1615) PP. 37-9
 2. Alford Vol V. P. 320.
 3. Alford Vol V. P. 60.

Donne and Mysticism.

Donne has clearly said in one of his sermons that there are some Decrees of God that can not be searched by reason and that His Judgments should not be made the object of philosophical controversies. He says: "Mysteries of Religion are not the less believ'd and embrac'd by Faith; because they are presented, and induc'd, and apprehended by Reason. But this must not enthrone, this must not exalt any mans Reason so far, as that there should lie an Appeal, from Gods Judgements to any mans reason: that if he see no reason why God should proceed so, and so, he will not believe that to be Gods Judgement, or not believe that Judgement of God, to be Just: For, of the secret purposes of God we have an example what to say, given us by Christ himself; It is so, O Father, because thy good pleasure was such: All was in his own breast and bosome, in his own good will and pleasure, before he Decreed it; And as his Decree itself, so the wayes and Executions of his Decrees, are often unsearchable, for the purpose and for the reason thereof, though for the matter of fact, they may be manifest. They that think themselves sharp-sighted and wise enough, to search into those unreveal'd Decrees; they who being but worms, will look into Heaven; and being the last of creatures, who were made, will needs enquire, what was done by God, before God did anything, for creating the World; In ultimam dementiam reverant, says S. Chrysost. They are fallen into a mischievous madness..... They will needs make up red hot Irons, with their bare fingers, without tongs. That which is in the centre, which should rest, and lie still, in this peace, That it is so, because it is the will of God, that it should be so; they think to toss and tumble that up, to the circumference, to the Light and Evidence of their Reason, by their wrangling Disputations."¹⁾

In the early stages of the triumph of scholasticism mystics like St Bernard were not influenced by scholasticism but

1. Sermons XXVI No VI.

as the schools became more rigid and formal in their application of the "New Logic" of Aristotle to the theology of the church, mystics like Tauler and later Eckhart revolted against the authority of scholasticism.

Mystics like Hugo of St Victor tried to effect a synthesis between mysticism and scholasticism. They regarded "ecstasy" as an additional power which should not impair the authority of reason. Thus the dualism between "natural" pertaining to reason and "supernatural" pertaining to "contemplation and ecstasy became sharp as in Hugh of St Victor, who is the only great scholastic mystic.

Scholasticism (of St Thomas) and mysticism are not synonymous terms, and there are elements in the philosophy of Aristotle which St Thomas incorporated in his system which do not belong, and at times are even contradictory to the Neoplatonic view of God, the Soul and Nature; and we must remember that it was Neoplatonism which largely influenced the Christian mystics like St Augustine.

Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris, reduced mysticism to a science of the supernatural in which various stages of mystical life are clearly distinguished and classified, and the larger quest of mysticism the union of the soul with God, is reduced to a code of ascetic life. It is a significant fact that Scholasticism failed to produce any great mystic except Hugh of St Victor, (the other being Richard of St Victor, Bona Ventura (1221-1294), and Albert the Great). In the greatest German mystic of the 14th century, Eckhart, who mainly follows the Neo-Platonic Philosophers, the orthodox doctrines of the scholastic mysticism about the ladders of ascent, and scales of virtue disappear. To Eckhart, as to Donne and other great mystics, the fundamental question is not these charts of virtues and stages of mind, but the nature and life of the soul and its relation to God. Though the system of St Thomas did not prove favourable to the growth of mysticism, he himself seems to have clearly perceived the significance of love as a means of man's union with God. He concludes the analysis of the

difference between Love, charity, and Dilection with this important remark on the powers of Love:

"But it is possible for man to tend to God by Love, being as it were passively drawn to Him, more than he can possibly be drawn thereto by his reason, which pertains to the nature of Dilection. And consequently Love is more God-like than Dilection."¹⁾

He knew that the union which is caused through Love is closer than that which is caused through knowledge.

He says. "Again there is a union which is the effect of Love. This is real union, which the lover seeks with the object of his love. Moreover this union is in keeping with the demands of love knowledge is perfected by the thing known being united, through its likeness, to the knower. But the effect of love is that the thing itself which is loved is in a way united to the lover, consequently the union caused by love is closer than that which is caused by knowledge."²⁾

St Thomas recognises the significance of the union through love, but he not only denies the possibility of the direct vision of God in this life,³⁾ he also asserts that God's presence in the human soul can not be known with any certainty. He says. "But the principle of grace and its object is God, who by His very excellence is unknown to us.....and hence His Prescence in us and His absence cannot be known with certainty."⁴⁾

Donne, on the other hand, rested his whole faith on the certainty of possessing the divine grace through Christ; Donne declared in one of his sermons. "I am that Christian man, who have seen this affliction in the cause thereof, so far off, as in my sin in Adam, and the remedy of this affliction, so far off, as in the death of Christ Jesus, I am the man, that can not repine nor murmur, since I am the cause; I am the man that can not despair, since Christ is the remedy."⁵⁾

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1. (1a, 2ac Qu 26. Ar. 3 and 4.)
 2. (1a, 2ac Qu 28. Art land 2,3.)
 3. See the first part of the summa where this problem is fully discusses.
 4. (1a, 2ac Qu 112. Art 5)
 5. The works of John Donne edited by Alford V. P. 320.

But before the soul could have this assurance of Salvation, the reason of man must be satisfied, God infuses grace into the soul through its natural faculties. But Donne knows that grace can only have its growth in the natural faculties of the soul, which he calls the "reasonable soul". He says: "Let us reflect upon our beginning, upon the consideration of Gods first benefits, which he hath given to us all in Nature, That light, by which he enlighteneth every man that commeth into the world, That he hath given us a reasonable soule capable of grace here, (that, he hath denied no man, and no other creature hath that) That he hath given us an immortal soul capable of glory hereafter, (and that, that immortality he hath denied no man, and no other creature hath that) consider we alwaies the grace of God, to be the Sun itselife, but the nature of man, and his naturall faculties to be the Sphear, in which that Sun, that Grace moves. Consider we the Grace of God to be the Soule itself, but the naturall faculties of man, to be as a body, which ministers Organs¹⁾ for that soule, that Grace to worke by."

The regular stages of the mystical life, Conversion, Purgation,²⁾ Illumination and union have been traced in Donnes life by Mrs Simpson and need not be repeated here;³⁾ however it must be noticed that Donne attributes conversion wholly to the working grace; he says: "Man in his Conversion, is nothing, does nothing. His bodie is not verier dust in the grave, till a Resurrection, then his soule is dust in his body, till a resuscitation by grace. But then this nothingnesse that is in man, upon this meere privation; but grace finds out mans naturall faculties, and exalts them to a capacity, and a suceptiblenesse of the working thereof,⁴⁾ and so by the understanding infuses faith."

Donne in his "Essays in Divinity" has given us a description of his

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1. LXXX Sermons P. 685.
 2. A study of the Prose works of John Donne chapter V.
 3. The relevant passages showing Donne's conception of these stages of mystical life will be found in our Anthology of Donne's sermons which forms part of this thesis.
 4. LXXX Sermons. P. 611.

own conversion which he attributes to the "visitation" of God: he says: "Though this soul of mine, by which I partake thee, begin not now, yet let this minute, O God, this happy minute of thy visitation, be the beginning of her conversion, and shaking away confusion, darknesse, barrenesse; and let her now produce creatures, thoughts, words and deeds agreeable to thee."¹⁾

Too much has been written about Donne's agonised sense of sin in general and of his own sins of youth in particular to which he gave an intense expression in his holy sonnets, devotions and sermons, but Donne's passionate belief in the mercy of God and the efficacy of prayer and repentance, and the Atonement of Sin through what he called "the inestimable price of his (Christ's) incorruptible blood,"²⁾ is also evident in his sonnets as well as in his sermons. He says:

"Yet grace, if thou repent, thou canst not lacke;
But who shall give thee that grace to beginne?
Oh make thyself with holy mourning Blacke,
And red with blushing, as thou art with Sinne;
Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which hath this might
That being red, it dyes red soules to white." (3).

Donne in a remarkable passage in his sermons says that though Christ has taken upon himself the sins of all the world, every individual soul should bear the testimony of his remission in his own conscience, and this he calls the "sealing" of the Pardon. "In the knowledge that Christ hath taken all the sins of all the world upon himselfe, that there is enough done for the salvation of all mankinde, I have a shadowing, a refreshing; But because I can have no testimony, that this generall redemption belongs to me, whom am still a sinner, except there passe some act betweene God and

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1. Essays in Divinity P. 77.
 2. LXXX Sermons P. 548.
 3. Holy Sonnets IV. 9-14 (Grierson - 1.323.)

me, some seale, some investiture, some acquittance of my debts, my sins....
 and covers my sin, from the eye of his father, not onely obumbrando,
 as hee hath spread himselfe as a cloud refreshing the whole world, in the
 value of the satisfaction, but Attingendo by coming to me, by spreading him-
 self upon me, as the Prophet did upon the dead child, Mouth to mouth,
 Hand to hand.¹⁾"

Donne like the other mystics seems to have received an assurance
 of the pardon of his sin in the stage of purgation; thus he relies on "some
 act between God and me." He also knows that the knowledge of self comes
 only through suffering and privation which God inflicts on the human soul:
 he says "so when the hand and sword of God hath pierced our soul, we are
 brought to a better knowledge of ourselves, than any degree of prosperity
 would have raised us to."²⁾

Though Donne claimed for himself nothing but the guidance afforded to
 the Christian soul in the scriptures, and the ordinances, doctrines and
 ritual of the Church, we find a note of ecstatic joy in his contemplation
 of the love and mercy of God. Addressing God, he says: "O glorious
 beauty, infinitely reverend, infinitely fresh and young, we come late to
 thy love, if we consider the past daies of our lives, but early if thou
 beest pleased to reckon with us from this houre of the shining of thy
 grace upon us."³⁾

These words remind us of St Augustine's beautiful rhapsody about the
 love of God: "Too late loved I Thee, O Beauty so old, yet ever new!
 too late loved I Thee. And behold thou wert within and I abroad, and
 there I searched for Thee..... Thou breathedst odours, and I drew in
 breath, and pant for Thee. I tasted, and hunger and thirst. Thou

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1. LXXX - P. 565.
 2. Ibid - P. 563.
 3. LXXX - P. 116.

touchedst me, and I was on fire for Thy peace." ¹⁾ Donne believes that though it is in the Doctrine, and Sacraments of the Church that God has manifested Himself; in order to recognise Him in His Church, our spirit should bear witness to His Spirit in our souls. He compares the Church to God's Face and His spirit working in the Christian soul, to the Eye of God: "Gods whole ordinance in His Church, is Gods face; For that is the face of God, by which God is manifested to us; But then, that eye in that face, by which he promises to guide us..... is that blessed spirit of his, by whose operation he makes that grace, which does ever more accompany his ordinances, effectual upon us; The whole congregation sees God face to face, in the service, in the sermon, in the sacrament, but there is an eye in that face..... a piercing and operating spirit that looks up that soul and f~~o~~ments and cherishes that soule, who by a good use of Gods former grace, is become fitter for his present." ²⁾

Illumination to Donne meant an ever increasing sanctification of life resulting in a "holy cheerfulness" which he considers to be the best evidence of the possession of heavenly life on earth. He seems to have frequently experienced this joy: "so though he reserves that hemispheare of heaven, which is the Glory thereof to the Resurrection, yet the other hemispheare, the joy, God opens to our discovery, and delivers for our habitation even whilst we dwell in this world And as God doth inflict two deaths, and infuse two lives, so doth he also passe two judgements upon man or rather repeats the same judgement twice.

For that which Christ shall say to thy soule then at the last judgement, Enter into thy Masters joy. He sayes to thy conscience now, Enter into thy Masters joy. The everlastingness of the joy is the

1. Western Mysticism by D.C. Butler. PP. 40, 41.

2. LXXX Sermons P. 617.

blessedness of the next life, but the entering, the inchoation is afforded here.¹⁾"

The mystics believe that this joyful communion with God is often interrupted by a state of intense spiritual isolation in which God seems to desert the soul. Donne has several times alluded to this state which the mystics call, the "Dark Night of the Soul". Donne says: "Love him not onely in spiritual transfigurations when he visits thy soule with glorious consolations, but even in his inward eclipses, when he withholdes his comforts, and withdraws his cheerfulness, even when he makes as though he loved not thee, Love him."²⁾

Though Donne never seems to have attained the last stage of the mystical life, the "unitive stage", which Evelyn Underhill has described as the state in which "his long sought correspondence with transcendental Reality, his union with God, has now been finally established: that his self, though intact, is wholly penetrated - as a sponge by the sea - by the ocean of Life and Love to which he has attained",³⁾ he seems to have believed in the soul's ultimate union with God as being the consummation of the mystical life; he says: "The other great effect of his guiding us with his eye, is, that it unites us to himselfe; when he fixes his eye upon us, and accepts the returne of our to him, then he keeps us as the Apple of his Eye Quasi pupillam filiam oculi (as S. Hierom reads it) as the Daughter, the issue, the offspring of his own eye. For then, He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of his eye. And these are the two great effects of his guiding us by his eye, that first, his eye turnes us into himselfe, and then turnes us into himselfe; first, his eye turnes ours to him, and then, that makes us all one with himselfe; we can not be safer than by being his; but thus, we are not onely His, but He;"⁴⁾

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1. LXXX Sermons P. 672.
 2. LXXX Sermons P. 399.
 3. Mysticism by E. Underhill P. 499.
 4. LXXX, P. 618.

Christ and Scholasticism.

Scholasticism failed to recognise the true significance of the life of Christ to the individual soul; Rudolf Steiner says: "And the question scholasticism could not answer was: How does Christ enter into human thought? How is human thought permeated with Christ? It is the question: How does one carry Christology into thought? How is thought made Christ-like? At the moment when Thomas Aquinas died in 1274, this question, historically speaking, confronted the world."¹⁾

It is a significant fact that the mysticism of Donne is based on this mystical conception of Christology; infact like St Paul and Augustine and other great Christian mystics, Donne believed that all knowledge was to "know Christ" and all virtue was to be "Christ like:" Donne says: "one philosopher thinks he is dived to the bottome when he says, he knows nothing but this, that he knows nothing..... S. Paul found that to be all knowledge, To know Christ."²⁾

A passionate devotion to the person of Christ is the keynote of Donne's mysticism. Donne said: "That is enough which we have in St John: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus is come in the flesh of God; for since it was coming of Jesus, Jesus was before; so he was God; and since he came in flesh, he is now made man: and that God and man are so met, is a sign to me that God and I shall never be parted."³⁾

Donne defined his entering into the Church "A valediction to the world," and having divorced wordly life, he concentrated all his love on Christ.

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1. The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, by Rudolf Steiner - P. 76.
 2. Donne's Sermons, Pearsall Smith P. 94.
 3. Alford Vol I P. 33.

Mary
 "Seale then this bill of my Divorce to all,
 On whom those fainter beams of love did fall;
 Mark those loves, which in youth scattered bee
 On fame, wit, hopes (false mistresses) to thee." (1)

Donne had prayed:

"..... let all mee elemented bee.
 Of power, to love, to know you unnumbered three." (2)

but he later realised with all great mystics that it was neither
 knowledge nor reason that could lead him to God, but Love. He declared
 in clear terms "we can humbly believe these mysteries of our religion,
 by faith, without the hand and help of reason."³⁾ Love alone could
 save us.

"Thy lawes abridgement, and thy last command
 Is all but love; oh let this last Will stand." (4)

And this love was the love of Christ and his birth into the human
 soul.- "all these fulness I shall have, if I can find and feel in myself
 this birth of Christ."⁵⁾

Christ is the promise of regeneration in this life and hope and
 promise of Salvation in the next aswell; even the horrors of death give
 place to a spiritual joy when Donne thinks of the Redeeming character of
 his Saviour, Christ:

"If I can say (and my conscience doe not tell me that I belye mine own
 state) if I can say, that the blood of my Saviour runs in my veines, that
 the breath of his spirit quickens all my purposes, that all my deaths
 have their Resurrection, all my sins their remorse, all my rebellions
 their reconciliation, I will harken no more after this question, as it is
 intended de morte naturali, of a naturall death, I know I must die that
 death, what care I? nor de morte spirituali, the death of sin, I know
 I doe, and shall die so; why despair I? but I will finde out another

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1. A Hymn to Christ (At the Authors Last Going Into Germany.)
 2. The Litanie
 3. Alford Vol I P. 46.
 4. Holy Sonnets XVI.
 5. Alford Vol I P. 44.

death, mortem raptus, a death of rapture, and of extasie, and that death which S. Paul died more then once. The death which S. Gregory speaks of Divina Contemplatio quoddam animae^{subalter}, the contemplation of God, and heaven, is a kinde of buriall, and sepulchre, and rest of the soule; and in this death of rapture, and extasie, in this death of the contemplation of my interest in my Saviour, I shall finde myself, and all my sins enterred, and entombed in his wounds, and like a Lily in Paradise, out of red earth, I shall see my soul rise out of his blade, in a condor, and in an innocence, contracted there, acceptable in the sight of his Father." 1)

The importance of Christ's life in the history of mysticism has been discussed by Miss Evelyn Underhill with a rare insight into the life of the Christian mystics.

"But from Jesus of Nazareth descends that whole spiritual race, that fresh creation, within which the Christian mystics stand as it were as the heads of great houses; the originators of those variations whereby the infinite richness and variety of the parent life has been expressed." 2)

It is thus clear that Donne belongs to that line of the Christian mystics who, like St Bernard, and St John of the Cross, and St Teresa, and others, have made the adoration of Christ and the contemplation of his Passion the aim of mystical life; while St Thomas belongs to the school of Dionysius, the Areopagite, who while recognising the significance of Christ makes God Himself, the central object of the mystic's life. 3)

St Thomas and The "Vision of God" and Donne's views about it.

Though St Thomas has passionately argued that the ultimate destiny of the human soul was to see God as He is, in the light of glory in Heaven and has devoted the III book of "Contra Gentiles" to this subject,

1. LXXX Sermons 27. 273-4.

2. The Mystic Way P. 147.

3. This difference between the mysticism of Donne and St Thomas was suggested to me by Prof. A.E. Taylor.

he denied that we could see the Essence of God in this life. As all knowledge is derived through the senses, therefore the perception of Pure Spiritual Being, God, is beyond the capacity of the human mind. He says: "If the unnatural dependence of our understanding on Phantasms prevents us in this life from understanding other pure spirits, much less can we in this life see the divine essence, which transcends all angels. Of this fact the following may also be taken as an indication: The higher our mind is raised to the contemplating of spiritual things, the more it is abstracted from sensible things; but the final terminus to which contemplation can possibly arrive is the divine substance: therefore the mind that sees the divine substance must be totally divorced from bodily senses, either by death or by some rapture. Hence it is said in the person of God; No man shall see me and live (Exod. XXXIII -20)¹⁾

He holds that God can be known in this life by his effects alone; he says: "Nor is it necessary for something greater than God to be conceivable if His non-existence is conceivable. For the possibility of conceiving Him not to exist does not arise from the imperfection or uncertainty of His being, since His Being is of itself most manifest, but from the infirmity of our understanding which can not discern him as He is of Himself but by the effects which He produces, and so it is brought

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1. Contra-Gentiles Translated by J. Rickaby P. 216. He also says in The "Summa Theologica" Part I - qs 12 - art 2nd (Dominican father's Translation).
 "In order to see God there must be some similitude of God on the part of the visual faculty, whereby the intellect is made capable of seeing God. On the part of the object seen, which must necessarily be united to the seer, the essence of God can not be seen by any created similitude."

by reasoning to the knowledge of Him. As it is self-evident to us that the whole is greater than its part, so the existence of God is most self-evident to them that see the divine essence, in as much as His essence is His existence. But because we cannot see His essence, we are brought to the knowledge of His existence, not by what He is in Himself but by the effects which He works." ¹⁾

But what the mystic claims is the attainment of the union of the soul with God, as Ruysbroeck says "we behold that which we are, and we are that which we behold; because our thought, life and being are uplifted in simplicity, and made one with the truth which is God." ²⁾ The last stage of mystical life is the unitive stage when as Dean Inge says "man beholds God face to face and is joined to Him." ³⁾ St Thomas by denying that God could be seen (as He is) in this life or that the "object seen" could be "united to the seer" ⁴⁾ rejected the whole basis on which mysticism is based. St Thomas has discussed in the "summa" two typical examples which the mystics often quote as the supreme example of mystical experience in this life, Jacob's seeing of God "face to face" and Moses' speaking to God "mouth to mouth". He assigns Jacob's vision to a "mode of Prophecy", "so when Jacob says, I saw God face to face, this does not mean the Divine Essence, but some figure representing God. This in itself is to be referred to some high mode of prophecy, so that God seems to speak, though in an imaginary vision; as will later be explained (II.II.Q.CLXXIV) in treating of the Prophetic grades. We may also say that Jacob spoke this to designate some exalted intellectual contemplation above the ordinary state." ⁵⁾

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1. Contra Gentiles. Translated by J. Rickaby P. 10.
 2. Quoted by E. Underhill - Mysticism P. 423.
 3. Christian Mysticism. Dean Inge. P. 12.
 4. Summa Pl - q 12 - Art 2.
 5. The "Summa" Theologica. Part I. - q 12. Art II. Dominican Father's Translation.

He says that St Augustine's examples of Moses and St Paul as men who saw God in His Essence, belong to "supernatural wonders;" he points out that "As God works miracles in corporeal things, so also He does supernatural wonders above the common order, raising the minds of some living in flesh beyond the use of sense, even up to the rising of His own essence; as Augustine says of Moses the teacher of the Jews; and of Paul the teacher of the Gentiles."¹⁾ St Augustine speaking of St Paul says that he "was rapt into this transcendent vision wherein we may believe that God vouchsafed to show him that life wherein, after this life we are to live for ever,"²⁾ and believes that Moses's desire "to see God in His own Nature as He will be seen by the saints in Heaven, as He is"²⁾ was fulfilled. St Thomas seems to have accepted the authority of St Augustine in the case of St Paul and Moses. But St Thomas is quite definite in his view that the essence of God cannot be seen in this life.

In a passage which does not leave any doubt about St Thomas' views about the vision of God as He is, he says:

"I answer that, God can be seen in His Essence by man only if separated from this mortal life. The reason is, because, as was said above, the mode of knowledge follows the mode of existence of the knower. Our soul, as long as we live in this life has its existence in corporeal matter; hence naturally it knows only what has a form in matter, or what can be known by such a form. It is evident that the Divine Essence can not be known by the nature of material things. It was shown above that the knowledge of God by means of any created similitude is not the vision of His Essence. Hence it is impossible for the soul of man in this life to see the Essence of God. This can be seen in the fact that the more our soul is abstracted from corporeal things, the more it is capable of

1. The "Summa" Part I - q12. art II.

2. Quoted by D.C. Butler - Western Mysticism. He has fully discussed the respective views of St Augustine and St Thomas about the vision of God see PP. 78-88.

receiving abstract intelligible things. Hence in dreams and alienations of the bodily senses Divine revelations and foresight of future events are perceived the more clearly. It is not possible, therefore, that the soul in this mortal life should be raised up to the supreme intelligible object, that is, to the Divine Essence." ¹⁾

P. Wicksteed has also pointed out that St Thomas denied the possibility of seeing God in His Essence in this life, which, according to St Thomas, is a state proper to the state of the soul in Heaven.

"Aquinas" Wicksteed points out "it will be seen wholly excludes the possibility of anticipating the vision of God while we are yet in body; for the organic connection of the soul with the (not yet glorified) body makes it dependent ultimately upon the species sensibiles or Phantasmata, supplied by the senses, from which it can never shake itself free in via." ²⁾

Though St Thomas did not believe that it was possible to attain a direct vision of God in this life, he himself seems to have been blessed with such a vision. He was staying at his sister's castle of San Severino, when he experienced a prolonged ecstasy, and when he returned to his normal self again "He said with sighs: Son Rainaldo, I will tell thee in secret, forbidding thee to disclose it to any while I live. The end of my writing has come, for such things have been revealed to me that all that I have written and taught seems to me very little; and from this I hope in my God that, even as my teaching is ended so my life will soon close." ³⁾

Thus the greatest exponent of scholasticism ended as a sheer mystic.

1. The Summa. Part I - q 12. art II.
2. The Reaction between Dogma and Philosophy by P. Wicksteed P. 644; also see Wicksteeds, Dante and Aquinas.
3. Dante and the Mystics by E.G. Gardner P. 5. For a brief discussion of the Mystical Theology of St Thomas see - The Mysticism of St Thomas Aquinas by Fr. Vincent McNabb. o.P.

J. Maritain has given several other recorded instances of the visions of The Virgin Mary and Christ which St Thomas had in his life; once the sacristan saw him raised above the ground. J. Maritain describing this incident says. "A similar incident occurred again at Naples. Friar Thomas was then writing the third part of the Summa dealing with the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, one day, before Matins, the sacristan saw him raised nearly two cubits above the ground and stood a long time gazing at him. Suddenly he heard a voice proceed from the image on the crucifix to which the Doctor was turned, praying in tears: "Thou has written well of me, Thomas, what reward shall I give thee for thy work?"¹⁾
- "None but Thyself, O Lord."

Speaking of the mystical life of St Thomas, J. Maritain Says, "We have information therefore regarding the mystical life of St Thomas in the testimonies of his brethern and exterior indications..... There is however, never a direct statement by himself, for he practised only too thoroughly the maxim of St Anthony the hermit which he may have read in Cassian (every day he had read to him a few pages of Cassian), that "there can be no perfect prayer, if the religious perceives himself to be praying" "And it was no part of his mission, like a St John of the Cross or a St Teresa, to expound the things of contemplation practically, from the point of view of introspection and experience."²⁾

Donne following St Thomas Aquinas believed that God could not be seen in His Essence; he says "That neither Adam in his extasie in Paradise, nor Moses in his conversation in the Mount, nor the other Apostles in the transfiguration of Christ, nor S. Paul in his rapture to the third heavens, saw the Essence of God, because that is admitted to that sight of God, can never lookoff, nor lose that sight againe only

1. St Thomas Aquinas by J. Maritain Trans. by J.F. Scalan P. 47.
2. St Thomas Aquinas by J. Maritain P. 47.

in heaven shall God proceed to this patefaction, this manifestation, this revelation of himself; and that by the light of glory." ¹⁾ But he believed that St Paul did enjoy a momentary vision of God while the eternity of His vision can only be enjoyed in Heaven. He says "(God) gave him a Rapture, an Extasie, and in that, an appropinquation, an approximation ²⁾ to himselfe, and so some possession of Heaven in this life."

There are several passages in the sermons which show that Donne was familiar with the diverse views which were held by the different mediaeval Philosophers, like St Thomas and Duns Scotus, on the Vision of God. Donne says: "Blessedness itself, is God himselfe; our blessednesse is our possession; our union with God. In what consists this? A great limbe of the schoole with their Thomas, place this blessednesse, this union with God, In Visione, in this, that in heaven I shall see God, see God essentially, God face to face, God as he is. We do not see one another so, in this world; In this world we see but outsides; in heaven I shall see God, and God essentially. But then another great branch of the schoole, with their Scotus, place this blessednesse, this union with God, in Amore, in this, that in heaven, I shall love God. Now love presumes knowledge; for Amari nisi nota non possunt, we can love nothing, but which we do or think we do understand. There in heaven, I shall know God, so, as that I shall be admitted, not onely to an Adoration of God, to an admiration of God, to a prosternation, and reverence before God, but to an affection, to an office, of more familiarity towards God, of more equality with God, I shall love God. But even love itselfe, as noble a passion as it is, is but a paine except we enjoy that we love; and therefore

1. LXXX Sermons P. 230.

2. LXXX Sermons P. 476.

with their Aureolus, place this blessedness, this union of our souls with God, in Gaudio, in our joy, that is, in our enjoying of God. In this world we enjoy nothing; enjoying presumes perpetuity; and here, all things are fluid, transitory: There I shall enjoy, and possesse for ever, God himself. But yet, everyone of these, to see God, or to Love God, or to enjoy God, have seemed to some too narrow to comprehend this blessednesse, beyond which, nothing can be proposed; and therefore another limbe of the Schoole, with their Bonaventure, place this blessednesse in all these together. And truly, if any of those did exclude any of these, so, as that I might see God, and not love him, or love, and not enjoy him, it could not well be called blessednesse; but he that hath anyone of these, hath everyone, all: And therefore the greatest part concurre, and safely in visione, that vision is beatification, to see God, as he is, that blessednesse.¹⁾

But Donne does not argue like St Thomas as a philosopher, he does not say that the bodily senses cannot behold God or that the mind can not be raised to see the highest intelligible Being, God. He thinks that man can never be altogether free from sin and that the state of sanctification and purification which can be attained in this life can never be so perfect as to enable us to comprehend the Essence of God, and speaking of Philip Neri, and Ignatius Loyola, he says that "this Pureness is not in their heart, but in their²⁾ fantasie," and he remarks that "They meane, (and indeed, some of them say) that a man come to that purity in this life, as that in this life, he shall bee in possession of that very Beatificall vision, which is the state of glory in heaven."³⁾ He rejects their claims to have attained such purity. But he knew that a momentary union with God was possible in this life as he himself says "first his (Gods) eye

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1. Fifty Sermons - No XLIV P. 421
 2. XXVI Sermons 24. 325.
 3. LXXX P. 116.

turnes ours to him, and then, that makes us all one with himself
 we can not be safer than by being his; but this we are not only His,
 but He." ¹⁾ Elsewhere he declared "The sight of God which we shall have
 in heaven, must have a Diluculum, a break of day here; If we will see
 his face there, we must see it in some beames here." ²⁾

He believed that the joys of heaven did not begin after death but
 we have a forecaste of them in this life and they are only multiplied in
 the next. "Certainly as that man shall never see the Father of Lights
 after this, to whom the day never breaks in this life: As that man must
 never look to walk with the Lambe wheresoever he goes in heaven, that
 ranne away from the Lambe whensoever he came towards him, in this life;
 so he shall never possess the joys of heaven hereafter, that feels no
 joy here." ³⁾

To Donne "heaven and salvation is not a creation, but a multiplication;
 it begins not when wee dye, but it increases and dilated itself infinitely
 then" ³⁾ and thus the true mark of the mystic is the possession of Heaven
 on Earth.

"The pure in heart are blessed already, not onely comparatively
 that they are in a better way of Blessedness, then others are, but actually
 in a present possession of it: for this world and the next world are not,
 to the pure in heart, two houses, but two roomes, a Gallery, to pass
 thorough, and a lodging to rest in, in the same House, which are both
 under one roofe, Christ Jesus; The Militant and the Triumphant, are not
 two churches, but this the Porch, and that the chancell of the same church,
 which are under one head, Christ Jesus; so the joy, and the sense of
 Salvation which the pure in heart have here, is not a joy severed from the

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1. LXXX Sermons - P. 618.
 2. LXXX Sermons - P. 122.
 3. L Sermons, Sermon XVI.

joy of Heaven, but a joy that begins in us here, and continues and accompanies us thither, and there flows on, and dilates it selfe to an infinite expansion."¹⁾

This conception of ever increasing Blessedness and Joy from this life to the next is a conception peculiar to all Christian mystics. St Augustine says: "I entreat thee, O my God, that I may know Thee, that I may love Thee, that I may rejoice in Thee. And even if I cannot do so fully in this life yet make me daily advance till my joy be full. May I grow daily in knowledge of Thee while I am in this life, that hereafter it may be full. Make Thy love here increase in me, that there it may be full; that here my joy may in itself be great, that there it may be full in thee."²⁾

Donne's imagination is ever kindled by the firm belief that he shall see God, it is a fact which he never doubted; and then his possession of God shall be timeless and so eternal: He says. "No man ever saw God and liv'd; and yet, I shall not live till I see God; and when I have seen him I shall never dye."³⁾

It is almost the same desire which St Augustine has expressed in one of his devotions. "Exceeding glorious will be the glory of seeing God as He is; of seeing Him and possessing Him and this to all eternity."⁴⁾

St Thomas' "reasoning" did not lead him to mysticism; and it was mainly due to two reasons. St Thomas did not bring the religious experience of the human soul as one of the proofs of the existence of God; the Christian revelation is only proved on the basis of the miracles which Christ performed (Contra Gentiles VI Chapter); and secondly

1. LXXX - Sermons 12 P. 119.
2. Manual of Devotion of Saint Augustine Translated by Rev. Marcus Dods, D.D. PP. 69-70.
3. LXXX Sermons 14. P. 117.
4. Devotions - P. 33.

he did not make visio Dei as an additional evidence of not only God's existence but also of His coming into the individual soul;¹⁾ and thus religious experience which is the basis of all forms of mysticism found no significant place in his majestic "Summa" of knowledge; but on that phase of theology where Moral and Natural Theology merge into Mystical Theology St Thomas' Philosophy is of great value. His Holiness Pope Pius XI (in his Encyclical Letter *Studiorum Ducem*) said: "Nor is his asectical and Mystical Science any less noble. He reduces the whole of moral discipline to the virtues and gifts; and he excellently defines the same method and discipline for various states of life, whether for those who follow the ordinary Christian life or for those who strive after consummate perfection, whether in a contemplative or active order."²⁾

Donne was not the only great poet who in his search of God outlived the rationalism of St Thomas. Dante who had accepted the conception of the universe as revealed in the Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas also found the power of intellect inadequate in the realisation of the supreme Bliss, the vision of God. (see *Paradiso* XXXIII. 142: and *Paradiso* IV. 37-42.)

E.G. Gardner has pointed out that in Dante "Gradually discarding imagination and reason, the object of the mind's contemplation, becomes what is above reason and seems to be beside reason, or even against it."³⁾ That the Mystical Vision, in its essence, cannot be described, is the experience of all great mystics. Dante says: "Hence onward my sight was greater than our speech, which fails at such a vision, and memory fails at so great excess." (*Paradiso*. XXXIII. 55-57). Donne knew that in these stages of religious life, intellect, memory and speech, all that

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1. See *The Conception of God in the Philosophy of Aquinas* by Robert Leet Paterson Ph.D., M.A., B.D. P. 490-91.
 2. See *The Mysticism of St Thomas Aquinas* by Fr. V. MacNabb. P. 1.
 3. See *Dante and the Mystics* (London). by E.G. Gardner 157-177.

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 belongs to sense and imagination, fails; and this bliss could be achieved only through Christ's Mercy and his Grace: He prayed "Lighten our darkenss, we beseech thee, O Lord with all these lights; that in thy light we may see light; that in this essential light, which is Christ, and in this supernatural light, which is grace, we may see all these, and all other beams of light, which may bring us to thee, and him, and that blessed spirit which proceeds from both. Amen."

Donne, it has been claimed by his critics, like Miss Ramsay, "never knew that inner unification which is an essential element in the ethical teaching of Plotinus."^{2.}

That Donne attained the "unification" and the peace that comes of the assurance of salvation becomes evident from a close study of his sermons, but we must bear in mind the fact that Donne as a Christian mystic had outlived the experience of such non-Christian Philosophers as Plato and Plotinus. as St. Augustine had done before him. A critical and just estimate of the influence of Neo-Platonism in Christian mysticism has been made in recent years by critics like Dean Inge,^{3.} William Temple and George Santayana.

Miss Ramsay says: "Here I can but mention Spenser as a contrast to Donne, and indicate by this suggestion that path of escape from insecurity not found by the latter."^{4.} Spenser had never been troubled by any "immoderate desire" of human learning and languages, and he was not

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1. XXVI Sermons 24, 325: LXXX Sermons 12, 122.
 2. Donne's relation to Philosophy - (A Garland for John Donne P. 116)
 3. See Inge's Philosophy of Plotinus, and "the Platonic Tradition in English Religious thought," and Temple's "Plato and Christianity," George Santayana's "Plato and Spiritual Life."
 4. Donne's Relation to Philosophy - 116.

interested in such diverse system of Philosophy which Donne's curiosity explored.

Spenser's personality is much more simple when compared to that of Donne; and moreover Spenser was not so deeply religious as Donne was and Spenser's interest in Neo-Platonism was a philosophical and theoretical interest, he did not live on those planes of religious life with which Neo-Platonism deals. St Augustine best illustrates in his life the relation of Christian mysticism to Neo-Platonism.

Though St Augustine was deeply influenced by Neo-Platonism, he found it inadequate for the higher development of Christian life. D. C. Butler has pointed out that "There is a tendency, I think, to exaggerate greatly the Neo-Platonism of the early treatises, particularly those composed between conversion and baptism, and to minimize the element of very real Christian and religious feeling that pervades them; still they are an ordered attempt to provide a Philosophy of Christian belief in the ideas and terms of the most generally accepted and most spiritual philosophic system of the time, ¹⁾ the Neo-Platonism which Augustine loved as the means, humanly speaking, that had led him back to his catholic faith."

Donne, like St Augustine, discovered another kind of beauty to which Spenser in his Epithalamion or Hymns did not give any great importance, and that Beauty was Christ: the constant theme of Donne's Poetry and Prose alike is:

1. Western Mysticism by Dom Cuthbert Butler see pages - 57 and 70. St Augustine's early attitude towards Platonists is summed in the following sentence when he said "the Platonists with the change of very few words and opinions would become Christians." (De Vera Relig. 7) see Montgomery, St Augustine. Also see The Philosophy of St Augustine by M.C. D'Arcy S.J. - A Monument to Saint Augustine chapter V.

"Love him as he is the Lord, that would have nothing perish that he hath made; And love him as he is Christ, that hath made himself man too, that thou mightest not perish; Love him as the Lord that could shew mercy; and love him as Christ, who is the way of mercy, which the Lord hath chosen. Returne againe, and againe, to that mysterious person, Christ¹⁾

It is significant that Donne classed Plato and Socrates as "natural man" and distinguished them from the "regenerate Christian." Donne says that philosophy and reason can sustain the moral life to a certain limit: "as long as these helps of reason and learning are alive and awake and actuated in us from sinking under the afflictions of this world, for they have sustained many a Plato and Socrates. And Seneca in such cases;"²⁾ but when the part of the "affliction" that God sends to us, is the darkening of the powers of intellect and reason, these "helps" of Philosophy are of no avail, and then the Christian is alone saved through Christ, for he exclaims "I am the man that cannot despair, since Christ is the remedy."²⁾

Donne, like St Augustine, had outlived the Neo-platonic Philosophers, and so it is idle to compare him to Neo-platonic poets like Spenser. In speaking of salvation to non-Christians before Christ like Plato and Socrates, Donne could not say definitely that they shall be saved. "To me, to whom God hath revealed his son, in a Gospel, by a church, there can be no way of salvation, but by applying that Son of God, by that Gospel, in that church Nor is there any other foundation for any, nor other name by which any can be saved but the name of Jesus. But how this foundation is presented and how this name of Jesus is notified to them amongst whom there is no Gospel preached, no church established I am not curious in inquiry I know God can be merciful as those tender Fathers present him to be;

1. LXXX Sermons PP. 400-1.
2. Alford 320. vol V.

and I would be as charitable as they are. And therefore humbly embracing that manifestation of his Son, which he hath afforded me, I leave God, to his unsearchable ways of working upon others, without further inquisition." 1)

But he makes it clear that we can not find God without the help of Christ, and Plato had no Christ to offer to his followers; he says. "To know a better state, and to desire it, is not pride; for pride is onely in taking wrong wayes to it. So that, to think we can come to this by our own strength, without Gods inward working a belief, or to thinke that we can believe out of Plato, where we may find a God without Christ, or come to be good men out of Platarch or seneca, without a Church and Sacraments, to pursue the truth itselpe by any other way than he hath laid open to us, this is pride, and the pride of the Angels." 2)

Donne as we have seen was interested in different schools of Philosophy; he knew the sceptical Philosophers, like Sextus Empiricus, the Greek Philosophers, like Plato and Socrates, and the whole body of Scholastic Philosophy before and after St Thomas Aquinas, and its critics like Duns Scotus and Occam; he had read all these Philosophers with special reference to his own ever deepening religious life, but his last step was mystical. It was in a mystical form of faith and experience that he found peace and certainty. He had in one of his sermons declared that the man who has repented for his past sins sincerely will receive the testimony of his pardon on his death-bed and will be reconciled to God and possess Heaven before his bodily eyes be shut; he says: "so if thou have repented before and settled thyself in a religious course before, and have

1. LXXX . 26. 261-262.
2. LXXX. P. 623.

nothing to doe than, but to wrestle with the power of disease, and the agonies of death, God shall fight for thee in that weake state; God shall imprint in thee a cupio dissolvi, S. Pauls, not onely contentednesse but desire to be dissolved; And God shall give thee a glorious Resurrection yea an Ascension into Heaven before thy death, and thou shalt see thyselfe in possession of his eternall Kingdome, before thy bodily eyes be shut; that even thy death-bed bee as Elias Chariot, to carry thee to heaven." ¹⁾

Donne here seems to have prophesied the assurance and certainty of Salvation which he was to receive in his last illness. He declared then that he was confident of his Salvation: "I know he looks not upon me as now as I am of myself, but as I am in my Saviour, and hath given me even at this present time some testimonies by his Holy Spirit, that I am of the number of his Elect; I am therefore full of unexpressible joy, and shall dye in peace." ²⁾

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1. LXXX Sermons P. 803.
 2. Life of Dr John Donne by Izaak Walton edited by George Saintsbury (The World's Classics) P. 77.

THE MYSTICAL ELEMENT IN
THE POETRY OF GEORGE HERBERT.

The New Individualism in the age of Donne and Herbert.

The earlier Renaissance of Sidney, Spenser and his school was an age of consolidation in politics, religion and literature. The dangers of foreign invasion had made the whole nation to rally round the Queen who became the symbol of national solidarity; the leaders in the state as well as in the church recognised the immediate need of uniformity; dissenters in the church were treated as traitors to the crown. Elizabeth's Act of Supremacy "Restoring Ancient Jurisdiction" A.D. 1559, laid down that "all usurped and Foreign power and authority, spiritual and temporal may for ever be clearly extinguished and never to be used or obeyed within this realm."

Shakespeare in his historical plays emphasised the virtues of orderly government; Spenser tried to illustrate with a wealth of romance and allegory the ideals of orderly beauty, while Jewel and Hooker reasoned out a system of orderly church government; and it was in drama the most artistic form of communal pleasure that Elizabethan genius found its supreme expression. Hooker declared that Royal authority was supreme in matters of religion;¹⁾ the theory that the power of the crown was supreme in the church as well as in the state led to the consolidation of the national power; L. Einstein says; "Church men were regarded as subjects of the crown taking out commissions like other officers and religion became merely one side of the state. The frequent shifts of men like Gardiner, Paget and Cecil can not be laid down solely to indifference, fear or ambition but were due to belief as well - sincere belief in the royal supremacy to decide questions of faith."²⁾

But as the seventeenth century advanced, this conception of uniformity

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1. Hooker's Ecc: Polity Book VII. chap 2.
 2. "Tudor Ideals" by L. Einstein PP 24, 25.

in the church and the state was assailed by the new individualism. G.H. Palmer has called it the "second period of the Renaissance;" he says "a period of introspection where each man was prone to insist on the importance of whatever was his own In science Bacon had already questioned established authority and sent men to nature to observe for themselves. In government, the King's prerogative was steadily questioned and Parliament became so rebellious that they were often dismissed. A revolution in poetic taste was under way; Spenser's lulling rhythms and bloodless heroes were being displaced by the jolting and passionate realism of Donne The changes wrought in religion were of a deeper and more varied kind personal religion, the sense of individual responsibility to God, was regarded as the one thing needful The call to individualism was the most sacred summons of the age." ¹⁾ The new individualism which Palmer ascribes to the second Renaissance was in fact no new movement in itself, but was the product of the earlier Renaissance. In the sixteenth century circumstances had contrived to break all the strongholds of tradition and authority, thus liberating the individual; the destruction of feudalism, of monasticism, of Scholasticism, inevitably led to the growth of a new conception of human personality and the role assigned to it in human affairs. The culture of the Renaissance was based on the individual while that of the Middle Ages was based on the ideals of communal and corporate life.

The Renaissance had given to man a new conception of his moral worth and dignity; and the equality of opportunity which the new conditions offered to man led to the assertion of his wildest dreams.

The Reformation carried this individualism further into matters of faith; the abolition of the Papal authority liberated the conscience of

1. The works of George Herbert by G.H. Palmer Vol I PP. 99, 100.

man and the translation of the Bible placed in his hands a new criterion of truth. Protestantism gave a new significance to the responsibility of the individual soul to God and this was the logical outcome of the breakup of Catholicism. Ernst Troeltsch says: "A bond of union absolutely superior to individualism can only be supplied by a power as tremendous as that of the belief in an immediate supernatural Divine revelation, such as Catholicism possessed and organised in the church as the extension and continuation of the Divine incarnation."¹⁾

The relation of Donne and Herbert to Individualism.

Elizabeth did not claim like the Pope the infallibility of judgement in all matters concerning faith; she declared in the Proclamation issued after her excommunication that she did not intend to enter into the conscience of her subjects and what she insisted upon was the observance of the outward forms of uniformity in the church. Henry VIII had tried to be the Pope and King in one, but the crown in England could not assume the dignity of the Pope and this was an important factor in the growth of individualism in religion.

Though Donne and Herbert taught the virtues of obedience to the established authority in church as well as state, their emphasis is on personal holiness, on self-mortification, on the relations of the individual soul to God.²⁾

Donne in one of his sermons justified the claims of the authority to legislate in matters "indifferent", where the Scriptures do not enjoin any definite form of ceremony or ritual. He says: "That which Christ's

1. Protestantism and Progress by Ernst Troeltsch P. 19.
2. "Foole and wretch, wilt thou let thy soule be tyed
To mans lawes, by which she shall not be tryed
At the last day?" (Donne III - Satire.)

Example left indifferent, the Authority of that church, in which god hath given thee thy station, may make necessary to thee; Though not absolutely necessary, and Ratione medii, that none can be saved that doe not kneele at the Sacrament, therefore because they do not kneele¹⁾ at the Sacrament, yet necessary Ratione praecepti, as it is enjoined by lawful authority, and to resist lawful authority is a disobedience, that may endanger any mans salvation."

Herbert went so far as to assert that though the "spirituall men" cannot be judged by learned man they can be judged by a magistrate. He says: "allowing no jurisdiction over the godly, this cannot stand, and it is ill doctrine in a commonwealth." and he further declared "Wordly learned cannot judge spirituall men's actions, but the magistrate may."²⁾ The personal problems of salvation, Election and Good works are the things which engage the attention of Donne and Herbert. The interest of Cranmer, Jewel, and Parker was in proving the antiquity of the Anglican church, in justifying the breach from Rome, in defending the ritual and ceremony of their Mother church; but Donne and Herbert discern symbolic significance in the ritual, they preach the gospel of a humanism based on charity and tolerance but grounded on discipline and personal purity; they analyse their own souls and meditate on its hopes and aspirations, they reveal the contradictions of human nature, their interest in the complex development of human soul is almost dramatic. Donne's ideal of purity extends far beyond its physical or practical bounds, he like Shakespeare probes deeper into our thoughts and intentions, he says: "And though I may have done thus much towards this purity, as that, for a good time, I have discontinued my sin, yet if my heart be still set upon the delight, and enjoying of that was got by former sins, though I be

1. LXXX Sermons page 116, Sermon XII.

2. Herberts' Notes on John Valdesso - Palmer Vol I page 361.

not that dog that returns to his vomit, yet I am still that sow, that wallows in her mire; though I do not thrust my hands into new dirt, yet the old dirt is still baked upon my hands, though mine own clothes do not defile again; as Job speaks (though I do not relapse to the practise of mine old sin) yet I have none of Icremies nitre, and sope, none of Jobs snow-water, to wash me cleane, except I come to Restitution. As long as the heart is set upon things sinfully got thou sinnest over those years sins, every day: thou art not come to the Purity of this text, for it is pure, and pure in heart." ¹⁾

Herbert with a more practical bent of mind is less concerned with the Philosophical aspects of theology, he is mainly concerned with personal holiness, the problems of sin, salvation and grace; to him "The country Parson's Library is a holy life," ²⁾ and "Law is Practice," ³⁾ and his effort is to live "the holy and unblamable life" ⁴⁾ but, like Donne, he is also preoccupied with the relations of the individual soul to God: "For their obligation to God and their own soul is above any temporall tye. Do well and right and let the world sinke." ⁵⁾

It is this conception of the responsibility of the individual soul to God that produced the religious poetry of Donne and Herbert.

(II).

Donne and Herbert.

Prof. Grierson has pointed out that "It was from Donne that Herbert learned the "Metaphysical manner" ⁶⁾ and when he wrote his two sonnets to his mother, he seems to have already come under the influence of Donne.

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1. Donnes LXXX Sermons P. 117.
 2. The Country parson - Palmer Vol I. P. 307.
 3. Ibid P. 304.
 4. Ibid P. 289.
 5. The Country Parson - Palmer Vol I. P. 293.
 6. Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the 17th century - P X LIII..

Herbert himself tells us (second Jordan) that when he resolved to dedicate all his poetic powers to the Sacred Muse, he chose the Metaphysical manner peculiar to Donne.

"When first my lines of heavenly joys made mention,
Such was their lustre, they did so excell
That I sought out quaint words and trim invention."

Herbert's adoption of metaphysical manner was not confined to his choice of "quaint words" but also extended to his thoughts.

"My thoughts began to burnish, sprout and swell
Curling with metaphors a plain intention
Decking the sense as if it were to sell."

When Herbert wrote to his mother, "For my own part, my meaning (dear Mother) is in these sonnets, to declare my resolution to be, that my poor Abilities in Poetry shall be all and ever consecrated to God's Glory; and I beg you receive this as one testimony," he had perhaps Donne's example in mind who, after writing some of the finest love lyrics of the century, had devoted himself to the writing of sacred verse. It is significant that Herbert asks:

"Why are not sonnets made of thee? and layes
Upon thine Altar burnt?"

and Donne was the great poet who not only wrote the Divine Sonnets, but also sent them to his mother. Donne wrote (1607) to Lady Herbert "I commit the enclosed Holy Hymns and Sonnets (which for the matter, not the workmanship have yet escaped the fire) to your Judgment and to your protection too, if you think them worthy of it and I have appointed this inclosed sonnet to usher them to your happy hand."

Lady Herbert could not help showing these Divine Poems to Herbert whom she was training for the church. Donne had lamented the "Idolatrie" of "Profane Mistresses"¹⁾ and had emphasised the virtues of bestowing all our affections upon God alone. He says "What poems and what orations, we

1. The Poems of Donne edited by H.J.C. Grierson, P. 299.

Make, how industrious and witty we are, to over praise men, and never give God his due praise?"¹⁾ It is in the same spirit that Herbert resolved that all his "poor Abilities in poetry shall be all, and ever consecrated to Gods Glory."²⁾

The influence of Donne is felt in Herbert's quality of poetic sensibility and his choice of conceits. The spontaneous quality of the Elizabethan song is absent from the poetry of Herbert; the song in Donne's hands had become a subtle, argumentative poem in which the poet feels and thinks at the same time.

T. S. Eliot in his Clark lectures defined Metaphysical poetry as "that in which what is ordinarily apprehensible only by thought is brought within the grasp of feeling or that in which what is ordinarily felt is transformed into thought without ceasing to be feeling." Herbert, like Donne, makes available for feeling the content of his thought. In the "Church Monuments" which Palmer has classed with Herbert's early poems, we meet such lines as these.

"While that my soul repairs to her devotion
Here I entombe my flesh, that it betimes
May take acquaintance of this heap of dust,
To which the blast of death's incessant motion,
Fed with the exhalation of our crimes
Drives all at last."

The quality of thought in Herbert's poems such as "Praise", "Mortification", "Parodie" and "Church-Porch" is peculiarly Donnean

(III)

The chronological order of Herbert's Poems.

Nothing is so important to study the progress of a poet on the Mystic way as the chronological order in which the poems were composed. Though Palmer says that the evidence drawn from the manuscript sources and the style of Herbert "is too slender to establish a through going

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1. LXXX Sermons P. 88.
 2. Walton's Lives edited by George Saintsbury P. 268.

chronological sequence," he has grouped the poems in three main divisions to correspond with the three distinct periods of Herbert's life.

- 1). The Cambridge Period from the beginning of his writings to 1627.
- 2). The second period of crisis 1627-1630 when he was instituted at Bemerton on April 26, 1630.
- 3). 1630-1633, when he died on March 3.

This classification is based on the assumption that the Williams Manuscript, discovered by Dr. Grosart (in 1874, in the Williams Library, Gordon Square, London) contains the poems which Herbert wrote before 1630, when he settled down as a priest at Bemerton. No poem included in the Williams MS contains reference to its author as a priest, though it contains seventy-three of the one hundred and sixty-nine poems of the Bodelian MS.¹⁾ The difference in the readings of these seventy-three poems common to both Williams and the Bodelian MSS is due to the fact that Herbert was continuously revising his poems; the Williams MS preserves the earlier draft of the revised poems which he sent to Nicholas Ferrar at the time of his death. A close study of the poems arranged thus in their probable chronological order enables us to comprehend the various stages in the religious life of Herbert. These can be divided into two main divisions:-

- (1) Awakening of the self; and Purgation.
- (2) Illumination.

The higher stages of the Mystic way, the Dark Night of the Soul, and the unitive life, are not to be found in Herbert's poetry; in the end, however, we shall discuss the quality of his mystical experiences of God²⁾ and discuss the reasons which Palmer has given to prove the "non-mystical"

1. The Williams MS also contains six English poems and two series of Latin poems not found in the Bodelian MS.
 2. See Palmer Vol. I. P 74.

quality of Herbert's religious poetry.

(IV)

His Conception of the Church and his Approach to God.

The poems which Herbert wrote before 1627, (the year of the death of his mother; his other patrons, King James and Marquis of Hamilton had died two years earlier in 1625) when he resigned the oratorship reveal his conception of the church, the church ritual and festivals, the Holy Scriptures, Prayers and the Sacraments. We shall study his method of approach to God under the following headings and try to relate them to his conception of the church and its religious life -

- a) his conception of the church ritual and the church festivals.
- b) Prayer and Meditation.
- c) Scripture and the Sacraments.

Herbert's Conception of the Church and its Ritual.

The anglican church was peculiarly suited to effect a compromise between the Roman church and the spirit of Protestantism. It recognised the Apostolic succession, ¹⁾ the need of Priesthood, and ritual, while it encouraged the reading of the Bible in the English tongue, and upheld the Protestant conception of the individual responsibility of the soul to God, and the constant need of Preaching. The Anglican church in the hands of such ardent and sincere religious men as Parker, Hooker, Andrews, and Laud became the repository of a new kind of Anglican Polity which was based on the principles of tolerance and sweet reasonableness in matters of faith. Donne considered different Christian churches as "co-natural pieces of one circle" and not so "contrary as the North and South Poles

1. The Article VIII (1571) laid down that "the Three creeds, Nicene crede Athanasius crede and that which is commonlye called the Apostle's crede, ought thoroughlye to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certayne Warrauntes of holye Scripture."

Religion is Christianity, which being too spiritual to be seen by us, doth therefore take an apparent body of good life and works, so salvation requires an honest Christian.¹⁾ Moreover the Anglican divines did not consider, like the Puritans, the Pope to be anti-Christ, they recognised him to be the true Bishop of Rome. Hooker said "That the church of Rome is a true church of Christ, and a Sanctified church by profession of that truth which God hath revealed unto us by His Son, though not a pure and Perfect church." It is to this church of Andrews, Laud and Donne that Herbert belongs. To him the Anglican church was not based on a convenient compromise; it essentially represented the spirit of moderation and charity. Herbert defines the true character of the church:

"A fine aspect in fit array
Neither too mean, nor yet too gay
Shows who is best."

He thought England to be a "land of light"²⁾ in an age of religious persecution and intolerance; when he recommended Ferrar to publish "The Divine Considerations of Valdesso," a spanish catholic, he remarked that he considered Valdesso "to have been a true servant of God.....who being obscured in his own country, he would have to flourish in this land of light and religion of the Gospell among His chosen."²⁾ This is the voice of Anglican humanism and religious Polity.

Herbert's preoccupation with the ideals of the church is shown again in "The Church-Porch" and The Church-Militant, the two long poems which belong to the period before 1630. In "The Church-Porch" there is little religion or mysticism, Herbert displays his shrewd common sense in judging men; this poem was evidently written by a friend of Bacon; the orator and the courtier, and the lover of pregnant epigrams; good taste, fine breeding, refinement and culture, were the qualities which Herbert

1. The Life and Letters of John Donne by Gosse I P. 226.
2. Palmer Vol I, P. 367.

thought indispensable for any serious vocation in life. He approves of courtesy and wit in discourse.

"In thy discourse, if thou desire to please
All such is courtecous, useful, new or wittie
Usefulness comes by labour, wit by ease
Courtesie grows in court, news in the citie.
Get a good stock of these, then draw the card
That suites him best of whom thy speech is heard." (1)

He mixes wordly wisdom with the cultivation of such Christian virtues as Truth (stanza Liii), Kindness (LV), Love (LIX); his aim, in short, is to build the character of the Christian who lives an honest, pure, but ambitious life in the crowded world of men. This poem also shows Herbert's interest in the priest's work; he even prefers public prayer to private ones;

"Though private prayer be a brave designe
Yet Publick hath more promise, more love." (2)

And though the puritans in Herbert's time exalted preaching at the expense of prayer, Herbert declares that sermons are necessary but prayers are more important.

"Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:
Praying's the end of preaching." (3)

Herbert sums up his conception of life when he declares:

"In brief, acquit thee bravely; play the man".

In "Life's ware"⁴⁾ he counsels us to fight bravely and live dangerously like a soldier:

"Chase brave employments with a naked sword
Throughout the world. Fool not: for all may have,
If they dare try, a glorious life or grave." (5)

The Archbishop of Armagh thinks that it is one of the "highest note of style which Herbert has ever struck" 6)

In the "Church-Militant" Herbert treats the growth of the church throughout the preceding ages; Palmer calls it "the first sketch of

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| 1. Palmer Vol I P. 49. | 2. Palmer Vol I P. 62. |
| 3. Ibid P. 63. | 4. Ibid P. 39. |
| 5. Ibid P. 25. | |
| 6. Poems by George Herbert - Introduction by Archbishop of Armagh P. V. | |

general church history in our language." Herbert does not trace the various stages in the development of the ecclesiastical organisation of the church, his main concern is to show the coming of righteousness and true religious life on earth.

"But above all, thy church and spouse doth prove
Not the decrees of power, but bands of love." (1)

He exalts the English church above all the other Reformed churches, and, like the true High churchman, defends the union of the church and State. England achieved "the higher victorie"²⁾ by

"Giving the church a crown to keep her state
and not go lesse than she had done of late." (2)

Herbert also shows here his strong bias against the Roman clergy. He tells us that sin resolved

"To be a church-man too and wear a Mitre,"³⁾

and that the catholic ministers were

"Statesmen within, without doores cloisterers."⁴⁾

Herbert's conception of the church is that it is an embodiment of righteousness; and this conception, as his religious life deepened, assumed a mystical form. In the poems, which are not found in William's MS and therefore were written after 1630, such as "sion" and "The Church Floore", he conceived the Christian Temple, in contrast to Solomon's Temple,⁵⁾ "where most things were of purest gold", as built within the soul, the human aspirations and Christian virtues being its liturgy. St Paul had said "Know yet not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Corinthians. III. 16). Herbert thought that the real temple was the human soul where the spirit of God made its home; he says:

"And now thy Architecture meets with sinne
For all thy frame and fabrick is within." (5)

L. Palmer III, P. 359.

2. Ibid P. 365.

3. Ibid P. 371.

4. Palmer Vol III, P.373.

5. Ibid P. 265. He had said in an earlier Poem "Man":

"Since then, my God, thou hast
So brave a Palace built, O dwell in it" (Vol II P.223)

Herbert thought that the real dwelling place of God was the Human soul; in one of his letters to his mother, he wrote "God intends the soul to be a Sacred temple for Himself to dwell in."¹⁾

Herbert's church is "all within;" and even the "Church Floore" becomes symbolic of "Patience,"²⁾ and "Humilite,"²⁾ while the quire is "confidence"²⁾ and the "sweet cement"²⁾ which binds the whole frame is "Love and charity."²⁾ In the "Church-Porch" he tries to refine the human nature and prepare the Christian to become worthy of tasting the delicacies of Divine Love; while the significance of "Perirrhanterium," (the Greek term for a sprinkling instrument) which, in Ferrar's edition, is inserted between "the Church Porch" and "The Church", is that "self-Purification" is necessary for entering the church of God.

Herbert and The Ritual of the Church.

It is significant that Herbert who was to express the serious spirit of Anglicanism wrote his first poem (in Latin) to defend its church government and ritual against the attack of Andrew Melville (1543-1622), a leader of the Presbyterian Party.³⁾

Herbert's epigrams "concerning the use of ceremonies" reveal the importance which he attached to ritual in the church services; he argues that to adopt the Puritan austerity would make us an easy prey to the Roman church:

"When Caesar steer'd to Briton's shore
With his great fleet in the days of yore
Seeing the native's of the place
To have of clothing not a trace
He cried out as they caught his eye
O certain and easy victory"

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1. Palmer Vol I P. 405.
 2. Palmer Vol III, P. 167. In an earlier Poem "The Altar" he had said that the real altar was "Made of a heart and cemented with teares" (II,121)
 3. For further particulars of Herbert's controversy with Melville see Wlaton's Lives (edited by Saintsbury) P. 271, 272; and A.G. Hyde's Herbert and His Times PP. 55-58.

Herbert thinks that if we give up the ceremonies, history would repeat itself and we shall again be conquered by the Roman church.

"Just so, the Puritans austere
While they the Lord's spouse would strip bare
Of all Ceremonies holy -
Howe'er reverent and lowly

Thus would they straight way her expose
Destitute of seemly clothes
To the Devil and enemies
Conqu'ring easily as so she lies." (1)

In "The British Church" which belongs to Bemerton Period, Herbert again disapproved of the Puritan rejection of all ceremony. He held that though nothing was too mean "to clothe the Sunne," the Anglican moderation in the use of ceremonies was the only course open to the Reformed churches; he did not like the catholic church with her "painted shrines"²⁾ nor the Calvinistic church which is "shie of dressing;"²⁾ and addressing his own church he says:

"But dearest Mother (what those misse)
The mean, thy praise and glorie is
And long may be." (3)

Herbert recognises the spiritual need of beauty and reverence in worship and justifies the ritual and ceremony because they lead to edification. He says: "And all this he (the priest) doth not as out of necessity or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way, between superstition and slovenlinesse, and as following the Apostle's' two great and admirable Rules in things of this nature: The first whereof is, Let all things bedone decently and in order; The second, Let all things be done to edification"⁴⁾ (1. cor 14).

Donne had also justified the ceremonies as "helps to excite and awaken devotion" and pointing out the cause of their abuse in the Roman church he observes: "They were not practised as they should,

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1. The complete works of George Herbert edited by A.B. Grosart II Vol P136
 2. Palmer Vol III. P. 103.
 3. Palmer Vol III, P. 103.
 4. Palmer Vol I. P. 248.

significant but effective, not as things which should signifie to people higher mysteries, but as things as Powerfull, and effectual in themselves as the greatest Mysteries of all, the Sacraments themselves." 1)
He further remarks "all that I strive for is, but Moderation" 1)

This view of ceremonies as "significant" but not "effective" was the Anglican view point adopted by Herbert. The Poems like "Prayer" "Scripture" "Baptisme," "Communion" "Love" (belonging to Pre-Bemerton Period) form an important group for they reveal to us Herbert's method of approach to God through Prayer, Meditation and the Sacraments; these are his means of attaining personal holiness in the first two stages of the Mystical life, the awakening of the self, and the Purification of the self. Prayer for Herbert is the highest form of devotion. He calls prayer "the churches' banquet." It is

The soul in paraphrase, heart in Pilgrimage
The Christian plummet sounding heaven and earth."

In the Country-Parson, he pointed out that "Private praying is a more voluntary act in them than when they are called to other's Prayers." 2)
Herbert always considered Prayer an important form of communication with God; it was to him an easy way of access to Him:

"Of what an easie quick accesse
My blessed Lord, art thou!"
(Prayer).

The Anglican Liturgy like the Bible had coloured the imagination of Herbert; and when at his death-bed Mr Duncan wanted to know what prayer he should read, Herbert replied "O Sir, the prayers of my mother the church of England, no other prayers are equal to them." Herbert is the poet of the Anglican church for his devotion found full satisfaction in the prayers, ritual and ordinances of the church.

Like all the Protestant divines, Herbert laid great emphasis on the constant study of the Holy Scriptures, its correct and reverent

1. LXXX Sermons, P. 80.
2. In the church-porch he had said that Public Prayer had "more promises, more love."

interpretation.

To the Roman Catholic church, the essence of worship lies in the ministering of the consecrated and mystic rites by which God had ordained His ministers to symbolise to humanity the infinite mysteries of His Truth. The main duty of the priests was not preaching but ministering the Sacrament. Protestantism declared that truth was not contained in the mystical rites of the Sacrament but in the Bible; hence the importance of preaching, of interpreting the Holy Scriptures. Herbert said:

"Oh Book! Infinite sweetness! Let my heart
Suck ev'ry letter and a long gain
Precious for any grief in any part,
To cleare the breast, to mollifie all pain."

(The H. Scriptures).

In the "Country Parson" he also declared that "the chief and top of his knowledge consists in the book of books, the store house and magazene¹⁾ of life, and comfort, the Holy Scriptures. There he sucks and lives."

Herbert in his notes on Valdesso disapproved of his assigning the Holy Scriptures "only an elementary use." Herbert points out that the Holy Scriptures have also "a use of perfection and are able to make the man of God Perfect" (I. Tim. IV).²⁾

Herbert and The Holy Communion.

Protestantism has often been defined as the revival of the Pauline and Augustinian religion of grace but we must understand the differences which exist between the Catholic and Protestant conception of grace; for it is the Protestant conception of grace and sacrament which underlies such Poems of Herbert as "The Holy Communion" and "The Holy Scriptures." Catholicism is also a religion of grace but its conception of grace was that of sacramental grace, of supernatural and mystical power; its ministering by the church had^a two-fold effect on the recipient, the

1. Palmer Vol I. P. 215.

2. See Palmer Vol I, P. 369.

forgiveness of sin, and the mystical exaltation of humanity in sharing the body and blood of Christ. The Protestant conception of grace is not that of the mystical substance, to be ministered through sacraments, but that of a divine temper of faith, and spirit, which the believer can find in the Bible and in the love of Christ for humanity. Protestantism rejected the priesthood, for it maintained the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers; the idea of the direct relation of the soul to Christ which is involved in the doctrine of the Justification by faith which modified the Catholic conception of the efficacy of the sacraments in this sense that it was made dependent on the spiritual state of the recipient; anything like magical efficacy was denied to the sacraments.

In "The Holy Communion" Herbert traces the subtlety of God's approaches. God comes to his soul not externally:

"Not in rich furniture, or fine array,
Not in a wedge of gold,"

but God enters the human soul bringing peace and rest with him,

"But by the way of nourishment and strength
Thou creep'st into my breast,
Making thy way my rest,
And thy small quantities my length."

God destroys the "force and art of sin" and He purifies the soul as well as the flesh,

"Leaping the wall that parts
Our souls and fleshy hearts;"

The grace of Christ alone could enter the innermost recesses of the human soul.

"Onely thy grace, which with these elements comes
Knoweth the ready way
And hath the privie key
Op'ning the soul's most subtile rooms;"

(The Holy Communion)

This conception of the grace in the sacrament of the Altar is characteristically Anglican and underlies several poems of Herbert which deal with this subject.

The actual partaking of bodily "nourishment and strength" which can

be felt stealing into the breast, is the perfect symbol of God's grace stealing into the soul. It is the conception which Cranmer and Ridley had offered and Hooker and Donne had defended. Cranmer had contended that it is "the grace, the virtue, and benefit of Christ's Body" that are "really and effectually present" with him, and not that Body itself. Hooker had pointed out that the spiritual state of the receiver was an important factor: "The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament."¹⁾ Donne with the spiritual energy which always characterised his sermons also declared: "woe unto them who present themselves that day without such a preparation as becomes so fearful and mysterious an action upon any carnall or collaterall respects before you come to that day, if you come not to a crucifying of yourselves to the world, and the world to you, ut quid vobis?..... you shall prophane that day and the Author of it, as to make the day of Christ's triumph, the triumph of Satan, and to make that body and blood of Christ Jesus Vehiculum Satana, his Chariot to enter into you."²⁾ Concerning the real presence, Herbert's attitude is also characteristically Anglican. In the autobiographical poem called "Love unknown", he says:

" I found a callous matter
Began to spread and to expatiate there;"

and so he washed it with the holy blood of Christ:

"I bath'd it often, ev'n with holy blood,
Which at a board, while many drank bare wine
A friend did steal into my cup for good,
Ev'n taken inwardly, and most divine
To supple hardnesse."

The element, wine, had no efficacy in itself; the friend did steal into the cup of the worthy receiver alone. Prof. Grierson has remarked that

1. Laws of Ecc. Polity V. LXVIII 5,6; for further discourse see also V, LXVII, 3; and A Christian Letter.
2. LXXX Sermons, XIV, P. 143.

position when he says,

"First I am sure, whether bread stay
or whether Bread doe fly away,
concerneth Bread, not mee."

Hooker had also declared that the controversial aspect of the doctrine of Christ's Presence in the Euchrist was immaterial to him: "What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ, his promise in witness hereof sufficeth, his word he knoweth which way to accomplish;"¹⁾

Herbert rejects the Catholic doctrine of trans-substantiation; the physical changes in the nature of Bread are not important to him:

"That flesh is there mine eyes deny."

The Anglican is eager not for the flesh of God but His Spirit

"This gift of all gifts is the best
Thy flesh the least that I request.

or give mee that so I have more
My God, give mee all Thee."

Besides Prayer, the Scriptures and the Sacraments, Herbert believed in another mode of divine communication; it was music.

Herbert's love of music is well known, it was developed during his Cambridge residence, and became his comfort and recreation at Bemerton. Walton says: "Though he was a lover of retiredness, yet his love of Musick was such that he went twice every week on certain appointed days to the cathedral church in Salisbury, and at his return would say: That his time spent in Prayer and Cathedral music elevated his soul and was his "Heaven upon Earth,"²⁾ and we also know the picturesque episode when he raised himself from his death bed and sang the beautiful lines:

"The sundaies of man's life
Thredded together on times string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal glorious King."

1. Ecc. Polity V. LXVII, 12.

2. Also see Herbert's Epigram mata Apologetica XXVI, De Musica Sacra.

Music, Herbert tells us, in "Church Musick" was his comfort and refuge.

"Sweetest of sweets, I thank you! When displeasure
Did through my bodie wound my minde
You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
A daintie lodging me assign'd."

Herbert's knowledge of music made him conscious of the dual problem of art, the counterpart of sense and music. His poetic thought moulds itself into appropriate musical forms as in the poems called "The Church Monuments" and "The Pulley." Having discussed Herbert's method of approach to God through prayer, Meditation and the Sacraments, we come now to his festival songs, which deal with the spiritual significance of the various stages of Christ's life.

The Songs of Church Festivals.

Herbert's festival songs and the poems which deal with baptism and crucifixion are closely allied to his church-poems and were, like them, composed in his Pre-Bemerton Period. In poems like "The Easter" "Whitsunday" "Christmas" and "Lent", Herbert symbolises the various aspects of Christ's life; these songs of Christian festivals became the analogies of soul's experience of Christ's living presence. Herbert's religious experience in these poems is simple, pious and undisturbed by any acute consciousness of sin, he sings in passionate but clear accents:

"I got me flowers to straw thy way,
I got me boughs off many a tree,
But thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee."
(Easter).

In "Whitsunday", Herbert also relates the joyous experience of Earth when Christ was alive.

"That th' earth did like a heav'n appeare;"

and he Prayes to God to fulfil His promise "which he had made to his disciples at or before his ascension; namely that though he left them, yet he would send them the Holy Ghost to be their comforter"¹⁾

1. Walton's Life.

In "Trinitie Sunday," the three-fold aspects of life as creation, redemption, sanctification (God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) became to Herbert three cardinal virtues, faith, hope, and charity:

"Enrich my heart, mouth, hands in me
with faith, with hope, with charitie
That I may runne, rise, rest with thee."

The happy serene note of the close and intimate experience of God is maintained in "Christmas" and "Sunday." Herbert imagines a time when

"His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine
Till ev'n his beams sing and my musick shine."

But he sums up his attitude towards Christ when he says:

"Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone,
Is more sure to meet with him than one
That travelleth - by-wayes."

Christian mystics throughout the ages have recognised Christ's path to be the only Mystic way leading to God. Christ's coming to Earth was not only a evidence of God's love for humanity, it also held out the promise that human nature could be raised to the heights of divine nature. Origen pointed out the true significance of Christ's life to the Christian soul when he said: "From Him there began the interweaving of divine and human nature, in order that the human by communion with the divine, might rise to be divine."¹⁾

The whole effort of the life of the Christian mystic is to know Christ and be transformed in his Image; Christ's peculiar significance was to raise life to its height and fulness as the perfect fusion of the "natural" and the "divine."

Herbert realises that those who set their hearts on realising the love of Christ in their lives must undergo the arduous process of self-Purification;

"Avoid profaneness! come not here!
Nothing but holy, pure and cleare." (2)

1. Quoted by Underhill - The Mystic Way.
2. Palmer Vol II. P. 119.

In "The Sacrifice" Herbert dwells at length on the spiritual and redeeming character of Christ's crucifixion and in "Good Friday" he tries to apply the grief of Christ and his wounds to wipe off his sins:

"Then when sinne spies so many foes
Thy whips, thy nails, thy wounds, thy woes
All come to lodge there, sinne may say
No room for me, and flie away." (1)

The Awakening of the self

The real consciousness of sin which is accompanied with the awakening of the self comes to Herbert when he nears the crisis of his life (1627). In poems like "The Thanksgiving" and "Reprisall" his self awakens to recognise its imperfection and ^{un-}worthiness, longing to be blessed with the love of God. He cries out:

"O make me innocent, that I
May give a disentangled state and free." (2)

and he resolves to discipline his self with God's help.

"Though I can do nought
Against thee, in thee I will overcome
The man who once against thee fought." (2)

In "The Sinner" and the "Deniall," he recognises the fact that God did not answer his prayers because of the imperfection of his own soul; he had cried:

"Come, come, my God, O come!
But no hearing." (3)

His soul was "untun'd and unstrung" ³⁾ and thus not in a fit state of purity to receive His "favours".

We must note an important fact here; the consciousness of sin in his earlier poems is not strong; in poems like "The World" "Sinne" and "Faith", he seems to believe that Christ's death has atoned for our sins and thus the problem of the Fall and the Sin has been solved forever.

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1. Palmer Vol II. P. 151.
 2. Palmer Vol II. P. 293.
 3. Ibid P. 297.

"And where sinne placeth me in Adam's fall,
Faith sets me nigher in his glorie." (1)

But in the later poems when his self awakens to the need of purification, the consciousness of sin becomes very acute in poems such as "Nature" "Repentance" and "Grace;"

"Sinne is still hammering my heart
unto a hardnesse void of love;
Let suppling grace, to crosse his art;
Drop from above." (2)

He recognises the need of attaining simplicity, humility, and surrender to the will of God.

"Give me simplicities, that I may live;
So live and like, that I may know, thy wayes,
Know them and practise them." (3)

His surrender to Divine Will is complete.

"yet take thy way, for sure thy way is best,
Stretch or contract me thy poore debtor.
This is but tuning of my breast
To make the musick better." (4)

The Poems of Crisis and Purgation.

Herbert's was a complex character, while one side of his nature drew him to the church, and a life of spirit, the other side (perhaps an inherited one) drew him to court, a life of pleasure, learning and wit. Pride and ambition were the characteristics of his family and as his Cambridge years showed he was not free from them. Walton has told the story of his life as a courtier and orator when he had the "laudable ambition to be something more than he was."⁴⁾

When Herbert's ambitions of becoming the secretary of State were shattered to pieces by the death of all his patrons,⁵⁾ he retired into the country; and in this period the awakening of the self which we have

1. Palmer Vol II. P. 233.
2. Ibid P. 311.
3. Palmer Vol II. P. 319.
4. His elder brother Edward was ambassador to the French Court, while Henry was Master of Revels at the English court.
5. Herbert says. "Thou took'st away my life,
And more; for my friends die." (Palmer Vol II P. 343)

noticed in the earlier poems soon developed into the Purgative way. In his period of retirement, he seems to have felt a rebuke from God and his sense of sin was heavy. When he looks into his soul he finds nothing but vanity and sin there.

"I find there quarries of pil'd vanities
But shreds of holiness, that dare not venture
To shew their face, since crosse to thy decrees.
There the circumference earth is, heav'n the centre." (1)

Herbert's resistance to the destiny which was drawing him closer to God was obstinate and intense and this conflict he has recorded in the poems like "The Pearl," "Obedience" and "Affliction" where he asks God,

"Now I am here, what wilt thou do with me.
None of my books will show."

When in "The Pearl" he records his decision to enter the priesthood, he recounts all that he has renounced for the love of God;

"I know the wayes of Pleasure, the sweet strains,
The lullings and the relishes of it;
The propositions of hot bloud and brains;
What mirth and music mean; what love and wit
Have done these twentie hundred years and more."

He is proud to have given away "the wayes of honour" and "the quick returns of courtesie and wit" to have the love of God;

"I know all these and have them in my mind;
Therefore not sealed but with open eyes
I flie to thee....."

Like the true lover he is glad that he has made a heavy sacrifice for his love. He fully understands "at what rate and price I have thy love."²⁾

Henceforth Herbert attempts to surrender himself completely to the will of God, to realise the virtue of humility and strive to win the love of God. He prays of God to conquer his heart:

"O tame my heart!
It is thy highest art
To captivate strong holds to thee." (3)

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1. Palmer Vol II P. 345.
 2. "The Pearl"
 3. Nature.

Herbert is not one of those poets who lose themselves in the luxury of language or who find satisfaction in the external world; he knows the exquisite beauty of the world but he is intent on realising the love of God in his own soul.

"My stuffe is flesh, not brasse; my senses live,
And grumble oft that they have more in me
Than he that curbs them, being but one to five
Yet I love thee." (1)

The external infact throws him back into himself and he begins to examine his inner self and realise the need of Repentance, confession, and obedience:

"Lord, I confesse my sinne is great
Great is my sinne, oh! gently treat
With thy quick flow'r, thy momentarie bloom
Whose life still pressing
Is one undressing
A steadie aiming at Tombe."

In poems like "Content" "Vanitie" and "Frailitie", he recognised the illusiory character of wordly joys which are now "a scourge" and he feels that repentance is a spiritual necessity and purge.

"For they all produce repentance
And repentance is a purge." (2)

The consciousness of the need of repentance, confession, and obedience was accompanied with the desire to realise the love of God in his own soul.

"So thy love shall sway
Resigning the rudder to thy skill." (3)

He has resigned his soul to the working of Divine Love and his actions to His Will."

"So disengag'd from Sinne and sicknesse
Touch it with thy celestially quicknesse
That it may hang and move
After thy love." (4)

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1. The Pearl.
 2. "The Rose"
 3. "obedience"
 4. The Starre.

The mystic tries to be filled with the love of God and prepare his soul through Purgation and discipline to be a fit abode of God. Evelyn Underhill says: "The Mystic way has been a progress, a growth in love: a deliberate fostering of the inward tendency to the soul towards its source, an eradication of its disorderly tendencies to "Temporal good."¹⁾ Herbert also realises that the measure of the religious life is nearness to God through the grace of Christ.

"For as thou dost impart thy grace,
The greater shall our glorie be.
The measure of our joyes is in this place
The stuffe with thee." (2)

Besides repentance, Herbert also felt another phase of the Purgative way; the need for acts of piety and devotion such as the redecoration of Leighton church. Evelyn Underhill has pointed that the true mark of the mystic is that the new acquisition of spiritual energy should lead him to grapple with the practical problems of life.³⁾ Mystical experience is an enrichment, not an escape from life, it is an activity rather than a state; the mystic in fact becomes "a weapon and warrior" in one.

Herbert's main interest in the devotional life was practical; he defined the true character of Purgation as "abhorring and renouncing of sin and turning unto God in truth of heart and newness of life."⁴⁾ and this "newness of life" which is the mark of a regenerate Christian was not a theoretical proposition, it must become evident in the holiness of life - "The country Parson's library is a holy life."⁵⁾

In the last two poems of the period of crisis "Praise" and "Love," we find a note of reconciliation and joy which is maintained in the poems which Palmer has classed under the suggestive heading "The Happy Priest".

Herbert seems to have received some favour of Divine Love, for he says:

1. Mysticism - Evelyn Underhill P. 512.
2. "Employment."
3. Mysticism - Underhill P. 495.
4. Palmer Vol I P. 309.
5. Ibid P. 307.

"Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me." (1)

A strange tenderness and pathos creeps into his poem "love" which seems to be an intimate record of this experience of the love of God. Like the true lover he says that he cannot behold the beauty of his Beloved:

"I, the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
I can not look on thee.
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?" (2)

He sat down and tasted the "meat" of Love
2)

"So I did sit and eat."

Illumination

In the poems which Herbert wrote just after his ordination like "The call," "Aaron", "The odour", and "Clasping of Hands," we find a new lyric note of joy in his priestly office; the period of self purification seems to have ended, doubts and fears no longer assail him; but the significance of these poems lies in the fact the Herbert establishes intimate relations with Christ. He addresses him not with fear and awe, but in tender and affectionate accents:

"Christ is my onely head,
My alone onely heart and breast,
My onely musick, striking me ev'n dead
That to the old man I may rest
And be in him new drest." (3)

He says that Christ "lives in me" and that without Christ he shall have no rest:

"Without whom I could have no rest
In him I am well drest." (3)

This joy has come to him through trust in God and he has realised the deeper truth that the surrender to the will of God is an enrichment of life.

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1. Palmer Vol II P. 397.
 2. Palmer Vol II P. 401.
 3. Aaron.

"Much troubled, till I heard a friend Expresse
That all things were more ours by being his." (1)

and he knows that Christ's help "cannot fail or fall."¹⁾

The new deepening of Herbert's religious life seems to have come through Christ. Walton tells us "The same night that he had his Induction he said to Mr Woodnot: I have this day taken Jesus to be my Master and Governor; and I am so proud of his service that I will always observe and obey and do his will, and alwaies call him Jesus my Master;"²⁾ In "The odour" the word Jesus Christ seems to perfume his mind and, as Walton remarks, to leave "an oriental fragrancy in his very breath." The same note of passionate adoration is struck again in "A True Hymne."

"My joy, my life, my crown!
My heart was meaning all the day
Somewhat it fain would say
And still it runneth mutt'ring up and down
With onely this, My joy, my life, my crown." (3).

His experience of God was the experience of the human soul feeling the abundance of Divine Love. Herbert says:

"As when th' heart sayes (sighing to be approved)
O, could I love and stops: God writeth, Loved." (3)

Herbert seems to have received some favour and sign of God's Love.

"My God, thou art all love.
Not one poor minute 'scapes thy breast
But brings a favour from above.
And in this love, more than in bed, I rest." (4)

He again rejoices in the consciousness of having received the gift, the nature of which he does not reveal:

"Gift upon gift, much would have more,
And comes." (5).

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1. The Holdfast.
 2. Walton's Life.
 3. "A True Hymne"
 4. "Evensong."
 5. Gratefullnesse.

There is a strange familiarity in Herbert's discourse with God in the poems which he wrote in this period. He evidently had received some sign or "gift" of God's favour (whether it was a direct vision of God in illumination we can not say) but he felt within himself peace and joy which he had not experienced before.

"O what sweetness from the bowl
 Fills my soul
 Such as is and makes divine!
 Is some star (fled from the sphere)
 Melted there
 As we sugar melt in wine?" (1)

It is a delight which can not be described through language.

"For thy neatness passeth sight,
 Thy delight
 Passeth tongue to taste or tell." (1)

Was Herbert at this stage of his life granted a vision of Reality? Did he achieve the bliss of Illumination of the self? These are the questions which can never be satisfactorily answered, but his language, his caressing intimate accents, show a peculiar likeness to the description given by the mystics of their "Illumination." The first characteristic of the "Illumination of the self," according to E. Underhill, is "A joyous apprehension of the Absolute, that which many ascetic writers call "The practice of the presence of God," and it was the Presence of God which seems to have filled Herbert's heart with "sacred cheer" and he felt Him as "sweetness" and "Love",

"Here is love, which having breath
 Ev'n in death
 After death can never die." (2)

God at last had heard his call:

"And yet when I did call
 Thou heardst my call, and more. (3)

Herbert expresses his sense of oneness with God in the characteristic language of the mystic.

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1. "The banquet"
 2. The Invitation.
 3. Praise.

"Without whom I could have no rest
In him I am well drest."

St Augustine said: "When I shall cleave to thee with all my being,
then shall I in nothing have pain and labour; and my life shall be a
real life, being wholly full of thee." ¹⁾ The joyous apprehension of the
Presence of God found supreme expression in such lines as these

"Come, my joy, my Love, my heart
Such a joy as none can move
Such a Love as none can part
Such a Heart as joyes in love." (2)

Hugh of St Victor says: "I am suddenly renewed; I am changed; I am
plunged into an ineffable peace. My mind is full of gladness, all my
past wretchedness and pain is forgot." ³⁾

Herbert even uses the favourite symbolism of wine and cup; the
celestial wine carries him high into the Heavens and there he sees God.
"No image, perhaps, could suggest so accurately" says E. Underhill "as
this divine picture of the conditions of Perfect illumination: the
drinking deeply, devoutly, and in haste of the heavenly Wine of Life." ⁴⁾
Herbert says:

"Having raised me to look up
In a cup
Sweetly he doth meet my taste." (5).

But Herbert drew back conscious of his own unworthiness to drink
the heavenly wine:

"But I still being low and short
Farre from court
Wine becomes a wing at last." (5).

Having thus drunk the wine of life, he fearlessly mounts to the sky; and
with a strange boldness, he tells us of his experience:

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1. Conf. Bk. X Chap XXVIII.
 2. The Call. Palmer Vol III P. 9.
 3. Mysticism. E. Underhill P. 294.
 4. Ibid P. 285.
 5. The Banquet.

"For with it alone I flie
 To the skie;
 Where I wipe mine eyes, and see
 What I seek, for what I see
 Him I view
 Who hath done so much for me." (1)

This mystical language of love and longing in which the poet could assert "Lord thou art mine and I am thine"²⁾ and realise that his individuality apart from God will lose all its richness and significance leaves no doubt about the quality of his religious experience which was mystical in its essence.

"If I without thee would be mine,
 I neither should be mine nor thine." (2)

But like other great mystics, Herbert is eminently practical, he combined in a rare degree the practical aspects of the devotional life with the mystic's Love of God.

In his insistence on personal holiness, and the love of Christ for the individual soul, Herbert's devotion is of the New rather than of the Old Testament. Herbert knows that to understand the Holy Scriptures your knowledge of them must be deep and learned. Ferrar tells us that Herbert's love of the Holy Scriptures was so great that he used to say that he would not exchange them for the riches of the whole world. "he hath been heard to make solemne Protestation, that he would not part with one leaf thereof for the whole world, if it were offered him in exchange."³⁾

Herbert himself emphasised the importance of the Holy Scriptures to the life of the Parson: "But the chief and top of his knowledge consists in the book of books, the storehouse and magazene of life and comfort, the Holy Scriptures. There he sucks and lives."⁴⁾ But the real understanding of the Scriptures comes by living them: "But for the understanding of these means he useth are first, a holy life; remembring what his

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1. The Banquet.
 2. "Clasping of Hands"
 3. Ferrar - "The Printers to the Reader."
 4. Palmer. I P. 215.

Master saith, that if any do God's will, he shall know the Doctrine, John 7; and assuring himself that wicked men however learned, do not know the Scriptures because they feel not and because they are not understood but with the same Spirit that writ them." ¹⁾

That "spirit" was to be cultivated from "within." He says that we should not "think that when they have read the Fathers or schoolmen, a Minister is made, and the thing done. The greatest and hardest preparation is within." ²⁾ We have already described his own preparation from "within".

Herbert's critics like Courthope, Grosart, Beeching, Arthur Waugh, Ernst Rhys have analysed the qualities of his religious poetry to determine his place among the English poets; but none of his critics has tried to study him from the mystical point of view. In a recent book, Mr. J.B. Leishman says about Herbert's religion: "The outlines of his faith were simple perhaps - there is no trace of mysticism in his writing." ³⁾

He has been declared by Palmer to be "non-mystical" ⁴⁾ because his religion had a strong vein of the institutional element in it. He had found, as we have seen, great spiritual satisfaction in the rites and ceremonies of his church; but there have been few Christian mystics (and those were seldom great) who have refused the aids of the Sacrament or the ordinances of the church. Herbert did not develop the mystical side of his religion at the expense of the other equally important elements. Palmer in his exhaustive study of Herbert's Poems has not devoted any chapter to his mysticism but his remarks dispersed throughout his notes and commentary show that he did not consider George Herbert to be a mystic. His objections are a) that Herbert's conception of God is not mystical b) that his religion was institutional rather than mystical. c) that soon

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1. A Priest to the Temple, Palmer Vol I. P. 215.
 2. Ibid P. 211.
 3. The Metaphysical Poets by J.B. Leishman, 1934 P. 114.
 4. Palmer P. 74. Vol II.

after settling at Bemerton "The conflicts of the crisis were renewed" and he never achieved the peace of the mystics.

We shall discuss each of these three points separately to show that Palmer's views in some respects are incorrect and that he failed to realise the significance of the inner struggle of Herbert's later years which was essentially spiritual and had no relation to the conflicts of the crisis which were the result of worldly and material considerations.

Herbert's Conception of God.

Herbert's conception of God is personal and mystical; Christ lives in him and through Christ he realises his nearness to God. In "The Flower", he calls God "Lord of Love" and it is the Lord of Love who woos his soul, and for whose love he strives and suffers. Palmer thinks that Herbert thought of God as hostile and detached from human affairs, he says: "Many will feel that this failure of inward unity was due to the separatist notions under which Herbert for the most part thought of God, conceiving Him not as immanent in human affairs, but as detached and hostile." 2)

In the seventeenth century the Anglican divines, like Donne, thought that God could not be seen in His Essence by our bodily eyes (this was the view of St Thomas Aquinas) and to the English mystics a close and intimate relationship with God (expressed through the symbolism of Divine Marriage) has never appealed as it has to the imagination of the catholic mystics. Donne said "God is best seen by us, when we confess that he can not be seen by us Here, in this life, neither the eyes, nor the minde of the most subtle, and most sanctified man can see the Essence of God." 3)

Herbert mainly conceived God as Love.

"My God thou art all Love" he says in "Evensong" Without God he feels a void in his life and his spirit loses all its freshness and buoyancy:

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1. Palmer Vol III PP. 171, 173.
 2. Palmer Vol III P. 174.
 3. LXXX Sermons P. 121.

"Therefore my soul lay out of sight
 Untun'd, unstrung,
 My feeble spirit, unable to look right
 Like a nipt blossome hung
 Discontended." (1)

But it is through Christ that he approaches God:

"Christ is my onely head
 My alone, onely heart and breast." (2)

His presence brings "mirth", his absence dejection of spirit:

"O what a damp and shade
 Doth me invade!
 No stormie night
 Can so afflict or so affright
 As thy eclipsed light." (3)

It was Herbert's conception of God and His relation to the individual soul that led him to mysticism. Palmer has conceived mysticism as hostile to the established authority of the church of the Holy Scriptures; Herbert in his note on "The Divine consideration of Valdesso" maintained that to make men of God "exempt from laws with God is dangerous and too farre;"⁴⁾ and commenting on this Palmer says "From it he attacks mysticism in its central position, viz, its assertion that the ground of authority lies in the individual's own feelings and that no standards erected by past experience or by the present needs of society can discredit that inner prompting."⁴⁾

This is a charge which has ever been brought against the mystics, but we must remember that great mystics like St Paul, St Augustine, St Bernard, St Thomas Aquinas, and St Francis have been faithful sons of the church. St Paul had declared the church to be the Body of Christ - "I Paul.... fill up that which is behind" (lacking) "of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the church." (col I. 24) G. Hodgson says: "once more, to avoid misleading, it may be well to say that the Mystic shares with the rest of us, the common life of the church. It is

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1. The Deniall.
2. Aaron.
3. "A Parodie"
4. Palmer I P. 364.

an error to imagine that the catholic mystic at any rate, is a law to himself, and has peculiar methods of his own; it is no such thing;¹⁾ and he has quoted at length from St Catherine of Genoa, St Francis, S. Vincent Ferrer and several other great mystics' writings to show that they were all dutiful sons and daughters of the church. S. Theresa said: "Experience is necessary throughout, so also is a spiritual director" and in church they found a reliable "director" of their spiritual life. The Anglican mystics like Donne, Herbert, and Vaughan, all remained devout churchmen. Herbert thought the doctrines of the church and the individual religious life were intimately connected. He recognises two "great helps", "a strict religious life," and "ingenuous search for truth" and remarks "which are two great lights able to dazzle the eyes of the misled, while they consider that God cannot be wanting to them in Doctrine to whom he is so gracious in Life."²⁾ He knew that any wavering from the doctrines of the church was dangerous:

"Doctrine and life, colours and light, in one
When they combine and mingle, bring
A strong regard and awe;" (3)

Doctrine and life should mingle like colour and light and thus became one; and then alone the soul would feel the joy that comes through a religious life lived intensely and strictly according to the doctrines of the church.

Palmer has emphasised the note of restlessness, of agony, of disappointment in the poems which Herbert wrote at Bemerton to prove that he never knew the inner peace and calm which the mystic feels. We shall try to show that the agony and restlessness of this period are not due to the fact that "the conflicts of the crisis were renewed" due to his love of a wordly career, but because after settling down at Bemerton his religious

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1. "In the way of the Saints" G. Hodgson, pp. 108, 109.
 2. The Country Parson, Palmer I. P. 280.
 3. The Windows.

life deepened and he felt that God had absented Himself from him, this is a phase of development experienced by every great mystic.

Palmer says "There came a reaction. The little parish which had seemed so attractive in its isolation and into which Herbert had thrown himself with such joyful eagerness proved painfully small The conflicts of the crisis were renewed. Human interests, personal desires, had never died in Herbert. They never did die."¹⁾

In "Submission", according to Palmer, "we hear of the painful contrast between the empty life at Bemerton and that to which he had aspired." His interpretation of line 23 of "The Pilgrimage"¹⁾ is that Herbert's "Parish life was stagnant and tasteless;" while it shall be nearer to truth to say that with the further deepening of his religious life Herbert knew that he had yet to travel a long way to realise in his soul a permanent and living Presence of God. "My hill was further"²⁾ is the common experience of the travellers on The Mystic way; having attained a certain stage in their spiritual development, they realise that the goal is still far off. A momentary supreme elevation in "Illumination" is generally followed by a recoil of the soul, and this falling away from the height brings sadness and disillusion to the human soul.

St Augustine has described this phase with his usual insight in the psychology of mystical experience. "Thy invisible things, understood by those that are made, I saw, but I was not able to fix my gaze thereon; but my infirmity being struck back, I was thrown again on my normal experience (Solita), carrying with me only a memory that loved and desired what I had, as it were, perceived the odour of, but was not yet able to feed upon." (Conf. VII. 23).

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1. Palmer Vol III, PP. 171, 173.
 2. A.G. Hyde - in G. Herbert and His Times - has compared this poem with Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

Herbert says:

"Soul's joy, when thou art gone,
And I alone -
Which cannot be,
Because thou dost abide with me
And I depend on thee-" (1)

When God's light is "eclipsed" from his soul, he fears that sin may return again. It is when mystics are most conscious of the living presence of Christ that they are most conscious of their own sin.²⁾ Herbert says:

"Ah Lord, do not withdraw
Lest want of aw
Make sinne appeare," (1)

But in this consciousness of sin there is no sense of complete alienation from God but a realisation of the unworthiness of the soul. When Herbert asks Christ to return again to him, there is a strange tenderness in his address:

"My love, my sweetnesse, heare!
And heal my troubled breast with cryes,
Which dyes." (3)

This phase of Herbert's religious experience when God seems to desert the soul found expression in an acute distress of the soul and though this was further heightened by his sense of approaching death, his Bemerton period can not be described, as Palmer has done, as one of "disappointment, rebellion, dulness, self-reproach, penitence, mental perplexity, bodily pain, fear of God's alienation, and the bitterness of life long purpose coming to an end."⁴⁾ Much of the agony and pain in the poems written at Bemerton (i.e. those not found in William's MS) are more spiritual than physical. Herbert seems to have experienced that affliction and dejection of spirit on which Donne loved to dwell in his sermons. "But when part of the affliction shall be, that God worketh upon the spirit

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1. Palmer Vol III P. 293-295.
 2. George Herbert, Melodist by E.S. Buchanan P. 57.
 3. Longing Palmer Vol III P. 287,
 4. Palmer Vol III P. 245.

itself, and damps that,.....divest, strip the man of the man..."¹⁾

Herbert also knew that Affliction that God sends to the human soul is severe indeed:

"No scrue, no piercer can
Into a piéce of timber work and winde
As God's afflictions into man,
When he a torture hath design'd." (2)

That this affliction was spiritual and religious, Herbert has told us several times; he even imagines that his grones are making music for the Lord:

"But grones are quick and full of wings
And all their motions upward be.
And ever as they mount, like larks they sing.
The note is sad, yet musick for a King." (3)

In fact the struggle was a struggle of love and conquest between the soul, and God, who woos the human soul; Herbert says:

"The fight is hard on either part.
Great God doth fight, he doth submit." (4)

This "fight" has ever been the theme of great mystical poetry: "I chased thee, for in this was my pleasure" says the voice of Love to Machthild of Magdeburg "I captured thee, for this was my desire; I bound thee, and I rejoice in thy bonds; I have wounded thee, that thou mayst be united to me. If I gave thee belows, it was that I might be possessed of thee."⁵⁾ The feeling of being hunted by the Divine Love is a common experience of mediaeval mystics. Eckhart declared "He who will escape Him only runs to His bosom; for all corners are open to Him."⁵⁾

Herbert in his poem "Affliction" has clearly declared that his grief is religious in the sense that it is another phase of divine Love.

"Thou art my grief alone
Thou Lord, conceal it not, And as thou art.
All my delight, so all my smart." (6)

1. Alford V 320.

2. Confession.

3. Sion.

4. Sion.

5. Mysticism, by E. Underhill, Part I chap 6. This feeling found its supreme expression in E Thompson's: The Hounds of Heaven." see Francis Thompson by R.L. Megroze P. 154.

That the restlessness which God has given to the human soul tosses it again to the bosom of the Lord was a favourite theme of Herbert's poetry. The "repining restlessness"¹⁾ he thought, could lead man to God; moreover this spiritual grief and smart are in a way welcomed by the mystics, for they reveal to them the reality of the Passion of Christ and thus they realise their Fellowship with Christ in his suffering. Herbert realises that it is Christ who is grieving in him:

"Thy life on earth was grief, and thou art still
Constant unto it, making it to be
A point of honour now to grieve in me,
And in thy members suffer it." (2)

The absence of God was also the greatest of torments to him; "Bowels of pitie, heare" he cries and he prays "Lord of my soul, love of my minde, Bow down thine eare!"

"Lord Jesu, heare my heart
Which hath been broken now so long,
That ev'ry part
Hath got a tongue."

But this is the suffering of a man who has known love; and is a common occurrence in the life of the mystics: "The periods of rapid oscillation between a joyous and painful consciousness occur most often at the beginning of a new period of the mystic way: between Purgation and Illumination, and again between Illumination and the Dark Night"³⁾ it is how E. Underhill has defined the restlessness of the human soul who has known the bliss of divine Love; and thus even in the agony of separation, Herbert calls Christ "My love, my sweetnesse, heare!"⁴⁾

Herbert's wounds are the wounds of love;

"wounded I sing, tormented I indite." (5)

and he prays:

"Pluck out thy dart
And heal my troubled breast which cries
Which dyes," (4)

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1. The Pulley
 2. Affliction.
 3. Mysticism, E. Underhill, P. 467.
 4. Longing.
 5. Joseph's Coat.

The consciousness of alienation from God after the experience of this love causes great distress to the soul of the mystic. St Joh of the Cross describing his affliction says "the greatest affliction of the sorrowful soul in this state is the thought that God has abandoned it, of which it has no doubt; that He has cast it away into darkness as an abominable thing the shadow of death and the pains and torments of hell are most acutely felt, that is, the sense of being without God, being chastised and abandoned in His wrath and heavy displeasure."¹⁾

The last few lines of this passage might well be taken as a description of the poetry of Herbert at Bemerton, the longing for Christ is so intense that every particle of Herbert's dust cries "come."

"Wilt thou deferre
To succour me,
Thy pile of dust, wherein each crumme
Saves, come?" (2)

Herbert knew that his end was fast approaching but he was ready to meet death calmly and cheerfully:

"O show thy self to me
Or take me up to thee."

Herbert had experienced the bliss of the love of God and he constantly refers to its happiness and joy:

"I felt a sugred strange delight,
Passing all cordials made by any art,
Bedew, embalme, and over-runne my heart,
And take it in." (3)

And when Herbert imagines the joy which waits him in Heaven when he shall see God face to face he is ready to welcome death:

"If thy first glance so powerfull be,
A mirth but open'd and seal'd up again,
What wonders shall we feel when we shall see
Thy full-ey'd love!" (4)

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1. "Noche Escura del Alma" (Lewi's translation) I. II Chap. VI
 2. Longing.
 3. The Glance.
 4. The Glance Vol III. P. 331.

and he uses the mystic's favourite symbol of light to denote the character of the Presence of God;

"And one aspect of thine spend in delight
More then a thousand sunnes disburse in light,
In heav'n above." (1)

But it is pleasant to note that he seems to have again experienced the Love of God after this acute period of longing and prayer,

"How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns!" (2)

At the return of the "Lord of love",²⁾ he recovers "greenesse" and "buds" again, and he wonders at the strangeness of his new experience:

"O my onely light,
It cannot be
That I am he
On whom thy tempests full all night". (3)

He had felt the agony of separation from God; his "flesh and bones
and joynts"⁴⁾ had prayed for His return; his thought had even become sharp wounding weapons:

"My thought are all case of knives,
Wounding my heart
With scatter'd smart," (5)

but we should remember that such a sense of grief and separation is inevitable in the life of a mystic, even such a great apostle as St Paul experienced it; he says "Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of revelation, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh."⁶⁾ Christ seems to have returned to Herbert towards the end of his life. In a poem probably written during the last Easter of his life he wrote,

"Thy Saviour comes, and with him mirth,
Awake, awake!" (7)

He knew that death was fast approaching - "The harbingers are come"⁸⁾-

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1. The Glance.
 2. The Flower.
 3. The Flower.
 4. Home.
 5. Affliction. Vol III P. 273.
 6. The Mystic Way - E. Underhill, P.174.
 7. The Dawning.
 8. The Forerunners.

but it has lost its "ancient sting."¹⁾ for him; death now meant everlasting Life and Peace in Heaven. He says:

"Spare not, do thy worst.
I shall be one day better than before;
Thou so much worse that thou shalt be no more." (1)

Having overcome his last "conflict with his last Enemy, by the merits of his Master Jesus," as Walton says, "he breathed forth his Divine soul without any apparent disturbance," and thus passed away the "saint" of the Anglican church.

Though Herbert, perhaps never lived at the higher stages of mystical life known as the Dark Night of the Soul, and The Unitive stage, the development of his religious consciousness in the years of crisis (1627-1630) closely resembles to what the mystics call, The Purgative way; while in the early years, the awakening of the self is closely akin to that of the mystics. Whether he ever experienced Illumination can not be definitely said, but that his description of God's wooing his soul and his own experience of God's Love is mystical in its essence can not be denied. We have traced these three phases of his religious life in the foregoing pages and tried to show their resemblance to the corresponding phases of mystical life by giving parallel quotations from such great mystics as St Augustine, St Bernard and St John of the Cross. Herbert has neither the Sombre majesty of Donne's imagination, nor the ardour of Crashaw, nor the mystical exaltation of Vaughan, but in his poetry the ideals of the church of Hooker and Laud found their supreme expression, with its primitive piety, and devotion, its love of ritual, and ceremony; and through him the church has spoken "more directly than the mystic, and more temperately than the enthusiast."²⁾

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1. "A Dialogue - Antheme."
 2. The Poems of George Herbert - Introduction by Arthur Waugh P. IV.

Though he is not a great mystic, his poetry is rich in mystical content; he is the poet who has known God; he has felt the peace and joy of His Presence and the pain and agony of His absence in a manner peculiar to the mystics, and he has communicated his experience to us with all its complexity and richness worthy of a delicate and sincere artist.

THE MYSTICAL ELEMENT IN THE RELIGIOUS POETRY

of

RICHARD CRASHAW.

Richard Crashaw has been so widely hailed as a mystic that it is essential to analyse the elements of his religious poetry to determine the quality of his mystical experience.

Crashaw and Counter-Reformation.

Crashaw's religious poetry was largely written under the influence of the counter-reformation which followed the Council of Trent and sent a wave of religious ardour and mystical faith through the Catholic countries. It ended the secular and pagan renaissance in Italy, created the order of the Jesuits, and gave rise to the mystical poetry like that of Vondel in Holland and Crashaw in England and it was under its influence that the mystical soul of Spain flowered in the writings of St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross and Ignatius Lyola. The counter-reformation in England resulted in the Laudian ideals of beauty in holiness, of more reverence and decorum in church ceremonial and service, in the decoration of the churches, in the elaboration of the ritual; another aspect of the counter-reformation was the revival of asceticism within the Anglican church. Donne had declared from his pulpit at St. Pauls:

"And therefore, if when I study this holinesse of life, and fast, and pray, and submit my selfe to discreet, and medicinall mortifications, for the subduing of my body, any will say, this is Papis-ticall, it is a blessed Protestation, and no man is the lesse a Protestant, nor the worse a Protestant for making it, Men and brethren, I am a Papist, that is, I will fast and pray as much as any Papist, and enable myself for the service of my God, as seriously, as sedulously, as laboriously as any Papist."¹

1. Selections from Donnes Sermons by L.P. Smith, 130.

This ascetic ideal of life found its expression in the piety of George Herbert, and the saintliness of the life of the members of the religious colony at Little Gidding of Nicholas Ferrar which was called the "Arminian Nunnery" by the Puritans.

Crashaw is closely allied with these two great movements of his times which deeply influenced his poetic art and mystical faith. Though Crashaw's father was an ardent Puritan divine and held Pope to be an anti Christ,¹ we must remember that he was deeply interested in the catholic devotional literature and the missionary and controversial literature of the Jesuits.

William Crashaw translated the verses of St. Bernard under the title of "The Complaint or Dialogue Betwixt the soul and bodie of a damned man" (1616) and wrote several anti-Jesuit pamphlets including the one dealing especially with the teachings of St. Ignatius Loyola named "Lyola's Disloyalty" (1610).²

Richard Crashaw must have become familiar with the catholic devotional literature even before coming to Cambridge in the library of his Puritan father.

In a very interesting letter William Crashaw requested "The Earl of Salisburye Lord High Treasurer of Englande" to send him the "popish books" which were recently confiscated - "And whereas I am informed some popishe bookes newly taken are in your lordships disposition, I beseeche your lordship continue your wonted favoure and let me have of eche kind one, for my own use."³ (Feb. 26, 1611). This not only

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1. He declared in his Will that "I believe the Pope's seate and power to be the power of the greate Antichrist, and the doctrine of the Pope (as now it is) to be the doctrine of Anti-Christ"- LXXXI. Grosart vol.II.
 2. This was originally published in 1610 under the title "Jesuits' Gospell" and was reissued in 1621, 1641, under the above title "Loyla's Disloyalty" in 1643.
 3. State Papers - Domestic James I, LXI. No.11, Feb. 26 (1611) - also quoted by Helen C. White - English Devotional Literature Prose - p. 141.

shows one of the many sources through which the Catholic devotional books found their way into the Puritan homes, it also makes it probable that Richard Crashaw, who early showed his interest in sacred literature, became acquainted with Catholic devotional literature in his father's library long before he came to Cambridge which was feeling the full tide of Laudian Reformation.

The aspect of Laud's reform of the Anglican Church which influenced Crashaw was the decoration of the churches and the institution of a reverent and elaborate ritual. Laud declared "It is true the inward worship of the heart is the true service of God and no service acceptable without it; but the external worship of God in His Church is the great witness to the world that our heart stands right in that service of God These thoughts are they, and no other, which have made me labour so much as I have done for decency and an orderly settlement of the external worship of God in the Church; for of that which is inward there can be no witness among men nor no example for men."¹

The fruits of Laud's labour in this direction must have met Crashaw in the new chapel (1632) at Peterhouse where Dr Cosin who was appointed master in 1634 had brought the services and ritual to the Laudian standard. Crashaw's taste in decoration and ritual seems to have been highly ornate and florid and the artistic and ceremonial aspect of Laud's Anglicanism appealed to his deep-seated poetic instincts.

1. The English Church from the Accession of Charles I. to the Death of Queen Anne, by W. H. Hutton, page 53.

Nicholas Ferrar and Crashaw.

Long before Crashaw migrated to Peterhouse, the fame of N. Ferrar and his religious community at Little Gidding had reached Cambridge and many ardent and devout men used to go over to Gidding to participate in their night vigils and Sunday devotions. "Several religious persons", says Dean Peckard "both in the neighbourhood and from distant places attended these watchings: and amongst them the celebrated Mr Richard Crashaw, fellow of Peterhouse, who was very intimate in the family and frequently came from Cambridge for this purpose, and at his return often watched in Little St. Mary's Church¹ near Peterhouse".

It was perhaps the austere life of Nicholas Ferrar which aroused in Crashaw a similar desire to keep night vigils and devote himself to a life of prayer and mortification. His first editor (which L.C. Martin thinks was an inmate of Little Gidding) says that "he led his life in S. Maries' Church near St. Peter's College; there he lodged under Tertullians' roof of Angels; there he made his nest more gladly than David's Swallow near the House of God, where like a primitive Saint he offered more prayers in the night, than others usually offer in the day".

Regular watches were also kept throughout the night at Little Gidding when the Psalms were recited every four hours by the watchers on their knees; these austerities of Nicholas Ferrar took a still severer turn after the death of his mother. After her death he

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1. The Life and Times of Nicholas Ferrar by H.P.K. Skipton. Also see on this subject.
 2. Cambridge in the 17th Century by J.E.B. Mayor.
 3. Little Gidding and Its Founder by Henry Collett.
 4. John Inglesant by J.H. Shorthouse.

never went to bed "but wrapping himself in a loose frieze gown, slept on a bear's skin upon the boards. He also watched either in the oratory, or in the church three nights in the week."¹.

That Crashaw's relations with the Ferrar's were intimate is further proved by the fact that Ferrar Collet was placed (May 1636) under Crashaw's charge at Peterhouse; L.C. Martin has published a letter of Crashaw from Holland addressed probably to John Ferrar, the brother of Nicholas Ferrar which shows that Mary Collet,² the niece of Nicholas Ferrar, accompanied or joined Crashaw at Leyden.

His conception of the night vigils is described in his "Description of a Religious House and Condition of Life".

"A hasty Portion of prescribed sleep;
 obedient Slumbers? that can wake & weep,
 And sing, & sigh & work and sleep again;
 Still rowling a round of sphere of still-returning pain."

It seems that Crashaw at Cambridge was a High-church man of the school of Laud and Andrews.³ As early as 1635, he had denied in his verses prefixed to Shelford's "Five Pious Discourses", the Puritan dogma that the Pope was Anti-Christ.⁴ He says:

"Why 'tis a point of Faith. What e'er it be
 I'm sure it is no point of charity."

He also denied the Protestant doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. He said (in Fides Quae Sola Justificat).

"Faith is the body, Love the Soul

1. Life & Times of Nicholas Ferrar by H.P.K. Skipton, page 144.
2. see "Richard Crashaw and Mary Collet", Church Quarterly Review, vol. LXXIII.
3. He also wrote a poem "Upon Bishop Andrews his Picture before his Sermons".
4. Nicholas Ferrar held that the Pope was Anti-Christ, see Skipton, page 123.

Take Love from it, you take the whole:
 Now, now indeed Thy Faith's alone,
 But being alone, lo, it is none."¹.

But for the Civil Wars, Crashaw would still have remained an ardent High-church man secure at Cambridge in "a little contentfull kingdom"² as he called his Patrimony in St. Peter.

Crashaw's Conversion.

His conversion, we should remember did not depend like that of Donne on "controverted divinity"; it was not the catholic dogma, but the catholic ritual and the reading of the catholic mystics especially of St. Teresa which mainly led him to seek repose in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. Crashaw's conversion was the confirmation of a spiritual state which had already existed and that spiritual state was largely emotional, an arduous abandonment to the ecstasy of divine love expressed through sensuous symbolism.

Grosart holds that Crashaw till 1634 was "as thoroughly Protestant, in all probability as his father could have desired,"³ while R.A. Eric Shepherd states the point of the Catholic critics when he says that Puritanism never had any influence on Crashaw. "Whether Puritanism can ever have had any influence on Crashaw, it is not possible to say. It is most probable that it never had".⁴ The influence of Puritanism never seems to have been strong in his life and he soon adopted the tenents of the Laudian Party as is evident from his Epigrammata Sacra, a careful study of which shows that he had come early in life under the spell of the Catholic mystics,

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1. The complete works of Richard Crashaw, Grosart, Vol.II, page 215.
 2. L. C. Martin - Introduction.
 3. Grosart, Vol.II, Introduction to the Works of Crashaw P. XLII.
 4. The Religious Poems of R. Crashaw - Introduction, p. 3.

while such epigrams as "Mary Magdalene", "The Blessed Virgin Seeks Jesus", "On the wounds of our Crucified Lord" show the trend of his mind; these were the themes which were to occupy his mind as a sacred poet. He had already written his great hymn to St. Teresa while he was "yet among the Protestantes".¹ His conversion heightened his sense of ecstatic adoration of the Virgin Mary, Christ, and his Saints and his piety and religious poetry became more characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church. He joined the church which was already his spiritual home and cultivated, as H.C. Beeching has said "that tone of familiarity which is so distressing in so many devotions used by Romanists and our own dissenters".² Nicholas Ferrar had given a prophetic warning about the "coming troubles" a few days before his death to his brother John Ferrar: "I now tell you, that you may be forewarned and prepare for it, there will be sad times come, and very sad. But if you should live to see the divine service and worship of God by supreme authority brought to nought and suppressed, then look and fear that desolation is at hand, and cry mightily to God."³ When this prophecy was fulfilled and the Puritans ejected Crashaw from Cambridge in 1643, he became a Catholic⁴ and Cowley found him in great distress in Paris in 1646; thus by outward circumstances as well as by the inner urge of his religious temperament his Rome-ward journey was completed.

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1. Grosart quotes Crashaw's poems on the "Gunpowder Treason" as an evidence of Crashaw's puritanism and compares them to "his father's wrath". (Vol. II, page XLI) but we must remember that there was a large majority of English Catholics who were against the conspiracies and plots of the Jesuits. See Donne's Pseudo-Martyr.
 2. H.C. Beeching, *Religio Laici*.
 3. *The Life and Times of N. Ferrar*, Skipton, p. 145.
 4. We have used the word "Catholic" in this Chapter as applying to the Roman Catholic Church.

II.

A careful study of Crashaw's religious poetry shows that he was a poet with a mystical temperament, ornate and sensuous, rather than a mystic of the Catholic Church in the sense in which St. Augustine or Blessed St. Teresa are mystics. Algar Thorold holds that Pseudo-Areopagites' "Theologia Mystica" provides the solid basis on which the Catholic mysticism rests. He says "The human soul, by an inverse movement to that of God towards the creature, rising step by step through the degrees of creation, remounts at last to God, enters the mysterious night of the Divinity, which no created light can pierce, and there unites herself intimately with her last end."¹ Pseudo Dionysius in a passage which has become the classics of Catholic mysticism says that the mystic having become "purely free and absolute, out of self and of all things, thou shalt be led up to the ray of the divine darkness, stripped of all, and loosed from all." (Mystical Theology).

There is no evidence in Crashaw's poems that he was ever led up to the mysteries of "divine darkness" where the soul becomes united with God. G.E. Hodgson has remarked that Crashaw is "a poet writing about a mystic rather than . . . a mystic pouring out his own actual experience."²

Prof. Grierson has justly remarked "Neither spiritual conflict controlled and directed by Christian inhibitions and aspirations, nor mystical yearning for a closer communion with the divine, is the burden of his religious song, but love, tenderness, and joy."³

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1. An Essay in Aid of The Better Appreciation of Catholic Mysticism - Algar Thorold, Page 77.
 2. English Mystics by G.E. Hodgson, page 239.
 3. Introduction to "Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems" of the Seventeenth Century, page XLVI.

Francis Thompson, who, like Crashaw, was a great Catholic religious poet, held that Crashaw's is "essentially a secular genius" and that he is attracted to religious themes "not by the religious lessons, but the poetical grandeur and beauty of the subject" - "he sings the Stable at Bethlehem, but he does not sing its lessons of humility poverty, self-abregation".^{1.}

Though Crashaw was attracted to the themes of his poetry because they were religiously exalted, as the agony of Christ on the Cross, or the mysteries of the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, or the heroic life of St. Teresa and had great poetic possibilities in them, he never seems to have experienced the joys of an illuminated mystic.

St. Teresa describes her experience of Christ:

"He also spoke other gracious words, which I need not repeat. His Majesty, further showing His great love for me said to me very often: "Thou art Mine, and I am thine".^{2.} We do not find any record of such intimate experience of the love of Christ in Crashaw's poetry which is the mark of a true mystic.

The analysis of the divine poems according to their theme would help us in determining the quality of Crashaw's religious experience.

(A detailed grouping of the English poems according to their subject-matter will be found in the Appendix to this Chapter, arranged in Chronological order.)

We have grouped the poems according to their themes in four sections as follows:³

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1. See R.A. Eric Shepherd's Introduction, page 9, and Works of F. Thompson, Vol.III. (1913).
 2. The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus written by Herself, Translated by David Lewis, page 353.
 3. This is our own arrangement in which we have followed the chronological arrangement according to three original editions of 1646, 1648, 1652.

- (1) Poems on Christ's Life and his miracles.
- (2) On the Catholic Church and its ceremonies.
- (3) On the Saints and martyrs of the Church.
- (4) On several sacred themes such as the translation of the Psalms and letters to Countess of Denbigh and "on Mr George Herbert's book intituled, the Temple of Sacred Poems sent to a Gentlewoman" which contain Crashaw's reflection on the problem of conversion and on the efficacy of prayer.

The poems under the first section on the life of Christ published in 1646 are as follows.

- (1) On the Water of our Lord's Baptisme.
 - (2) Upon the Sepulchre of our Lord.
 - (3) On the Still surviving markes of our Saviour's wounds.
 - (4) Come see the Place where the Lord lay.
 - (5) I am the Doore.
 - (6) Neither durst any man from that Day ask him any more Questions.
 - (7) Upon our Saviour's Tombe.
 - (8) Upon our Lord's last comfortable discourse with his Disciples.
 - (9) Upon the Thornes taken downe from our Lords head bloody.
- (These (9) are from Divine Epigrams) 1646.
- (10) Our Lord in his circumcision to his Father.
 - (11) On the wounds of our crucified Lord.
 - (12) On our crucified Lord Naked and Bloody.
 - (13) Easter day.
 - (14) On the bleeding wounds of our crucified Lord.
 - (15) A Hymne of the Nativity, sung by the shepherds.
 - (16) An Himne for the circumcision day of our Lord.
 - (17) New Year's Day.

The following poems dealing with the life and passion of Christ were added in 1648 and retained in the "Deo Nostro" Paris. (1652).¹

- (1) To the Name Above Every Name -
 - (2) The Glorious Epiphany of our Lord.
 - (3) The Office of the Holy Crosse.
 - (4) Evensong)
Compline) 1652. (added to "The Office of the Holy Crosse"
 - (4) Upon the H. Sepulcher.
 - (5) Charitas Nimia. (6) A Song.
- Poems from MSE.
- (7) Out of Grotius his Tragedy of Christes sufferings.

There are only three poems (see the appendix to this Chapter) on Church's ceremonies, one being a translation of the famous hymn of St. Thomas in "adoration of The Blessed Sacrament".

Except the two epigrams on Virgin Mary published in 1646, all the three great poems on Virgin Mary (1) Sancta Maria (2) Gloriosa Domina (3) on The Glorious Assumption of our Blessed Lady.) were written after Crashaw's conversion and included in the 1648 edition. There are eleven poems dealing with the life of saints and martyrs of the church like St. Magdalene, St. Teresa, St. Anthony and others. There are 31 poems dealing with other sacred subjects like The Prayer-book; "Description of the Religious house" and the poem addressed to The Countess of Denbigh "Perswading her to Resolution in Religion."

There are only six epigrams dealing with the miracles of Christ.

This analysis of the divine poems shows the limited range of

1. No important poem dealing with Christ was added in 1652 except that certain alterations were made "For the Office of the H. Cross".

Crashaw's interest in the choice of subjects which is confined to Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints of the Church. These poems are not like Donne's "A Hymn to God the Father" and Herbert's poems like *The Affliction*, *The Search* and *The Collar*, poems which reveal the inner struggle for self-purification of these poets and the complexity of the aspirations of the soul in its attempt to apprehend God.

Crashaw's vision is more objective, he feels a kind of ecstatic ardour when he contemplates on the life of the Saints of Christ, or the mystery of Christ's birth and his relation to the Virgin Mary; he does not give us any insight into the inner struggle of his soul in what the Catholic critics call the "Progressive Sanctification of life". His religious poetry is the song of thanksgiving and joy. In his famous hymn "To the Name above Every Name"¹, he hails Christ with the passionate enthusiasm of a convert:

"I sing the Name which None can say
But touch't with An interiour Ray:
The Name of our New Peace; our Good:
Our Blisse: & supernaturall Blood:
The name of All our Lives & Loves".¹

He does not reveal any deep personal experience of the "interior-ray" of the love of Christ. The key-note of his hymn is

"Awake & Sing
And be All wing;"².

He soars high on the wings of his imagination, but leaves us wondering about the nature and depth of his own religious experience.

1. L. C. Martin, page 239.
2. Ibid, page 240.

Crashaw and the Dutch poet Vondel strike a new note in the religious poetry of the Counter-Reformation, the note of the ardour, exaltation and joy of the poet who has at last found peace and rest in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. In the study of Crashaw's religious poetry, we should bear in mind a simple biographical detail, that he was a convert. Edmund Gosse says that Crashaw "Is the solitary representative of the poetry of Catholic Psychology which England possessed until our own days"¹; but it is the psychology of a convert to Catholicism. The convert in his outburst of joy at the newly discovered truth forgets to dwell upon the lessons the Church teaches and instead sings of its saints and martyrs. Donne's religious poetry is also rich in its psychological content; in Crashaw's poetry there is no subtle argumentative evolution of religious feeling; his poetry is controlled more by his senses than intellect. His ecstatic joy like that of a convert is uncontrollable. He feels the "Artfull Touch" of Christ which has led to his conversion and with him the whole creation sings.

". . . . All Things that Are
Or, what's the same,
Are musicall;"².

It is instructive to compare Crashaw with R. Southwell (1561-1595.) In this great Catholic poet, the ecstatic phase, the desire for martyrdom which the Jesuits had kindled in many a religious soul, begins early in life. But what is significant in the life of Southwell is not the joy of the convert, for he was sent at an early age to Douay and was educated there by the Jesuit Leonard

1. Seventeenth Century Studies by E. Gosse, pages 154, 155.
2. L. C. Martin, page 241.

and later at Paris by the Jesuit Thomas Derbyshire and was duly ordained as priest at the age of 23 (1584)¹, but his passionate desire for martyrdom which was at last satisfied and he endured with great courage and fortitude the tortures during his imprisonment at Topcliffe's house.²

On his way to England, R. Southwell wrote a letter to the Father General of the Jesuits (July 15, 1586) in which he declared: "nor do I so much dread tortures, as look forward to the crown"³. Southwell often sings like Crashaw of the blessed state in Heaven.

O State of Joye, wher endless joye remains!
 O haven of blisse, wher none doth suffer wrack!
 O happie howse, which all delight containes!
 O blessed state, which never faileth lack!
 O goodlie tree, which fruite dothe ever beare!
 O quyette state, which dangger newe not feare"⁴.

But the ecstatic note in Crashaw's poetry is not that of a martyr but that of a happy convert.

Eric Shepherd commenting on Crashaw's choice of subjects says "a host of similar ones, all precisely the subjects which a convert would be likely to choose should he be a poet, to praise in hymns. Be it noted also that all the poems are hymns"⁵.

Crashaw's preoccupation with the "facts" of redemption, and the means by which it was accomplished is more fully explained when we understand the Psychology of a religious convert. Addressing Christ he says:

1. Dictionary of National Biography, vol. LIII, P. 294.

2. R. Southwell, by M. Rodkin, p. 19.

3. The Book of R. Southwell, P.C.M. Hood, p. 14.

4. "Of the Joys of Heaven" from "A Foure-fould Meditation".

5. The Religious Poems of R. Crashaw - Introduction, page 12, by R.A. Eric Shepherd.

"How many Unknown Worlds there are
 Of Comforts, which Thou hast in keeping!
 How many Thousand Mercyes There
 In pittys' soft lap ly asleeping!"¹.

Crashaw's main emphasis is on Christ the Redeemer, rather than on Christ who is reborn in the soul of the Christian mystic as St. Paul says. "I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."² Crashaw does not establish any such intimate relation with Christ in his Poetry. If we analyse his three great hymns in which he has celebrated the birth, life and passion of Christ, we shall come to this conclusion that he sings with ardour, and exaltation and with infinite musical variation the single theme of Christ, the Redeemer. In his Hymn of the Nativity, he is eager to "Kiss thy feet, and crown thy head".³ He seems to see, as if in ecstasy, the Divine Babe with his own eyes.

"We saw thee in thy Balmy Nest,
 Bright Dawne of our Eternall Day;
 Wee saw Thine Eyes break from the East,
 And chase the trembling shades away:
 Wee saw thee (and wee blest the sight)
 Wee saw thee by thine owne sweet Light."⁴.

It is quite in a different spirit that the Anglican Herbert wrote of the Nativity. Crashaw sings at the Birth of the Saviour, Herbert thinks of his own sin and the need of repentence. His prayer on "Christmas" is,

1. L. C. Martin, page 244.
 2. Gal. II. 20.
 3. L. C. Martin, page 108.
 4. Ibid, page 107.

"Furnish and deck my soul, that thou mayst have

A better lodging then a rack or grave."¹.

While Herbert feels the presence of Christ in his soul, Crashaw is satisfied with the vision of Christ only. His poems, says Gosse, "are not poems of experience, but of ecstasy, not of meditation, but of devotion"²; and the religious mood in which these poems are written is one of "devout rapture" described in detail by St. Teresa in her autobiography. St. Teresa describing the nature of the rapture says: "I have seen it myself and I know by experience, that the soul in rapture is mistress of everythingO my God how clear is the meaning of those words, and what good reason the Psalmist had, and all the world will ever have, to pray for the wings of a dove. It is plain that this is the flight of the spirit rising upwards above all created things, and chiefly above itself: but it is a sweet flight, a delicious flight - a flight without noise."³ Crashaw's religious poetry is also "a delicious flight" not of the soul but of imagination which has realised the sublimity and grandeur of the themes it dwells upon - such as the Life and Passion of Christ and the martyrdom of the saints of his church. It is the spirit of prayer, of thanksgiving, of singing hymns to the Glory of the Lord and His spouse, the holy Catholic church, which determines the character of Crashaw's mysticism.

In his second great poem on Christ "Charitas in Nimia", he has approached the subject of redemption from a different point of view; he contemplates the sublimity of Christ's Sacrifice and the "faithlessness" of his own soul which his death has redeemed. He asks:

1. The works of G. Herbert, edited by G.H. Palmer, page 167, vol.II.
2. Seventeenth Century Studies by E. Gosse, page 153.
3. St. Teresa's Autobiography, Translated by David Lewis, page 154.

"If I were lost in misery
 What was it to thy heaven & thee?
 What was it to thy pretious blood
 If my foul Heart call'd for a floud?"¹.

He recognises that it was the sacrifice of Love; Christ gave away his life so that the sins of Man may be redeemed. "Love is too kind, I see."².

In his third important poem about Christ's life, he chose a favourite theme of the Catholic poets, Christ as the "Bright Babe"! (see Southwell's "Burning Babe").

In "The Glorious Epiphany of our Lord" he meditates on the various aspects of Christ as the Glorious Babe. He imagines the whole world lying in the lap of the "Bright Babe" and being blessed by Christ's kisses.

"O little all! in thy embrace
 The world lyes warm & likes his place.
 Nor does his full Globe fail to be
 Kist on Both his cheeks by Thee".³.

Christ blesses the world with his kiss and the "mists" of false worship disappear from earth. To him the "supernaturall Dawn of Thy pure day"⁴. is the purification of all forms of worship; no longer shall man worship the Sun or "Ram, He goat".⁵.

"The dotting nations now no more
 Shall any day but Thine adore."⁵.

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1. L. C. Martin, page 281.
 2. Ibid, page 280.
 3. L. C. Martin, page 255.
 4. Ibid, page 258.
 5. Ibid, page 256.

The picture of Christ holding the world in his protecting arms is exquisite and delicately drawn. Christ to Donne is also a Redeemer and the sublimity of the agony of the Cross assumed a vital significance to Donne because of his own acute consciousness of sin, but Christ to Donne is a feared saviour; his sonnet on "Nativitie" is solemn and aloof.

"Seest thou, my soule, with thy faiths eyes, how he
Which fills all place, yet none holds him, doth lye?
Was not his pity towards thee wondrous high,
That would have need to be pittied by thee?

(La Corona)

He can not address Christ with the familiarity of Crashaw who called him in his "Hymne of the Nativity" the "fair ey'd boy". It is not so much on the divinity of the "Bright Babe" that Crashaw dwells upon, the emotional concentration is more on the human side of the divine childhood, and Christ, the Babe, is not convincingly divine. It is this conception of Christ's Childhood which determines Crashaw's conception of the Heavenly Virgin Mother in which the Sanctity of Motherhood is more emphasised than the supreme Mystery of Christ's birth.

"The Babe no sooner gan to seeke,
Where to lay his lovely head,
But streight his eyes advis'd his Cheeke,
'Twixt Mothers Brests to goe to bed.
Sweet choise (said I) no way but so,
Not to lye cold, yet sleepe in snow."¹

The "tone of familiarity" which according to Beeching is "distressing" to the Anglicans is the keynote of Crashaw's poetry of

1. L. C. Martin, page 107.

religious ecstasy and exaltation. Crashaw's imagery expressive of his "familiarity" is raised to a high level of mystical emotion because it is suffused with his own feelings of reverence and affection for Christ.

"Welcome to our wondring sight
 Eternity in a span!
 Summer in Winter! Day in Night!
 Heaven in Earth! and God in Man!
 Great little one, whose glorious Birth,
 Lifts Earth to Heaven, stoops heaven to earth".^{1.}

Even when Heaven stoops to Earth and Eternity is shut in a span, Heaven remains Heaven and it is only the feeling of wonder and reverence which elevates Crashaw's imagery to a religious significance.

Crashaw's worship of the Virgin Mary is closely associated with his conception of Christ, the "Bright Babe". It is significant to note that Crashaw in his address to the reader in his "Epigrammata Sacra" (written before his conversion) declares that instead of writing poetry to celebrate Venus and Cupid as the pagan epigrammatists did, he would dedicate his poetry to the Virgin Mary and her Child.

"Another Cypris holds me now,
 Another Love receives my vow:
 For Love is here and Mother kind,
 But she is a Virgin; He not blind".^{2.}

The
 He, though still a Protestant, invokes/Virgin Mary:

1. L. C. Martin, page 107.

2. The Complete Works of Richard Crashaw, edit. by Grosart, vol.II. page 28. He has several epigrams on Virgin Mary such as "Blessed be Paps" or "on the Blessed Virgin's bashfulness".

"O child; O Lord; great Mother blest!

O wonder of thy holy breast".¹.

The Anglican Church did not make the worship of the Virgin Mary a fundamental article of their creed.

Donne has treated the various controversies connected with the Virgin Mary in his sermon (Sermon No.11, LXXX Sermons) and declares: "Pariet, & Pariet filium, she shall bring forth a son; If a son, then of the substance of his Mother, that the Anabaptists deny; But had it not been so, Christ had not beene true Man, and then, man were yet unredeemed. He is her son, but not her ward; his Father cannot dye; Her son but yet he asked her no leave, to stay at Jerusalem... His settling of Religion, his governing the church, his dispensing of his graces is not by warrant from her. They that call upon the Bishop of Rome; in that voyce, Impera Regibus; command Kings and Emperors, admit of that voyce, Impera filio, to her, that she should command her sonne: Blessed are thou amongst women, saies the Angell to her, Amongst women, above women; but not above any person of the Trinity that she should command her son."

Crashaw wrote his three great poems on the Virgin Mother after his Conversion((1) Sancta Maria; (2) O Gloriosa Domina (3) on The Glorious Assumption of our Blessed Lady.) The first poem celebrates

1. The Complete works of Richard Crashaw, edit. by Grosart, Vol.11. page 28.
- 2.L. C. Martin, page 303. Courthope remarks that "Virgin occupies a less prominent position in Crashaw's poetry than either St. Mary Magdalene or St. Teresa". (History of English Poetry, vol,11¹ page 222). This remark is hardly justified for he wrote three of his famous poems on the Virgin Mary and she is present in his Hymn of Nativity and other poems as well.

her as "The Mother of Sorrows", the second hails her as the "door of life", as the Mother of the Saviour;

"Had not a Better Fruit forbidden it.
 Had not thy heathful womb
 The worlds new eastern window bin
 And given us heav'n again, in giving Him".

and in the third he sings a solemn hymn at her hour of death. He sums up the Catholic conception of the Virgin Mary when he says:

"Hail, most high, most humble one!
 Above the world; below thy son".^{1.}

The doctrine embodied in the above lines was the favourite one during the period of the four great Councils (A.D. 324-451). E.B. Pusey says "yet it was self evident, as soon as stated, that she of whom Christ deigned to take His human flesh was brought to a nearness to Himself above all created beings; that she stood single and alone in all creation or possible creations, in that in her womb He who in His Godhead is consubstantial with the Father, deigned, as to His Human Body, to become consubstantial with her". (Eirenicon II. 24.)

In all the three poems Crashaw recognises this fact, the sublimity of the Motherhood of the Divine child. Her sorrow in "Sancta Maria" is the sorrow of a mother at the Great Affliction of her Son.

1. There is no evidence of the cult of the Virgin Mary in the first few centuries of Christian era; the cult of the Virgin Mary assumed a great significance with the growth of monasticism and the idealisation of virginity and chastity. Cardinal Newman admitted that no prayer to Virgin Mary is found in the works of St. Augustine (See Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 8, page 477.)

"Each wound of His, from every Part,
All, more at home in her own heart".^{1.}

We are not here concerned with the heresies and controversies about the Virgin Mary which were closely associated with the controversies about the incarnation, the mystery of the Word made flesh; (the Arian controversy was largely due to this fact)², it is enough to remark here that Crashaw's worship of the Virgin Mary breathes the spirit of the Roman Breviary as reformed by the Council of Trent, where She is invoked as follows:-

"Hail, O Queen, Mother of Mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness, our hope! To thee we fly, the banished sons of Eve."

(Antiphon to the Magnificent~~is~~ in the Roman Breviary).

Crashaw, it is significant, also refers to the Fall through Eve and the restoration of the state of grace which existed before the Fall through the Virgin Mary.

"The first Eve, mother of our Fall,
E're she bore any one, slew all".^{3.}

It is the Virgin Mary who "renders all the stars she stole away".^{3.} Crashaw's Blessed Mary is more human than divine and, it is as the Mother of the Saviour rather than as the Saint of the church that Crashaw invokes her.

"MARIA, men & Angels sing

MARIA, mother of our King.

Live, rosy princesse, Live."^{4.}

1. L. C. Martin, page 284.

2. See Newman's The Arians of the fourth century, 1876.

3. L. C. Martin, pages 302, 303.

4. Ibid, page 306.

He does not establish any personal relation to the Virgin Mary like that of the devotee to the Patron Saint, he sings of the Blessed Queen as if with the congregation rather than in the serene peace of the private prayers. She to him is the "mistress of our song", and he does not seem to have entered into a mystic communion with the Virgin Mary.

Crashaw and The Passion of Christ.

Another theme of Crashaw's religious poetry is the Contemplation of the Agony of the Cross. Besides the long poem "The office of the Holy Cross", Crashaw is never tired of mentioning the wounds, the blood, and the pierced hands and sides of Christ.

Gosse says that Crashaw has "an hysterical delight in blood and details of martyrdom".¹ Mario Praz has traced this characteristic of Crashaw's religious poetry to the Jesuit's delight and glorification of martyrdom:

"Contrition and indulgence were the hinges of Jesuit morality; remorse for the life of flesh, the repentance of the eleventh hour, the gesture of the supreme refusal, the dramatic moment of conversion, the welcome given to the erring soul in the loving bosom of divinity - these were the most popular elements of that tormented and sophisticated faith and casuistry".²

Crashaw does not dwell upon the physical details of the crucifixion as minutely in his later poems ("The office of the Holy Crosse" or "Charitas Nimia") as he had done in the earlier poems such as "on the wounds of our crucified Lord" or "on the bleeding wounds of our

1. Seventeenth Century Studies.

2. Review of English Studies, vol.II. page 470.

crucified Lord". In the later poems the Sublimity of Christ's Passion, the banishment of sin, and the attempt to realise the affliction of Christ in his own life are the themes of his contemplation of Passion.

"O teach those wounds to bleed
 In me; me, so to read
 This book of loves, thus writ
 In lines of death, my life may copy it
 With loyal cares."¹

Throughout the Middle ages the Passion was the theme most frequently treated in the mystery plays and sacred literature, but it was not till the time of St. Bernard and St. Francis of Assisi that the ardent devotion to the Passion was reached.²

Crashaw must have read St. Teresa's devotion to the Passion in her autobiography. She says that it was the contemplation of the Passion which helped her to concentrate on prayer:

"It seemed to me that the being alone and afflicted, like a person in trouble, must needs permit me to come near unto him

I thought of the bloody sweat, and of the affliction He endured there; I wished, if it had been possible, to wipe away that painful sweat from His face; but I remember that I never dared to form such a resolution - my sins stood before me so grievously,"³

At another place she recommends contemplation of the Passion as one of the best forms of meditation: "we set ourselves to meditate upon some mystery of the Passion: let us say, our Lord at the pillar

1. L. C. Martin, page 286.

2. The first recorded instance of Stigmata was that of St. Francis of Assisi.

3. Life of St. Teresa translated by David Lewis, pages 59, 60.

The understanding goeth about seeking for the sources out of which came the great dolours and the bitter anguish which His Majesty endured in that desolation."¹.

But Crashaw's meditations of the Passion is not due to the fact that he became a Catholic, but to the general tendency of the devotional literature of his age; Guevaras' "Mount of Calvary" or "the Passion of our Lord" was one of the most popular books of devotion in his age.

Donne, Herbert, and Vaughan all wrote great poems on the Passion of Christ.².

Vaughan recognises that it is the covenant of "blood" which binds him to Christ.

"That Thou forgott'st Thine own, for Thou
didst seal
Mine with Thy blood, Thy blood which
makes Thee mine,
Mine ever, ever and me ever Thine".

(Love-sick).

Crashaw in the glow and heat of his religious feeling is eager to be intoxicated with the wounds of Christ, it is a kind of ecstasy in meditation which St. Teresa held could be attained by contemplating on certain aspects of the physical suffering of Christ on the Cross.

"Till drunk of the dear wounds, I be
A lost Thing to the word, as it to me."³.

1. Life of St. Teresa translated by David Lewis, page 91.
2. W. A. Lewis Bettany in his Introduction to *Silex Scintillans* says that Vaughan has used the word "blood" ninety times.
3. L. C. Martin, page 287.

Crashaw and the Church.

Algar Thorold holds that the peculiar distinction of the Catholic mystic consists in his relation to the church.

"The Catholic mystic, apart from his individual vocation to real apprehension of spirit, finds himself in relation to the church i.e. to humanity organised from the religious point of view, and it is, of course, in this relation and what comes of it, that his peculiar note consists. . . . The task of the Catholic mystic is so to adjust these social claims to his individual vocation, that not either be defrauded, but that each subserve the other."¹.

He holds that it is the church alone which can help the mystic in the "progressive fructification" of dogma in the human soul; he points out "The saint alone is the real proof of Christianity, he alone renders its dark sayings intelligible. 'The obligatory dogmata of the church' says Coventry Patmore 'are only the seeds of life.'"¹.

Though Crashaw's Psychology is that of a Catholic devotional poet, his poetry is peculiarly free from any doctrinal implications.

In his church-hymns (which are elaborate versions of the Latin hymns) such as The Hymn of the Church, Lauda Sion Salvatore, The office of the Holy Crosse, and The Hymn of St. Thomas in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, he does not try to give a poetical rendering of the dogmas of the church. They are in his own language "a descant upon plain song."

His poem "Easter-Day" is free from all speculation as to the nature

1. An Essay in Aid of The Better Appreciation of Catholic Mysticism by Algar Thorold, pages 3 and 40.

of Resurrection,¹ he is content to sing of the glorious resurrection of Christ and his conquest of death.

"Rise, Heir of fresh Eternity,

From thy virgin Tombe:

Rise mighty man of wonders and thy world with thee

Thy tomb, the universall East,

Natures new wombe,

Thy Tombe, faire Immortalities perfumed Nest."²,

His Poem - "The Hymn of the Church in Meditation of the Day of Judgment"-does not mention that salvation shall be achieved through the protecting care and love of the Catholic Church. He relies on God's mercy and His love for Man, and hopes to find shelter at the Day of Judgment from God's wrath into Himself.

"But thou giv'st leave (dread Lord) that we

Take shelter from thyself, in thee;

And with the wings of thine own dove

Fly to thy scepter of soft love."³,

Faith and Love are the two pillars on which his religion rests; but his faith is nothing but the "progressive fructification" of dogma" in his own soul; and it is love which helps the "seed of life" to blossom forth. He says,

"Faith is my skill. Faith can believe

As fast as love new lawes can give.

Faith is my force. Faith strength affords

To keep pace with those powerfull words.

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1. As we find in Donne and Vaughan; see Vaughan's Poem "Death"; "Resurrection and Immortality".
 2. L. C. Martin, page 100.
 3. Ibid, page 300.

And words more sure, more sweet, than they
 Love could not think, truth could not say".^{1.}

Crashaw's religious mind is intensely Catholic but free from any controversial and doctrinal bias. Baron von Hügel's definition of the Catholic mind and its relation to the "Mind of the Church" may well be applied to Crashaw. He says: "For it is indeed certain that the special characteristic of the Catholic mind is not, necessarily, universally and finally, the conception and practice of sanctity under the precise form of the devotional spirits and habits special to the particular part or period of the Church in which that individual Catholic's lot may be cast. What is thus characteristic, is the continuous and sensitive conviction that there is something far-reaching and important beyond the church's bare precepts, for every soul that aims at sanctity, to find out and do,..... For the Church's life and spirit, which is but the extension of the spirit of Christ Himself, is, like all that truly lives at all, not a sheer singleness, but has a mysterious unity in and by means of endless variety."^{2.}

Crashaw found a resting home in the Catholic church because it satisfied his conception of worship and faith and he harmonised his life with the life of the Church as expressed in her devotions and mysticism.

Another characteristic of the Catholic mysticism is its conception of the created universe and the role assigned to Man in it.

According to the Catholic conception, the spheres of the senses and spirit are not separated by any rigid line of demarcation; they melt

1. L.C. Martin P.292

2. The Mystical Element in Religion, by B. von Hügel, vol.I., pages 122-123.

into each other. Dr Martineau says: "hence the invariable presence of some physical element in all that Catholicism looks upon as venerable. Its rites are a manipular invocation of God - - - The Catholic, looking on the natural universe, whether material or human, not as an antagonist but as the receptacle of the spiritual, seeks to conquer the World for the Church".¹ This conception is implicit in the manner of creation in which the Catholic Roman Church believes.

The Catholic church holds that "creation" is not "making" for making implies means and God created all the things in the universe as regards the whole of their substance Himself out of nothing. (as St. Thomas says "Productio alicujus rei Secundum suam totam substantiam nullo praesupposito".)²

Crashaw seems to have accepted the Catholic conception of the created universe; in his poetry, the sphere of the senses melts into the sphere of spirit and he frequently uses materialistic imagery to denote spiritual states.

"Heavens Golden Winged Herald, late wee saw
To a poore Galilean virgin sent:
How low the Bright youth bow'd, and with what awe
Immortall flowers to her faire hand present."³

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1. Dr Martineau's review of Newman's "Phases of Faith", see Puritan and Anglican Studies in Literature by Edward Dowden. Courthope has confused the Physical element in Crashaw's mysticism with the "pagan Muse". see History of English Poetry, vol. III, pages 229-230.
 2. Summa Theo 1^a 1^a q 65, art 3.
 3. L. C. Martin, page 112.

Courthope says that "this materialistic imagery produces not horror but disgust"¹. But before passing any judgment on Crashaw's use of materialistic imagery, we must bear in mind that it was the result of his accepting the Catholic conception of creation; the Catholic mind uses a sensuous vehicle to express spiritual states and tries to interpret the invisible with the help of the visible. Crashaw's devout imagination is as much stirred by the unknown rites of "mystical death" of ecstasy as by imagining the physical suffering of Christ on the Cross. Crashaw freely invokes his senses to aid him in his devotions. He prays to God:

"O fill our senses, And take from us

All force of so prophane a Fallacy

To think ought sweet but that which smells of thee."².

God must fill the soul as well as the senses. Crashaw was ever eager to bring

"Flowers of never fading graces

To make Immortal dressings",

for "the Virgin's Son" but sensuous and amorous symbolism formed an essential part of these "Immortal dressings" of divine songs.

Crashaw and the Spanish Mysticism.

The intensifying of religious life which followed the Council of Trent deeply influenced the Catholic devotion and gave rise to such great mystics as Philip Neri in Italy and Saint Francis de Sales in France, but neither Italy nor France can be compared with Spain in the eminence of her mystical achievement.

1. Courthope - History of English Poetry, vol. III. page 227.
 2. L. C. Martin, page 244.
 3. Ibid, page 127.

Spanish was a popular language in England in the last decade of the sixteenth century when Vives, who was the tutor of the Princess Mary was at Oxford and that the interest in Spanish literature was widespread is further proved by the presence of a large number of Spanish and Portuguese books in the new library of Sir Thomas Bodley. The most popular Spanish devotional writer in England was Fray Luis de Granada. In 1582 his two famous books of devotion "Meditaciones" and "Memorial de la Vida Cristiana", were translated by the English Catholic Richard Hopkins, the first under the title "Prayer and Meditation", it ran into six editions in France before one was published in London; in 1598¹, Francis Meres translated the more mystical work of Granada, "Granada's Devotions" in 1598, earlier in the same year he had translated Granada's "The Sinners Guyde".² As for one of the greatest Spanish Mystic, St. Teresa, no effort was made to translate her works in English at this time. A French translation of her "Interior Castle" appeared as early as 1601 and a Jesuit published an English version of her autobiography at Antwerp in 1611. It was the Publication of the "Acta Authentica canonizationis" at Vienna in 1628 which carried the story of her life of sanctity and prayer far and wide in Europe. Crashaw's interest in Spanish literature and mysticism seems to have been aroused during his early years at Cambridge. Da. Llyod (sometime of Oriel College in Oxon. London MDDCLXVIII) tells us that "Hebrew, Greek, Latine, Spanish, French, Italian were as familiar to him as English";³

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1. For other editions see Spanish Influence on English Literature by Martin Hume, page 225.
 2. English Devotional Literature (Prose) by Helen C. White.
 3. Memoirs of the Lives, Sufferings & Deaths of those Nobell, Reverend and Excellent Personages that suffered for the Protestant Religion. Also see Anthony Woods' Athenae Oxonienses (1691). vol.II. col. 688.

moreover we must remember that Nicholas Ferrar with whose family Crashaw was on intimate terms had travelled in Spain and when we remember that Ferrar knew German, Dutch, Italian, French and Spanish, it is almost certain that he must have brought with him a large number of Spanish books for we are told that he brought home from his continental travels "many scarce books in various languages, chiefly treating of a spiritual life and of religious retirement."¹.

It was probably due to the influence of St. Teresa that Crashaw while at Cambridge like "a primitive saint, . . . offered more prayers in the night, than others usually offer in the day".².

St. Teresa's main contribution to the psychology of mysticism is her differentiation and classification of various forms of prayer into vocal and mental prayers; she laid a great emphasis on a life of prayer and mortification in her autobiography. She says: "only this will I say: prayer is the door to those great graces which our Lord bestowed upon me. If this door be shut, I do not see how He can bestow them; for even if He entered into a soul to take His delight therein, and to make that soul also delight in Him, there is no way by which He can do so; for His will is, that such a soul should be lovely and pure, with a great desire to receive His graces."³.

The influence of St. Teresa moulded to a great extent the devotions of Crashaw and helped, in his conversion to the Catholic Church.

1. See Cambridge in the Seventeenth Century, Part I., edit by J.E.B. Mayor, P. 201. For an account of Nicholas Ferrar's travels in Spain see "Nicholas Ferrar" by H.P.K. Skipton page 54-57.

2. Original Preface of The Reader.

3. The Life of St. Teresa translated by David Lewis, pages 56-57.

Crashaw says that the "holy fires" in his soul were kindled "from reading thee".

" . . . O Pardon if I dare to say
Thine own dear bookes are guilty. For from thence
I learn't to know that love is eloquence."¹

But St. Teresa held that the Love of God, which Crashaw calls "Wine of Immortall mixture", was a love that was born of ascetic life, the complete dedication of one's life to the service of God to the exclusion of all other interests. She says:
"A love without self-interest small or great: all it desires and seeks is to see such a soul rich in celestial goods. This indeed is love, and not these unhappy affections here below: yet I mean not vicious ones: from these God deliver us".² Crashaw's ascetic and devotional life must have been influenced by the ideals which St. Teresa had held in high esteem in her writings. His friend R.C. described the ascetic bent of Crashaw's mind:

"Nor would he give, nor take offence; befall
What might; he would possess himself; and live
As dead (devoide of interest) t'all might give
Declare t'this well composed mynd; forestal'd
With heavenly riches: which had wholly call'd
His thoughts from earth, to live alone in th' aire
A very bird of paradice."³

He had completely "call'd his thoughts from earth" and in the moulding of his religious life St. Teresa's writings must have played a great part. Crashaw was attracted by the Spanish mysticism while

1. L. C. Martin, page 322.

2. Camino de Perfeccion VII., Mysticism, Underhill.

3. L. C. Martin, page 233.

"yet a Protestant" because one of the characteristics of the Spanish mysticism, as Martin Hume has remarked, is "that it has little to do with theology or doctrine and the works of Fray Luis de Granada can be read with as much edification by a Puritan as by a Roman Catholic if once the spirit can be exalted to the level necessary to understand them".^{1.}

Crashaw perhaps recognised this characteristic of Spanish mysticism when he said:

"What soul so e're, in any language, can
speak heav'n like her's is my souls countryman".^{2.}

Crashaw's idealisation of the "sweet deaths of love" and martyrdom is perhaps the result of his close study of St. Teresa's work.

L. C. Martin in his great edition of Crashaw's works has only quoted two parallel passages from St. Teresa's autobiography.^{3.}

No editor of Crashaw has pointed out the high esteem in which St. Teresa held St. Mary Magdalene and "The Weeper" was perhaps suggested by St. Teresa's Life; moreover Crashaw has referred to several incidents of St. Teresa's life in his great hymn "To The Name and Honor of the Admirable St. Teresa".

Crashaw says:

"Scarcely has she learn't to lisp the name
Of Martyr; yet she thinks it shame
Life should so long play with that breath
Which spent can buy so brave a death".^{4.}

1. Spanish Influence on English Literature by Martin Hume, page 216.

2. L. C. Martin, page 322.

3. See notes to page 131, 134 L.C. Martin

4. L. C. Martin, page 317.

In the above lines Crashaw has referred to an incident related by St. Teresa in her life which shows her impatience for martyrdom while she was yet a child.

She says: "When I read of martyrdom undergone by the Saints for the love of God, it struck me that the vision of God was very cheaply purchased; and I had a great desire to die a martyr's death - not out of any love of Him of which I was conscious, but that I might most quickly attain to the fruition of those great joys of which I read that they were reserved in heaven; and I used to discuss with my brother how we could become martyrs. We settled to go together to the country of the Moors begging our way for the love of God, that we might be there beheaded; and our Lord, I believe, had given us courage enough, even at so tender an age, if we could have found the means to proceed; but our greatest difficulty seemed to be our father and mother".^{1.}

Crashaw has given an elaborate account of this incident in lines 14-70 of his Hymn.

"Farewell house, & farewell home!

She's for the Moors and Martyrdom".^{2.}

In his Hymn Crashaw maintains that her eager desire for martyrdom was not fulfilled because God had reserved a higher death of ecstasy and Love for her.

"Thou art Love's victime; & must dy

A death more mysticall & high."^{3.}

1. The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus, Translated by David Lewis, page 4.

2. L. C. Martin, page 318.

3. Ibid, page 319.

Crashaw has again referred to this "mystical death" in "The Flaming Heart".¹

"Let mystick DEATHS wait on't; & wise soules be

The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee",

and describing the "pain" of these mystical joys, Crashaw says:

"O how oft shalt thou complain

Of a sweet & subtle pain

Of intolerable joys!"²

St. Teresa says that when "The waters of grace have risen to the neck of the soul this state can only be described by calling it a "death".³

"It is rejoicing in this agony with unutterable joy; to me it seems to be nothing else but death, as it were to all things of this world, and a fruition of God. I know of no other words whereby to describe it, or to explain it; neither does the soul then know what to do - for it knows not, whether it should laugh or weep."³

In "The Flaming Heart" Crashaw has mentioned the "wounds of love".

"Leave her that; & thou shalt leave her

Not one loose shaft but love's whole quiver!

For in Love's field was never found

A nobler weapon, then a Wound".⁴

St. Teresa has described at length the effect of these wounds of love; she says:

1. L. C. Martin, page 326. Crashaw borrowed the title "The Flaming Heart" from the title of her autobiography published at Antwerp. "The Flaming Heart or the Life of the Glorious St. Teresa Antwerpe M. De XLII." The Translator signs himself "M.T".
2. Ibid, page 319.
3. Life of St. Teresa, translated by David Lewis, page 114.
4. L. C. Martin, page 326.

"Another prayer very common is a certain kind of wounding; for it really seems to the soul as if an arrow were thrust through the heart, or through itself. Thus it causes great suffering which makes the soul complain; but the suffering is so sweet, that it wishes it never would end At other times, this wound of love seems to issue from the inmost depth of the soul; great are the effects of it; and when our Lord does not inflict it, there is no help for it, whatever we may do to obtain it, nor can it be avoided when it is His Pleasure to inflict it. The effects of those longings after God, so quick and so fine that they can not be described".¹

In Crashaw's poems we frequently come across his favourite phrase "fire of Love"². This expression also occurs in St. Teresa's autobiography. She thinks that every true lover of God must have this fire; accusing the preachers of her day, she says:

"They are not burning with the great fire of love of God, as the Apostles were, casting worldly prudence aside; and so their fire throws out little heat."³

Every critic has tried either to justify "The Weeper" or condemn it as an absurdity of metaphysical conceit.

M. Praz has related this poem to the widespread European cult of St. Magdalene; and the Jesuit's conception of repentance and self-sacrifice. "One of the most typical expressions" of the phenomenon he points out "is the abundant cult of the Magdalene. For the plastic arts as well as in literature this motive renews itself

1. Life of St. Teresa Translated by David Lewis, pages 427,428.

2. See L. C. Martin, pages 326, 327.

3. Life of St. Teresa, page 118.

inexhaustibly in the beautiful Sinner, pictured in the flower of her youth, who despoils herself of mundane pomps, and, ungirt and clothed in coarse garb, pours the silver stream of her tears on the feet of the Redeemer, wiping them with the golden river of her hair, the epoch must recognise itself as in a mirror".¹.

Crashaw perhaps found in the autobiography of St. Teresa an evidence of the efficacy of the Prayers to St, Magdalene. She says: "I had a very great devotion to the glorious Magdalene, and used to think of her conversion - especially when I went to communion. As I knew for certain that our Lord was then within me, I used to place myself at His feet, thinking that my tears would not be despised. I did not know what I was saying; only He did great things for me, in that He was pleased I should shed those tears, seeing that I soon forgot that impression. I used to recommend myself to that glorious Saint, that she might obtain my pardon."².

Crashaw also refers to the tears and sorrows of St. Magdalene, and, like St. Teresa, he also desires to sit at the feet of Christ.

"We go to meet

A worthy object, our Lord's feet."

(The Weeper).

St. Teresa, it is evident, was to Crashaw the ideal type of the contemplative mystic and she became one of the greatest shaping influences in his life. It was her experience of ecstasy and rapture and sweet "deaths of love" that fired the imagination of Crashaw with the desire to attain the mystic's direct vision of God. He prays:

1. Review of English Studies, vol. II. page 470.

2. St. Teresa's Life, Translated by David Lewis, page 59. Also see XXI, 9; XXII, 19. Donne, Herbert and Vaughan also wrote poems on St, Magdalene.

"Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek thy face,
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
I dy in love's delicious fire".¹

It has been remarked by Crashaw's critics that his religious muse is that of ecstasy,² but we must remember that the ecstatic mood has a definite place in the Catholic mysticism. A desire for ecstasy, Algar Thorold holds, lies at the root of our nature,³ and Francis Thompson declared that the main characteristic of Crashaw's religious poetry is the "ardorous abandonment" and "rapturous ether-eality",⁴ a quality of religious lyric in which Crashaw's genius found its supreme expression.

The religious mood in which Crashaw wrote his poems was that of ecstasy and rapture of St. Teresa who declared: "It is a glorious folly, a heavenly madness, wherein true wisdom is acquired; and to the soul a kind of fruition most full of delight".⁵

Crashaw also **desires** to lose his self in the death of ecstasy.

"Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may dy".⁶

But Crashaw's poetry of religious and mystical states is that of a poet writing about mystics rather than that of a mystic relating his own actual experience.

1. L.C. Martin, page 327.
2. See Courthope History of English Poetry, vol. III. pages 222-227, and Gosse, Seventeenth Century Studies, page 153.
3. See The Dialogue of The Serphic Virgin, St. Catherine of Siena, Introduction, Algar Thorold.
4. The Works of Francis Thompson, vol. III. (1914) pages 175-177.
5. Life of St. Teresa, page 114.
6. L.C. Martin, page 327.

In his description of these mystical moods, there is no evidence of self-analysis and self-introspection which we find in Donne and Herbert, all other religious moods are absorbed in the single mood of joy and thanksgiving.

A careful analysis of the themes of his poetry has shown that he does not give us any intimate account of his own struggles of self-purification and purgation as St. Teresa or St. Augustine or St. John of the Cross give. St. John of the Cross makes love the motive of Purgation. He says "In order to overcome our desires and to renounce all those things, our love and inclination for which are wont so to inflame the will that it delights therein we require a more ardent fire and a nobler love - that of the Bridegroom".^{1.}

The Keynote of Crashaw's religious passion in its exalted heights is divine Love; and as he has told us in his "Apologie" for the hymn on St. Teresa, it was his "reading" of St. Teresa's works that gave him a true conception of Love. She is always relating the real significance of "the flames of that most vehement love of God which His Majesty will have perfect souls to possess."^{2.} Crashaw has employed the imagery of the Song of Solomon to express the ecstatic state of this divine Love.

"What Joy, what blisse

How many Heav'ns at once it is

To have her God become her Lover".^{3.}

Canon Beeching says "The world is justly suspicious of any mixture of compliment with devotion, especially when the devotion is of a

1. Mysticism by E. Underhill, page 203.

2. Life of St. Teresa, page 105.

3. L. C. Martin, page 331.

type that uses freely the imagery of the Song of Solomon the temper of the English race and indeed of the English language, is against religious rapture of the soul; and not even the genius of Crashaw has been able to make it seem other than exotic."¹ But we must remember that in certain poems Crashaw has given a chaste and exalted expression to the power of Divine Love.

"Love, thou art Absolute sole Lord
Of Life & Death".²

The supreme example of the use of the imagery of Song of Solomon is that of St. Bernard in his sermons where it is free from any implications of "Sensuous Love". He says:

"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."³

Evelyn Underhill says "It was natural and inevitable that the imagery of human love and marriage should have seemed to the mystic the best of all images of his own "fulfilment of life"; his soul's surrender, first to the call, finally to the embrace of Perfect Love."⁴

Courthope's remark that no poet except Crashaw "has depended so exclusively on the amorous imagery and allusion which inspire the

1. Introduction to Crashaw's Poems - page XXXIV.

2. L. C. Martin, page 317.

3. Eric Shepherd says "Every Catholic should repeat it each morning.. It is a line that stuns the cosmos at one blow". page 24.

4. For a discussion of the Mystical Language of St. Bernard see D.C. Butler, "Western Mysticism", page 160, also Underhill, Mysticism, page 138.

4. Mysticism, E. Underhill, page 136.

genius of the Pagan Muse" is not justified.^{1.} It is not the Pagan Muse which taught Crashaw to express in terms of ecstatic ardour the mysteries of Divine Love, but the Christian mystics like St. Teresa, who describing the secrets of the "Spiritual Marriage", says "He has thus deigned to unite Himself to His creature: He has bound Himself to her as firmly as two human beings are joined in wedlock and will never separate Himself from her".^{2.}

Crashaw does not describe the "spiritual marriage" as his own personal experience, it is not the record of his own soul.

"Delicious Deaths; soft exaltations
Of Soul; dear & divine annihilations;
A thousand Unknown rites
Of joys & rarefy'd delights;"^{3.}

These lines are charged with infinite suggestion but they do not reveal the reality of his own personal experience. We can not accept the common definition of a mystic that he is a man who has fallen in Love with God for the love of God is an essential element of every religious experience.

If the mystic does not relate to us his own actual experience, we have no evidence to call him a mystic. The life of an artist interests us only when it is transformed into his work of art, but it is not so with the mystic who is a mystic only because of the experience he has lived through which we can understand through his writings, and his work is of abiding value if it is based on his own actual experience, a condition which is not applicable to the

1. History of English Poetry, Courthope, vol.III, page 222.

2. The Interior Castle, Cap. II;Mysticism, Underhill, page 139.

3. L. C. Martin,page 330.

works of imagination. While from the artist we demand "concrete expression", as Praz says "the mystic's aim, in the words of St. John of the Cross, is a general obscure contemplation His supreme confession is the Sanskrit "Neti, Neti, Neti. "It is not that, it is not that, it is not that."¹

Though Crashaw is ever describing with admiration "Amorous languishments; luminous trances"²; he seems to have known that the supreme experience of the mystic, his direct vision of God, can not be translated into the language of the senses, it is a "Dark Night" of the soul with a deep but dazzling Light within; for he says:

"And teach obscure Mankind a more close way
By the frugall negative light
Of a most wise well-abused night
To read more legible thine original Ray".³

But this only shows that Crashaw was deeply read in the mystical literature of his age.

He neither relates it as his own personal experience nor does he try to analyse his own religious experience as such; as Prof. Grierson says: "one can not speak of Crashaw as a mystic for mysticism implies thought - and Crashaw does not think, he accepts".⁴

He accepted the experience of such great mystics as St. Teresa or St. Thomas Aquinas; Crashaw knew at the strength of his own experience of conversion that in it God woos the human soul.

He says "Man is alone wo'ed" and asks the Countess of Denbigh to "yield to his siege"⁵ and he gives us a more accurate and abstract

1. Unromantic Spain, by Mario Praz

2. L. C. Martin, page 330.

3. Ibid, page 259.

4. Cross-Currents in English Literature of the 17th Century, page 182.

5. L. C. Martin, page 350.

conception of mystical experience when he says:

"Words which are not heard with Eares

(Those tumultuous shops of noise)

Effectual wispers, whose still voice

The soul itself more feeles then heares;"^{1.}

St. Teresa also says that Love to make itself known requires no words. Describing the "Way of understanding", she points out that "it is our Lord's will in every way that the soul should have some knowledge of what passes in heaven; and I think that, as the blessed there without speech understand one another - I never knew this for certain till our Lord of His goodness made me see it."^{2.}

Crashaw never tells us what God in his goodness made him see.

He strikes a personal note in his translation of St. Thomas' Hymn in adoration of the Blessed Sacraments!

"Down, down, proud sense! discourses dy.

Keep close my soul's inquiring ey!"

He perhaps has given us his own first hand experience of Conversion in "Councel"; he says:

"Thence he might toss you

And strike your troubled heart

Home to himself; to hide it in his breast

The bright ambrosial nest,

Of Love, of life, & everlasting rest".^{3.}

This is an account of the spiritual state of conversion and not of the mystical experience which is nothing but a direct and intimate vision of God.

1. L. C. Martin, page 330.

2. Life of St. Teresa, page 213.

3. L. C. Martin, page 333.

Crashaw is a great religious poet; he has given supreme expression to the moods of religious ecstasy in English lyric; there is human tenderness and fire of the lover of God which informs his divine poems and distinguishes them from the conventional forms of the Anglican sacred poetry with its "solemn aloofness from celestial things".¹ He knows how to express in exquisite imagery and soft musical cadences, the ardour, the rapture, and the exaltation of the mystical moods, but he is not, in spite of his deep religious sincerity, himself a mystic.

1. The Works of Francis Thompson, vol.III, page 177.

HENRY VAUGHAN, THE MYSTIC.

It has been declared by critics that Donne was an anguished, tortured and troubled soul who never knew the inner unification so essential for the peace and felicity of the true mystic, that Herbert was an ascetic more concerned with practical piety of religious life than with the ardour and exaltation of mystical faith, but Henry Vaughan has been recognised as a mystic par excellence. Canon Beeching has even asserted that Vaughan's rank as a poet is determined by the quality of his mysticism. "Herbert was an ascetic, Vaughan a mystic. And it is undoubtedly the mystical element in Vaughan's writing by which he takes rank as a poet".¹ G.E. Hodgson said: "if ever an Anglo-Catholic mystic existed after the Reformation, Henry Vaughan was one".²

Prof. Grierson has also emphasised the mystical quality of his thought: "Vaughan is less effective preacher, a far less neat and finished artist than Herbert. His temper is more that of a mystic."³

But we must remember that Vaughan was a specialist in experience which he could only suggest in his poetry through Nature-Symbolism, by the sudden illumination of a conceit, by the help of analogies drawn from Christian mysticism, Neo-Platonism and Hermetic Physics. Not because he is essentially a mystic, but because he succeeded in communicating to us the ardour, the felicity, and the nature of his mystical experience in poetry that we chiefly value him as a poet. We must, however, remember that there are critics like Mr W.A. Lewis Bettany who do not consider Vaughan a mystic because there is no ecstasy and rapture in his poetry; he says:

1. Introduction to "Poems of Henry Vaughan" page XLI.

2. English Mystics - by G.E. Hodgson page 226.

3. Introduction to Metaphysical Lyrics - page XLV.

"yet when all is said, he can not be deemed a true mystic. His bent was towards speculation and vision, scarcely towards ecstasy and rapture."¹.

Richard Garnett characterised Vaughan's mysticism as Pantheism:

"Perhaps this may be best expressed if we define Herbert as theistic, and Vaughan as Pantheistic."².

The difference among critics about the nature of Vaughan's mysticism is due to the various conceptions of mysticism held by these critics; Garnett calls Vaughan a pantheist but still considers him an orthodox mystic. He says :

"Herbert is devout according to recognised method, Vaughan is a devout mystic. Herbert visits the spiritual world as a pious Pilgrim, but Vaughan is never out of it." ²

E. Underhill has pointed out that the rich diversity in the religious experience of the mystics can not be reduced to a rigid formula; she says: "This central fact, it seems to me, is an overwhelming consciousness of God, and of his own soul: a consciousness which absorbs or eclipses all other centres of interest..... Hence we must put first among our essentials the clear conviction of a living God as the primary interest of consciousness and of a personal self capable of communion with Him. Having said this, however, we may allow that the widest latitude is possible in the mystics' conception of his Deity. At best this conception will be symbolic; his experience, if genuine, will far transcend the symbols he employs." ³.

This definition is elastic enough to include such diverse mystics

¹•Introduction to Silex Scintillans by W.A.Lewis Bettany. (1905).
Page XXVIII.

²•Dictionary of National Biography

³•The Essentials of Mysticism - E. Underhill, Pages 2, 3.

as Plotinus who experienced God as the "bare pure one", St Augustine as Perfect Beauty "old yet new", and Ruysbroeck as the "abyss of fathomless beautitude where the Trinity of divine persons possess their nature in essential unity." E. Underhill says that "we can not refuse the title of mystic to any of these; because in every case their aim is union between God and soul. This is the one essential of mysticism, and there are as many ways from one term to the other as there are variations in the spirit of man." ¹.

Vaughan had a vivid and sublime consciousness of God and his own self, and his aim like the true Christian mystic was to attain the union with God through the redemptive grace of Christ and through the usual Christian method of Purgation, Penance and Illumination. Though Vaughan saw the Spirit of God working in Nature as in Man, he knew only one way "to climb" to God, and it was the Way of Christ.

"But now since we to Sion came
 And through thy bloud thy glory see,
 With filial confidence we touch ev'n thee ;
 And where the other mount all clad inflame,
 And threatening clouds would not so much
 As 'bide the touch
 We climb up this, and have too all the Way
 Thy hand our stay.
 Nay, thou tak'st ours, and (which full Comfort brings)
 Thy Dove too bears us on her sacred wings." ².

1. The Essentials of Mysticism - E. Underhill Page 6.

2. "The Law and the Gospel" vol. II. p. 465 - all the quotations are from L.C. Martin's edition of the Works of H. Vaughan, 2 vols. Oxford 1914.

The first volume of Vaughan's poems entitled "Poems with the tenth Satyr of Juvenal Englished, by Henry Vaughan, gent" appeared 1646; these are the secular poems of a young poet some of them in the manner of Donne; the second volume of the secular verse, *Olor Iscanus* appeared in 1651 (though the dedication to Lord Kildare Digby bears the date 1647. This volume perhaps contains the poems which, as Thomas Vaughan tells us, the author intended to destroy. The first edition of "Silex Scintillans" appeared in 1651, and the second with the enlarged and rich second part in 1655, the two important prose works which contain his meditations also appeared during this period, "The Mount of Olives or Solitary Devotions" 1652, this also contains "Man in Glory" and "Flores solitudinis" with the Life of Paulinus in 1654; the last volume of his poems "Thalia Rediviva" was published by one of his friends who signs himself as J.W. in 1678. It is thus evident that the period when Vaughan composed his important poems and prose treatises lies roughly between 1650 - 1655, there being only few important sacred poems in "Thalia Rediviva" (1678). There is no chronological order of the poems in the original editions, nor any of his modern critics has attempted to arrange them in the probable order in which they were composed but, as we shall see, the various stages of mystical life can be easily traced in his poems. ¹.

II.

In order to trace the various stages in the mystical experience of Henry Vaughan and define clearly the nature of his mysticism, we must bear in mind the two great influences in his early life, ^x

¹. For a fuller bibliography of the works of Henry Vaughan see E. K. Chambers "Preface to The Poems of Henry Vaughan" vol. II. page LVII.- LXIII.

the influence of George Herbert, and the influence of the Civil Wars, for both of these influences deepened his religious life and helped him to withdraw into himself to communicate with Nature and God of Nature. As he tells us he concentrated all the Spiritual energies of his soul on its "secret growth".

"Then bless thy secret growth, nor catch
At noise, but thrive unseen and dumb;
Keep clean, bear fruit, earn life and watch
Till the white Reapers come!"^{1.}

Though the influence of the religious verse of Donne largely descended through George Herbert, Vaughan did not escape the direct influence of Donne which is evident in his secular poems and also in the use of conceit and the subtlety of thought in his religious poetry. In Vaughan's first poems published in 1646 addressed "to all Ingenious Lovers of Poesie", the influence of Donne is felt not only in direct imitation of his poems, but also in the management of conceits and the tighter structure of the love poems. The lines in "To Amoret gone from him" betray the influence of Donne.

"Though fate, and time each day remove
Those things that element their love
At such vast distance can agree
Why, Amoret, why should not wee."

In "An Elegy" we come across such lines in the manner of Donne as

"In them the Metempsychosis of Love."

But most obvious and direct borrowing from Donne appears in Vaughan's poem "To Amoret, of the difference, twixt him, and other Lovers, and what true Love is". In "A Valediction: forbidding

^{1.} "The seed growing secretly" vol. II. P. 511.

Mourning" Donne had employed his famous metaphysical conceit of the lovers transcending distance and absence by virtue of the higher union of their spirits.

Dull sublunary lovers love
 (whose soul is sense) can not admit
 Absence, because it doth remove
 Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love, so much refin'd
 That ourselves know not what it is,
 Inter-assured of the mind,
 Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse."

Vaughan employed this conceit in his poem "To Amoret of the difference 'twixt him, and other Lovers".

"Just so base, sublunarie Lovers hearts
 Fed on loose prophane desires,
 May for an Eye
 or face comply:
 But those removed, they will as soone depart,
 And shew their Art
 And painted fires.
 Whil'st I by pow'rfull Love, so much refin'd
 That my absent soule the same is,
 Carelesse to misse,
 A glaunce or kisse,
 Can with those Elements of lust and sence
 Freely dispence
 And court the mind." ¹

1. Martin 1, page 12.

Vaughan's modification of the conceit borrowed from Donne shows that he has lost the passion and subtlety of Donne and added the didactic element which is absent in Donne's poems. Donne calls the "sublunary lovers" "dull" but not "loose prophane desires," he has also missed the subtle wonder of the alchemy of love of the line,

"That ourselves we know not what it is",

which Vaughan has not imitated.

Vaughan informs us that though his love poetry "may warme the Bloud, the fire at highest is but Platonick, and the commotion, within these limits, excludes Danger", it is a Platonism not of Spenser but of Donne and has been saturated with the quality of Donne's passion revealed in the use of sensuous and complex images employed in poems like "The Lampe" and "The charnel house"

"Come see your dissolution, and weigh

What a loath'd thing you shall be one day,

As th' Elements by circulation passe

From one to th' other, and that which first was

Is so again, so 'tis with you."

Though Vaughan turned to Herbert as a master of Sacred Verse, the influence of Donne is felt in Vaughan's interest in the scientific discoveries and speculations of his age, in the theories about the pre-existence of the soul and its relation to God, in his belief in the resurrection of the body and soul alike, and above all in the Metaphysical cast of his thought and manner of handling the bold images about Eternity, Life and mystical experience.

Vaughan's preface to *Silex Scintillans* is really an attack upon all secular poetry of his day, "those ingenious persons, which in the late times are termed Wits"; and when he repudiated his own

secular poems and desired that "if the world will be so charitable, as to grant my request, I do here most humbly and earnestly beg that none would read them", he naturally went for imitation and instruction to Herbert who did not spend his genius in composing love poems full of "lewdness and impieties". Vaughan was not in favour of a strict censor of the published books, but what he desired was a genuine conversion of the gifted poets of his age.

He says :

"The suppression of this pleasing and prevailing evil, lies not altogether in the power of the Magistrate: for it will flie abroad in Manuscripts, when it fails of entertainment at the Press. The true remedy lies wholly in their bosoms, who are the gifted persons, by a wise exchange of vain and vitious subjects, for Divine Themes and celestial praise."

And when he resolved to follow the counsel given in the above passage, he saw the shining example of Herbert who had dedicated all his poetic powers to God and His Church.

In a famous passage he generously acknowledged that his conversion was due to the example and genius of Herbert: He says

"The first that with any effectual success attempted a diversion of this foul and overflowing stream, was the blessed man, Mr George Herbert, whose holy life and verse gained many pious Converts (of whom I am the least) and gave the first check to a most flourishing and admired wit of his time." In an important passage which is seldom quoted Vaughan declared that most of the imitators of Herbert were unworthy of the master for "they had more of fashion, than force:" their poetry was not the intimate record of their own religious experience, "for not flowing from a true, practick piety, it was impossible they should effect those things abroad,

which they never had acquaintance with at home; being onely the productions of a common spirit, and the obvious ebullitions of that light humour, which takes the pen in hand out of no other consideration, then to be seen in print".¹ Vaughan makes a truly holy life a condition of writing great religious poetry: "but he that desires to excel in this kinde of Hagiography, or holy writing, must strive (by all means) for perfection and true holyness, that a door may be opened to him in heaven Rev. 4. 1 and then he will be able to write (with Hierotheus and holy Herbert) A true Hymn." This passage is important in this respect that it shows to us not only Vaughan's attitude towards contemporary religious poets but also shows the spirit in which he himself wrote sacred poetry, it being a record of his own experience of God; he had seen the things that were in "heaven" before he could write of them. Herbert was not only a great religious poet, but he was also "holy Herbert," and Herbert's influence on Vaughan was not only literary but also spiritual. Vaughan referred again to the holy life of Herbert in a passage in his prose meditation "Man in Darkness". He says :

"We have had many blessed patterns of a holy life in the British Church, though now trodden under foot, and branded with the title of Antichristian", and referring to Herbert in the marginal notes, he continues "I shall propose but one to you, the most obedient Son that ever his Mother had, and yet a most glorious true Saint and a Seer. Hark how like a busie bee he hymns it to the flowers, while in a handful of blossomes gathered by himself, he foresees his own dissolution".² The relation in which Vaughan stands to Herbert has become a problem in itself. Mr Lyte, the Archbishop of Trench, Dr Grosart, all have taken sides either with Herbert or

1. Martin, vol. II., p. 391.

2. Man in Darkness - L. C. Martin, vol. I., page 186.

Vaughan. Dr Grosart asserted that "I limit Vaughan's debt to Herbert wholly to spiritual quickening, and the gift of gracious feeling; more than that is profoundly exaggerated." Vaughan's editors like Beeching, E. K. Chambers, and L. C. Martin have pointed out the parallels which exist between Herbert and Vaughan's poem while a fuller and comprehensive list of parallels is given by W. A. Lewis Bettany in his edition of *Silex Scintillans*. He calls Vaughan a "deliberate plagiarist" and remarks that "the really significant features of resemblance between Herbert and Vaughan are to be discovered in that parallelism of phrase and of conceit which can be seen right through the *Temple* and *Silex Scintillans*, a parallelism so continuous and so close as to leave the reader no alternative save to regard the younger poet as elder's deliberate Plagiarist".¹ We must, however remember that in the seventeenth century literary plagiarism was not considered to be a crime as it is in our own day for it did not entail any financial loss to the poets, there being no copy rights; moreover we must remember that in spite of his indebtedness to Herbert, in the choice of themes and conceits and even in the title of poems (he borrowed twenty-eight titles of Herbert's poems), we value Vaughan primarily for things which are the characteristic of his own genius; he is less didactic than Herbert and is more mystical; though a devout churchman in private life, his poetry does not belong to any single communion, while Herbert is the typical Anglican poet who discovered in the ritual and ceremonies of his Mother Church the satisfaction of the aesthetic side of his religion. Herbert's ideal is the beauty of holiness, and

1. Introduction to *Silex Scintillans* by W.A. Lewis Bettany. Page XXXV.

beauty in order, enjoined by the National Church and sanctioned by the State, but Vaughan, as Prof. Dowden said, "is the poet of what cannot be methodised - the incalculable beams and irradiation of the soul, the incalculable wind that blows where it listeth; his garden is watered by the sudden shower and the invisible dew."^{1.} Herbert in "Church Porch" and Vaughan in "Rules and Lessons" gave their respective precepts about moral life and these poems reveal the religious temperament of both the poets. While to Herbert Private Prayer is a "brave design", he prefers Public Prayers to it.

"Though Private prayer be a brave design
 Yet Public hath more promise, more love;
 And love's weight to hearts, to eies a signe.
 We are but cold suitours; let us move
 Where it is warmest; leave thy six and seven;
 Pray with the most; for where most pray is Heaven".^{2.}

Vaughan recognises the necessity of the larger communion between Nature, Man and God; to him the hour of prayer is before dawn when there are "set, awful hours 'twixt heaven and us." Vaughan's prayer is a mystical communion between man and God; but a man who is conscious of the glory of the created universe.

"Walk with thy fellow creatures; note the hush.
 And whispers amongst them. There's not a Spring
 Or Leaf but hath his morning hymn. Each Bush
 And Oak doth know I am".

Vaughan's poetry is of the "seed growing secretly" and flowering into a vision of God. We have dealt with the nature and extent of the influence of George Herbert on Vaughan, we now come to the

1. Puritan and Anglican Studies in Literature - page 121, by Edward Dowden.

2. The Church Porch LXVII.

second important influence at this period of his life which deepened his religious consciousness.

The influence of the Civil Wars consists in the spiritual affliction which the defeat of the ideals of the High Church Party caused him; and what is important is the fact that the influence of George Herbert and that of the Civil Wars both coincided. He says in his Latin Poem "Ad Posterios" that when the Civil Wars shattered his hope of a worldly career, he came under the influence of Herbert.

. . . "then I went
 "To learned Herbert's kind encouragement,
 Herbert, the Pride of our Latiny."

"Six years with double gifts he guided me
 Method and love, mind and hand conspired,
 Nor ever flagged his mind, nor his hand tired.
 This was my shaping season; but the times
 In which it fell were torn with public crimes;
 I lived when England against England waged
 War, and the Church and State like furies raged."¹.

By the days of Vaughan's youth, the Anglican church had acquired a permanent character after the disruption of the Reformation, uniformity in doctrine and ritual had been achieved, and she had devoted and learned sons and bards to expound and uphold her system; and idealise her ceremonies; under Laud the ideals of beauty in holiness, and stately and elaborate ritual had given a catholic character to the church. The English church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced her greatest divines like Parker,

1. "To After Ages" - on the Poems of Henry Vaughan by Edmund Blunden. p. 9.

Jewel, Hooker, Donne and Laud, Lancelot Andrews and Jermy Taylor, and a great and distinguished line of devotional poets like G. Herbert, Henry Vaughan and Traherne. In the Civil Wars the unity of national ideals which had been attained in Church and State was destroyed. All that men like Vaughan, ardent Royalists and devout High churchmen, held sacred and dear was destroyed; the King and his Archbishop both had been executed.

Barrett Wendell has pointed out that "when Puritanism sought to remould the laws and right of England into those new forms which it believed sanctioned by the Divine right set in Scripture and interpreted by the Saints, it was met by an equally unbending determination that those laws and rights should rather be reduced to other new forms, proclaimed and sanctioned by the divine right inherent in the King."¹

Prof. Dowden has pointed out that "Two doctrines in religion arrayed themselves each against the other. Two parties in the State entered upon a great contention. Two theories of life and conduct stood opposed. All things tended towards a vast disruption; and in the strife of King and Commonwealth, of Puritan and Anglican, that disruption was accomplished."²

Vaughan's sensitive and delicately attuned mind was deeply effected by this vast "disruption", but his affliction under the Puritan regime was mainly Spiritual, he was not concerned with the Political aspects of the great controversy.

In his "A Prayer in time of persecution and Heresie" he says "Most glorious and Immortall God, the Prince of Peace, unity and order

¹•The temper of seventeenth century in English Literature. p. 250.

²• Puritan and Anglican Studies in Literature, E. Dowden, p. 2.

which makes men to be of one mind in a house, heale I beseech thee these present sad breeches and distractions!

Consider, O Lord, the tears of thy spouse which are daily upon her cheeks, whose adverseries are grown mighty, and her enemies prosper.

The ways of Zion do mourne, our beautiful gates are shut up and the Comforter that should relieve our Souls is gone far from us. Thy service and thy Sabbaths, thy own sacred institutions and the pledges of thy love are denied to us; Thy Ministers are trodden down and the basest of the people are set up in thy holy place." He seems to have witnessed at close quarters the misery and savageness of the Civil Wars and it left a deep and abiding impression on his mind.

It is doubtful if Vaughan ever took actual part in the War, but there are lines in his poem "To Mr Ridsley" which suggest that, like his brother, Thomas Vaughan, he also fought in the Royalist Forces; he says:

"When this juggling fate
Of soldiery first seiz'd me."

and further remembers

"That day, when we
Left craggy Biston and the fatal Dee."

In his "Elegy on Mr R.W." who fell in the battle of Rowton Heath (Sept. 24, 1645), he describes the death of his friend in a manner which suggests that he was present at the Battlefield.

" O that day
when like the Fathers in the Fire and Cloud
I mist thy face!"¹.

¹. Martin I. p. 50.

On the other hand in his Latin Poem he definitely says that he took no part in actual fighting.

"But, Honour led me, and a pious heart:

In this great ravenous heat I had no part;
It was my faith, that guiltless blood will cry
Aloud, and has a power which does not die."

Vaughan seems to have a Christian horror of shedding blood to which he gave a passionate expression in his poem "Abel's blood"; and in one of his prayers in "The Mount of Olives" he said;

"I know, O my God, and I am daily taught by that disciple whom thou didst love, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Keep me therefore, O my God, from the guilt of blood, and suffer me not to stain my soul with the thoughts of recompense and vengeance, which is a branch of thy great prerogative, and belongs unto thee."¹.

Miss Morgan's suggestion that Vaughan was present at Rowton Heath, not as a combatant but in the capacity of Physician seems plausible,² whether he actually bore arms or not is not after all an important fact; that he revolted against the tyranny of war and the spiritual emptiness of the Puritan regime is a fact that can not be denied and it alone is of significance to the student of his mind and art. He saw his friends and relations falling at the battlefield, his brother ejected from his living of Llansanffread and he saw Churches defiled and the Anglican ritual prohibited and ridiculed, but there is a strange dignity and calm in his protest against the regime of the usurpers. He saw the "Princes brought to their graves

¹. Works of Henry Vaughan, L. C. Martin, II., page 167.

². E. Blunden thinks that he took part in the fighting.

by a new way, and the highest order of human honours tramped upon by the lowest"¹ and he cried out like an ancient prophet

"Arise O God, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let those that hate thee flee thee before thee. Behold, the robbers are come into thy Sanctuary, and the persecuters are within thy walls... our necks are under persecution, we labour and have no rest. Yea, thine own Inheritance is given to strangers, and thine own portion unto aliens."².

Vaughan in the midst of persecution and misery prayed to God to give him strength to forgive his enemies in the true Christian way:

"Though they persecute me unto death, and pant after the very dust upon the heads of thy poore, though they have taken the bread out of the children's mouth, and have made me a desolation, yet Lord give me thy grace, and such a measure of charity as may fully forgive them suffer me not to open my mouth in Curses but give me the spirit of my Saviour, who reviled not again, but was dumb like a Lamb before his shearers."³.

He had prayed in "Men of War" to God to give him "humility and peace";

"Give me humility and peace
Contented thought, innoxious ease
A sweet, revengeless, quiet mind,
And to my greatest haters, kind."⁴.

And these virtues he was to find in the solitary countryside near the "Usk" where he was to commune in an undisturbed way with Nature;

1. Man in Darkness, Martin, vol.I., pp. 170, 171.
2. Martin, vol.I., p. 166.
3. The Mount of Olives, L.C. Martin, I., p. 167.
4. Martin, II., p. 517.

"But rural shades are the sweet sense
 Of piety and innocense
 They are the meeks calm region, where
 Angels descend and rule the sphere.¹"

Conversion and Purgation.

Vaughan's awakening of self or conversion was the outcome of a real and acute struggle which has left its mark on his Poetry. The actual date of his conversion when he renounced the pleasures of the world and resolved to dedicate his life to God is not known. It is probable that it took place during the period between December 1647, the date of the dedication of Olor Iscanus, and the publication of the first part of Silex Scintillans in 1650, when Vaughan tried to suppress all his early poems, and which Thomas Vaughan printed in 1651, without his approval. "Here is a Flame" declared Thomas Vaughan "hath been sometimes extinguished: Thoughts that have been lost and forgot, but now they break out again like the Platonic Reminiscencie. I have not the Author's Approbation to the Fact, but I have Law on my side, though never a sword: I hold it no man's praerogative to fire his own House."²

Besides the influence of Herbert and the Civil Wars, two other important influences at this period seems to have quickened the already awakened sense of the new values of spiritual life; (1) the influence of Christ, and (2) the effect of a long and serious illness.

Vaughan seems to have early received some sign of favour from Christ, and it was really the cause of his conversion.

1. "Retirement".

2. The Publisher to the Reader.

In "the Garland" he has told us the story of his conversion. In his "youthfull, sinfull age" he had drowned himself in worldly pleasures.

"I sought choice bowers, haunted the spring,
Cull'd flowres and made me posies:
Gave my fond humours their full wing,
And crown'd my head with Roses."¹.

But at the height of "This Careire" of pleasure a strange experience befell him which changed his whole attitude towards life.

"I met with a dead man,
Who noting well my vain Abear
Thus unto me began :
Desist fond fool, be not undone,
What thou hast cut to-day
Will fade at night, and with this sun
Quite vanish and decay."².

Various explanations have been given by critics as to what Vaughan meant by "dead man"³ but it seems quite probable that he is referring here to Christ.

In his dedicatory Epistle to Jesus Christ, prefixed to *Silex Scintillans*, he definitely ascribes his conversion to the love of Christ, to his all quickening touch.

1. "The Garland" Vol II. 492, 493.
2. The Garland II. 492, 493.
3. It has been suggested that he is either referring to the death of friend which he has celebrated in several Poems beginning "Fair and young light" (ll. 513) or that beginning "Thou that know'st for whom I mourne" (ll. 416) or to his own spiritual death see Poems "The Obsequies" and "Death".

"Some drops of Thy all-quickenning blood
 Fell on my heart; those made it bud
 And put forth thus, though Lord, before
 The ground was curst, and voide of store." ¹.

and this experience of the love of Christ, he assigns in his epistle to his "sinful youth." ¹.

Vaughan has referred to his illness which seems to have been a long and serious one in his preface to *Silex Scintillans*. "I was nigh unto death, and am still at no great distance from it; which was the necessary reason for that solemn and accomplished dress, you will now finde this impression in.

But the God of the spirit of all flesh, hath granted me a further use of mine, then I did look for in the body; and when I expected and had (by his assistance) prepared for a message of death, then did he answer me with life; I hope to his glory, and my great advantage." ².

Ever afterwards an acute illness of this kind was associated in Vaughan's mind with purgation and the cleansing of the self; such sickness to him was "wholesome," and with reference to the sickness of blessed Paulinus, he wrote,

"this sickness was a pure stratagem of love: God visited him with it for this very purpose, that He himself might be his cordial."³

And in several poems in *Silex Scintillans*, we find Vaughan referring to his illness which he regarded as a form of purgation. He says in "Begging."

1. Martin II, 394, 395.

2. Martin II. P. 392.

3. Life of Blessed Paulinus.

"Dear Lord! restore thy ancient peace,
 Thy quick'ning friendship, man's bright wealth"¹!
 And if Thou wilt not give me ease
 From sickness, give my spirit health."¹

But whatever might have been the cause of his conversion, the fact remains that it was final and it influenced his whole outlook on life, and made him seek God with the sincerity and earnestness characteristic of all great mystics. With the awakening of self came to Vaughan an anguished sense of sin and the realisation of the worthelessness and waste of his past life spent in the pursuit of worldly pleasures and ambitions. He calls upon his heart to awake, which has been lain dead for all these years, to the need of purgation and repentance.

"Come my heart, come my head
 In sighes and teares !
 'Tis now, since you have laine thus dead
 Some twenty years ;
 Awake, awake,
 Some pittty take
 Upon yourselves -
 Who never wake to grone, nor weepe
 Shall be sentenc'd for their sleepe."²

E. Underhill has pointed out that in conversion "the self awakes to that which is within, rather than to that which is without : to the Immanent not the Transcendent God, to the personal not the cosmic relation."³ Vaughan sees deep into himself and realizes the need of purification before he could establish new relations with God.

1. "Begging", vol II. P. 501.

2. The Call.

3. Mysticism - E. Underhill page 237.

"Prepare, prepare me then, O God!

And let me now begin

To feele my loving fathers Rod

Killing the man of Sinne!"¹.

He recognises the need of spiritual affliction for the purification of the self.

"Thus by the Crosse salvation runnes,

Affliction is a mother,

Whose painfull throws yield many sons,

Each fairer than the other!"².

Thus Vaughan recognises the need of faith and the grace of Christ as essential for Purification and Illumination alike.

"Three things I'de have, my soules chief health!

And one of these seme loath,

A living FAITH, a HEART of flesh

The WORLD an Enemie

This last will keepe the first two fresh,

And bring me, where I'de be."³.

He recognises that a steady heart, holiness and purity of life, and the mercy of Christ are necessary for those who travel on the Mystic Way.

"Then make my soule white as his owne,

My faith as pure, and stedly,

And deck me Lord, with the same Crowne

Thou hast crowned him already!"⁴.

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1. Day of Judgement.
 2. The Call - II., 417.
 3. Day of Judgement, II; 402.
 4. The Call, Martin, vol.II.,418.

Vaughan knows that the Mystic Way is a long and arduous way beset with difficulties; and only men of steadfast faith and unflinching religious determination can hope to reach the goal.

". . . . The night

Is dark, and long;

The Rode foul, and where one goes right,

Six may go wrong."¹.

He recognises the need of following in the footsteps of the Saints of God who are the "shining lights" to guide us on our way to God.

"They are (indeed) our Pillar-fires

Seen as we go

They are that cities shining spires

We travell too."¹.

Vaughan tried to discipline his mind as well as the body in the Purgative stage, but his asceticism is of the Protestant type. Ernst Troeltsch has pointed out that the Protestant acceptance of the world did not preclude the ideal of asceticism from Protestantism. The real problem now became the detachment from the world while living in it, and not a withdrawal from life in to the quietitude of the monastery. Troeltsch says:

"At bottom, the acceptance of the world does not cease to be an asceticism, that is, denial of the world, only it is a different kind of asceticism from the heroic asceticism of the Church, and it also differs from the legalistic detachment from the world practised by the "sects". It is an asceticism in the impulse of the individual conscience. "Good works " exist no longer; all that matters is the general spirit and attitude of the individual."².

1. "Content" - vol. II., p. 423.

2. Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Vol. II., p. 471.

Vaughan does not reject the body, he prays that his whole personality, body and soul alike, may be transformed through the grace of Christ to taste the real bliss of religious experience. He says:

"Arise O daughter of Sion, O my soul redeemed with the blood of Christ ! sit no more in the dust of thy sins, but arise, and rest in that peace which is purchas'd by the Saviour's merits.

Christ Jesus! my most merciful and dear Redeemer! as it is thy meer goodness that lifts up this mortal and burthensome body, so let thy grace lift up my soul to the true knowledge and love of thee; grant also that my body may this day be helper and servant to my soul in all good works, that both body and soul may be partakers of those Endless Joyes, where thou livest, and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one true God world without End. Amen."^{1.}

He does not despise the world, he rejects it for he found it inadequate to help him to apprehend the Reality underlying the phenomena. He found that in worldly wisdom "all is vanity".^{2.}

"Those secret searches, which afflict the wise,
Paths that are hidden from the Vulturs eyes
I saw at distance, and where grows that fruit
Which others only grope for and dispute."^{2.}

He knew that certainty about God comes not through debate and knowledge, but through faith and mystical Illumination. We must remember that Vaughan found Philosophy and Science inadequate to lead him to any definite conception of Reality. He was eager to know,

"Who gave the clouds so brave a bow,
Who bent the spheres, and circled in
Corruption with this glorious Ring
What is his name, and how I might
Descry some part of his great light."^{3.}

1. The Mount of Olives
2. The Hidden Treasure, 11, 520.
3. Vanity of Spirit. 11.. 418.

He seems to have carried on some ingenious experiments in alchemy or Hermeticphysics:

"I summond nature; peirc'd through all her store
Broke up some seales, which none had touch'd before."¹.

Having discovered nothing to unveil the underlying Reality, he searched his own self.

"To search myselfe, where I did finde
Traces, and sounds of a strange kind."¹.

He heard the "Ecchoes beaten from th' eternall Hills", but these were "Weake beames", a glimpse of Reality and not the full-faced vision of God; and he was "griev'd" that the "little light I had was gone" and so he realized the truth of the old paradox that he who shall lose his life shall gain it, the extinction of self shall lead to the rebirth of a purer self.

At last, said I

Since in these veyls my Ecclips'd eye
May not approach thee, (for at night
Who can have commerce with the light?)
I'le disapparell, and to buy
But one half glaunce, most gladly dye."².

He realized the truth which every mystic discovers for himself that in order to see the face of God one must become pure and holy for the vision of God is promised to the pure in heart alone. Like all protestants, Vaughan laid great emphasis on personal holiness of which he had early seen a shining example in George Herbert. He says :

1. Martin, II. p. 418.

2. The Mount of Olives, vol.I. p. 159.

"And as for a regular, sober, holy life; we should in all places, and at all times labour for it, for without holiness no man shall see the face of God, much less be partaker of His merits, and by this spiritual eating and drinking become a member of that body, whose life and head he is."¹.

This desire for purity and holiness in the Purgative stage is due to an acute consciousness of sin; Vaughan was assailed with the sense of sin and he realized his own unworthiness in the sight of God, which is a way to humility.

"O what am I, that I should breed
 Figs on a thorne, flowres on a weed!
 I am the gourd of sin and sorrow
 Growing o'r night, and gone tomorrow."².

Even in "Christ's Nativity" when he tries to sing the glory of the "King" he is conscious of his own impure self.

"I would I had in my best part
 Fit Roomes for thee! or that my heart
 Were so clear as
 Thy manger was!
 But I am all filth, and obscene
 Yet if thou wilt, thou canst make clean."³.

This phase of Purgation is experienced by all mystics; St. Augustine said "I was swept up to thee by Thy Beauty and torn away from Thee by own weight."⁴. St. Bernard says that contemplation and

1. The Mount of Olives, vol.I, p. 159.

2. "Repentance", II, p.448.

3. Christ's Nativity, II., 442.

4. Aug. conf. Bk. VII. Chap. XVII.

devotion do not entitle every soul to the Sight of God; but "to that Soul only which is shown, by great devotion, vehement desire, and tender affection to be His Bride, and to be worthy that The Word in all His beauty should visit her as a Bridegroom."¹. The cleansing of the self, however, leads to a complete surrender of the soul to the Will of God, the soul lies passive like clay in Divine Hands to be moulded according to His desire and purpose. Vaughan says:

"I'll seal my eyes up, and to thy commands
 Submit my wilde heart, and restrain my hands;
 I will do nothing, nothing know, nor see
 But what thou bidst, and shew'st and teachest me.
 Look what thou gav'st; all that I do restore
 But for one thing, though purchas'd once before."²

This surrender is the result of humility and the consciousness of the need of grace.

Vaughan tries to build his faith not on the merits of his own work but on the grace of Christ - "So give me grace ever to rest."³. He thus discourages over inquisitiveness and curiosity in the mysteries of religion, for it does not help one to become a worthy receiver of grace.

"Let me thy Ass be onely wise
 To carry, not search mysteries;
 Who carries thee, is by thee lead
 Who argues, follows his own head."³

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1. Canticle XXXII, 3. Quoted by D.C. Butler - Western Mysticism, p. 145.
 2. The Hidden Treasure, II., 520.
 3. The Ass, II. 518.

Vaughan clearly recognises the function of Purgation as the purification of self, surrender to the Will of God, and the transformation of the whole personality for the higher purposes of religious life, but like all great English mystics, Vaughan has a firm grasp of the practical aspects of the religious life; and though he is eager to experience a direct vision of God in Illumination, he knows that it is only within the bounds of Gospel and Law, that divine love could be crystallised.

"O Plant in me thy Gospel, and thy Law

Both Faith and Awe;

So twist them in my heart, that ever there

I may as well as Love, find too thy fear!"¹.

Vaughan knows that real purgation is a baptism in fire, it is the burning away of the dross so that the gold may be refined.

He knows that God sends "dew" as well as "frost"² to the soul, love and discipline are necessary for religious life alike; God knows how to sow His seed in the human heart and the man who has known the bliss of complete surrender can only say with Vaughan "Blest be thy skill!" He recognises that the affliction which God sends is a training of the soul.

"And happy I to be so crost

And cur'd by Crosses at thy cost."².

Mortification has been defined by E. Underhill as "the positive aspect of purification" which helps the remaking of the self for the higher stages of religious life, in fact it is a preparation for Illumination. Unsanctified emotions and undisciplined acts cannot help the soul in realising the presence of God.

1. Martin, vol. II., p. 465.

2. Love and discipline II., 464.

Thomas à Kempis described the true purpose of mortification when he said "Who hinders thee more than the unmortified affections of thy own heart? if we were perfectly dead unto ourselves and not entangled within our own breasts, then should we be able to taste Divine things, and to have some experience of heavenly contemplation."¹.

Vaughan like all true mystics knew that purgation was a disciplining of the self for the bliss of mystical experience. In a beautiful passage in *The Mount of Olives* he says: "Inlighten my soul, sanctifie my body, govern my affections, and guide my thoughts, that in the fastest closures of my eyelids my spirit may see thee, and in the depth of sleep be conversant with thee."².

Vaughan realised that the true purpose of self-purification was that Christ may be reborn in the human soul. St. Paul's experience that "yet I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me"³ is repeated in the life of every mystic; the "New Birth" transforms the whole personality and makes him a "new creature" as St. Paul said - "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

It was for this mystic birth of Christ in his soul that Vaughan longed for;

"And let once more by mystick birth

The Lord of life be borne in Earth."⁴.

Vaughan's body and soul alike pined for the love of Christ, he knew that without him his life would be meaningless and insignificant; the constant refrain of his poetry and prose meditations is "Make

1. See *Mysticism*, Underhill, page 261.

2. *The Mount of Olives*, L.C. Martin, vol.I, p.152.

3. Gal. II. 20 (RV)

4. *Christ's Nativity*, II. page 442.

my soul to thirst for thee, and my flesh also to long after thee."¹.

Vaughan and Illumination.

Having completed the process of purgation and realised the true significance of mortification, Vaughan embarked on the third stage of the Mystic Way, "The Illumination of Self". He knew that ^{the} soul to be fully disciplined must be refined by fire.

"O come! refine us with thy fire!

Refine us! we are at a loss."².

After such refinement, his spirit was ready to behold God. Vaughan has described his experience of illumination in several poems such as in "Unprofitableness" and "The Check" but the classical description of the joys of illumination after the severe strain of purgation is to be found in "Regeneration".

It is instructive to compare Regeneration with Herbert's poem "The Pilgrims' Progress". All the stages in Herbert's journey (like those of Bunyan's Pilgrim) are well marked and easily recognised. After passing between the "gloomy cave of Desperation" and "the rock of Pride", he arrives at "Phansies medow", and faces hardships in crossing the "cares cops" and "the wilde of passion" and finally climbs "the gladsome hill" to behold the vision of Eternal Life beyond death. Vaughan does not give us any such clearly marked descriptions of the three stages of his mystical experience in "Regeneration".

Mr Herbert Read has chosen this poem as characteristic of Vaughan's style and after quoting the first four stanzas, he remarks, "Four stanzas, but only two sentences, so admirably controlled in rhythm

1. L. C. Martin, vol.I, page 153.

2. White Sunday, II, 486.

and construction that we are carried along with a smooth delightful ease, and yet the meaning is retained."¹.

The "delightful ease" of the rhythm does not explain the difficulty inherent in the symbolism of the poem. Herbert chose allegory as a medium of poetic communication while Vaughan has tried to render his mystical experience in terms of symbolism. Mr W.B. Yeats has pointed out the difference between symbolism and allegory in his essay on "Symbolism in painting"; he says, "Symbolism said things which could not be said so perfectly in any other way, and needed but a right instinct for its understanding; while Allegory said things which could be said as well, or better, in another way, and needed a right knowledge for its understanding."².

Symbolism has a definite significance in mysticism; it is true that symbol is a sign for something which could not be expressed in any other way but the meaning of the mystic always transcends the Symbolism he employs to communicate his experience to us. He has to contract the majesty, and the infinite splendour of his Vision in finite words, and the symbols that he uses suggest rather than describe the richness of his mystical experience.

St. Catherine of Sienna described the difficulty experienced by all the mystics when they try to communicate their experience to us. She said, "To explain in our defective language what I saw, would seem to me like blaspheming the Lord or dishonouring Him by my speech; so great is the distance between what the intellect, when rapt and illumined and strengthened by God, apprehends, and what can be expressed by words, that they seem almost contradictory."³.

1. Phases of English Poetry - p. 27.

2. Essays, p. 181.

3. The Legend of St. Catherine of Sienna, II, 190.

Mystic's experience of the eternal is communicated through symbolism and allegory to his fellow men; Vaughan himself referred to the difficulty of Symbolism he had used in poems like "Regeneration" when in his Preface to *Silex Scintillans* he said: "In the perusal of it, you will (peradventure) observe some passages, whose history or reason may seem something remote; but were they brought nearer, and plainly exposed to your view (though that (perhaps) might quiet your curiosity) yet would it not conduce much to your greater advantage."¹.

The reality of his mystical experience could not be "plainly exposed" to our view, it could only be communicated through symbols. His Pilgrimage from the mount of Purgation "Rough-cast with Rocks" to the fresh field of Illumination - "Jacob's bed", is described vividly in the first five stanzas of *Regeneration*. Illumination is to him a "virgin-soile" which only the friends of God can tread upon.

"A virgin-soile, which no
Rude feet ere trod,
Where (since he stept there,) only go
Prophets, and friends of God."².

He found that the afflictions of Purgation were over; "a new spring" greeted his senses.

"The unthrift sunne shot vitall gold
A thousand peeces,
And heaven its azure did unfold
Checqu'd with snowie fleeces
The aire was all in spice
And every bush

1. Martin, II. 392.

2. Martin, II. 397.

A garland wore; thus fed my Eyes

But all the Eare lay hush."¹.

He found in the Fountain of baptisme that some souls were "bright, and round" and some were "ill shap'd and dull", and it was in an state of Illumination, in the "bank of flowers", where it was "mid-day" that he heard the Wind of the Lord rushing through the world. He tried to know its destination, "where it was or where not" and the wind whispered in reply "where I please"²; the wind of the Lord bloweth where it listeth, and then Vaughan prayed for the death of ecstasy.

"Lord then said I, on me one breath,

And let me dye before my death!"³.

It is in the death of ecstasy that "oneness with the Absolute" is attained. St. Catherine of Sienna describing the state of her physical senses says ". . .the body loses its feeling, so that seeing eye sees not, and the hearing ear hears not and the tongue does not speak the hand does not touch and the feet walk not, because the members are bound with the Sentiments of Love."⁴. The joys of Illumination enabled Vaughan to write some of the finest mystical poems in English Literature; one "glance" of God gives life and freshness again to the bleak leaves.

" . . . I flourish, and once more

Breath all perfumes, and spice;

I smell like Myrrh, and all the day

Wear in my bosome a full sun; such store

Hath one beame from Thy Eys."⁵.

1. Martin, II. 398.

2. See St. John 3, 8.

3. Martin, II, 399.

4. Divine Dialogue cap LXXIX, quoted by Underhill - Mysticism.

5. Unprofitableness, II, p. 441.

He wants to be so close to God that he may forget the world while he is in the world.

" so close
 And knit me to thee, that though in this vale
 Of sin, and death I sojourn, yet one Eye
 May look to thee, to thee the finisher
 And Author of my faith;"^{1.}

His experience of God is expressed through the symbolism of light which enters into his conception of God or he feels Him as Sweetness and Myrrh.

" I felt through all my powr's
 Such a rich air of sweets, as evening showrs
 Fand by a gentle gale convey and breath
 On some parch'd bank, crown'd with a flowrie wreath;
 Odors and Myrrh, and balm in one rich floud
 O'r-ran my heart, and spirited my bloud,
 My thoughts did swim in comforts, and mine eie
 Confest, The World did only paint and lie."^{2.}

A joyous sense of the presence of God which is the characteristic of Illumination was felt in all its richness by Vaughan. He acknowledges that it was Christ's "art of love"^{3.} that brought him "home" and showed to him the "Pearl" he had sought elsewhere.

"Gladness, and peace, and hope, and love,
 The secret favors of the Dove,
 Her quickning kindness, smiles and kisses,
 Exalted pleasures, crowning blisses,

-
1. The Mutinie, ll, 468.
 2. Mount of Olives, ii, 476
 3. ll, 541.

Fruition, union, glory, life
 Thou didst lead to " ^{1.}

The richness of Vaughan's experience of Illumination was conveyed to us through the favourite symbolism of Light. Prof. Dowden has called him the "Mystic of Light," but we must remember that the experience of a kind of Divine radiance flooding the inmost corners of being is common to most of the mystics. The imagery of Fire and Light enters into their description of the state of Illumination. St. John of the Cross experienced God as a Fire that burns but heals.

"O burn that burns to heal

O more than pleasant wound!

And O soft hand, O touch most delicate

That dost new life reveal

That dost in grace abound

And slaying, dost from death to life translate. " ^{2.}

St. Teresa described her illumination as an "infused brightness... a light which knows no night; but rather, as it is always light, nothing ever disturbs it." But the classical description of Illumination is given by Dante in *Paradiso*, where in his purified vision he becomes united with the Light, which is Truth itself.

"For my sight, becoming pure, was entering more and more through the ray of that high Light, which in itself is true

"I believe that, through the keenness that I endured of the Living ray, I should have been lost if mine eyes had turned aside from it.

"And I remember that I was the bolder, for this, to sustain so far that I united my gaze with the infinite Worth.

1. Mount of Olives, II. 541.

2. St. John of the Cross "Llama de Amor viva" translated by Arthur Symons.

"O grace abundant, by which I presumed to fix my gaze through the eternal Light so far that I consumed my power of vision therein."¹
 Vaughan saw Eternity as pure and dazzling light and this vision revealed to him the true nature of the world.

"I saw Eternity the other night

Like a great Ring of Pure and endless light."²

He sees the "doting lover" with his Lute and "his flights", the "darksome states-man" working "under ground", using "churches and altars" to further his selfish ends; the "fearful miser" counting his hordes of money; and he also discerned that it was only a tiny minority of men which tried to soar "up-into the Ring" of immortality, others were content not to use their "wing" or the latent faculties of the soul which God had given them.

After seeing the misery, the folly and the distorted vision of common men, he cries out:

"O fools (said I,) thus to prefer dark night

Before true light

To live in grotts, and caves, and hate the day

Because it shews the way,

The way which from this dead dark abode

Leads up to God,

A way where you might tread the sun, and be

More bright than he" -

While he was thus lamenting the madness of the vast majority of men, someone whispered the truth into his soul that immortality and radiance of the Ring of eternity was only meant for the adoring and loving souls, "Christ's Bride"³.

1. Par. XXXIII.

2. The World, II. p.466.

3. Such men in the Bible are called the "Children of the bridegroom".

He refers to God, as Light, in several of his poems. The Angel of life which came to him with "bright and busie wing" pointed to him a place of Eternal Light :

"and point me to a place

Which all the year sees the sun's face."¹.

Before Christ comforted him, he was dejected because he was "no childe of day"¹; and before he was blessed with the vision of Eternity as a Ring of "pure and endless light", he had already seen "through a long night" the "edges" of the dazzling brightness of God.

"Thy edges, and thy bordering light!

O for thy Centre and mid day!"².

He addresses Christ "O light of light, the brightnesse of thy Father's glory" and describing his Illumination and intimacy with Christ more fully in "The Mount of Olives" he says:

"As long as thou art present with me, I am in the light . . . when thou art present, all is brightnesse, all is sweetnesse, I am in my God's bosome, I discourse with him, watch with him, walk with him, live with him, and lie down with him. All these most dear and unmeasurable blessings I have with thee, and want them without thee. Abide then with me, O thou whom my soul loveth! Thou sun of righteousness with healing under thy wings arise in my heart; refine, quicken, and cherish it; make thy light there to shine in darknesse, and a perfect day in the dead of night."³.

To him the greatest bliss of the "holy Elect" is that the glorious sun "never setteth, but is alwaies at the height, full of brightness

1. The Agreement, II, 528, 529.

2. Childe-hood, II, 521.

3. The Mount of Olives, I, p. 151.

and consolation"¹, and the greatest misery of the wicked is that a "heavie night sits in the noone-day upon those souls" and when "They look for light, and behold darkness; for brightnesse, and they walk in obscurity."¹.

St. Augustine in his confessions has described, with his usual insight into the psychology of mystical experience, the nature of this Light often beheld by the mystics.

"I entered, and beheld with the mysterious eye of my soul the Light that never changes, above the eye of my soul, above my intelligence. It was not the common light which all flesh can see, nor was it greater yet of the same kind, as if the light of day were to grow brighter and brighter and flood all space. It was not this, but different: altogether different from all such things. Nor was it above my intelligence in the same way as oil is above water, or heaven above earth, but it was higher because it made me, and I was lower because made by it. He who knoweth the truth knoweth that Light, and who knoweth it knoweth eternity. Love knoweth it. O eternal Truth, and true Love, and lovable Eternity."²,

Vaughan, like St. Augustine, knew that he who has seen this Light, has seen Eternity, but it was a vision granted only to those who had known Love. St. Augustine says "Love knoweth it" and Vaughan also points out :

"This Ring the Bride-groome did for none provide
But for his bride."

By eternity the mystic does not mean infinity of Time nor even everlasting life; he conceives Eternity as Boethius did as "the

1. The Mount of Olives, I, p. 151.

2. St. Augustines Confessions, Bk. VII, cap. X.

3. See Wicksteed - The Religion of Time and the Religion of Eternity, pp. 23 - 25.

complete and perfect possession of unlimited life at a single moment"; it is the realisation in one supreme moment of life of the eternal "Now", when the true character of Illumination is revealed to the mystic. Dante defined the mystic's conception of Eternity when he said "every where and every when is brought to a point".¹

The light-imagery is used in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel and the mystics who have used it have tried to describe their own personal experience; it is something which they have known and felt and which they have tried to communicate to us through this imagery of Light.

V.

In his Poem "The dwelling-place" Vaughan says, almost like St. Bernard, that he did not know how and when God visited his Soul, but the certainty of His visit was beyond doubt, and its memory a cherished possession.

"My dear, dear God! I do not know
 What lodged thee then, nor where, nor how;
 But I am sure, thou dost now come
 Oft to a narrow, homely room,
 Where thou too hast but the least part,
 My God, I mean my sinful heart."²

St. Bernard (in Canticle LXXIV which is ascribed to the closing years of his life) has described his mystical experience with singular charm and eloquence. He says:

1. Par. XXIX, 12.

2. Martin, II, 516.

"But although He has frequently entered into my soul, I have never at any time been sensible of the precise moment of His coming. I have felt that He was present;
 . . . It was not by His motions that He was recognised by me, nor could I tell by any of my senses that He had penetrated to the depths of my being. It was, as I have already said, only by the movement of my heart that I was enabled to recognise His presence, and to know the might of His power by the sudden departure of vices and the strong restraint put upon all carnal affections."¹.

Another characteristic of Illumination, the fleeting glimpse of God, which must be differentiated from the unitive stage of mystical experience, is that it is transient and it leaves behind it an intense longing for union with God.

Vaughan's description of the Transcendency of Illumination agrees with the similar descriptions given by such great mystics as St. Augustine and St. Bernard. The soul after enjoying a moment of supreme exaltation of union with God falls back to its normal state; the pain of separation is acute in which longing for a permanent union is present.

Vaughan has described this experience in many poems as "The Retreat", "Content", "The Evening Watch", "The Relapse" and "Cock-crowing".

He says :

"Come, come, what doe I here?

Since he is gone

Each day is grown a dozen year,

And each houre, one;

Come, come!"².

1. Quoted by D. C. Butler - Western Mysticism, pp. 146, 147

2. The Retreat, II, 420.

In "The Relapse", he tells us that it was the love of Christ that saved his soul; but he is grieved to relapse again to the normal self.

"Sullen, and sad eclipses, cloudie sphere

These are my due."¹.

When Christ is present all is "brightness" while his absence brings darkness and eclipses. St. Augustine says:

"Thy Invisible things, understood by those that are made, I saw, but I was not able to fix my gaze thereon; but my infirmity being struck back, I was thrown again on my normal experience, carrying with me only a memory that loved and desired what I had, as it were, perceived the odour of, but was not yet able to feed upon."².

In Vaughan this fleeting glimpse of Reality found its supreme expression in his longing for a fuller experience. He, in his imagination, ever goes back to the hour when God did visit him.

"So o'r fled minutes I retreat"

Unto that hour

Which shew'd thee last, but did defeat

Thy light, and pow'r,

I search, and rack my soul to see

Those beams again."³.

This phase in the growth of mystical consciousness is the common experience of all great mystics. St. Bernard says:

"Then have I felt on a sudden so great a joy and confidence arising in me, thatit seemed to me that I was one of those blessed ones. O that it had lasted longer. Again and again do Thou visit, O Lord, with thy Salvation."⁴.

1. The Retreat, II. 433.

2. (Conf. VII. 23).

3. "The Evening-watch", vol.II. p. 426.

4. (Cant. XXIII. 15) - quoted by D.C. Butler - Western Mysticism.

Vaughan's ideal of "retreating" back into time is not confined to his memory of Illumination, it embraces his whole conception of Nature, childhood, and the ideal church. Vaughan is always idealising the state of grace before The Fall.

Vaughan and the Fall.

It is to the Fall that Vaughan attributes Man's longing for "home".

"He drew the curse upon the world, and crackt

The whole frame with his fall".

This made him long for home, as loath to stay

With murmurs, and foes;

He sigh'd for Eden, and would often say

Ah! what bright days were those?"

This "Eden" he saw in Nature, in the infancy of the church, in the innocence of childhood.

"The Valley, or the Mountain

Afforded visits, and still Paradise lay

In some green shade or fountain."¹.

The blood of Christ and his contact with the world had brought, in however small a measure, a state of grace which existed before the Fall, and this grace he saw operative in the life of the primitive Christians.

"It was a blessed and glorious age the Primitive Christians lived in, when the wilderness and the solitary places were glad for them, and the desert rejoiced and blossom'd as the rose. When the blood of Christ was yet warme and the memory of his miracles and love fresh and vigorous; what zeale, what powerful faith, what perfect charity, hearty humility, and true holinesse was then to be found

1. Corruption, II. 440.

upon the earth? If we compare the shining and fervent piety of those saints with the painted and illuding appearance of it in these our times, we shall have just cause to fear that our candlestick (which hath been now of a long time under a cloud) is at this very instant upon removing."¹.

Vaughan's Conception of Childhood.

His idealisation of childhood as a state of grace has two aspects; he conceived it as an unsullied state of innocence, and prized it, for he thought that the child still retained some memory of his celestial home.

"Wash till thy flesh

Comes like a child's, spotless and fresh."

He remembers childhood as a time when sin had not yet invaded his heart and he was happy in "flowry vales, whose flower's were stars". He then could still have a glimpse of Divine "light".

"O then how bright

And quick a light

Doth brush my heart, and scatter night;

Chasing that shade

Which my sins made,

While I so spring, as if I could not fade."².

He laments that when we grow up the memory of heavenly home fades away, sin triumphs, and man cannot pierce through the veil of appearance to behold Reality.

"I see, thy curtains are close-drawn; Thy bow

Looks dim too in the cloud."³.

1. The Mount of Olives - L. C. Martin, vol.I. page 181.

2. "Looking-back", II, 640.

3. Martin, II, 440.

Man with the triumph of sin becomes "restless and irregular", and though he has the memory of his home, he does not know how to reach there.

"He knowes he hath a home, but scarce knows where,

He sayes it is so far

That he hath quite forgot how to go there."¹.

Vaughan, following the ideas of Plato in Phaedrus, says that in order to reach Home, we must travel back.

"O how I long to travell back

And tread again that ancient track!"².

He does not praise the maturity of intellect in child but the innocence of spirit and its closeness to God.

"Happy those early days! when I

Shin'd in my Angell-infancy."².

And by this angelic quality of the soul he could still have "a glimpse of his bright face".².

Vaughan's poem "The Retreat" seems to be less laboured and more a narrative of his own personal experience than Wordsworth's Immortality Ode. The memory of the "bright face" of God dazzles his eyes as did the vision of the pure and endless light of Eternity.

"I can not reach it; and my striving eye

Dazles at it, as at eternity."³.

And though he can not attain to that state of pure innocence again, he treasures its memory. He asks :

"Why should I not love childehood still"?³.

And in lines of remarkable poetic charm, he embodies the saying of

1. Man, II, 477.

2. The Retreat, II, 419.

3. Martin, II, 521.

Christ that to enter the Kingdom of God one must become a child again. It is by becoming childlike again that we shall behold the Face of God.

"An age of mysteries! which he
Must live twice, that would God's face see;
Which Angels guard, and with it play,
Angels! which foul men drive away."¹.

Thus the conception of childhood in Vaughan's poetry is related to his larger conception of the Fall, its effect upon human nature, and the state of innocence which man must acquire again to behold the Face of God. It is thus evident that the idealisation of childhood by the mystics like Vaughan, Traherne, and Blake is based on the realisation of the fact that instinctive purity, innocence, and simplicity of a child are the qualities which a man should cultivate before he can hope to enter the Kingdom of God.

But we must remember that Vaughan does not seem to have studied the objections of St. Thomas Aquinas against the Platonic doctrine of the Pre-existence of the soul.

St. Thomas holds that it is the soul's union with body that makes the perfect man and that though the Matter may be said to exist before the form potentially, the human body "when it is actually human, as being perfected by a human soul, it is neither prior nor posterior to the soul, but together with it."² St. Thomas ingeniously argued to show that the soul did not exist before the body. His main argument is that if "the soul is in a higher state away from body, especially according to the Platonists, who say by union with the body the soul suffers forgetfulness of what it knew before, and is hindered from the contemplation of pure truth. At that rate

1. Martin, II, 521.

2. Contra Gentiles, p.170.

it has no willingness to be united with a body except for some deceit practised upon it. Therefore, supposing it to have pre-existed before the body, it would not be united there with of its own accord."¹.

But if as an alternative it is argued they were united by a "divine ordinance"¹, this argument does not strengthen the position of the Platonists for St. Thomas says "If then He created souls apart from bodies, we must say that this mode of being is better suited to their nature. But it is not proper for an ordinance of divine goodness to reduce things to a lower state, but rather to raise them to a higher. At that rate the union of soul with body could not be the result of a divine ordinance,"² therefore the soul could not exist before the body.

VI.

Vaughan's pilgrimage from a life that was a "False life! a foil and no more,"³ to a life that was "a fix'd and discerning light"³ has been a growth in ever deepening consciousness of God and the true realisation of the nature of His relation to the human soul. He knows that the real life is one that has been infused with the spirit of God and has received the impression of the Divine Kiss - "A quickness, which my God hath kist."⁴.

The three stages of the mystical experience - the awakening of self, Purgation, and Illumination, - can be easily traced in Vaughan's poetry though, as we have shown, there is no geometrical progression; the transiency of Illumination renews the consciousness of sin and

1. Contra Gentiles, p. 162.
 2. Ibid. p. 162. J. Rickaby's Translation.
 3. Quickness, Martin II, p. 538.
 4. Quickness, Martin II, p. 538.

a sense of unworthiness to receive the love of Christ.

Vaughan tried to apprehend God by discerning a glory in the cloud, by trying to recover the innocence of childhood, by realising the mystical significance of the Holy Communion.

Vaughan and The Holy Communion.

He, like Herbert and Andrews, celebrated the ideal of beauty in holiness, and reverence, and decorum in receiving the sacrament. Vaughan was acutely conscious of the harmful effect of the controversy between the Puritans and the Anglicans. He prays to Christ: "Give to thy spouse her perfect, and pure dress,

Beauty and holiness

And so repair these Rents, that men may see

And say, where God is, all agree."¹.

His ideal virtues are "Obedience, Order, Light"¹, and like a true Anglican, he insists on the worthiness of the receiver of the sacrament. The attitude of mind in which one should approach the Communion-table is of utter humility and awe. When he is receiving the sacrament, Vaughan thinks himself to be before the "glorious and searching Eye"² of God. Addressing Christ, he says "Many a time hast thou knockt, and I have shut the doors against thee, thou hast often called, and I would not answer. Sleeping and waking, early and late, day and night have I refused instruction, and would not be healed. And now, O my God, after all this rebellion and uncleannesse, wilt thou come and lodge with me? O Lord, where shall I prepare, and make ready for thee? What communion can there be betwixt light and darknesse, purity and pollution, perfection and deformity."².

1. The Constellation, II. 470.

2. The Mount of Olives. L. C. Martin, vol.I, p. 161.

It is through/ ^{the} "mercy and plenteous redemption"^{1.} of Christ that he hopes to become worthy of taking the Bread of Life. He considers that the receiving of the Sacrament should prevent him from returning to his former "iniquities and pollutions";^{2.} it should become "a signet upon mine hand, and for a bracelet upon my arme"^{2.} so that it may strengthen him in his "pilgrimage towards heaven."^{3.} The sacrament not only purifies his soul but it also strengthens his body against sin and corruption.

"Thou dost unto thy self betroth
Our souls, and bodies both
In everlasting light."^{4.}

He contemptuously refers to the manner of receiving the Sacrament under the Puritan regime.

"Some sit to thee and eat
Thy body as their common meat."^{5.}

Walton, in his life of Hooker, has described how the "Genevian Minister" who was appointed to the Living of Borne in the fourth year of the Long Parliament administered "the Sacrament as in Geneva."
". . . the day was appointed for a select company, and Forms and stools set about the Altar or Communion-Table, for them to sit and eat, and drink; but when they went about this work, there was a want of some joint-stools which the Minister sent the Clerk to fetch, and then to fetch cushions (but not to kneel upon)."^{6.}

The irreverence of the Puritan so shocked the Parish clerk that he

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1. Martin, I. 161.
 2. Martin, I. 165.
 3. Martin, I. 163.
 4. The Holy Communion, II. 458.
 5. Martin, II, 456.
 6. "The Lives" of I. Walton, edited by George Saintsbury, page 217.

resigned his post and died within a few days.

To Vaughan the real significance of the Holy Communion is that it is a way of approach to God; these gifts are the "forerunner" of the joys that await the sanctified soul in the higher stages of mystical experience.

"Give to thy wretched one
 Thy Mystical Communion,
 That, absent, he may see,
 Live, die, and rise with thee;"¹.

Vaughan had known the real ecstasy of the mystical communion with God in Illumination when the Bridegroom had admitted him in the dazzling Ring of his Love. God is present in Illumination but the vision soon fades away leaving the soul restless and conscious of its own unworthiness. When the soul stretches itself aiming at the "stars and spangled halls", it falls back to its own normal self.

"Doth my weak fire
 Pine and retire,
 And (after all my height of flames,)
 In sickly Expirations tames

Poor, falling star!"².

Vaughan and The Dark Night of the Soul.

Vaughan now is entering on the fourth stage of the Mystic Way called the "Dark Night of the Soul" in which God seems to withdraw Himself completely from the soul. The main characteristic of the early phase of the "Dark Night" of the Soul is what

1. Martin, II. 455; see also poems "Easterday", "Easter Hymn" and "The Feast".
 2. Martin, II, 446.

Underhill has called "the periods of rapid oscillation between a joyous and a painful consciousness."¹

In Vaughan the joyous apprehension of the Absolute assumed the form of passionate longing for union with God, and it was a longing which was crossed with the pain of separation. He recognises that the veil which separates him from God must be first broken in him before he could stand face to face with God.

"This veyle thy full-ey'd love denies
And onely gleams and fractious spies."²

He is impatient of this veil which separates him from God;

"O take it off! make no delay,
But brush me with thy light, that I
May shine unto a perfect day,
And warme me at thy glorious Eye!"²

The night of God's absence to him is an unrelieved anguish; he cries out,

"My dew, my dew! my early love,
My soul's bright food, thy absence kills."³

His prayer in "Anguish" is that God should either visit his soul with his "holy feet" or "cast it out" - "cast it or tread it".⁴

In his great affliction he says,

"My God, could I weep blood,
Gladly I would."⁴

and he even longs for death which shall be a liberation from the captivity of the body:

"O my God, hear my cry;
Or let me dye! -"⁴

-
1. Mysticism - 457.
 2. Martin, II. 489.
 3. Martin, II. 510.
 4. Martin, II. 526.

The soul freed from the prison of the body will be able to enjoy the bliss which comes from the nearness of God.

"O then, just then, break or untye
 These bonds, this sad captivity,
 This leaden state, which men miscall
 Being and life, but is dead thrall."¹.

St. John of the Cross in his classical treatise on "The Dark Night of the Soul" describing the true nature and purpose of this affliction of the soul says:

"Souls begin to enter the dark night when God is drawing them out of the state of beginners . . . and is leading them into that of proficientes, the state of contemplatives, that, having passed through it, they may arrive at the state of the perfect, which is that of the divine union with God."² God leads men into this night for here "the soul is established in virtue and made strong for the inestimable delights of His Love."².

Vaughan describing the nature of the experience of knowing "God by night", says:

"Most blest believer he!
 Who in that land of darkness and blinde eyes
 Thy long expected healing wings could see,
 When thou didst rise,
 And what can never more be done,
 Did at mid-night speak with the sun."³.

When the soul in the "dark night" beholds the "sun", God, all its faculties are involved in this act of impassioned perception.

1. Martin, II, 519.

2. The Dark Night of The Soul by St. John of The Cross; translated by David Lewis.

3. Martin, II. 522.

The reality of this experience can only be described through negative symbols. Dante in the unitive stage is blinded with the Divine Light flashing around him, this light can only be described as dazzling darkness. Dante says: "As sudden lightning-flash that scatters the visual spirits, so that it deprives the eye of action towards the strongest objects;

"So shined round about me a living light, and left me swathed with such a veil of its effulgence, that naught appeared unto me."¹.

This dazzling darkness which the mystic finds in God is in reality his vision of the supreme Reality. Vaughan says:

"There is in God (some say)

A deep, but dazzling darkness; As men here
Say it is late and dusky, because they
See not all clear;

O for that night! where I in him
Might live invisible and dim."².

St John of the Cross explaining the true significance of this "dim contemplation" says that it is secret, i.e. unseen and undisturbed. He continues "The second blessing is that because of the spiritual darkness of this night . . . the soul seeing nothing, and unable to see, is not detained by anything which is not God from drawing near unto Him, and, therefore, advances unhindered by forms and figures and natural apprehensions."³.

St. John of the Cross has described his own experience of union with God in a hushed voice quivering with tenderness and love.

1. Par. XXX.

2. II, 522.

3. Dark Night of The Soul, page 182.

"All things I then forgot,
 My cheek on Him who for my coming came,
All ceased, and I was not,
 Leaving my cares and shame
 Among the lilies, and forgetting them."¹.

Vaughan does not seem to have enjoyed the highest state of union with God, which is granted to the sanctified soul after it has endured the privations of the Dark Night of the soul; he could not say with St. John of the Cross "All ceased, and I was not."

Vaughan does not claim to have experienced even this state of "dim contemplation" when God appears to the soul as "Dazzling Darkness". In the last stanza quoted, Vaughan is describing the state of the soul in the Dark Night, but he does not suggest that it is his own personal experience that he is describing; in fact he is careful to add as "some say":

"There is in God (some say)
 A deep but dazzling darkness;"².

He is simply here referring to the experience of the other mystics and longing to be blessed with it; the description of his own state of bliss in "Thalia Rediviva" is like home-coming crowned with sweetness, peace and light. He says in "The Revival".

"Hark! how his winds have chang'd their note,
 And with warm whispers call thee out.
 The frosts are past, the storms are gone:
 And backward life at last comes on.
 The lofty groves in express joyes
 Reply unto the Turtles voice,

1. The Dark Night of the Soul.

2. "The Night", L.C. Martin, vol.II, p.523.

"And here in dust and dirt, O here

The Lilies of his love appear!"¹.

This description does not refer to any intimate union with God which generally follows the Dark Night of the Soul. These joys to him are only the foretaste of the glory that awaits him, as the sanctified soul, in Heaven.

"And what the men of this world miss
Some drops and dews of future bliss."².

Vaughan seems to have believed with St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Donne that we can not see the Essence of God as He is what Vaughan calls "The Fulness of the Deity" in this life. St. Thomas Aquinas says:

"The Divine Essence cannot be seen by a created intellect, save through the light of glory, concerning which it is said in the Psalm (XXXV, 10 or XXXVI, 9): In Thy light shall we see light. This, however, can be participated in two ways: in the one, by way of it becoming the immanent form (of the intellect) and thus it makes the saints blessed in Paradise; and in the other, by way of a certain passing passion as we have said in the light of prophecy; and, in this latter way was in Paul, when he was caught up. And therefore, by such a vision he was not blessed absolutely, so that it overflowed to his body, but only relatively; and therefore such a being caught up pertains in some sort to prophecy."³ St. Augustine discussing the nature of St. Paul's experience when he was caught up in Heaven says: "St. Paul was rapt into this transcendent vision, wherein we may believe that God vouchsafed to show

1. The Works of Henry Vaughan, edited by L.C. Martin, II. p. 643.

2. Works of Henry Vaughan, L.C. Martin, Vol. II. p. 643.

3. Summa Theologica, II. II. q. 175 a 2, 3.

him that life wherein, after this life, we are to live forever."¹
 The idea embodied in these discussions of St. Augustine and St. Thomas is that while a transient glimpse of the lumen gloriae is granted to the mystic in the unitive stage, the permanent vision is the privilege of the blessed saints in Paradise.

Vaughan also believed that "eternal felicity" could only be granted to the soul in Heaven "Therefore in my opinion eternal Beautitude, or eternal felicity is nothing else but a sufficiency, or fulnesse of all good things, according to our own desire, and without any indigency, which felicity all the friends of God shall fully enjoy in the life which is to come."²

Eternal felicity, Vaughan considers, is possible only after death when Christ will "adopt us for his sons, making us his Consorts in his own Kingdome . . . But he himself is the God deifying and we are but deified, or gods made by him."³

Vaughan believes that in this glorified resurrection body will be blessed like the soul and the deified spirit of man shall make him "co-heires with his only begotten Son who is in everything co-equal with himself, changing our vile bodies, that they may be like unto his glorious body"⁴; St. Thomas Aquinas discussing the resurrection of the body uses almost the same language.

"Our resurrection shall be on the model of the resurrection of Christ, who will reform the body of our humiliation, so that it shall become conformable to the body of his glory (Phil. III, 21). But Christ after His resurrection had a body that could be felt and handled, as He says: Feel and see, because a spirit hath not flesh

1. Western Mysticism by D. C. Butler, p. 81.

2. Man in glory - L.C. Martin, vol. I. page 209.

3. Ibid, p. 206.

4. Ibid, p. 206.

and bones as you see me to have (Luke XXIV, 39): in like manner therefore also other risen men."¹.

Vaughan, like St. Thomas, believes that our resurrection shall be the resurrection of body and soul alike; he even asserts that the Souls of the Elect "have not yet enjoyed the fulnesse of felicity, until their bodies shall be restored unto them incorruptible;"².

Vaughan says that the body like a "Spruce Bride",

"Shall one day rise, and cloath'd with shining light

All pure, and bright

Re-marry to the soule, for 'tis most plaine

Thou only fal'st to be refin'd again."³.

It is after understanding Vaughan's conception of the resurrection that we can realise the significance and beauty of such lines as the following :

"They are all gone into the world of light!

And I alone sit lingering here."⁴.

Vaughan's conception of life was that it is situated between two eternities, the eternity which the soul lived before it assumed the body, and the eternity of endless light which stretches beyond death. He knew that "full-eyed" vision of God was not possible in our present life and therefore he was ready to be dissolved and thus achieve eternal life.

"Since in these veyls my ecclips'd eye

May not approach thee, (for at night

Who can have commerce with the light?)

1. Contra Gentiles, Chap. LXXXIV.
2. Man in Glory, Martin, vol.I. page 196.
3. Martin, II, page 402.
4. Ibid, p. 483.

I'll disapparell, and to buy

But one half glaunce, most gladly dye."¹.

In this pilgrimage there is no fixity and permanence of vision,
His light "Thus wee saw there, and thus here."².

It is only in rare moments of insight that we can transcend the
limitations of our self and "into glory peep."³.

The glory of the star is not to be confined into a tomb but shine
in all spheres.

"If a star were confin'd into a Tomb

Her captive flames must needs burn there,

But when the hand that lockt her up, gives room

She'll shine through all the sphaere."⁴.

To Vaughan death is "beauteous", for in it lies hidden the "jewel
of the just"; he is eager to know the mysteries which lie beyond
death and possess the freedom that awaits his soul in Heaven.

"Resume thy spirit from this world of thrall

Into true liberty."⁴.

Death has no terrors for him, he is longing to be dissolved so that
he may ever "triumph in the security of... everlasting Beatitude."⁵.

"Dissolve, dissolve! death cannot do

What I would not submit unto."⁶.

He believes that in Heaven both the body and the soul shall be
"wing'd and free."⁷ All veils shall be broken and he shall stand
face to face with God.

1. Martin, II. 419.

2. Martin, II. 464.

3. Martin, II. 484.

4. Martin, II. 484.

5. Man in Glory, vol. I. page 210.

6. Martin, II. 644.

7. Martin, vol. II. 402.

". . .we shall there no more

Watch stars, or pore

Through melancholy clouds, and say,

Would it were day!

One everlasting Saboth there shall runne

Without succession, and without a sunne."¹.

We have briefly described in the foregoing pages the characteristics of Vaughan's mysticism. He is a mystic in the only sense in which a poet can be a mystic; that while possessing all the felicity and magic of the true poet, his religious poetry is based on his own mystical experience. He had declared in his Preface to "Silex Scintillans" that a poet should strive for "perfection and true holyness, that a door may be opened to him in heaven. Rev. 4. 1. and then he will be able to write (with Hietotheus and holy Herbert) a true Hymn."².

We have tried to show, by giving parallel quotations from such great mystics as St. Augustine, St. Bernard and St. John of the Cross, that Vaughan had undergone that process of mystical development (which has been conveniently divided into the three stages of conversion or the awakening of the self, Purgation, or the Purification of the self, and the Illumination of the self) which was experienced by these great mystics also. But of the higher stages of mystical life (i.e. the Dark Night of the Soul and the unitive stage), we do not find any clear record in Vaughan's poetry or prose. Though he has described the "dazzling darkness" of the Dark Night of the Soul, he does not claim to have experienced it himself.; he expresses only his longing for it.

1. Martin, vol. II, 402.

2. L.C. Martin, vol. II. page 392.

"O for that night! where I in him

Might live invisible and dim."¹.

He has not described this important stage of the mystical life in terms of his own personal experience; moreover we do not find any evidence in his poems of his ever having reached the highest stage of the mystical life known as The Unitive Stage, which as Underhill says, is "the final triumph of the spirit, the flower of mysticism, humanity's top note: the consummation towards which the contemplative life, with its long slow growth and costly training, has moved from the first."² - but we must remember the important fact that Vaughan during the last thirty years of his life was silent, his latest poem which survives being his elegy on his brother's death in 1666,³ included in "Thalia Rediviva." (1678); and who knows that his further progress on the Mystic Way, he thought could no longer be communicated even through the symbols drawn from Nature and the imagery of light, for the intimate union of the soul with God, as St. John of the Cross says, relates "to matters so interior and spiritual as to baffle the powers of language"⁴. we can only guess!

1. L. C. Martin, vol. II, p. 523.

2. Mysticism by E. Underhill, p. 413.

3. Vaughan died in 1695 (23rd April).

4. The Living Flame of Love by St. John of the Cross, translated by David Lewis, page 1.

THE NATURE-MYSTICISM OF
HENRY VAUGHAN AND THOMAS VAUGHAN.

Dean Inge has defined religious mysticism in such broad terms as to include the search of God in Nature as a form of mysticism.

"Religious mysticism" he says "may be defined as the attempt to realise the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or more generally, as the attempt to realise, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal."¹⁾

This view of mysticism is based on the assumption that universe is a manifestation of the Mind of God, and everything, according to its measure reflects the nature of its Creator. The mystic discerns an essential unity running through creation which to him is the unity of the creative Intellect of God. In Nature, mystics have discerned the spirit of God flowering in its manifold richness; to Philo Nature is the language of God, but with "this difference, that while the human voice is made to be heard, the voice of God is made to be seen: what God says consists of acts, not of words."²⁾

The Nature-mysticism of a high order is present in St Francis of Assisi; he sees the world around him through the "many-coloured glass", and is delighted to behold the workmanship, and glory of God's creation; to him all the created things are the children of the same Divine spirit, In his "Hymn of the Sun" - Il cantico De Sole - St. Francis praises God "for all thy creation"; to him the sun is "Brother and Moon "sister" and earth "Mother", which "bringeth forth divers fruit and bright flowers and herbs"³⁾

This tender reverence for Nature is one of the characteristics of Nature-mysticism; John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist, justifying it said "God made the universe and all the creatures contained therein as so

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1. Christian Mysticism by W.R. Inge P. 5.
 2. Quoted by Inge, Christian Mysticism P. 254.
 3. The Hymn of the Sun by St Francis of Assisi.

many glasses wherein He might reflect His own glory. He hath copied forth Himself in the creation; and in this outward world we may read the lovely characters of the Divine goodness, power and wisdom." ¹⁾ This endeavour of man to discern God in Nature gave rise to Animism in primitive religion, to sublime pantheism in Hindu mysticism, and has brought Christian mystics like Shelley nearer to a form of Pantheism which Inge calls "pantheistic determinism" ²⁾, an irrevocable power determining human actions.

Vaughan and Pantheism.

Though Vaughan has been called by Richard Garnett a pantheist; ³⁾ Nature did not provide him with the same devotional and religious stimulus as the church's sacraments. Vaughan's religious life is bound up with the Christian conception of Christ as the Redeemer, and his church as the repository of his divine spirit, and though his religion, as expressed in poetry, is free from institutional formalism, it is essentially orthodox. To him Eucharist is a "private seal" ⁴⁾ and the symbol of the mystical union with the spirit and body of Christ.

"Give to thy wretched one
Thy mystical communion,
That, absent, he may see,
Live, die, and rise with thee;" (5)

Nature did not provide him with the same means of communion with Christ as the Holy Communion. Pantheism, as A. E. Garvie, has defined "is the view that all is God, and that God is all, but since thought may move from God to all or from all to God, it can assume two forms. If it begins with the religious or the philosophical faith in God as infinite and eternal reality, then the finite temporal world is swallowed up in God, and pantheism becomes acosmism (q.v) i.e.; the world is an illusion in

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1. See Inge - P. 294.
 2. Studies of English Mystics by W.R. Inge, P. 181.
 3. Dictionary of National Biography.
 4. Martin II, 456.
 5. Martin II, 455.

comparison with God as Reality. If it begins with the scientific conception or the poetic vision of the world as unity, then God is lost in the world, and pantheism becomes pancosmism.¹⁾

Vaughan's conception of Nature, if viewed in the light of the above definition, is not pantheistic. To him the world is not an illusion, nor his God is lost in the world. He affirms the reality of created Nature and enjoys the glorious manifestation of God's spirit in it, but he also realises that supreme Reality is God, and thus enjoys the divine fellowship with Christ. His God is in Nature and yet above Nature, Nature has its independent life, perhaps more permanent and well-ordered than the life of Man, but it is equally dependent upon God. Neither all is God nor God is completely manifested in Nature. Life is a quickness²⁾ touched with the Kiss of the Lord, and the pulse of this quickness is felt in the human soul as well as in Nature. He says:

"All were by thee,
And stil must be,
Nothing that is, or lives,
But hath his quicknings, and reprieves
As thy hand opens, or shuts;" (3)

The acceptance of life is the central fact in Vaughan's religion. His enjoyment of the physical universe is not only poetic, it is coloured with the religious emotion which pervades all his poetry. In "The seed growing secretly;" he has stressed the superior happiness of a life of devotion in the country far from the madding crowd. He is not against pleasure as such, but "glory, and gold" have no place in his scheme of life in which Christian humility and charity are cardinal virtues.

"Let glory be their bait, whose mindes,
Are all too high for a low cell:" (4)

he wants to "thrive" in calmness and peace.

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1. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics edited by J. Hastings Vol 9 P.609
 2. Martin II, 538.
 3. Martin II, 457,
 4. T. Vaughan also says that God is "the quickening of all,"
Anthroposophia Theomagica - 53.
 5. Martin II, 511.

"Then bless thy secret growth, nor catch
 At noise, but thrive unseen and dumb;
 Keep clean, bear fruit, earn life and watch
 Till the white winged Reapers come!" (1)

In "Resignation" he tells us that he found that the joys of the world were a hindrance to the growth of his religious life; he wants to tread the path of Christ, a path of humbleness and Poverty.

"I hear, I see all the long day
 The noise and pomp of the broadway;
 I note their course and proud approaches;
 Their silks, perfumes and glittering coaches." (2)

The noise and pomp and glory are not for him; he had lived the active life of the gallant of his day, and he had recoiled from its vanity and hollowness before his conversion. In "Rapsodie" he has given us a glimpse of his life of gaiety before the influence of Herbert made him a sacred poet.

"Let's laugh now, and the prest grape drinke,
 Till the drowsie Day Starre winke;
 And in our merry, mad mirth run
 Easter, and further than the sun;
 And let none his Cup forsake,
 Till that Starre again doth wake;
 So we men below shall move
 Equally with the Gods above." (3)

The royalist and cavalier became the recluse and the mystic, He renounced the glitter of gilded coaches and the finery of silk to chose a life of poverty and humble devotion. He says:

"But in the narrow way to thee
 I observe only poverty,
 And despis'd things: and all along
 The ragged, mean and humble throng
 Are still on foot, and as they go,
 They sigh and say; Their Lord went so!" (4)

He resolved to tread the narrowway of poverty and humbleness leading to Christ.

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1. Martin II, 5II
 2. Martin II, 65I.
 3. Martin I, 12.
 4. Martin II, 65I.

"Thus, thus and in no other sort
Will I set forth, though laugh'd at for't;" (1)

He thus tried to retreat from the pomp and vanity of the world to a life of contemplation in the solitude and peace of the countryside. That his retreat was not the hasty act of a disappointed youth who could not pursue his law studies in London, but a determined and well-planned act, he tells us in "Retirement."

"'Tis not th' applause, and feat
Of dust and clay
Leads to that way,
But from those follies a resolv'd Retreat." (2)

Though Vaughan resolved to retreat, he never adopted the Puritan attitude of condemning all forms of innocent pleasure as detrimental to the life of the soul. Vaughan's sense of Mystical enjoyment of life as manifested in Nature is keen and he delighted in the "change and flow" of life.

"Beauty consists in colours; and that's best
Which is not fixt, but flies and flows;
The settled Red is dull, and Whites that rest
Something of sicknesse would disclose." (3)

And as a Physician he valued the health and vigour of the body; and translated the treatise of Henry Nollius on Hermetical Physics to show
4)
"The right way to Preserve and to restore Health."

In the country he discovered a new world of beauty and pleasure, and he also found the peace and solitude necessary for communion with Nature and the God of Nature. In "Retirement" he has given us three reasons for preferring the country life to that of the city.

Nature in the countryside not only shows the "Earth's fair face" in all its virgin beauty, but it also reveals the fact that Earth is "God's
1)
foot-stool." When man sees the hills, trees, meadows, flowers and "the
boundless skie," his pleasure is not merely aesthetic, he realises the

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1. Martin II, 651.
 2. Ibid II, 463.
 3. Martin II, 460.
 4. Martin II, 547.
 5. Martin II, p642.

glory of the creative energy of God.

"And ev'ry minute bless the King
And wise Creatour of Each thing." (1)

The second reason which Vaughan advances is that the cities are "Thrones of Ill;" they are "cages with much uncleanness fill'd," while in the countryside there is innocence and freedom.

"But rural shades are the sweet sense
Of piety and innocence." (1)

He has the simplicity of vision, and can still see the angels ascending and descending from Heaven. To him Nature is the calm region, where

"Angels descend, and rule the sphere;
Where heav'n lyes Leiguer, and the Dove
Duely as Dew. comes from above." (2)

The country thus to him is an Eden on Earth.

"If Eden be on Earth at all,
'Tis that, which we the country call." (3)

In the country he found peace and contentment which he thought was necessary for the healthy growth of his religious life. Vaughan has himself declared that in the country even the days are lengthened and that the beauties of Nature are easily accessible there. He says "The day itself (in my opinion) seems of more length and beauty in the country, and can be better enjoyed than anywhere else. There the years passe away calmly, and one day gently drives on the other, insomuch that a man may be sensible of a certaine satiety and pleasure from every houre, and may be said to feed upon time itself, which devours all other things." ⁴⁾

Vaughan recognised that he could only cultivate his love of Nature in the solitude of the country. He says:

"Lord, what a busie, restless thing
Hast Thou made man?" (5)

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1. Martin II P. 642.
 2. Martin I P. 642.
 3. Martin II P. 643.
 4. The Praise and Happinesse of the Countrie Life, Martin Vol I P. 129.
 5. Martin II P. 414.

And this restlessness inherent in the nature of man was accentuated by his love of ostentation and display of wealth; he points out that "one day spent in the recesses and privacies of the country, seems more pleasant and lasting than a whole year at court." ¹⁾

"Man is the shuttle, to whose winding quest
And passage through these looms
God order'd motion, but ordain'd no rest." (2)

(II)

Vaughan's relation to the Hermetic Physics and the occult Philosophy of his age.

Vaughan's conception of Nature as the revelation of an aspect of the creative energy of God was influenced by Hermetic Physics, medical astrology and Alchemy, and to a certain extent by the Platonic conception of the beauty in the Physical world ultimately leading to the supreme Beauty, God. The influence of his twin brother Thomas Vaughan, a student of occult sciences and mysticism, has been recently traced in Vaughan's conception of the Physical world and its relation to God. A.C. Judson, ³⁾ and R. Sencourt ⁴⁾ have shown the affinity between the two brothers in the interest in natural sciences, Alchemy, and Platonism.

Vaughan's translations and prose treatises not only show his interest in the various aspects of religious life as in "The Mount of Olives," "Man in Darkness", and "Man in Glory", but also in Hermetic Physics and in the occult sciences of his day. He translated Nierembiergiu's observations on the need of Temperance and Patience, Plutarch's essays "on the Benefits we may get from our Enemies" and Eucherius' essays on despising the world when compared to the glories of heaven." Of the four translations which more or less must be considered Vaughan's own personal work, one is Guevara's treatise in praise of the country life and the

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1. Martin Vol I P. 129.
 2. Martin II P. 477.
 3. The Source of H. Vaughan's Ideas concerning God in Nature. Studies in Philology, XXIV.
 4. Outflying Philosophy.

other three translations show Vaughan's interest in medicine, two are on the diseases of mind and body, one by Maximus Tirijs, and the other by Plutarch, and the third is more important, it being the translation of Nollius' work on Hermetic Physics,¹⁾

It gives us an insight into the complex relation of occult sciences to the medicine and Philosophy of his age. Vaughan kept an open mind on these subjects and he defines his attitude to such medical Philosophers as Glen and Paracelsus in his preface to "Hermeticall Physick." He says: "For my owne part, I honour the truth wherever I find it, whether in an old, or new Booke, in Glen or in Paracelsus; and Antiquity (where I find it gray with errors) shall have as little reverance from me, as Novelisme I wish we were all unbiassed and impartiall learners, not the implicit, groundlesse Proselyts of Authors and opinions, but the loyall friends and followers of truth."²⁾

Henry Vaughan shared with Donne and Sir Thomas Browne his intrest in the uncommon and remote regions of knowledge; in one of his letters to Aubery, Vaughan wrote "I had but little affection to the skirts & lower parts of learning; where every hand is grasping & so little to be had -³⁾ butt neither nature nor fortune favoured my ambitions."

We are not here concerned with the larger relation of the occult sciences with mysticism, our limited purpose is to point out the influence of the occult Philosophers like Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa and Pymander on Vaughan's conception of Nature and its relation to God. The starting point of occult sciences, as Underhill has pointed out, is common both to magic and mysticism. She says: "The starting-point of all magic, and of all magical religion - the best and purest of occult activities - is, as in mysticism, man's inextinguishable conviction that there are

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1. For a detailed list of Prose translation see L.C. Martin Vol I and II.
 2. Martin II P. 543 - The Translator to the ingenious Reader.
 3. L.C. Martin II P. 673.

other planes of being than those which senses report to him, and its proceedings represent the intellectual and individualistic results of this conviction - his craving for the hidden knowledge.¹⁾

But the resemblance ends here; though religion, in its ceremonial aspects, has affinities with magic, religious mysticism adopts quite a different method and technique to apprehend reality from that followed by occult Philosophers. Magic²⁾ and mysticism represent the two different but abiding passions of the self, "the desire to love and the desire to know." Mysticism as Underhill has defined is "the science" of ultimates³⁾ and the true mark of the mystic is not to know but to be.

In the seventeenth century the two exponents of occult Philosophy who had obtained wide popularity among the Philosophers and Scholars of the age were Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) and Paracelsus. Agrippa was a German soldier, Physician and occult Philosopher. For seven years (1511-1518) he was in Italy in the service of William VI of Monferrato and of Charles III of Savoy. His lectures on the Pimander of Hermes Trismegistus at Pavia in 1515 brought him in conflict with the church. His work De occulta Philosophia (1510) brought him the antagonism of the Inquisition, it was printed at Antwerp in 1531, in his other work "De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et artium atque excellentia Verbi Dei declamatio" he advocated a return to the Primitive Christianity. The complete edition⁴⁾ of his works was published at Leyden in 1550.

The reason why Henry Vaughan like his brother Thomas Vaughan became interested in Hermetic Physics was that he believed that the fact of

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1. Mysticism, Evelyn Underhill P. 151.
 2. We have used the term "magic" in its ancient sense of occult Philosophy which is based on "an actual, positive, and realizable Knowledge concerning the worlds which we denominate invisible." A.E. Waite, "The occult Sciences" P. I.
 3. Mysticism - E. Underhill P. 72.
 4. See H. Morley, Life of H.C. Agrippa (London 1856).

sciences agreed with the truth of religion. Elias Ashmole, the Alchemist, declared in his preface to "Theatrum chemicum Britannicum" (1652) that the man who can peer into the secrets of nature does not rejoice "that he can make Gold and silver" but because "he sees the Heavens open, the Angells of God Ascending and Descending, and that his own name is fairly written in the Book of Life." Henry Vaughan himself defined medicine of "Physick" as "an Art, laying down in certain Rules or Precepts, the right way of preserving and restoring the health of Mankind"¹⁾

But this way of "restoring" the health of man was not limited to medicine or Physics but also included the occult Philosophy and Christian theology. In his treatise on "Hermetical Physick", Vaughan describing the means "of the Preservation of Health," remarks that "a pious and an holy life" are necessary for maintaining health:

"For Piety (as the apostle teacheth) is Profitable for all things, having the promise of this present life, and of that which is to come. Now all piety consists in this, that we love God with all our souls, and our Neighbours as ourselves."²⁾

This connection between medicine, theology, and astrology was the favourite doctrine of T.B.V.H. Paracelsus (c 1490-1541)³⁾ Paracelsus whom H. Vaughan mentioned with respect in his Preface to "Hermetic Physick" was considered to be an authority in the seventeenth century on Hermetical Physics. Paracelsus had little respect for the authority of Aristotle in sciences, for he advocated a form of experimental science in which occult sciences and theology were also included: He discerned a direct relation between Nature - by which he meant the infinite variety of God's creation - Man, and God. He says "It is to learn the mysteries of Nature by which

1. Martin II. P. 549.

2. Martin II. P. 552.

3. See Waite, The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus (1894 and also A.M. Stoddart, The Life of Paracelsus 1915).

we can discover what God is and what man is and what avails a knowledge of heavenly eternity and earthly weakness. Hence arises a knowledge of Theology, of Justice, of Truth, since the mysteries of Nature are to be imitated which can be known and obtained from God as the Eternal God." ¹⁾

The system of Paracelsus is based on a visionary Neo-Platonic Philosophy in which the life of man is regarded as a part of the larger life of the universe.

Henry Vaughan's conception of Nature seems to have been influenced by Paracelsus, for he also says: "he only is true Physician, created so by the light of Nature, to whom Nature herself hath taught and manifested her proper and genuine operations by experience." ²⁾ Agrippa had tried to effect a synthesis between religious truth and natural sciences, and Thomas Vaughan was naturally attracted by his genius. Thomas wrote a poem appreciating Agrippa (1651) in which he described him as

"Nature's apostle and her choice high priest
Her mystical and bright evangelist."

Anthony à Wood describing T. Vaughan's debt to Agrippa remarked:

"Vaughan was a great admirer of the labours of Cornelius Agrippa whose principles he followed in most of his works, and to whom, in matters of Philosophy, he acknowledged the next to God he owed all that he had." ³⁾

Though Henry Vaughan does not mention Agrippa in his treatise on Hermetical Physics, his interest in occult Philosophy like that of his brother makes it probable that he had also studied the works of Agrippa who was the greatest exponent of Hermetical Physics and occult sciences in his age. Henry Vaughan, like Thomas Vaughan, mainly relies in his treatise on the authority of the Hermetists. Thomas had repudiated the authority of Glen and Aristotle alike. He says: "I acknowledge the schoolmen ingenious; they conceive their principles irregular and prescribe rules

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1. Hermetical and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus trans. Waite Vol II, P. 4.
 2. Grosart II, P. 333.
 3. Also see The Works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 50.

for method, though they want matter. Their philosophy is like a church that is all discipline and no doctrine..... Besides their Aristotle is a poet in text¹⁾

Henry Vaughan also gives his reasons for preferring Hermetists to Galenists; he says: "now all the knowledge of the Hermetists, proceeds from a laborious manual disquisition and search into Nature, but the Galenists insist wholly upon a base received Theorie and prescribed Receipts, giving all at adventure, and will not be persuaded to inquire further then the mouth of their leader."²⁾

The conception of the Physical world as propounded by Hermetical Philosophers like Cornelius Agrippa deserves a careful study for the right understanding of Vaughan's conception of Nature. In the occult Philosophy, Agrippa gave a philosophical exposition of the Hermetical conception of a three-fold division of the world; the realm of pure Intelligence, the world of elements, earth, air, fire and water, and between them a spiritual world which seemed as a link between the other two worlds. Agrippa like H. Vaughan was a Physician and Vaughan like him maintained the ancient alliance between Medicine and religion. H. Vaughan says: "For true and perfect medicines, and the knowledge of them, can nowhere be had, but from God, whom we can serve by no other means in this life, but onely by piety and piety hath included in it fervent and incessant supplications unto God, hearty and frequent thanksgiving for his gracious and free benefits, with sincere and actual love towards our Neighbours."³⁾

Henry Vaughan who was interested in Hermetical Physics, Alchemy, and medicine must have found an ordered exposition of the threefold division of the world according to Hermetical Philosophy in the magical writings of his twin brother Thomas Vaughan. Thomas Vaughan declared (following C. Agrippa) that "the great world consists of three parts - the elemental, the

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1. The works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 7.
 2. Henry Vaughan, Hermetic Physicks, Martin P. 550.
 3. Martin II. P. 579.

celestial and the spiritual - above all which God Himself is seated ..."¹⁾
 In this conception of Nature, the physical and spiritual worlds were indissolubly linked together and Henry Vaughan must have discovered in the Philosophy of his brother which is a curious mixture of Hermetical Physics, Neo-platonism, and Christian theology, many mystical ideas about the creation of the universe and its relation to God. Thomas Vaughan's first three works on magic were published in 1650 which is also the date of the publication of the first part of *silex scintillans*.

(III)

Thomas Vaughan and Henry Vaughan's conception of the Relation of God to Nature.

Thomas Vaughan's magical theories about heat and light and magnetism help us to understand Henry Vaughan's constant references to them in his sacred poems; A.C. Judson has been able to trace almost a parallel idea embodied in "cock-crowing" in Thomas Vaughan's *Anima Magica Abscondita*,²⁾ 1650; but our purpose in this chapter is only to suggest certain similarities in H. Vaughan's conception of Nature and that of his brother T. Vaughan, who was also a mystic and an ardent Anglican. A.E. Waite has pointed out the relation of magic to Neo-platonism, Jewish Kabbala, and Christian theology; magicians like Thomas Vaughan, he says, were "Christian mystics who never dreamed of looking further than Christianity for light, and what they pretend to have possessed was the key of miracles and not the key of religious symbolism."³⁾ Thomas Vaughan himself said that he was "neither papist nor sectary but a true, resolute protestant in the best sense of the church of England."⁴⁾

Henry Vaughan and Thomas Vaughan both conceived God as immanent in Nature but still transcending Nature. God sits in Heaven above "the morning-starre," and the glories of the created universe are mean shows

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1. Anthroposophia Theomagica P. 40.
 2. A.C. Judson - Studies in Philology, Vol XXIV.
 3. The Magical Writings of T. Vaughan Lon. 1888 P. XXIII.
 4. The Works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite 1919. P. 58.

when compared to the glory of Heaven.

"Who on yon throne of Azure sits,
 Keeping close house
 Above the morning-starre,
 Whose meaner shewes,
 And outward utensils these glories are
 That shine and share
 Part of his mansion; (1)

Nature is the manifestation of God, but God though immanent in Nature still transcends it, for it is an incomplete manifestation of his glory; it is only a "part of his mansion." Thomas Vaughan, like the Platonists, says that God created Nature because He was in love with His own Beauty; moreover Nature itself was too beautiful to be eternally hidden in the Mind of God. Speaking of God's creatures, he says, "He considered them first and made them afterwards. God in His eternal idea foresaw that whereof as yet there was no material copy. The goodness and beauty of the one moved Him to create the other, and truly the image of this prototype, being embosomed in the second, made Him so much in love with His creature that when sin had defaced it, He restored it by the suffering of that pattern by which at first it was made."²⁾

Though T. Vaughan conceived God as manifesting his love for his creation in Nature, the source of this creative energy, Heat and Light, was not in Nature but above it. "So that hee overlooks all that he hath made, and the whole fabric stands in his heat and light, as a man stands here on earth in the sun-shine."³⁾ T. Vaughan's conception of Nature is complex because it is bound up with his important and ingenious exposition of the Trinity. The "process of the Trinity from the centre to the circumference,"⁴⁾ he conceives as an act of God revealing Himself in His creation, though essentially remaining apart from it: He says

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1. Martin II P. 462.
 2. Anthroposophia Theomagica, T. Vaughan. edited by A.E. Waite P. 13.
 3. Coelum Terrae PP. 142-3.
 4. The works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 14.

"God the Father is the Metaphysical super-celestial sun; the Second Person is Light; and the Third is Fiery Love or a Divine Heat proceeding from both. Now without the presence of this Heat there is no reception of the Light and by consequence no influx from the Father of Lights. For this Love is the medium which unites the Lover to that which is beloved, and probably 'tis the Platonic's "chief Diamon, who doth unite us with the Perfect of Spirits"¹⁾

God before this act of creation was "wrapped up and contracted in Himself." T. Vaughan says: "Thus we read that "darkness was upon the face of the deep" and "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Here you are to observe that, notwithstanding this process of the Third Person, yet was there no light, but darkness on the face of the deep, illumination properly being the office of the Second, Wherefore God also, when the matter was prepared by Love for Light gives out His Fiat Lux, which was no creation - as most think - but an emanation of the word, in whom was life, and that life is the light of men. This is the light whereof St John speaks, that it "shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."²⁾

This Divine Light, which was not only creation but an emanation of the Word, was infused into the matter and the Holy Ghost modelled the world according to the pattern which was in the Mind of God. He says "No sooner had the Divine Light pierced the bosom of the matter but the idea or pattern of the whole material world appeared in those primitive waters, like an image in a glass. By this pattern it was that the Holy Ghost framed and modelled the universal structure."³⁾ Now this structure was only an image of the original pattern which existed before the act of

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1. The works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 14.
 2. The Works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 15.
 3. The Works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 16.

creation in the Mind of God. In a very interesting passage T. Vaughan says: "This is it which the Divine Spirit intimates to us in that Scripture where He saith that God created "every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew." But, notwithstanding this presence of the idea in Matter, yet the creation was not performed "by the projection of something from the essence of the idea," for it is God that comprehends His creature and not the creature God.¹⁾ It is in the manner of creation, the Divine Light piercing the "bosom of matter" that the two worlds the visible and the invisible, become linked; and Love is the link which united these two worlds. This conception of Nature also explains the spirituality of matter which is a favourite idea of Henry Vaughan. He conceives Nature as being conscious of life.

"Hedges have ears, Said the old Sooth,
And ev'ry bush id somethings booth;
 This cautious fools mistake" (2)

Henry Vaughan thinks that not only the two worlds exist but they still communicate with each other.

"But I (alas!)
 Was shown one day in a strange glass
 That busie commerce kept between
 God and his creatures, though unseen." (2)

Thomas Vaughan thought that God was immanent in Nature as He was immanent within the individual soul; he conceives the union of God with Nature as a "Kiss" - "mysterious Kiss of God and Nature"³⁾ and thinks that "To speak then of God without Nature is more than we can do, for we have not known Him so; and to speak of Nature without God is more than we may do we should rob God of His glory and attribute."⁴⁾

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1. The works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 18.
 2. Martin II, P. 515.
 3. The works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 93. Henry Vaughan also defined Life as
"A quickness, which my God hath Kist,"
 4. The works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 395.

In T. Vaughan we also meet the clear exposition of the Hermetical conception of the two worlds the visible and the invisible, a conception which is ever present in Henry Vaughan's Nature-poetry. T. Vaughan says in "coelum Terrae": "Here we have two worlds, visible and invisible, and two universal Natures, visible and invisible out of which both these worlds proceeded. The passive universal Nature was made in the image of the active universal one, and the conformity of both worlds or Sanctuaries consists in the original conformity of their principles."¹⁾ He argues that spirituality of matter is based on the fact that God created Nature in His own image as he created the soul in His own likeness. He says that when God "was disposed to create, He had no other pattern or exemplar whereby to frame and mould His creatures but Himself. But having infinite inward ideas or conceptions in Himself, as He conceived so He created: that is to say He created an outward form answerable to the inward conception of figure of His mind."²⁾

The Act of Creation was thus the result of God's own love for Himself. He says: "God in love with His own beauty frames a glass, to view it by reflection."³⁾ And man, he points out in Lumen de Lumine is "employed in a perpetual contemplation of the absent beauty."⁴⁾ We can get a glimpse of the absent beauty of God in His creation; this conception of creation gives us an insight into Henry Vaughan's conception of Nature as a revelation of the creative energy of God.

He sees in nature a shadow of Eternity,

"My gazing soul would dwell an hour
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;"

Henry Vaughan says that God's absent beauty is present in his creation; Nature, can lead us to God. He views Nature as calling man to

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1. The works of T. Vaughan A.E. Waite P. 192.
 2. The works of T. Vaughan A.El Waite P. 193.
 3. Ibid P. 5.
 4. The works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 298.

God.

"O that man could do so! that he would hear
The world read to him! all the vast expanse
In the creation shed, and slav'd to sense
Makes up but lectures for his eye, and ear." (1)

He says that all things in God's creation "shew him heaven,"

".....trees, herbs, flowers, all
strive upward still, and point him the way home." (1)

H. Vaughan's conception of Nature is not pantheistic, for he does not identify God with Nature; Nature only points the way to God who is above Nature. His soul is eager not to drown itself in the beauties of Nature but to fly high above it to God.

"..... It was time
To get thee wings on, and devoutly climb
Unto thy God," (2)

The soul in its flight to God would fly

"Above the stars, a track unknown and high," (2)

This view of Nature may be termed as the Christian conception of Nature; speaking from the orthodox Christian point of view, mysticism is the attempt of the human soul to pierce through the veil of appearance to behold Reality and a synthetic vision of things is an essential quality of the mystic's mind, he perceives things as finally related to each other in an organic whole. G. Hodgson has pointed out that this awareness of God in Nature is the characteristic trait of English mysticism. He says "A similar attitude is to be found in these particular mystics, and those who, meeting it there dismiss it as "mere pantheism" seem in danger of denying the elementary Christian tenet that God, and He alone, made the world and all its other inhabitants as well as man and of forgetting that to belittle the natural world comes dangerously near to despising

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1. Martin II, P. 461.
 2. Martin II, P. 409.

its Author."¹⁾

The religious significance of Nature-symbolism goes back to the poetry of ritual in paganism. Le Megroz says "Nature poetry, for instance, is usually regarded as a typical modern phenomenon, but it is only a secular version of what used to be religious in pagan poetry of ritual and mystery play."²⁾ Inge thinks that the Divine in Nature has been discovered more fully by Christian poets and theologians, and justifies this attitude towards Nature as religious but calls it "more contemplative than practical." He says: "our Lord's precept, "consider the lilies," sanctions this religious use of Nature; and many of His parables, such as that of the Sower, show us how much we may learn from such analogies. And be it observed that it is the normal and regular in Nature which in these parables is presented for our study; the yearly harvest not the three years famine; the constant care and justice of God, not the "special providence" or the "special judgment." We need not wait for catastrophes to trace the finger of God but we may perhaps extract from the precept³⁾ quoted above the canon that the highest beauty that we can discern resides in the real and natural, and only demands the seeing eye to find it."

It is the "seeing eye" of the poet which discerns in the life of Nature the handiwork of God and this attitude of the poet leads him to nature - mysticism which rests on the belief that everything in this world is symbolic of something more. This attitude towards Nature is present in "the doctrine of signatures" which was current in the seventeenth century and which held that "though Sin and Satan have plunged mankinde into an ocean of Infirmities, the mercy of God which is over all His workes, maketh grasse to grow upon the Mountaines and Herbes for the

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1. English mystics - G.E. Hodgson. P. II.
 2. Francis Thompson by Le Megroz.
 3. Christian mysticism - W.R. Inge. P. 301.

use of Men, and hath not only stamped upon them a distinct forme, but also given them particular signatures, whereby a man may read, even in legible characters, the use of them." ¹⁾

To this doctrine there are repeated allusions in Vaughan's poems, not only herbs and flowers but dust and stone also "all have signature or life." Herbalism thus provides another connecting link between medicine and mysticism in the seventeenth century. Hermes Trismegistus held that the visible world mirrors the visible world; Sir Thomas Browne expressed the attitude of the physicians of his day towards Hermetical Philosophy when he said, "The severe Schools shall never laugh me out of the Philosophy of Hermes (i.e. Trismegistus) that this visible world is but a picture of the invisible, wherein, as in a portrait things are not truly but in equivocal shapes, and as they counterfeit some real substance in that invisible framework." ²⁾

The doctrine of the immanence of God in Nature was fully developed by Eckhart and it was embodied by Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus in their exposition of occult philosophy ³⁾ with which as we have shown, Henry Vaughan, like his twin brother T. Vaughan, was quite familiar.

H. Vaughan was a student of Natural Philosophy, and in his poems he has claimed to have carried on some scientific experiments about the Nature of things. This is an important phase in the development of his nature - mysticism, for he in later years distrusted the scientific method of apprehending reality. ⁴⁾ John Aubrey writing to Anthony à Wood says that he has written for Henry Vaughan the Natural history of Surrey.

"I desire from kindness to tell him (Dr Plott of Magdalen Hall) that I have writt out for him the Natural History of Metshire and of Surrey, and a sheet or two of other counties; and am now sending to my cosn.

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1. Henry Vaughan, Silurist - The Nineteenth century Vol LXVII, P. 502.
 2. "Religio Medici"
 3. Christian mysticism - Inge P. 273.
 4. Martin II P. 616.

Henry Vaughan, silurist, in Brecknockshire, to send me the natural history of it, as also of the other circumjacent counties: no man fitter." ¹⁾

In his poems, Henry Vaughan displays the knowledge of herbs and birds which is more scientific than poetic; the Hermetic Physician is present in such observations as follows:

"harmless violets, which give
Their virtues here
For salves, and syrups, while they live."

and he displays the interest of a Naturalist in his observations of the life of owls and Turtles in his poem "The Bird"; and there are many allusions to the wild flowers in his poems such as "Man". In "Vanity of Spirits" he says:

"I summon'd nature: peirc'd through all her store,
Broke up some seales, which none had touch'd before." (2)

But he realised the futility of scientific method in knowing the ultimate Reality; having searched Nature, he came to search himself, where he found the echoes of "eternal hills." In "The Search" he has definitely said that "The Skinne, and Shell of things," though fair can never lead us to God. He says:

"Search well another world; who studies this,
Travels in Clouds, seeks Manna, where none is." (3)

And when he had searched the another world (by which he means the invisible world of Hermetical Philosophy) he realised that the echoes of Eternity were not in external Nature but within his own self. Vaughan conceived God immanent in Nature as Spirit but transcendent as a Source.

God fills the world unseen, and still remains above it.

"Up to those bright, and gladsome hills
Whence flowes my weal, and mirth,
I look, and sigh for him, who fills
(Unseen) both heaven, and earth." (4)

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1. The Nineteenth century Vol LXVII; P. 501.
 2. Martin II, P. 418.
 3. Martin II, 407.
 4. Psalm 121, Martin II P. 458.

It is not Nature but God Himself who is H. Vaughan's "sole stay."

"He is my Pillar, and my Cloud,
Now, and for ever more." (1)

He realises that God is present as an unseen spirit in Nature, but one cannot have the mystic's "full-eyed" vision of God in Nature, and so he longs to "climb" to God and leave these "masques and shadows" of his glory in created Nature behind.

"That in these Masques and shadows I may see
Thy sacred way,
And by those hid ascents climb to that day
Which breaks from thee
Who art in all things, though invisibly;" (2)

He knows that the ultimate reality is God; and that it is only when the mystic lives and has his being in God that he can attain to Perfect knowledge.

"There, hid in thee, shew me his life again
At whose dumbe Urn
Thus all the year I mourn." (2)

Nature has a reality of its own, and being the creation of God embodies His "active breath." T. Vaughan says: "For Nature is the voice of God not a mere sound or command but a substantial, active breath, proceeding from the creator and penetrating all things." God Himself is "a spermatic form" and this is the only sense in which a form may be defined as "the outward expression of an inward essence."³⁾ Thus Nature, T. Vaughan points out, can lead us to God. He, like Henry Vaughan, tries to climb to God through visible Nature. He says that God can be known by "using and trying His creatures. For in them lies His secret path"⁴⁾ The object of knowledge is not Nature but God Himself. He says "Let them approach with confidence to the Almighty God who made the world, for none can give a better account of the work than the Architect."⁴⁾

1. Psalm 121, Martin II. P. 458.

2. Martin II, 479.

3. The works of T. Vaughan edited by A.E. Waite P. 84.

4. Ibid P. 85.

It is God alone who can reveal the true glory of His creation.

Henry Vaughan also declares that God can be known in His creatures, they lead man to God.

"Sure, mighty love foreseeing the descent
Of this poor creature, by a gracious art
Hid in these low things snares to gain his heart,
And layd surprizes in each Element." (1)

Though God is present unseen in Nature, He is ultimately above it; the immanence and transcendence are two inseparable aspects of the Deity.

H. Vaughan recognises that God's Hand is visible in His creation.

The beams of thy bright Chambers thou dost lay
In the deep waters, who no eye can find;
The clouds thy chariots are, and thy path-way
The wings of the swift wind." (2)

He is searching God in Heaven as on Earth; he quotes the significant lines of Psalm 73. ver. 25.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire besides thee." ³⁾

In the freshness of childhood the "gilded Cloud" and flower were to him "Bright Shootes of ever lastingnesse." ⁵⁾ He maintaind that Nature though speechless is not dumb.

"And stones, though speechless, are not dumb." (6)

And he believed that herb and flower are "shadows of his wisdome, and his Pow'r." ⁴⁾ He says that Nature receives the quickening of its life from God;

"Darkness, and day light, life and death
Are but meer leaves turn'd by thy breath." (7)

Nature depends for its life on God as does the soul of man.

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1. Martin II, 461.
 2. Martin II, P. 494.
 3. Martin II, P. 505.
 4. Martin II, 438.
 5. Martin II, P. 419.
 6. Martin II, P. 531.
 7. Martin II, P. 457.

"Spirits without thee die
 And blackness sits
 On the divinest wits,
 As on the Sun Eclipses lie." (1)

He sees the hand of God working in Nature; but God is not in Nature,
 he is "far" above it.

"There's not a wind can star
 Or beam pass by,
 But strait I think (though far)
 Thy hand is nigh;" (2)

God drew the circle and he fills it, days and night to Henry Vaughan
 are the blinds through which he can have a glimpse of God.

"....who drew this circle even
 He fills it; Dayes and hours are Blinds." (3)

He knows that every thing that subsists and exists has its "Commission
 from Divinitie" ⁴⁾ and in "The Rainbow" he gives us a complete exposition
 of his conception of God as being immanent and transcendent at the same
 time. Addressing the rainbow he says:

"When I behold thee, though my light be dim,
 Distant and low, I can in thine see him,
 Who looks upon thee from his glorious throne
 And mindes the covenant 'twixt All and one" (5)

God looks from His throne on the pageant of Nature which He has created;
 He is all in Nature and one above it. Thomas Vaughan has also quoted
 a passage from Pseudo-Dionysius with approval which embodies a similar
 idea: "Nay also (sayeth the Areopagite) they declare him to be present
 in our minds, and in our souls, and in our bodies, and to be in Heaven
 equally with earth, and in himself at the same time; the same also they
 declare to be in the world, around the world, above the world, above the
 Heaven, the Superior Essence, Sun, Star, fire, water, Spirit, dew, cloud,
 the very stone, and rock, to be in all things which are, and himself to be
 nothing which they are." ⁶⁾

1. Martin II P. 457.
2. Martin II P. 420.
3. Martin II P. 425.
4. Martin II P. 482.
5. Martin II P. 510.
6. Anthroposophia Theomagica - P. 35.

God is in all things and still He is not identified with them, He is "nothing which they are."

Though Henry Vaughan recognised the presence of God in Nature and declared that His spirit "feeds". "All things with life,"¹⁾ he has a clear conception of God as transcendent. God is "above the morning-starre"²⁾ he wants to "climb unto thy God,"³⁾ and that Heaven to him is "a countrie far beyond the stare"⁴⁾ and he speaks of the "transcendent bliss"⁵⁾ of knowing God.

Thomas Vaughan also conceived God as sitting on His throne and streaming the world with His creative energy which he identified with Light. He imagines "the great world above all which God Himself is seated in that infinite, inaccessible Light which streames from his own nature."⁶⁾

Henry Vaughan also conceived God as Light and Heat filling the whole "frame" of the world.

"O thou immortal light and heat!
Whose hand so shines through all this frame,
That by the beauty of the seat
We plainly see who made the same." (7)

Vaughan conceived Nature as having life of its own; and being conscious of its life, Nature also prayed to God.

..... "There is not a spring
Or Leaf but hath his Morning-hymn; Each Bus
And Oak doth know I AM." (8)

Nature which did not share in the Fall to the same extent as the man did has a better memory of its "home". Man strays and roams;

1. Martin II P. 515.
2. Martin II P. 462.
3. Ibid II P. 408.
4. Ibid II P. 430.
5. Ibid II P. 539.
6. Anthroposophia Theomagica.
7. Martin II P. 488; for other poems where H. Vaughan speaks of God as Heat and Light see "I walk'd the other day", and "Love-Sick" see also T. Vaughan Coelum Terrae 1650. P. 218.
8. Martin II P. 436.

"Nay hath not so much wit as some stones have
which in the darkest night point to their homes." (1)

In "The Constellation" he asserts that the herbs which man treads
upon "know much, much more."²⁾ He believes that all Nature shared
in the "Law and ceremonies"³⁾ and "had equal right"³⁾ to be benefitted
with the appearance of "the Sun of righteousness," Christ. Nature,
like man, was expecting to be redeemed by the death of Christ.

Trees, flowers, & herbs; birds, beasts, & stones
That since man fell, expect with groans
To see the lamb, which all at once
Lift up your heads and leave your moans." (4)

He says that death of Christ was man's life and Nature's "full liberty."⁴⁾

H. Vaughan has thus clearly recognised the same "divine spark" in
Nature: which he finds in the human soul

"And so the flowre
Might have some other bowre." (5)

T. Vaughan also said "There is not an herb here below but he hath a star
in heaven above."⁶⁾

Henry Vaughan again declared:

"Dear Soul! thou knew'st, flowers here on earth
At their Lords foot-stool have their birth." (7)

He holds that the herbs even know the Providence of God and "praise thy
bounteousness"⁸⁾; the hills and valleys also sing the praises of their
Creator, for they were taught their lesson "when first made,"⁹⁾

"So hills and valleys into singing break,
And though poor stones have neither speech nor tongue,
While active winds and streams both run and speak,
Yet stones are deep in admiration." (9)

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1. Martin II P. 477.
 2. Martin II P. 409.
 3. Martin II P. 451.
 4. Martin II P. 501.
 5. Martin II P. 478.
 6. The works of T. Vaughan. P 299.
 7. Martin II P. 508.
 8. Martin II P. 506.
 9. Martin II P. 497.

To H. Vaughan the presence of the "divine spark" in Nature was still working in Nature.

"It seems their candle, howe'er done,
Was tinn'd, and lighted at the sun." (1)

The divine image in his own heart gives him hope that God would dwell in him.

"Seeing thy seed abides in me,
Dwell thou in it, and I in thee." (2)

T. Vaughan also advanced a similar theory of creation in Anima Magica Abscondita; speaking of the soul he says "she is guided in her operations by a spiritual, metaphysical grain, or seed or glance of light, simple and without any mixture, descending from the first Father of Lights. For though His full-eyed love shines on nothing but man, yet everything in the world is in some measure directed for his preservation by a spice or touch of the First Intellect." ²⁾ Henry Vaughan also declared.

"This veyle thy full-ey'd love denies,
And only gleams and fractions spies." (4)

Henry Vaughan's enjoyment of the beauties of Nature was to a certain extent determined by the mystic's vision of the universe as a Shadow of God. To him the green trees, mountain and living streams were the "boundless Empyrean themes" of God's glory. His landscape is typically Welsh; the grandeur, the sublimity of vast spaces and high mountains are not his. The celtic spirit in him flowered with all its pensiveness and the vision of far-off things. He met "surprise in each element" ⁵⁾ and he discerned God and heaven in the pageant of Earth and sky.

"All things I see,
And in the heart of Earth, and night
Find Heaven, and thee." (6)

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1. Martin II P. 488.
 2. Martin II P. 488.
 3. Anima Magica Abscondita P. 81.
 4. Martin II P. 489.
 5. Martin II P. 461.
 6. Martin II P. 426.

As a Nature-poet, he is partial to dawn and night. Mornings are "Mysteries"¹⁾ to him; it is in the hour of dawn that he waits with the hush and wonder of the great lover, the "Bridegroome's coming!"²⁾

"Unlock thy bowres?
And with their blush of light descry
Thy locks crown'd with eternity." (2)

It is in the morning that the whole world "Awakes, and sings"³⁾ and the poet-mystic seems to hear "The great chime And symphony of nature."³⁾ Prayer to him is "The world in tune",³⁾ and in this prayer the spirit of man and the spirit of Nature both take a solemn and joyous part.

The Purified Vision.

Vaughan held that to discern the spirit of God working and realising itself in Nature, man must first purify his inner self.

"What sublime truths, and wholesome themes,
Lodge in thy mystical, deep streams!"
Such as dull man can never finde
Unless that spirit lead his minde,
Which first upon thy face did move,
And hatch'd all with his quickning love." (4)

The spirit that moved on the face of Nature must also move in the soul of man before he could understand the mystery of creation. Vaughan conceived that herbs and trees, birds and man, each had a "divine spark"

"For each inclosed spirit is a star
Inlightning his own little sphere," (5)

The light has been "borrowed from far,"⁵⁾ but it is the same light which is in the soul of man and in heart of Nature. The bond of union between the visible and the invisible world is God's love which Henry Vaughan calls the Magnet:

"Sure, holyness the Magnet is,
And Love the Lure." (6)

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1. Martin II P. 436.
 2. Martin II P. 451, 452.
 3. Martin II P. 424.
 4. Martin II P. 538.
 5. Martin II P. 497.
 6. Martin II P. 539.

T. Vaughan also speaks of "The infallible Magnet, the Mystery of union" by which he conceives that "all things may be attracted, whether Physicall or metaphysicall, be the distance never so great,"¹⁾ and he defines this Magnet as Love, "For this "Love " is the medium which unites the Lover to that which is beloved."²⁾

The Mystical Approach to God.

Henry Vaughan recognised that the means to apprehend God were holiness and love; and though in the glories of Nature the purified vision of the mystic may behold the spirit of God working, this spirit could not be identified with God Himself.

"If the sun rise on rocks, is't right,
To call it their inherent light?" (3)

The way leading to God was the narrow and the arduous way which the mystics have ever travelled throughout the ages; repentance, purgation, Illumination are the stages which ultimately lead to the Union of the soul with God. Repentance to him is:

"The little gate
And narrow way, by which to thee,
The passage is." (4)

Though Vaughan had the poet-mystics' faculty of seeing the Angels ascending and descending in Nature, he, like the orthodox Christian mystic, knew that the path leading to God was "a narrow, private way,"⁵⁾ the way of Christ's humility, poverty and repentance.

The mystic may discern a glimpse of God in the glories of His creation, but the "full-eyed" vision of God could only be attained through purification and the mystical birth of Christ in the human soul. Through these veils

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1. Anthroposophia Theomagica P. 20.
 2. Ibid P. 12.
 3. Martin II P. 395.
 4. Martin II P. 448, also see pages 498 and 521.
 5. Martin II P. 498.

of appearance, Vaughan's "Eclips'd Eye" ¹⁾ could not behold the Ultimate Reality, God, and so he declares that he was ready to be dissolved and be nothing in order to stand face to face with God.

"I'lle disapparell, and to buy
But one half glance, most gladly dye". (1)

Thomas Vaughan also held that it was only through the dissolution of the body that we could see God; speaking of the divine origin of the soul, he says "Thus her descent speaks her original But the frailty of the matter excluding eternity, the composure was subject to dissolution." ²⁾ In Lumen de Lumine, he says that it is after the dissolution of the body that "we shall know the Hidden Intelligence and see that Inexpressible Face which gives the outward figure to the body." ³⁾ It is, he says, through the love of God that man would enter into the bond of "Eternal Unity" with God and the soul shall find "the true Sabbath, the Rest of God into which the creature shall enter." ⁴⁾

It is thus evident that Henry Vaughan was influenced by the "doctrine of Signatures," the Hermetical conception of the world, and the relation of the invisible to the visible world as expounded by his twin brother T. Vaughan in his magical writings. The constant references in Henry Vaughan's poetry to Heat, Light, and Magnetism, and the subtle processes of life in Nature can only be understood by a study of the occult philosophy of his brother where they have a definite significance and value. It was perhaps from the occult Philosophers like C. Agrippa and Hermes Trismegistus that H. Vaughan learnt his conception of God as being immanent in Nature, and still transcending it, which is the keynote of his mystical as well as Nature poetry.

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1. Martin II P. 419.
 2. Anthroposophia Theomagica, P. 5.
 3. Lumen de Lumine P. 299.
 4. Ibid P. 302.

THOMAS TRAHERNE,
THE MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHER.

Thomas Traherne alone of all the mystical poets of the seventeenth century has tried to give us a systematic exposition of his mystical philosophy. The reality of his own mystical experience became for him the subject-matter of his Philosophical speculations, which gives breadth, richness and intensity to his poems and prose treatises alike. The abstract Philosophy tinged with the Neo-Platonism of his times was thus transformed into a beautiful personal religion. Traherne's claim to be regarded as a Divine Philosopher, a claim which he himself advanced in his preface to *Christian Ethicks*, and in *Centuries of Meditations*, has been largely ignored by his critics. Traherne says :

"I will open my mouth in Parables, I will utter things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Things strange, yet common, incredible yet known; most high, yet plain; infinitely profitable yet not esteemed.....The thing hath been from the creation of the World, but hath not been so explained as that the interior Beauty should be so understood. It is my design therefore in such a plain manner to unfold it that my friendship may appear in making you the possessor of the whole world."¹

That his quest was Philosophical in the higher sense of the word as the quest of Plotinus was in which personal experience is woven into the fabric of an organic system of Philosophy is evident from a close perusal of his Fourth century (*Centuries of Meditation*). The important fact in the study of the religious mysticism of Thomas Traherne is that he apprehended the truth of Christianity philosophically. He thinks that the Perfect Man is a Divine Philosopher; he says

1. Preface to *Christian Ethicks*.

"But he that is Perfect is a Divine Philosopher, and the most glorious creature in the whole world. Is not a Philosopher a lover of Wisdom?"¹. and he further argues that as a Christian is a perfect man he must necessarily be a Philosopher:

"That is the signification of the very word, and sure it is the essence of a Christian, or very near to it, to be a lover of wisdom....Every man therefore according to his degree, so far forth as he is a Christian, is a Philosopher."¹.

The mystic always gives us his actual experience, actual knowledge; and hence mystical doctrines in their turn are never merely speculative, even if they involve speculation. In its essence mysticism is experimental.

Prof. Rufus Jones has pointed out that mysticism is "religion in its most acute, intense and living stage."².

Traherne has synthesised his mystical experience with his philosophy, they illustrate each other; a philosophy divorced from personal experience has no meaning for him. He says:

"Philosophers are not only those that contemplate happiness, but practise virtue. He is a philosopher that subdues his vices, lives by reason, orders his desires, rules his passions, and submits not to his senses, nor is guided by the customs of this world."³

In short he is a man who has proposed to himself "a superior end - than is commonly discerned,"³. such a man was Thomas Traherne.

We shall study him primarily as a mystical philosopher.

Underhill says that mysticism "is an art of establishing man's conscious relation with the Absolute" and that it is an "organic

1. Centuries of Meditation, Edited by B. Dobell, 1908, page 241.
2. Studies in Mystical Religion, p. 15.
3. Centuries of Meditations, page 244.

process which involves the perfect consummation of the love of God!"¹. Traherne fulfils these conditions in a high degree; in his unique personality the active and the contemplative sides of mysticism were exquisitely harmonised, and he gave a supreme expression to the glory of "the perfect consummation of the love of God", which he declared was the end of all true Felicity. He says:

"For besides contemplative, there is an active happiness, which consisteth in blessed operations. And as some things fit a man for contemplation, so there are others fitting him for action: which as they are infinitely necessary to practical happiness, so are they likewise infinitely conducive to contemplative itself."²

His philosophy is instinct and alive with his own personal experience; his personality is the proof of his mystical philosophy. Behind the achieved simplicity of Traherne's poetry and prose, we discover a mind highly trained and original enough to steer its way safely through the perilous by-paths of the theological controversies of his times. He was (as Roman Forgeries and Christian Ethics show) a great scholar, an authority on ecclesiastical history; but his learning as we find in "Centuries of Meditations" was well assimilated. Though as he himself tells us he rediscovered "the grandeur and glory of Religion", his debt to Plato is obvious. He was deeply read in the writings of Plotinus and the Neo-Platonic Philosophers from Hermes Trismegistus to Mirandola. His Christianity is essentially Platonic - the Christianity of the Gospel of St. John and Pauline epistles, of St. Paul the mystic, who was "caught up" into the third Heaven; but he is not a Neo-platonic mystic

1. Mysticism, E. Underhill, page 96.

2. Centuries of Meditations, page 238.

like Plotinus; his conception of God as the "God of Love" is essentially Christian and it differs from that of Plotinus who conceived God as the "Pure One".

"According to Plotinus" says Dr Bigg "God is goodness without love. Man may love God, but God cannot love man."¹. The central idea of Christianity, the Incarnation, has no place in the speculative system of Plotinus, while to Traherne it is the Supreme Act of Love. Traherne's debt to Plato and Plotinus does not lie in the ideas which he modifies or adopts in his own Philosophy, but in the support their Philosophy gave to his own religious experience, that reason and religion do not contradict each other, and that the religious life is the only reasonable life. As a Platonist and as an advocate of Reason in the realm of "Divine Philosophy", Traherne takes his place in the group of the Cambridge Platonists. In his sweet reasonableness, in his conception of reason and faith, the value and power of religion, he comes nearer to the group of the Cambridge divines than to the school of Donne. We must remember that Sir Orlando Bridgeman was a Cambridge man, and his Chaplain before Traherne was Hezekiah, one of the group and the friend of More. Burton and Traherne were both present when their patron drew his will and it is quite probable that they had met several times before this; Traherne thus also established personal contacts with the members of this group.²

Traherne came rather late in the history of seventeenth century mysticism. Donne lived from 1573-1631, Herbert 1593-1633, Vaughan 1621-1695; the Cambridge Platonists were writing their philosophical and theological treatises about the middle of the 17th

1. Bigg: Neo-Platonism.

2. Also see T. Traherne of the Cambridge Platonists by T.O. Beachcroft, The Dublin Review, Vol. 186.

century. Traherne was born about 1636 and died in 1674. If we divide the mystics of the seventeenth century into two main groups, the religious poets of the School of Donne, and the mystical Philosophers of the Cambridge group, Traherne has closer affinities with the latter than with the former group, though in the main he reflects the general spirit of the movement rather than any particular side of it.

The themes of his mystical poetry and prose are the themes of "Divine Philosophy", as he himself says of St. Paul:

"But there is also a Divine Philosophy of which no books in the world are more full than his own. That we are naturally the Sons of God (I speak of primitive and upright nature) that the Son of God is the first beginning of every creature, that we are to be changed from glory to glory, into the same Image, that we are spiritual Kings, that Christ is the express Image of His Father's Person, that by Him all things are made whether they are visible or invisible, is the highest Philosophy in the world; and so is it also to treat, as he does, of the nature of virtues and Divine Laws."¹

This may be taken as Traherne's comprehensive description of the themes of Divine Philosophy which are also the themes of his poetry and prose alike.

Before attempting to analyse the themes of his mystical Philosophy, we shall discuss his conception of childhood, and its relation (a) to his own personal experience as a child and (b) the influence of this experience on his mysticism, for his mysticism, though highly Philosophical, had its seeds in the intuitions of childhood.

1. Centuries of Meditations, pp. 239,240.

Traherne's Conception of Childhood.

Traherne, like Vaughan, recognised and felt the innocence and Sanctity of childhood and believed in the capacity of the child to apprehend the higher truths of religion through intuition.

"He in our childhood with us walks

And with our Thoughts mysteriously He talks."¹

Both of the poets felt themselves in communion with God in the innocence of their childhood and they looked back to it as a time of "Angell Infancy".

Vaughan asked: "Since all that age doth teach is ill

Why should I not love childhood still?"

and in a similar vein Traherne declared:

"And as I backward look again,

See all His Thoughts and mine most clear and plain.

He did Approach, He me did woo;

I wonder that my God this thing could do."¹

But here the resemblance ends. Vaughan says,

"I can not reach it; and my striving eye

Dazzles at it, as at eternity."²

Traherne could not write of childhood as a period which man could not live again; he believes in the recovery of the vanished light. To him Christ's injunction that "He must be born again and become a little child that will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"³ is of vital significance. He says that the blest state of childhood is to be achieved through our conscious effort.

"It is not only in a careless reliance upon Divine Providence,

1. The Approach, Dobell, p. 31.

2. Martin, page 520.

3. Centuries of Meditations, page 161.

that we are to become little children, or in the feebleness and shortness of our anger and simplicity of our passions, but in the peace and purity of all our soul, which purity also is a deeper thing than is commonly apprehended

And therefore it is requisite that we should be as very strangers to the thoughts, customs, and opinions of men in this world, as if we were but little children, those things would appear to us only which do so to children when they are first born.

and only those things appear, which did to Adam in Paradise, in the same light and in the same colours: God in His Works, Glory in the light, Love in our parents, men, ourselves and the face of Heaven: Every man naturally seeing those things, to the enjoyment of which he is naturally born."¹.

Man was to regain the child's quality of mind of seeing things naturally to the enjoyment of which he is "naturally born", and thus recovering the freshness and wonder of child's first impressions of the world. Traherne himself seems to have achieved it:

"For till His works my wealth became,

No Love, or Peace did he enflame:

But now I have a DEITY."².

Traherne's idealisation of childhood is based on the innocence and glory of his own childhood, the memory of which lingered in his mind throughout his life and largely determined the nature of his doctrine of Felicity. In his "native health and innocence of childhood", he saw all the world in Divine Light.

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 161.

2. "Poverty". The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne, edited by G.I. Wade, page 128.

"I felt a vigour in my sense
 That was all spirit. I within did flow
 With seas of life, like wine;
 I nothing in the world did know
 But 'twas divine."¹

He has given a connected and vivid account of his own childhood in the third century of his meditations where he tells us of his early obstinate questionings about the nature of the world and God, but his main conception of childhood is based on three important facts. (1) "Estate of Innocence" unaffected by the doctrine of original sin. (2) The glory, the freshness, the enjoyment, and the possession of the world in childhood. (3) The "Pure and virgin apprehensions" of childhood about Reality.

He had no consciousness of sin in his childhood: "I knew not" he wrote "that there were any sins, or complaints or laws. I dreamed not of poverties, contentions or vices. All tears and quarrels were hidden from mine eyes."² He says:

"nor did I dream of such a thing
 As sin, in which mankind lay dead."³

He believes the child to be free from the taint of original sin:

"And that our misery proceedeth ten thousand times more from the outward bondage of opinion and custom, than from any inward corruption or depravation of Nature: And that it is not our parents' loins so much as our parents lives, that enthrall and blinds us."⁴ He lived in his childhood as if in the state of grace before the Fall.

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1. Wonder, Dobell, page 5.
 2. Centuries of Meditations III, 2.
 3. Eden, Dobell, page 8.
 4. Centuries of Meditations III, 8, page 164.

"Only what Adam in his first estate,
 Did I behold;
; my blessed fate
 Was more acquainted with the old
 And innocent delights which he did see
 In his original simplicity."¹

While his soul in childhood was "A fort, Impregnable to any sin"²; he possessed the pure and virgin apprehensions about the nature of the world, its glory and richness as a gift from God to man.

"And every stone, and every star a Tongue,
 And every Gale of Wind a curious song.
 The Heavens were an oracle, and spake
 Divinity: The Earth did undertake
 The office of a Priest;"³

His Light in childhood was free from all "Contagion"⁴ and he saw things "Ev'n like unto the Deity".⁴ This way of apprehending Reality was based on the "Sacred Instinct".⁵ which inspired his soul in childhood. He beheld that "the corn was orient and immortal wheat" which stood from "everlasting to everlasting"⁶ and that "All Time was Eternity and a perpetual Sabbath"⁶.

Though Traherne has given us the "sublime and celestial greatness" of childhood, he has not explained its mystery. The reason, perhaps, is that he does not believe in the pre-existence of the soul, he has not expressed any definite opinion on it as we find in Vaughan or Wordsworth.

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1. Dobell, page 9.
 2. Ibid. page 35.
 3. Dobell, page 35.
 4. Poetical Works of T. Traherne, edited by G.I. Wade, 1932, page 104.
 5. Ibid, page 113.
 6. Centuries of Meditations, page 157.

"The soul that rises with us, our life's star
 Hath had elsewhere its setting
 And cometh from afar."¹.

He has given us the wonder and mystery of childhood but he does not offer any explanations. He has accepted the Bible story of Adam and Eve literally and he believes that God created the first Man in His Image out of Nothing.

"From dust I rise,
 And out of nothing awake!"².

or

I that so long
 Was nothing from Eternity,².

The miracle of birth remains a supreme mystery to him:

How like an Angel came I down!
 How bright are all things here!³.

He is at a loss to account for his early innocence:

"Whether it be that Nature is so pure,
 And custom only vicious; or that sure
 God by Miracle the guilt remove,
 And made my soul to feel His love
 So early."⁴.

Traherne's speculations about God and His relation to the World were nevertheless influenced by his capacity in childhood to enjoy the beauty and magnificence of the world and esteem it as his own.

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1. Wordsworth's Ode on Immortality.
 2. Dobell, page 2, 1;
 3. Dobell, page 4.
 4. Ibid, p. 13.

"A stranger here

Strange things doth meet, strange glory see;

Strange Treasures lodg'd in this fair world appear,

Strange all ~~and~~ new to me;

But that they mine should be who Nothing was,

That strangest is of all, yet brought to pass."¹.

Traherne soon lost this capacity of enjoying and possessing the world, and he ascribes it to the corrupt customs and manners of men who try to impose false values of things on the mind of the child: He says:

"The first Light which shined in my Infancy in its primitive and innocent clarity was totally eclipsed: in so much that I was fain to learn all again. If you ask me how it was eclipsed? Truly by the customs and manners of men, which like contrary winds blew it out and at last all the celestial, great, and stable treasures to which I was born, as wholly forgotten, as if they had never been."².

The story of his progress in Felicity is then briefly told in the third century; having been "swallowed up therefore in the miserable gulf of idle talk and worthless vanities" of the world, he did not find any longer the "bliss which Nature whispered and suggested to me", until he entered the university and a whole world of new and fascinating ideas was made available to him; he says: "Having been at the university, and received there the taste and tincture of another education, I saw that there were things in this

1. Dobell, page 3.

2. Centuries of Meditations, pages 162, 163.

3. Ibid. page 168.

4. Ibid. page 174.

world of which I never dreamed; glorious secrets, and glorious persons past imagination. There I saw that Logic, Ethics, Physics, Metaphysics, Geometry, Astronomy, Poesy, Medicine, Grammar, Music, Rhetoric all kinds of Arts, Trades, and Mechanisms that adorned the world pertained to felicity. . . . there were received all those seeds of knowledge that were afterwards improved; and our souls were awakened to a discerning of their faculties, and exercise of their powers."¹.

Though his eager curiosity for knowledge was satisfied at the university, he did not learn there how to achieve felicity. He says "There was never a tutor that did professly teach Felicity",² and the means to achieve felicity were revealed to him in the Bible. Traherne's debt to the Bible is not confined to its imagery on diction, he himself confesses that the reading of the Bible was a central fact in his life, it confirmed his belief in the goodness of God and the beauty and wonder of the world he had known in childhood. He says :

"And by that book I found that there was an eternal God, who loved me infinitely, that I was His son, that I was to overcome death and to live forever, that He created the world for me, that I was to reign in His throne and to inherit all things. Who would have believed this had not that Book told me? It told me also that I was to live in communion with Him, in the image of His life and glory, that I was to enjoy all His treasures and pleasures, in a more perfect manner than I could devise, and that all the truly amiable and glorious persons in the world to be my friends and companions."³.

Here is in a nutshell the essence of the mystical philosophy of

1. Centuries of Meditations, pages, 186, 187.

2. Ibid, page 187.

3. Centuries of Meditations, pages 181, 182.

Traherne which he learnt from the Bible. But the real conversion of Thomas Traherne to a new way of life occurred when he returned to the country after finishing his university career and "being seated among silent trees, and meads and hills, had all my time in my own hands" and resolved "to live upon ten pounds a year" and devote himself to the study of Felicity and realise the truth of religion in his own life. He says: "For it is impossible for language, miracles, or apparitions to teach us the infallibility of God's word, or to shew us the certainty of true religion, without a clear sight to truth itself, that is unto the truth of things."¹. His means of achieving Felicity and thus knowing "the truth of things" was a return to the simplicity of the childhood with its naive trust in God, its capacity of enjoying and thus possessing the world:

"So that with much ado I was corrupted, and made to learn the dirty devices of this world which now I unlearn, and become, as it were, a little child again that I may enter into the Kingdom of God."². Elsewhere he declared "I knew by intuition those things which since my Apostasy, I collected again by the highest reason."³.

His main ideas embodied in his mystical philosophy can be conveniently studied under the following three headings:

- (1) Traherne's Conception of God and His Relation to the World.
- (2) Traherne's Conception of the Soul and its way of apprehending Reality.

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 194.
 2. Ibid, page 158.
 3. Ibid, page 157.

- (3) The nature of the Union of the Soul with God and the manner in which it is achieved.

Under the last heading we shall also be able to discuss the quality of Traherne's own mystical experience apart from his Philosophical speculation about the nature of the Soul's communion with God and thus answer the question which is inevitable in the case of every mystic - did he enjoy a direct vision of God in Illuminative and unitive stages of the Mystic Way?

(II)

Traherne's Conception of God.

Traherne's conception of God in many respects is that of the New Testament, he has come nearer to the Johnian conception of the Deity than any of the Metaphysical religious poets. To him God is Love - "God is Love, and my Soul is Lovely!"¹ - and he holds that "He is not an object of Terror but Delight".

Traherne points out the futility of knowing God through a negative way, by discovering what He is not. Many mediaeval mystics following Dionysius, the Areopagite, who held that "There is no contact with the Deity, nor has it any communion with the thing participating in it"² had declared that no symbol was sublime enough to express God and that the mind should be deliberately stripped of every earthly likeness or analogy of His being; (these mystics were on the opposite pole of thought to the Pantheistic mystics who tried to discover the One in Many). St. Augustine declared "we must not even call God ineffable since this is to make an assertion

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 49.

2. See "Eternal Life" by Von Hügel, page 97.

about Him. He is above every name that can be named."¹.

The self thus emptied would attain to an abstraction which the mystics called the Desert of Godhead or "the Divine Darkness" of the soul. Traherne holds that in order to apprehend the true nature of Felicity we must not try to discover God in negatives. He says:

"Nevertheless great offence hath been done by the philosophers and scandal given, through their blindness, many of them, in making Felicity to consist in negatives. They tell us it doth not consist in riches, it doth not consist in honors, it doth not consist in pleasures. Wherein then, saith a miserable man doth it consist?"².

He says that the world is a means of beautifying the soul, which without it would be empty and deformed.

"Your soul, being naturally very dark, and deformed and empty when extended through infinite but empty space, the world serves you in beautifying and filling it with amiable ideas; for the perfecting of its stature in the eyes of God."³.

Traherne saw God in all that was good and beautiful, and he wrote, almost as Plato had done, that "To know Him therefore as He is is to frame the most beautiful idea in all worlds."⁴. He declared "To know God is to know Goodness. It is to see the beauty of infinite Love: To see it attend with Almighty Power and Eternal Wisdom; and using both those in the magnifying of its object."⁵.

1. De Trin VII, 4, 7.

2. Centuries of Meditations, pages 153, 154.

3. Ibid, p. 139.

4. Ibid, p. 12.

5. Ibid, pages 11, 12.

To know God as Goodness, Beauty and Love is "to see the King of Heaven and Earth take infinite delight in Giving".¹ Traherne thinks that this is the only way of knowing God: "Whatever knowledge else you have of God, it is but Superstition."¹

The infinite Goodness and Beauty of God is made accessible to man; this is the glory of His gift: He says:

"He delighteth in our happiness more than we: and is of all other the most Lovely object. An infinite Lord, who having all Riches, Honors, and Pleasures in His own hand, is infinitely willing to give them unto me. Which is the fairest idea that can be devised."² This Goodness and Beauty of God are not abstract attributes, they are transformed into what Traherne calls an Act.

"His Essence is all Act; He did that He
All Act might always be."³

It is the attribute of His nature to be possessed and enjoyed by all.

"His nature burns like fire;
His goodness infinitely does desire
To be by all possesst,"³

The glory which Traherne admires in His attributes is that they are communicated to Man.

"He is an Act that doth communicate."³

The Beauty of God is in conformity to Law and can be discerned by Reason. He says:

"It is an Idea connatural to the Notion of God, to conceive Him Wise and Good, and if we can not see some Reason in his ways, we

1. Centuries of Meditations pages 11, 12.

2. Ibid, P. 12.

3. Dobell, page 85 - The Anticipation.

are apt to suspect there is no Deity, or if there be, that he is Malevolent and Tyrannical, which is worse than none. For all Wisdom and Goodness are contained in Love."¹.

Though Love, Beauty and Joy "adorn the God-head's dwelling place,"² it is a Beauty which is well-ordered.

"Order the beauty even of beauty is,

It is the rule of bliss,

The very life and form and cause of Pleasure;"².

Love, Beauty, Joy and Order are to Traherne the different aspects of the Deity.

In Christian Ethicks,³ Traherne has shown how far the Deity is limited by this law of "Order in Beauty."

He holds that the Power of God could not exist without Wisdom, and in God there is no separation between these attributes; it is why nothing is possible to God which is not infinitely excellent, for in Him Power, Wisdom, and Will are identical. The Wisdom of God is revealed in ordering and regulating His creation. To moderate God's Power "is to limit or extend it as Reason requires.

Reason requires that it should be so limited as most tends to the perfection of the universe."⁴ God is thus "The Law-giver of Heaven and Earth,"⁵ and in ordering, regulating His Power, He has revealed His infinite Wisdom and Love.

"His Wisdom did His Power here repress",⁶.

and thus created a perfect pattern of Wisdom; thus God's Power

1. Christian Ethicks, p. 49.

2. The Vision, Dobell, page 20.

3. Chapter XIII. "Of Temperance in God".

4. Christian Ethicks, Chapter XIII, page 341.

5. Centuries of Meditations, page 52.

6. Dobell, page 120.

is limited only so far as He is incapable of doing anything imperfectly. The greatest attribute of God is thus His unity.

"God is not a Being compounded of body and soul, or substance and accident, or power and act, but is all act, pure act, a simple Being whose essence is to be, whose Being is to be perfect so that He is most perfect towards all and in all. He is most perfect for all and by all. He is in nothing imperfect, because His Being is to be perfect. It is impossible for Him to be God and imperfect:"¹. As God is Perfect therefore He is Pure Act, or as Traherne says "all act."

"All His Power being turned into Act, it is all exerted; infinitely and whollyWere there any power in God unemployed He would be compounded of Power and Act. Being therefore God is all Act, He is a God in this, that Himself is Power exerted. An infinite Act because infinite Power infinitely exerted. An Eternal Act because infinite power eternally exerted."².

Traherne declares that Knowledge and Wisdom are the attributes of God as "Eternal Act." He says:

"He is one infinite Act of KNOWLEDGE and WISDOM, which is infinitely beautified with many consequences of Love."³.

What is the nature of this Power of God, limited by Wisdom, enriched by Knowledge, and made glorious by Love? Traherne has defined it as Love.

He calls God "Pure Love"; it is in love that the unity of His Being is expressed: "God is not a mixt compound Being, so that His Love is one thing, and Himself another: but the most pure and

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 208.

2. Ibid, page 208.

3. Ibid, page 139.

simple of all Beings, all Act, and pure Love in the abstract."¹.
 To Traherne God's Love is "the Fountain" of "Heaven and Earth;"².
 and it is also

"Abridgement of Delights!

And Queen of sights."³.

In "Anticipation" he has given a metaphysical conception of the nature of God as an Act of Bliss:

"From all to all Eternity He is

That Act: an Act of bliss:

Wherein all bliss to all

That will receive the same, or on Him call,

Is freely given: from whence

'Tis easy even to sense

To apprehend that all Receives are

In Him, all gifts, all joys, all eyes, even all

At once, that ever will or shall appear."⁴.

God and the World.

God's Power was thus infinitely exerted towards a definite end, that being Infinite Love. It is in the nature of Love to manifest itself; "For it seems all love is so mysterious that there is something in it which needs expression and can never be understood by any manifestation (of itself in itself) but only by mighty doings and sufferings."⁵. God's Love could not be complete until "it has poured out itself in all its communications."⁵. This idea is the

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 109.

2. Dobell, Another, page 93.

3. Ibid, page 94.

4. Dobell, The Anticipation, page 92.

5. Centuries of Meditations, page 284.

keystone of Traherne's conception of the relation of God to the world.

"In all His works, in all His ways,
We must His glory see and praise;
And since our pleasure is the end,
We must His Goodness, and His Love attend."¹.

The creation of the world and its relation to God, according to Traherne, could only be understood by recognising the end of creation, which is to please the object of God's Love, Man. God, as he says, in "The Circulation", is,

". . . the primitive eternal spring
The endless ocean of each glorious thing."².

and the human soul is spacious enough to contain this Infinite Love of God.

"The Soul a vessel is,
A spacious bosom, to contain
All the fair treasures of His bliss,
Which run like Rivers, from into the main,
And all it doth receive returns again."³.

Thus he pictures the created universe as a vast "circulation" of God's Love, all things ultimately returning to Him. Traherne significantly remarks :

"Socrates, perhaps, being an heathen, knew not that all things proceeded from God to man, and by man returned to God; but we that know it must need all things as God doth, that we may receive them and live in His image,"⁴.

1. The Recovery - Dobell, page 88.
2. The Circulation, Dobell, page 73.
3. The Circulation, Dobell, page 79.
4. Centuries of Meditations, page 28.

God created Heaven and Earth so that man may recognise Him in the symbolism of His creation: "We needed Heaven and Earth, our senses, such souls, such bodies with infinite riches in the Image of God to be enjoyed."¹.

We must understand two implications of creation, it was necessary for the Perfection of God's Love, and it was equally necessary for the union of God and Man. In the work of His creation God desired to please Man as well as Himself:

"Infinite Goodness loves to abound, and to overflow infinitely with infinite treasures. Love loves to do somewhat for its object more than to create it. It is always more stately being surrounded with power, and more delighted being inaccessible in a multitude of treasures, and more honourable in the midst of admirers; and more glorious when it reigneth over many attendants. Love therefore hath prepared all these for itself and its object."².

The world was created so that it may serve as a means of communication between God, and Man, the Lover and the Beloved; thus the supreme attribute of God as Love is that He is knowable, and does communicate Himself. "It is absolutely impossible" he declares "that any power dwelling with Love should continue idle. Since God therefore was infinitely and eternally communicative, all things were contained in Him from all eternity."³.

The things when created therefore bore an impress of His Divinity, Wisdom, Power and Love. To Traherne thus God is the "object" of Felicity, the "manner" of our enjoyment of God is through the enjoyment and possession of the world, and the human soul is the means

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 28.

2. Ibid, page 50.

3. Ibid, page 209.

by which the man is to enjoy God - he says: "All which you have here, God, the World, yourself."¹.

In the 2nd century, he has explained God's "manner of revealing Himself"² in the world. He defends God's being invisible for "whatsoever is visible is a body; whatsoever is a body excludeth other things out of the place where itself is. If God therefore being infinite were visible He would make it impossible for anything to have a being."² Moreover he could not assume any body for it would have been incapable of expressing His attributes. He points out that "the world is that Body, which the Deity hath assumed to manifest His Beauty and by which He maketh Himself as visible, as it is possible He should."³.

He argues that it is only in the "manifold and delightful mixture of figures and colours" of this world that God's Beauty and Wisdom could be revealed.

"Ancient Philosophers have thought God to be the Soul of the World. Since therefore this visible world is the body of God, not His natural body, but which He hath assumed; let us see how glorious His Wisdom is in manifesting Himself thereby. It hath not only represented His infinity and eternity which we thought impossible to be represented by a body, but His beauty also, His wisdom, goodness, power, life, and glory, His righteousness, love, and blessedness: all which as out of a plentiful treasury, may be taken and collected out of this world."⁴.

It is difficult to assign any definite source for these Neo-platonic ideas of God and His relation to the world; perhaps one of the

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 155.

2. Ibid, pages 90, 91.

3. Ibid, page 92.

4. Ibid, page 93.

"ancient philosophers" he has in mind is Plotinus in whose sixth Ennead we meet such strikingly similar thoughts as these: "God is not external to anyone, but is present in all things, though they are ignorant that he is so," and "God is not in a certain place, but wherever anything is able to come into contact with him there he is present."

This idea, however, underlies Traherne's conception of the world and its relation to God. The quality of God's creation was to Him a sufficient Proof of his Existence:

"The Author yet not known

But that there must be one was plainly shewn;

Which Fountain of Delights must needs be Lov

As all the Goodness of the Things did prov."¹.

To Traherne the world is "the Paradise of God";² it is the "glorious mirror"³ wherein "you shall see the face of God,"³ and thus "The brightness and magnificence of this world . . . is Divine and wonderful."⁴

The world is thus the material expression of the spiritual attributes of God, His Power, Wisdom, Glory and Love, and it provides man a way of establishing communion with God for "His omnipresence was wholly in every centre: and He could do no more than that would bear: communicate Himself wholly in every centre."⁵

1. Nature; H.I. Bell, page 73.

2. Centuries of Meditation, page 21.

3. Ibid, page 90.

4. Ibid, page 25.

5. Ibid, page 137.

The Way of Communion with God.

The way of communion with God was the enjoyment and possession of the world, this is the central idea of Traherne's Doctrine of Felicity; he says :

"He wanted the communication of His divine essence, and persons to enjoyit. He wanted worlds, He wanted spectators, He wanted joys, He wanted treasures,"¹ for as he points out "want is the fountain of all His fulness,"¹ and that "want in God is Treasure to us."¹ and thus "wants are the bands and cements between God and us."² Traherne maintains that unless man enjoys the world and esteems it as his own, the end of creation is not attained, and God is infinitely grieved.

"If we despise His glorious works,
Such sin and mischief in it lurks
That they are all made vain;
And this is even endless pain
To Him that sees it. Whose diviner grief
Is hereupon (Ah me!) without relief."³

He imagines God as the Bridegroom who has built this Palace of the world for His Bride, Man; and therefore nothing would displease Him more than the rejection of the world:

"As bridegrooms know full well that build
A Palace for their Bride. It will not yield
Any delight to him at all
If she for whom he made the hall
Refuse to dwell in it
Or plainly scorn the benefit."⁴

1. Centuries of Meditations, 29.

2. Ibid. page 34.

3. Dobell, The Recovery, page 88.

4. Ibid, pages 88, 89.

To God, man's enjoyment is more important than all the treasures which He has created.

"Her Act that's woo'd yields more delight and pleasure

If she receives, than all the pile of treasure."¹.

Traherne's theory of enjoyment of the world requires a fuller treatment which is not relevant to our purpose;² it can be summed up in one of his most striking utterances on this subject. He says "you shall be like Him, when you enjoy the world as He doth,"³ for by taking an infinite delight in His creation we shall be fulfilling the end for which He created the world.

"Our blessedness to see

Is even to the Deity

A Beatific Vision! He attains

His ends while we enjoy. In us He reigns."⁴.

Possession of The World.

Mere enjoyment is not sufficient, we must be conscious of possessing the world and then enjoying it as our own:

"your enjoyment of the world is never right, till you so esteem it, that everything in it, is more your treasure than a King's exchequer full of Gold and Silver."⁵.

The glory of possession truly reveals the magnificence of the world.

"Here I was seated to behold new things,

In the fair fabrick of the King of Kings.

All, all was mine."⁶.

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1. Dobell, The Recovery, pages 88, 89.
 2. For further references see the following pages of the Centuries of Meditations, 16, 18, 20, 39, 29-32, 54, 55, 90, 115.
 3. Centuries of Meditations, page 90.
 4. Dobell, page 87.
 5. Centuries of Meditations, page 18.
 6. Dobell, page 52.

But the world must be seen under a definite law; we must see things at their proper places so that we may see them as God intended us to see them. He says "The World is unknown. . . .till the Beauty and the serviceableness of its parts is considered."¹ In order to know the world we must conceive it as the manifestation of the divine law.

"Everything in its place is admirable, deep and glorious, out of its place like a wandering bird, is desolate and good for nothing."² The first step to attain Felicity was thus to recognise the truth that "All things were well in their proper places, I alone was out of frame and had need to be mended,"³

It is nothing but the establishment of the new spiritual relations with the world. The "outward things" he says "lay so well, me thought, they could not be mended: but I must be mended to enjoy them."³

Order, Beauty, Unity and Law are the qualities which the world shares in common with the attributes of God. The whole wisdom of God is revealed even in the minute parts of a grain of sand:

"You never enjoy the world aright, till you see how a sand exhibiteth the wisdom and power of God:"⁴

When we have realised this truth we shall understand how everything "conduceth in its place, by the best means to the best of ends:"⁵

Manner of Enjoying the World.

Traherne's conception of the manner of enjoying the world does not only consist in recognising the fact that "All things being infinite-

1. Centuries of Meditations, p. 12.

2. Ibid, III Century, no. 55, also see II,13,III,62, III,60, I,10.

3. Ibid, page 206.

4. Ibid, page 19.

5. Ibid, page 126.

infinitely beautiful in their places,"¹ he also holds that this manner is essentially spiritual. You cannot enjoy the world and behold the beauty of God's creation without the aid of your senses but this is an elementary stage of enjoyment. "By the very right of your senses you enjoy the World. Is not the beauty of the Hemisphere present to your eye? Doth not the glory of the sun pay tribute to your sight? Is not the vision of the World an amiable thing?"².

It is after you have beheld the glory of the world and its beauty has entered into your soul that the real enjoyment begins - "you never enjoy the world aright, till the Sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars."³.

Nature of Reality.

Having assimilated the glory and beauty of the world so that "your spirit filleth the whole world"⁴, you realise the great truth that Reality is not objective but subjective. He says:

"The services of things and their excellencies are spiritual: being objects not of the eye, but of the mind; and you are more spiritual by how much more you esteem them."⁵ He shows in his beautiful poem "Nature" how the soul spiritualises the material objects until life itself becomes,

"A Day of Glory where I all things see,
As't were enrich'd with Beams of Light for me,"⁶.

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 264.

2. Ibid, page 15. "My senses were informers to my Heart,
The conduits of His Glory, Power and Art."(Nature)

3. Ibid, page 20.

4. Ibid, page 20.

5. Ibid, page 19.

6. Dobell, page 51.

This is the mystic's way of apprehending Reality, he affirms the existence of Matter, but Matter without Mind is to him meaningless. In his poem "Praeparative" he says:

"'Tis not the object but the light
That maketh Heav'n: 'tis a ~~pure~~ sight.
Felicity
Appears to none but them that purely see."

Reality can thus be apprehended by what he calls the "Ministry of inward Light."¹

Mind is the only reality, and thoughts alone can transcend the narrow boundries of space and matter. In "Dreams" he says,

"Thought! Surely Thoughts are tru;
They pleas as much as Things can do:
Nay Things are dead,
And in themselves are severed
From souls; nor can they fill the Head
Without our thoughts. Thoughts are the Reall Things
From whence all joy, from whence all sorrow springs."²

He even sometimes seems to doubt the reality of Matter at all:

". . . . I could not tell
Whether the Things did there
Themselves appear,
Which in my spirit truly seem'd to dwell:
Or whether my conforming Mind
Were not ev'n all that therin shin'd."³

He affirms the superiority of "Thoughts" to "Things".

1. Dobell, The Circulation, page 72.
2. Dreams, G. I. Wade, pp. 193, 194.
3. "My Spirit", G. I. Wade, p. 162.

"Compar'd to them,

I Things as Shades esteem."¹.

Nature to him is subjective and not objective and this explains the unreality of his nature descriptions. He says:

"Things are indifferent; nor giv
Joy of themselves, nor griev."².

Even true Things when unknown have no reality for us, but Mind can transcend Matter and apprehend them through thoughts.

"Things tru affect not, while they are unknown:

But Thoughts most sensibly, tho quite alone."³.

Mind being the only Reality, the enjoyment of the world consists in ordering our thoughts so that they may present to the mind a true picture of the Thing.

". . . . what care ought I

(Since Thoughts apply

Things to my Mind) those Thoughts aright

To frame, and watch them day and night;

Suppressing such as will my Conscience stain,

• That Heav'nly Thoughts me Heav'nly Things may gain."⁴.

This conception of the relation of matter to mind elucidates many difficult passages in "Centuries of Meditations" where he affirms that the thought of the World is better than the world itself.

He says:

"What would Heaven and Earth be worth were there no spectator, no enjoyer? As much therefore as the end is better than the means,

1. The Review, Gladly I. Wade's Edition, 1932, page 207.

2. "The Inference", G. I. Wade's Edition, pages 194,195.

3. "The Inference"

4. "The Inference", G.I. Wade, page 195.

the thought of the world whereby it is enjoyed is better than the world. So is the idea of it in the Soul of Man, better than the World in the esteem of God: being the end of the World, without which Heaven and Earth would be in vain."¹.

The end of the world is that the man may enjoy it, and as it is enjoyed through thoughts, the image of the world within your Mind is more precious to God than the material world which He Himself has created. This is the startling result of Traherne's mystical speculation about the Nature of Reality. He says:

"The world within you is an offering returned which is infinitely more acceptable to God Almighty, since it came from Him, that it might return unto Him. Wherein the mystery is great. For God hath made you able to create Worlds in your own mind which are more precious unto Him than those which He created; and to give and offer up the world unto Him, which is very delightful in flowing from Him, but much more in returning to Him."².

The world before its actual creation had existed in the Mind of God, and its image can again exist in the Mind of Man, and in this way man comes nearer to God;

He says: "Besides all which in its own nature also a Thought of the World or the World in a Thought, is more excellent than the World, because it is spiritual and nearer unto God. The material world is dead and feeleth nothing, but this spiritual world, though it be invisible, hath all dimensions, and is divine and living, being the voluntary Act of an obedient soul."³.

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 143, 144.

2. Ibid, page 144.

3. Ibid, pages 144, 145.

The spiritual world within our mind is "nearer unto God", because all Things exist in His Mind; and in this way of apprehending Reality we come nearer to His Mind, the Source of all Creation.

"All Things appear

All things are

Alive in Thee! Super-Substantial, Rare,

Above themselves, and nigh of kin

To those pure Things we find

In His Great Mind

Who made the World!"¹.

This conception of Reality also explains the romance of Traherne's imagination through which he could be present in past ages or feel the glory of a new Kingdoms beyond the Seas.

He says "when the Bible was read, my spirit was present in other ages. I saw the light and splendour of them, the land of Canan, the Israelites entering into it, the ancient glory of the Amorites, their peace and riches I saw all and felt all in such a lively manner, as if there had been no other way to those places, but in spirit only."².

Whether the object has any real existence apart from the observer appeared to him beside the point.

He says: The sun would shine "in vain to you could you not think upon it".³ and declares "Dead things are in a room containing them in a vain manner; unless they are objectively in the Soul of a seer. The pleasure of an enjoyer is the very end why things placed are in any place. The place and the thing placed in it being both

1. "My spirit", this idea is again repeated in "Silence" and "Con-summation".
2. Centuries of Meditations, page 176.
3. Ibid, page 144.

in the understanding of a spectator of them."¹.

In order to understand the mystical significance of these ideas, we must bear in mind the fact that Traherne was occupied with the problem of how to attain the union with God and as we have already shown in the foregoing pages he thought this could be achieved by the exercise of three faculties in three distinct stages.

Three Stages of Knowing God.

To sum up what we have explained in detail, he believed that - (1) the world must first be observed, (2) and the manner in which it embodies the attributes of God must then be understood; (3) and finally man must develop the faculty of loving and possessing the world. The first implies the use of the senses in observing and realising the beauty of the world, the second of the intellect in understanding it, and the third of the soul in loving and esteeming it.

We have described in detail the first two stages of what Traherne calls "The Way of Felicity". The perception of the material beauty of the world by the aid of the senses is man's first step towards God. He declared "By the very right of your senses you enjoy the World."².

The next stage, as we have shown, concerns the intellect when you proceed from things to their thoughts.

"When I so in Thoughts did finish

What I had in Things begun;"³

This Spiritual apprehension of Reality he thought was better than the perception of the beauty of the material world through the

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 78.

2. Ibid, page 15.

3. The poetical work of T. Traherne, edited by G. I. Wade, page 206.

senses, for he believed that "the idea of Heaven and Earth in the Soul of Man, is more precious with God than the things themselves and more excellent in nature."¹ Traherne seems to have anticipated the Berkleyan hypothesis that the reality and permanence of the material world is due to its reality and permanence as a thought in the Mind of God. Traherne says:

"If He would but suspend His power, no doubt but Heaven and Earth would straight be abolished, which He upholds in Himself as easily and as continually as we do the idea of them in our own mind."² God "upholds" the world in His mind because it is "the Manifestation of Eternal Love";² and this Divine means of sustaining the world, Traherne argues, must be repeated in the mind of Man if he were to love God. "We likewise ought to show our infinite love by upholding Heaven and Earth, Time and Eternity, God and all things in our Souls, without wavering or intermission: by the perpetual influx of our life."²

This is the highest achievement of the mystic in the second stage when through his intellect he comprehends the world and recreates it in his mind, for "were you able to create other worlds, God had rather you should think on this. For thereby you are united to Him."³ The third state, when the Soul loves and prizes what the senses have observed and the intellect comprehended, involves the discussion of the nature of the soul, its relation to God, the effect of the Fall on Man and his redemption through Christ, and Traherne's conception of the nature of the soul's union with God.

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 143.

2. Ibid, page 142.

3. Ibid, page 144.

Soul and its relation to God.

Traherne's whole conception of the soul and its relation to God is based on the belief common to all mystics that Man was made in the Image of God, and it is the highest thing which God could create. He says: "It is no blasphemy to say that God can not make a God": and further adds that "Since there can not be two Gods the utmost endeavour of Almighty Power is the Image of God."¹

The Divine powers of man's soul depend on its being an Image of God. He says: "God from all Eternity was infinitely blessed and desired to make one infinitely blessed. He was infinite Love, and being lovely in being so, would prepare Himself a most lovely object. Having studied from all Eternity, He saw none more lovely than the Image of His Love, His own Similitude, O Dignity unmeasurable!"² The Soul in order to contain the infinite Love of God must be infinite in itself.

He says: "Infinite Love can not be expressed in finite room: but must have infinite places wherein to utter and shew itself,"³ for God is anxious for our Love as we are for His.

"He seeks for ours as we do for His
Nay, O my Soul, our is far more His bliss
Than His is ours; at least it so doth seem
Both in His own and our esteem."⁴

The infinite capacity to Love, and to know; and to possess are to Traherne the three supreme attributes of the Soul.

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1. Centuries of Meditations, page 206.
 2. Ibid, page 49.
 3. Ibid, page 136.
 4. Another, Dobell, page 91.

"Few will believe the soul to be infinite; yet Infinity is the first thing which is naturally known. Bounds and limits are discovered only in a secondary manner That things are finite therefore we learn by our senses. But infinity we know and feel by our souls, and feel it so naturally as it were the very essence and being of the Soul."¹.

This infinite capacity of the Soul is due to God's presence in the Soul: he points out,

"The truth of it is, it is individually in the Soul: for God is there, and more near to us than we are to ourselves. So that we can not feel our souls, but we must feel Him, in that first of properties, infinite space."¹.

Traherne has given us his conception of an ideal uncorrupted soul in his poem "My Spirit" and he holds that the highest attribute of the soul in childhood is its infinite capacity for knowledge and Love.

"I felt no drop nor matter in my soul
No brims nor borders, such as in a bowl
We see. My Essence was capacity,
That felt all things;"².

Mind to Traherne is the instrument of knowledge; Soul, the instrument of love, and they are both intimately connected. Love he holds is not independent of knowledge but rests in it. He defines the soul as "Mind exerted, reaching the Infinity,"³ and elsewhere he remarks "An Act of the understanding is the presence of the Soul."⁴ In God, soul, and mind are identical, He knows and Loves

1. Centuries of Meditations, pages 136,137.

2. "My Spirit", Dobell, page 41.

3. Ibid, Dobell, page 41.

4. Centuries of Meditations, page 132.

together as a simple Act. "O Glorious Soul" he cries out "whose comprehensive understanding at once contains all Kingdoms and Ages! O Glorious Mind! whose love extendeth to all creatures!"¹.

Soul in its uncorrupted state in childhood possessed the faculty of knowing and prizing things like the Deity.

"But being simple like the Deity
In its own Centre is a sphere
Not shut up here, but everywhere."².

This infinite capacity of the soul is natural to it and is only lost through sin. He asks, "What shall we render unto God for this infinite space in our understanding? Since in giving us this He hath laid the foundation of infinite blessedness, manifested infinite love, and made us in capacity infinite creatures."³.

Man must exert this infinite capacity of his soul in loving God who is Infinite Love.

"By Love alone is God enjoyed, by Love alone delighted in, by Love alone approached or admired. His Nature requires Love, thy nature requires Love. The law of Nature commands thee to Love Him - the Law of His nature, and the Law of thine."⁴.

It is the nature of God to be loved and possessed by man, for the blessedness of man consists in His Love.

"His nature burns like fire;
His goodness infinitely does desire
To be all possesst;
His Love makes others blest."⁵.

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1. Centuries of Meditations, page 44.
 2. "My Spirit", Dobell, page 41.
 3. Centuries of Meditations, page 132.
 4. Ibid, page 53.
 5. "The Anticipation", Dobell, page 85.

Christ, The Fall and Sin.

Though the world is "A perfect Token of His perfect Bliss"¹, the supreme mystery of divine Love is expressed in the person of Jesus Christ. He says:

"God by loving begot His son. For God is Love, and by loving He begot His Love. He is of Himself and by loving He is what He is, INFINITE LOVE."²

God "begot" His son so that Man may be restored to the original purity and happiness which he had enjoyed before The Fall. The knowledge of the state of blessedness before the Fall, Traherne holds, is essential to understand the full implication of Redemption through Christ.

"Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent. Which intimates our duty of remembering our happiness in the estate of innocence. For without this we can never prize our Redeemer's love: He that knows not to what he is redeemed cannot prize the work of redemption."³ He has given a beautiful description of man's glorious estate before the Fall in his Poem "Adam's Fall", and in several⁴ poems where he deals with the native innocence of the soul in childhood which resembles the blessed state before The Fall.

"Encompass'd with the Fruits of Lov,
He crowned was with Heven abov,
Supported with the Foot-stool of God's Throne,
A Globe more rich than gold or precious stone,
The fertil Ground of Pleasure and Delight,
Encircled in a sphere of Light."⁵

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1. "The Anticipation", Dobell, page 83. He affirms the superiority of soul to created nature in Poems like "Admiration" and "Insatiableness."
 2. Centuries of Meditation, page 109.
 3. Centuries of Meditations, page 83.
 4. These poems are, "An Infant Ey", "News", "Nature" and "My Spirit".
 5. "Adam's Fall", G. I. Wade, page 116.

God's sending of Christ to redeem the sins of Man and thus restoring him to his original purity was a supreme act of love, "His Love therefore being infinite, may do infinite things for an object infinitely valued. Being infinite in Wisdom, it is able also to devise a way inscrutable to us, whereby to sever the sin from the sinner and to satisfy its righteousness in punishing the transgression, yet satisfy itself in saving the transgressor: And to purge away the dross and incorporated filth and leprosy of sin: restoring the Soul to its primitive beauty, health and glory. But then it doth this at an infinite expense, wherein also it is more delighted, and especially magnified, for it giveth Another equally dear unto itself to suffer in its stead. And thus we come again by the Works of God to our Lord Jesus Christ."¹.

Traherne holds that Redemption could have been achieved through the death of Christ alone. He argues² that even angels were unworthy to perform man's redemption and suffer for his sins, for it was an act of supreme love reserved by God for His son who "would humble Himself to the Death of the Cross for our sakes."² He points out that "one great cause why no Angel was admitted to this office, was because it was an honour infinitely too great and sublime for them, God accounting none but His own Son worthy of that dignity."³.

Traherne's Conception of Sin.

Having been restored to the original purity before the Fall or even "to greater beauty and splendour than before"⁴, it is a greater transgression of the Divine Law of Love to sin now.

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1. Centuries of Meditations, page 103.
 2. Ibid, see pages 104, 105, 106.
 3. Ibid, pages 104, 105.
 4. Ibid, page 103.

"God can not therefore but be infinitely provoked, when we break His Laws. Not only because Love is jealous and cruel as the grave, but because also our duty being so amiable, which it imposeth on us with infinite obligations, they are all despised: His Love, itself, our most beautiful duty and all its obligations. So that His wrath must be very heavy and His indignation infinite."¹

Sin to him is thus

". . . a Deviation from the way
of God".²

Sin makes the soul a deformed and an ugly object and God as Supreme Beauty can not be united to an ugly object, this to Traherne is the greatest misery of sin:

"Yet Love can forbear, and Love can forgive, though it can never be reconciled to an unlovely object What shall become of you therefore since God can not be reconciled to an ugly object? Verily you are in danger of perishing eternally. He can not indeed be reconciled to an ugly object as it is ugly."³ If God could be reconciled to an ugly object, he shall no longer be Supreme Beauty and therefore it is against the nature of God to be reconciled to an ugly object.

Man was redeemed through Love, and sin is a transgression of the law of love; and as the union of man and God can only take place through love, sin is the greatest hindrance in the attainment of this union.

It is however evident that Traherne has no acute consciousness of sin, and though he recognises the need of self discipline in

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 102.

2. "Adam's Fall", G. I. Wade, page 115.

3. Centuries of Meditations, page 102.

religious life and of subduing our passions and desires, this can not be described as the Purgation which in the life of such typical mystics as St. Augustine and St. Bernad occupies a definite and important place.¹

"No one" says the author of *Theologia Germanica* "can be enlightened unless he be first cleansed or purified and stripped."²

The two aspects of the Purification of the self which Underhill calls (1) "The Negative Purification or self-stripping" (2) and "The Positive Purification " or Mortification, "a deliberate recourse to painful experiences and difficult tasks"³ are not to be found in the life of Traherne. He has not felt what St. Bernard calls "the sharp blade of sincere Repentance"⁴. He has not known like St. Augustine "the tears of confession, the troubled spirit, the contrite heart." Traherne says:

"I do not speak much of Vice which is a far more easie Theme, because I am entirely taken up with the abundance of Worth and Beauty in Vertue."⁵

He seems to have relied too much on the "sacred instincts" of childhood; and his views about ^{the}innocence of childhood being corrupted by the "vicious customs" of men resembles more those of the naturalists like Rousseau than those of the typical mystics like St. Bernard or St. Catherine of Siena in whom the consciousness of sin was so acute that she realised the need of utter humility; the Voice of God told her "and by humbling thyself in the valley of humility thou wilt know Me and thyself, from which knowledge thou wilt draw all that is necessary."⁶

1. *Western Mysticism* by D.C. Butler, page 143.

2. "*Theologia Germanica*" cap. XIV.

3. *Mysticism* by E. Underhill, pp. 204, 205.

4. *Western Mysticism* by D.C. Butler, p.143.

5. *Christian Ethics*, Address to the Reader.

6. *Mysticism* by E. Underhill, p. 200.

Traherne sees Order, Beauty and Love everywhere in God's creation but he does not try to solve the problem of evil and misery in this world. He recognises that sin is ugly and therefore a hindrance in man's union with God who is the most Sublime Beauty we can conceive of; but he does not show the need of self-purification or mortification to subdue sin.

Plotinus does not recognise the reality of evil in God's creation; "Evil" he says "is not alone. By virtue of the nature of Good, the power of Good, it is not Evil only. It appears necessarily, bound around with bonds of Beauty, like some captive bound in fetters of Gold."¹.

Dean Inge says that Plotinus "can not regard it (evil) as having a substance of its own."¹.

It was perhaps due to the influence of Plotinus, that Traherne minimised the presence of evil in the world and called it merely as a "deviation from the way of God."².

It is significant that like Plotinus, Traherne, as we have seen, has identified God with Goodness and declared "To know God is to know Goodness".³.

Plotinus, Dean Inge has pointed out, assumed "The moral aspiration for the Good . . . throughout the Enneads, it is regarded as too fundamental to need argument. Of the Beautiful he says that he who has not yet seen God desires Him as the Good; he who has seen Him adores Him as the Beautiful (I.VI.7): . . . But he does not really subordinate Beauty to Truth and Goodness. Ultimately they are one and the same."⁴.

1. The Philosophy of Plotinus by W. R. Inge, Vol.I. page 22.

2. See his Poem "Adam's Fall".

3. Centuries of Meditations, pp. 11,12.

4. See Dean Inge's Essay on Neo-Platonism, Ency. of Religion and Ethics, Vol.9.

Traherne also thinks that to Know God is to know Goodness, Beauty and Love.¹

Traherne's conception of God and evil and sin was undoubtedly influenced by the Philosophy of Plotinus.

We do not find the three stages of mystical life, purgation, Illumination and Union in any marked degree or in regular order in Traherne's life. The first does not exist, the last two are not separated by any development of mystical consciousness; moreover his conception of Illumination, as we shall see, differs from those of the mystics like St. Augustine or St. John of the Cross.

Traherne does not show any Psychological interest in his own religious experience as we find in St. Augustine, nor does he describe his mystical experienced from a Psychological point of view as does St. John of the Cross in his treatise on the "Dark Night of the Soul."

His Conception of Trinity.

In order to understand the full significance of Love in the mystical Philosophy of Traherne, we must understand his conception of the Trinity, which like the Cambridge Platonists, he borrowed from Plotinus. The Father was the creative source of all whom Traherne calls the Fountain; the Holy Spirit was the divine spark in the human Soul; the Son, was the means of enabling the two to be united. To Traherne God is Lover, Christ is His Love, becoming "in act what it was in power" and thus His Love comes to us through Christ. To realise the true significance of God's Love and Christ's Cross, and to love both the Father and the Son to the utmost of ^{our} Power is to attain Felicity. He says:

1. Centuries of Meditations, pp. 11,12.

"Love is the Spirit of God. In Himself it is the Father or else the Son, for the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father: In us it is the Holy Ghost".¹ Thus the Trinity is the expression of the different aspects of the Love of God, as Traherne explains "In all Love there is some Producer, some Means, and some End; all these being internal in the thing itself. Love loving is the Producer, and that is the Father: Love produced is the Means, and that is the Son; For Love is the means by which a lover loveth. The End of these Means is Love: for it is love by loving: and that is the Holy Ghost."² Thus Traherne expounded his supreme exalted conception of the infinite Love of God through the Trinity, for in "His being Love you see the unity of the Blessed Trinity, and a glorious Trinity in the Blessed unity."³

V.

Spurgeon has called Traherne a Philosophical mystic,⁴ but he is more properly a Love-mystic, the mystic who found in the conception of God as "Infinite Love", an explanation of the relation of God to the world, the human soul, and Christ.

He is certainly a Philosopher but his Philosophy of Felicity is based on his own personal experience of God as Love - speaking of the experience of Felicity he says: "And by what steps and degrees I proceeded to that enjoyment of all Eternity which now I possess I will likewise shew you."⁵

It is obvious that in the formulation of his mystical Philosophy, he was influenced by (a) the Platonic school at Cambridge (b) by

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 112.

2. Ibid, page 113, for fuller quotation see pages 106-111.

3. Ibid, page 112.

4. Mysticism in English Literature.

5. Centuries of Meditations, page 162.

the Philosophy of such Neo-Platonists as Plotinus and Hermes Trismegistus (c) and above all by the Bible in which he discovered (in the epistles of St. Paul and the Gospel of St. John¹.) the supreme conception of God as Love and Christ as the embodiment of that love. Traherne's mysticism though expressed in terms of abstract Philosophy is crystallised within the bounds of orthodox Anglicanism as the Publisher of Christian Ethicks pointed out: "For he firmly retains all that was established in the Ancient Councils, nay and sees cause to do so, even in the highest and most transcendent mysteries; only he enriches all by farther opening the grandeur and glory of Religion with the interiour depths and Beauties of Faith".

To Traherne, the incarnation of the Deity in Christ was not only a token of God's Love, it was also a positive demonstration of the possibility of the union of God and man. His meditations on the Passion of Christ in the first century of Meditations show that he had a passionate love of Christ. The vision of the Cross was to Donne a Symbol of Christ's agony which reminded him of his own sins of youth; to Traherne in whom the consciousness of personal sin is not so strong, the Cross is a triumphant symbol of man's conquest over death, and his redemption from sin; he says "our Saviour's Cross is the throne of delights. That centre of Eternity, that tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God!"².

The Cross to him is the means of man's union with God: "The Cross of Christ is Jacob's ladder by which we ascend into the highest heavens - - - That Cross is a tree set on fire with invisible flame,

1. Speaking of the Illuminated mystic he says "the revelations of St. John transport him".

2. Centuries of Meditations, page 39.

that illuminateth all the world. The flame is Love; the Love in His bosom who died on it".¹.

The Incarnation of the Son was to Traherne also a glorification of the Flesh. When God assumed the Flesh, he sanctified the Body and the senses for ever. He says, "This Body is not the cloud, but the Pillar assumed to manifest His love unto us. In these shades doth this sun break forth most oriently".². All the bodily senses thus became means of apprehending the goodness and beauty of God.

"There's not an Ey that's frame'd by Thee

But ought thy Life and Love to see".³.

This idea is again repeated in his poem "The Person" and his contemplations on the blessings of the body in "A Serious and Pathetic-all Contemplation of the Mercies of God".⁴.

It was Traherne's belief that "God never shewed Himself more a God than when He appeared man"⁵, for it was the fulfilment of His Love, and the means of demonstrating the Possibility of the union between God and man, which is the end of all His creation.

The Incarnation and Crucifixion were the two supreme aspects of God's Love for man; and, as we have shown, Traherne believed that the union between God and man could be achieved only through Love.

Traherne's Conception of the Nature of Union between God and the Soul.

He says that the soul was created to be infinite measure of God's Love and "The Soul is shrivelled up and buried in a grave that does not Love. But that which does love wisely and truly is the joy and

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 43.

2. Ibid, page 68.

3. "The Estate" - Dobell page 64 also see pp. 68, 69.

4. See "Thanksgiving for the Body", Dobell pages 163, 164.

5. Centuries of Meditations, page 68.

end of all the world, the King of Heaven, and the Friend of God, the Shining Light and Temple of Eternity: The Brother of Christ Jesus, and one Spirit with the Holy Ghost."¹.

To be in act what man is in power is Traherne's definition of the union of the soul with God. He declares: "Love also being the end of souls, which are never perfect till they are in act what they are in power Till we become therefore all Act as God is, we can never rest, nor ever be satisfied."².

He believes that within certain limits it is possible for man to become "all Act as God is," but his method of achieving it is not that of the typical mystics like St. Augustine, St. Bernard or St. Teresa, the way of Purgation, Penance and Illumination; it is to Traherne more a form of Philosophical contemplation.

Speaking of his own speculations about the nature of God and Eternity, he says: "Little did I think that, while I was thinking these things, I was conversing with God".³ Though he believed that God was "eternally communicative";⁴ for Traherne the channels of communication were not those of the typical Christian mystics.

Critics, like G.E. Willett⁵ and Rufus M. Jones⁶, think that Traherne believed in the possibility of complete union with God but a closer study of *Centuries of Meditations* shows that Traherne believed in the communion with God, not in a direct vision of God in Illumination, but in what he called our "Understanding".

This was to be achieved in three stages in which the senses in observing the world, reason in apprehending it, and the soul in

1. *Centuries of Meditations*, page 116.

2. *Ibid*, page 115.

3. *Ibid*,

4. *Ibid*, page 209.

5. *An Essay on Traherne* by G.E. Willett, 1919.

6. *The Spiritual Reformers of the 16th and 17th Centuries*.

Loving and prizing it were to play their respective parts. The end of Felicity was to "approach more near, or to see more clearly with the eye of our Understanding, the beauties and glories of the whole world: and to have communion with the Deity in the riches of God and Nature".¹ The story of his own experience as told by him in the third century falls in these three stages. To him the communion with God is not, as with the typical mystics, a culmination of the long process of Purgation, a supreme gift of grace from God to the mystic, it is to him an Act of Understanding which man can achieve through the powers of the Senses, Intellect, and the Soul; but his description of the state of communion with God resembles that of the typical mystics. Traherne says:

"To enjoy communion with God is to abide with Him in the fruition of His Divine and Eternal Glory, in all His attributes, in all His thoughts, in all His creatures, in His Eternity, Infinity, Almighty Power, Sovereignty &c."²

This communion is to be enjoyed not in a direct vision of God but as he points out :

"We are to enjoy communion with Him in the creation of the world, in the government of Angels, in the redemption of mankind, in the dispensation of His Providence, in the incarnation of His Son, in His passion, resurrection, and ascension, in His shedding abroad the Holy Ghost, in His government of the church, in His judgment of the world, in the punishment of His enemies, in the rewarding of His friends, in Eternal Glory".³

We were to enjoy this communion with God by loving and prizing all these things; these must be "esteemed by us as our riches" as Traherne puts it.

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 211.

2. Ibid, page 237.

3. Ibid, page 237.

This mode of apprehending Reality, God, is peculiar to the mystical genius of Traherne. By communion with God he does not mean the Illumination of the mystic, a direct and immediate vision of God, it is to him an "Act of Understanding" which is the supreme expression of the powers of Mind and Soul alike. Traherne definitely says: "These things shall never be seen with your bodily eyes, but in a more perfect manner, you shall be present with them in your Understanding. You shall be in them to the very centre and they in you. As light is in a piece of crystal, so shall you be with every part and excellency of them".¹.

As we have shown in the foregoing pages, he believed that the image of an object in the mind was better than the object itself².and that the apprehension of an object recreates it in the mind and the understanding of a thing places it within the soul. "An object seen, is in the faculty seeing it, and by that in the soul of the seer".³. This not only applies to material objects; whatever is conceivable, no matter how abstract, can exist in the mind. The soul was to him eternal in a purely metaphysical way; it could, like eternity, contain all Time. He says "Thus all ages are present in my soul."⁴. and he also declared that "the Eternity and Infinity of God are in me for evermore - I being the living Temple and comprehensive of them."⁵ It is then through "Understanding" that the Soul becomes God-like; he has defined this "Act of Understanding" as "the presence of the soul, which being no body but a living Act, is a pure spirit and mysteriously fathomless in its true dimensions."⁶.

1. Centuries of Meditations, p. 132.

2. Ibid, page 250.

3. Ibid, page 78.

4. Ibid, page 78.

5. Ibid, page 78.

6. Ibid, page 132.

He has described the manner in which the soul becomes one with its object through this "Act of Understanding". He says:

"For as light varieth upon all objects whither it cometh, and returneth with the form and figure of them: so is the soul transformed into the Being of its object and by understanding becometh all Things."¹.

The soul thus possesses what it understands, and through this Act of Understanding, becomes united to the "Being of its object".

This mode of apprehending Reality explains his conception of the union of the soul with God which is not a direct union in Illumination, but through "Understanding" as Traherne has defined it.

He says: "The true exemplar of God's infinity is that of your understanding, which is a lively pattern and idea of it. It excludeth nothing, and containeth all things, being a power that permitteth all objects to be, and is able to enjoy them."². This is the original conception underlying the mystical Philosophy of Thomas Traherne and which has escaped the notice of all his critics. He definitely says that it is not possible to see the Face of God in a direct vision^{here}, we can only recognise Him in His glory.

"For so glorious is the face of God and true religion that it is impossible to see it, but in transcendent splendour. Nor can we know that God is till we see Him infinite in Goodness. Nothing therefore will make us certain of His Being but His glory"³.

Discussing the illumination of David, Traherne declared "He saw God face to face in this earthly Tabernacle"⁴. but further he qualified this statement by the remark that "He saw these things only

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 784.

2. Ibid, page 98.

3. Ibid, page 236.

4. Ibid, page 233.

in the light of faith, and yet rejoiced as if he had seen them by the Light of Heaven".¹.

He also believed that all the powers of the soul could not be turned into an Act of Understanding here as they shall be in Heaven: "We by the powers of the soul upon Earth, know what kind of Being, Person, and Glory it will be in the Heavens. Its blind and latent power shall be turned into Act, its inclinations shall be completed, and its capacities filled, for by this means is it made perfect".².

Neither the soul can be perfected here, nor shall we see the Face of God on Earth; but we can see His Being in His glory.

Thus the end of Felicity is to "to be conformed to the Image of His glory: till we become the resemblance of His great exemplar. Which we then are, when our power is converted into Act, and covered with it, we being an Act of KNOWLEDGE and WISDOM as He is: when our souls are present with all objects, and beautified with the ideas and figures of them all."³. Thus in order to become an "Act of Knowledge and Wisdom", "All things must be contained in our souls"³. so that we may become "the same mind with Him who is an infinite eternal mind. As both Plato and Cato with Apostle term Him:"

"If God, as verses say, a spirit be

We must in spirit like the Deity

Become: we must the Image of His mind

And union with it, in our spirit find".⁴.

Thus through an "Act of Understanding", we become the image of the Mind of God, and are united with Him. This Union, we must remember,

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 234.

2. Ibid, page 291, also see page 130.

3. Ibid, page 140.

4. Ibid, page 140.

ultimately rests on God's Love for us and our love for Him and His son.

"For love communicateth itself: And therefore love in the Fountain is the very love communicated to its object. Love in the fountain is love in the stream, and love in the stream equally glorious with love in the fountain.

Though it streameth to its object it abideth in the lover, and is the love of the lover."¹.

Thus the Paradox of mysticism shall be achieved; the soul shall be in "all things" and still capable of withdrawing "into the centre of his own unity"². where "he shall be one spirit with God, and dwell above all in the solitary darkness of His Eternal Father."².

The originality of Traherne's mystical thought is obvious from this brief survey: he has given to his mystical experience a logical lucidity and Philosophical unity; and his main appeal to the modern mind rests in his success in translating his Mystical experience in intellectual terms:³ he has thus achieved the goal of the Philosopher and the mystic alike, for as Dean Inge paraphrasing Van Harlmann has said "the relation of the individual to the absolute, an essential theme of Philosophy, can only be mystically apprehended."⁴.

1. Centuries of Meditations, page 111.

2. Ibid, page 298.

3. He said "All men see the same objects, but do not equally understand them. Intelligence is the tongue that discerns and tastes them". (Centuries of Meditations, page 211.)

4. Christian mysticism by Dean Inge, page 337.

HENRY MORE,
THE PLATONIC MYSTIC.

The Cambridge Platonists in the seventeenth century represent not only "the church of the Spirit" in an age of theological and doctrinal controversies, or the return of Christianity to "her old loving nurse, the Platonic Philosophy", but they also carry on the traditions of rationalism, which was the product of Protestantism, to its logical conclusions; they have also affinities with Arminianism, for they repudiated the dogmatism of Calvinism; thus they represent a complex movement in which many strands of theological and philosophical speculations are woven into a single pattern of Platonic thought or as Dean Inge calls it, "the religion of the Spirit".¹

Though Protestantism in its initial stages was a revolt against the dogmatic infallibility of the Church in the interpretation of the Bible, against the prevailing scholasticism and superstition of the age, it soon developed in the hands of Calvin and Zwingli into a rigid dogmatism. The leaders of the Reformation like Luther, Calvin, and John Knox were mainly interested in spiritual salvation and not in rational liberty. It was in a way inevitable; the reformed National Churches could never have survived the revival of the Catholic Church after the Council of Trent if the spiritual power of Protestantism had not incarnated itself in dogma. But the spirit of inquiry which is inherent in Protestantism again appeared as a reaction against Calvin's theories of Predestination. We are not here concerned with the influence of Arminianism or the revival of rationalism and Biblical enquiry within the

1. Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought by Dean Inge, page VI.

Protestant Churches as a revolt against Calvinism,^{1.} it is enough to note that, except Henry More, all the Cambridge Platonists like Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683), John Smith (1616-1652), and Ralph Cudworth (1618?-1651), came from Emmanuel College, which was the home of rigid Calvinism.

The Cambridge Platonists who, according to Dean Inge, were "Puritans by education and sympathy"^{2.} carried the rationalism of Protestant Christianity beyond the sphere of the church into the realm of spiritual thought and religious philosophy.

The reformers like Luther and Calvin had inherited the idea of complete uniformity in theology and ritual from the Mediaeval Church and they were mainly concerned with the two important aspects of the Reformed Churches, (1) their constitution and (2) the principles of their religious authority. The conception of the Church which Whichcote and Cudworth preached, is moral and not ritual, and their main interest was to vindicate the truth of Christianity as a rational religion, and uphold the superiority of the cardinal principles of Christianity both against the dogmatism within the church and against the growing materialistic Philosophy of Hobbes which in itself was the product of rationalism, the liberated conscience of man.

The spirit of the religious culture of humanism, of rational theology of Protestantism, reappears in the Philosophy of the Cambridge Platonists.

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1. Principal Tulloch says of Arminianism: "It revived the suppressed rational side of the original Protestant movement, and, for the first time, organised it into a definite power and assigned it its due place both in Theology and the Church". Page 19. Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy". Vol.1.
 2. Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought, Page 40.

Religion with them is the dynamic principle of life which determines the temper of the Christian soul, and the religious life is nothing but the assimilation of the Life of God within the human soul.

"Spiritual Life" says John Smith "comes from God's breath within us and from the formulation of Christ within the Soul".¹

The Cambridge Platonists are the Christian Philosophers in the strict sense of the word, their aim being to effect a synthesis of Christianity with Philosophy on the basis of Reason, and they found in the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus and the Christian mystics like Clement of Alexandria and St. Augustine the framework of Christian Neo-Platonism which they needed for their task.

They drew inspiration from three sources (1) Scripture, (2) Platonic conception of Reason, (3) Neoplatonism and mysticism.

All these three phases of the Cambridge Movement are found in the Neo-Platonic Mysticism of Henry More.

More's Conception of Reason.

In order to understand the implications of rationalism and mysticism of Henry More, we must try to give a brief account of his conception of reason which had assumed such a vital significance for the Cambridge Platonists. It was Whichcote who imparted to reason a sacred significance in the Philosophy of the Cambridge divines. He held that "Nothing in religion is a burthen, but a remedy or a pleasure. When the doctrine of the Gospel becomes the reason of our mind, it will be the principle of our life".²

1. Select Discourses.

2. The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought by Inge, Page 52.

The reason thus becomes an inner experience, a faculty of the soul. More always tried to demonstrate the rationality of the Christian religion. "Every priest" he observed "should endeavour, according to his opportunity and capacity, to be as much as he can a rational man or Philosopher". He thought that the true glory of Christianity consisted in its being rational and therefore "to take away reason, under what fantastic pretence so ever, is to dissolve the priest, and despoil him of his breastplate, and, which is worst of all, to rob Christianity of that special prerogative it has above all other religions in the world - namely, that it dares appeal unto reason, For take away reason, and all religions are alike true: as the light being removed, all things are of one colour".^{1.}

More's conception of reason is Neo-platonic; he frequently quotes the authority of Plotinus and Philo in support of his view "that the image of God is the royal and divine Logos, but the image of this image is the human intellect".^{2.} Plato had taught that the Divine Reason is conversant with "ideas" only, with the pure truth of things; God sees the things as they are, He alone knows them in their entirety and fulness; but by communicating reason to man He implanted His own image in his soul, and therefore man could also know the truth in some measure through reason. In a very interesting passage Henry More has expounded this Platonic theory of reason; he says: "For mine own part reason seems to me to be so far from being any contemptible principle in man, that it must be acknowledged in some sort to be in God Himself".^{3.} He points that

1. Preface to Antidote against Atheism.

2. Ibid, V.

3. Preface to Conjectura, Cabbalistica II, III; also quoted by Tulloch, Rational Theology, Vol. II, page 354-355.

"What is divine wisdom but that steady comprehension of the ideas of all things",¹ and this he calls "Ratio Stabilis" - "a kind of steady and immovable reason, discovering the connection of all things at once?"¹

The counter-part of this Divine reason in man, he calls "Ratio Mobilis" or "reason in evolution, we being able to apprehend things only, in a successive manner one after another".² The exercise of reason to him "is really a participation of that divine reason in God, and is a true and faithful principle in man, when it is perfected and polished by the Holy Spirit; but before, very earthly and obscure, especially in spiritual things".²

This conception of reason has two important implications, (a) it justifies the use of reason in search of divine Truth, for to deny reason this right would be equivalent to destroy^g the image of God in us through which alone the divine Truth could be apprehended. In upholding the right of reason to search in the realm of divine mystery, Henry More rejected Bacon's conception of theology (which to a certain extent was that of Descartes also) as above the sphere of reason.

The Cambridge Philosophers had welcomed the new Philosophy of Bacon and Descartes with certain reservations as they had welcomed the discoveries in Physics and Astronomy. The Oxford man who wrote to his Cambridge friend about this new sect asked the reason of their being the "followers for the most part of the New Philosophy wherewith they have so poisoned that Fountain (i.e. Cambridge) that

1. Preface to *Conjectura, Cabbalistica* II, III; also quoted by Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, Vol. II, Pages 354-355.

2. *Ibid.* II, III.

there are likely to issue out very unwholesome streams throughout the whole kingdom".^{1.}

Bacon held that "Sacred Theology ought to be derived from the oracles of God and not from the light of nature",^{2.} and that in matters which properly belong to theology, we "step out of the barque of human Reason, and enter into the ship of the Church";^{2.} and while Descartes tried to prove the phenomena mechanically, he maintained that "the two questions of the existence of God and the nature of the soul were the chief of those which ought to be demonstrated rather by Philosophy than by Theology".^{3.}

The Cambridge Platonists like Whichcote, John Smith and Henry More could not but disagree with Bacon and Descartes, for it was their conception of Reason as the "participation in divine reason" which had led them to study theology in the light of Philosophy. Whichcote declared "I oppose not rational to spiritual, for spiritual is most rational",^{4.} and said elsewhere that "To go against reason is to go against God . . . Reason is the Divine governor of man's life; it is the very voice of God".^{5.}

John Smith said "Reason in man being lumen de lumine, a light flowing from the Fountain and Father of lights".^{6.}

But More was not only a rational theologian he was also a mystic and his conception of reason and knowledge, which is based on his own personal experience, is closely allied to his conception of purgation, to the cleansing of the soul, so that reason, as he said, might be "polished by the Holy Spirit".

1. The Cambridge Platonists by F.J. Powicke, Page 25.

2. See De Augmentis.

3. See Dedication of Descartes's Meditations to Sorbonne, quoted by Powicke, page 27.

4. In his reply to Tuckney.

5. Aphorisms No. 40.

6. See Christian Mysticism by Inge, Page 289.

More said in his Preface to the General Collection of his Philosophical writings that "All pretenders to Philosophy will be ready to magnify Reason to the skies, to make it the light of heaven, and the very oracle of God; but they do not consider that the very oracle of God is not to be heard but in His holy temple - that is to say, in a good and holy man, thoroughly sanctified in spirit, soul and body".

"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord", but More like Whichcote and John Smith believed that this "candle" could only burn steadily in a purified soul. It is not reason alone but reason aided with the illumined soul that could comprehend truth. In a lucid passage Plotinus defines the proper functions of "reason" and "spirit" in the search of truth.

He says: "Because we have assigned to reason the busy examination of external things, while spirit, we say, examines only itself and what it has in itself. If any one says, "why should not reason, by another faculty of the soul, examine what belongs to itself?" the answer is that then we should have pure spirit and not reason. 'But what hinders that pure spirit should be in the soul?'

'Nothing hinders'. 'But does it belong to soul?' No, it is rather, 'our spirit', something other than the reasoning faculty, something that has soared up, something that is still ours, though we do not count it among the parts of the soul. It is ours and not ours. We use it and we use it not, though reason we use always".^{1.} More in a similar vein declared that "I should commend to them that would successfully Philosophise, the Belief and Endeavour after a

1. The Philosophy of Plotinus by Dean Inge, Vol.I. Page 235.

certain Principle more noble and inward than Reason itself, and without which Reason will falter or at least reach but to mean and frivolous things."¹ He calls this "inward sense" the "Divine sagacity".

The "Divine sagacity" depends on purgation, on the degree of purity attained by the soul as he himself says "For if this Divine sagacity be wanting, by reason of the Impurity or Disorder of a Man's spirit; he can neither hit upon a right sense of things himself, nor easily take it, or rightly pursue it, when he is put upon it by another."¹ This conception of reason as depending on the inner experience of the soul he had elaborated earlier in his Philosophical poem Psychozoia. He says :

" Every faculty
And object have their due Analogy,
Nor can reach further than It's proper sphere.
Who divine sense by reason would descry
Unto the sun-shine listens with his ear".²

Like Plotinus he maintains that spirit can only know spirit:

"How then, said Graco, is the spirit known
If not by reason? To this I replyde,
Onely the spirit can the spirit own".³

Knowledge could only be attained through the inner illumination of the self;

" through inly experience
of Gods hid wayes, as he doth ope the ey'n
Of our dark souls and in our hearts his light enshrine".⁴

1. The Life of Henry More by Richard Ward, Page 164.

2. Philosophical Poems of Henry More edited by G. Bullough, Page 63.

3. Ibid, pages 63-64.

4. Ibid, page 64.

This conception of reason and its relation to the inner experience of the soul, which Tulloch calls "the key-note of his (More's) whole system of thought"¹ is, based on his personal experience of the inadequacy of knowledge divorced from mystical experience to comprehend truth.

He knew "That there is something before and better than Reason, whence Reason itself hath its Rise"², and as he said "But I am abundantly taught by experience, that both the finding out, and receiving Divine Truths found out by others is a special Gift of God"².

Having briefly explained the characteristics of the Cambridge Platonists in the seventeenth century, and More's conception of reason which determines the quality of his rationalism and explains his way of approach to mystical experience, we can now discuss the characteristics of his mysticism and its relation to Neo-platonism. Henry More's progress towards mysticism can be divided into three stages.

- (1) The period of intellectual preparation following his graduation in 1635 to 1637.
- (2) The spiritual crisis in his life when he realised the inadequacy of knowledge acquired through intellect and divorced from the corresponding process of inner purification. It was in this period that he practised self-mortification and completed the stage of Purgation.
- (3) Illuminative stage followed by an assurance that he has been blessed with the direct vision of Reality.

1. Rational Theology by Tulloch, Page 357. Vol.II.
 2. R. Ward's Life of H. More, pages 164, 165.

Under the last heading we shall also discuss the quality of his mystical experience and his claim to have attained the union with God "under the Broad Seal of Heaven".^{1.}

More and Neo-Platonism.

It is in the first period of intellectual preparation and his consequent dissatisfaction with the mere intellectual method of apprehending Reality that Neo-platonism influenced him. We must bear in mind the important fact that More's conception of Platonism was un-historical; he did not realise the significance of the different aspects of Platonism in Alexandrian mysticism, Jewish Cabbalism and the Christian Neo-Platonism of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and St. Augustine - all these were equally authoritative to him. But it was mainly in the Philosophy of Plotinus (A.D. 205-270) that he discovered the spiritual conception of the world, the Neo-Platonic conception of the Trinity, the soul, and the ecstasy. According to Dean Inge three influences have moulded the characteristics of the Anglican Church;^{2.} (a) it was built upon Latin Christianity, and was (b) deeply influenced by the "Germanic genius" at the Reformation (c) but there is a third influence, Platonism, which has deeply penetrated "English Christianity" since the Renaissance. The relation of Platonism to Christian mysticism goes back to St. Paul and St. John, as Dean Inge says, "The Platonism of which I speak was Christianised long before the New Testament canon was closed and ever since the first century it has been an integral part of Christianity as an historical religion."^{3.}

1. See Ward pages 90-1.

2. The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought by W.R. Inge, page 6.

3. Ibid, page VI.

The system of Plotinus though outside the pale of Christianity became a great formative influence in the history of Christian mysticism.

Through Clement of Alexandria, who interpreted the Christian Trinity through the Neo-Platonic Triad, through Augustine who realised the deeper truth of Christianity with the help of Neo-Platonic Philosophy, through Pseudo-Dionysius, Erigena and Eckhart, Neo-Platonism has become an integral part of Christian mystical philosophy. "From the time of St. Augustine". Dean Inge points out "to the present day, Neo-platonism has always been at home in the Christian Church.. Platonism is part of the vital structures of Christian Theology."¹. The elements of Neo-Platonic Philosophy which seem to have influenced Henry More can be described under the following three headings :-

- (1) More's conception of the Trinity.
- (2) More's conception of the nature of the Soul.
- (3) More's conception of Matter and its relation to spirit.

The influence of Plotinus on More's mysticism is greater than that of any other single Philosopher. His aim, in *Psychozoia*, was as he himself says, to "Give some fair glimpse of Plato's hid Philosophy",² but it is the Platonic Philosophy as interpreted by Plotinus. There are two fundamental Trinities in the system of Plotinus. One is the Trinity of Divine principles or we may say that he conceives the Divine nature as a Trinity.

Its three descending degrees are (a) the unconditioned one or the Good (b) Spirit or Noûs³. (c) The soul or the life of the World.

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1. The Philosophy of Plotinus by Dean Inge, Page 12, Vol.1.
 2. Canto I. Stanza 2. Bullough, page 12.
 3. Noûs has been defined as "Intelligence", "reason" "mind", Dean Inge calls it "spirit" - See The Philosophy of Plotinus, Vol.II. page 37; also see Underhill, The Essentials of Mysticism P. The Second Trinity is of Spirit, Soul, and Body.

The triadic series do not represent any succession either in time or generation, they merely represent an order in value. The worlds both of Spirit and Soul are co-eternal with the Absolute. This conception of the Trinity also explains the mystical conception of Being and Becoming.

The Absolute manifests as Nous or Spirit; this is the realm of being; this spirit manifests as soul (Psyche), this is the world of becoming.

Plotinus conceives the Transcendent One not as Being but the source of Being, as he says:

"The one is not a Being, but the source of being which is its first offspring. The one is perfect, that is, it has nothing, seeks nothings, needs nothing, but as we may say it overflows, and this overflowing is creative". (Enneads V.1.2.)

This "overflowing" is the act of creation, but before this act, Plotinus points out, "The first act is the act of Good, at rest within itself, and the first existence is the self-contained existence of the Good". (Enneads 1.8.2.) It is this aspect of God which More has described in the following lines.

"Th' Ancient of dayes, sire of Eternitie,
 Sprung of himself, or rather no wise sprong:
 Father of lights and everlasting glee,
 Who puts to silence every daring tongue
 And flies man's sight, shrowding himself among

His glorious rayes, good Atove , from whom came
 All good that Penia spies in thickest throng
 Of most desirables, all's from that same,
 That same, that Atove hight, and sweet, Abinoam.^{1.}

1. Bullough, pages, 12, 13, Canto 1, 5.

More has tried to denote the attribute of the Absolute One as Hattove (the Good), Abinoam (Father of Delight), Ahad (the one), and Adonai (the Lord or sustainer) of all.

The second Hypostasis of the Neo-Platonic Triad is $\text{N\ddot{o}us}$, which in one of its aspects is the "Father and Companion" of the Soul (V.1.3.) and in another "the intellectual universe, that sphere constituted by a principle wholly unlike what is known as intelligence in us" (1.8.2.) More, like Clement of Alexandria, has tried to identify this second Hypostasis with the second person of the Christian Trinity. He is in More's Psychozoia Aeon (Eternity) or Autocalon ("The first beauty"). More conceived it as the intellectual principle emanating from the Father.

He is, "Fount of all beauty, root of flowering glee".^{1.}

The Soul's excellence^{2.} consists in contemplating Aeon who is the "Abyss of good eternally".^{3.}

The third Hypostasis in the Neoplatonic Triad is the soul which is the manifestation of $\text{N\ddot{o}us}$ or Spirit, as $\text{N\ddot{o}us}$ was manifestation of the Absolute One. Psyche is the divine and eternal life of the universe. Describing the nature of the soul, Plotinus says: "We do not declare the soul to be one in the sense of entirely excluding multiplicity. This absolute oneness belongs only to the higher nature. We make it both one and manifold; it has part in the nature which is divided among bodies, but it has part also in the indivisible, and so again we find it to be one", (IV. Ennead 9.2.)

1. Canto 1.9, Bullough 14.

2. Ibid, 1.12.

3. 1.13.

In More's allegory Psyche (the soul of the world) or Uranore ("the light or beauty of heaven") is the daughter of Hattove and the bride of Aeon. More conceives Psyche as the emanation from the Father and partner with the son and as his purpose is to show the experiences of the soul from the time of its emanation from God to its return again to God, he has given an elaborate account of the life of the soul. It is not relevant to our purpose to give a detailed account of More's conception of the nature of 1. the soul (which can be found in the commentaries of More's editors especially Grosart and Bullough), or its grades of life in the lower order of the Physical world, it is enough to point out that in order to signify the unity in the Trinity More represents Aead joining Aeon, his son, in marriage to Psyche, the soul:

"My first borne sonne, and thou my Daughter dear,
 look on your aged sire, the deep abyse,
 In which and out of which you first appear;
 I Ahad hight and Ahad onenesse is:
 Therefore be one; (his words do never misse)
 • They one became".².

More believed that the spiritual progress consists in rejoining the "outward forms" of earthly beauty and contemplating the eternal beauty of the archetypal world where the subjects and object become one in the act of contemplation. (Canto 1.13.14.)

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1. More describes the journey of the soul through the Physical world figuring them as inner garments, they are Physis (Canto 1. 46, 47.) Arachena (1.48) is sense perception. The third veil is "Semele" "Intellectual imagination" (1. 57, 58.)
 2. Canto, 1. 34. Bullough page 22.

More discusses the moral life of the individual souls in the 2nd Canto of Psychozoia while in the third canto he describes the Purgative and illuminative stages of the soul before it is united to God.

Though More held Plotinus in the highest esteem and believed that his soul (as well as that of Plato and Pythagorus) was blessed in Paradise (see The Oracle, Bullough page 159), and called him "Divine Plotinus" and held that "it is no contemptible argument, that the Platonists, the best and divinest of Philosophers, and the Christians, the best of all that do profess religion, do both concur that there is a Trinity"¹. Neo-Platonism did not satisfy the deeper instincts of his soul; the reason lies in the very nature of the system of Plotinus; Plotinus' God, the supreme one, is definitely impersonal; while More's conception of God is personal; Plotinus had given no place to Incarnation in his Philosophy. The Platonic Logos² cannot be identified with Christ, for Christ is not only the creative principle emanating from God, he is also the God become Man, as W.K. Fleming has pointed out, "the Incarnation with all that it implies, was out of the range of his (Plotinus') thought"³. Plotinus does not believe in redemption through sufferings⁴, and so the two great aspects of the Christian Deity, Incarnation and Crucifixion, have no place in the system of Plotinus; and the whole basis of these two aspects rests on the Christian conception of Love, which is absent from the Philosophy of Plotinus.

1. Psychozoia - To the Reader.

2. See Augustine's Confessions 7 - IX - XX.

3. Mysticism in Christianity by W.K.Fleming, page 66.

4. See Bullough Introduction, page XXVIII.

Dr Bigg has pointed out that "According to Plotinus, God is Goodness without love. Man may love God, but God cannot love man. Religion is the desire for the star. Man can reach the star and cannot be happy unless he does; but the star does not know anything about him and does not care whether he reaches it or not".¹

More's conception of the Deity like the other Cambridge Platonists is based on Love; the favourite text of the Cambridge Philosophers being "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him". More was deeply read in the ancient Philosophers as he tells us in his preface to his Philosophical writings: "I immerse myself over head and Ears in the study of Philosophy; promising a most wonderful Happiness to myself in it. Aristotle, therefore, Cardun, Julius Scaliger, and other Philosophers of the greatest Note, I very diligently peruse. In which the truth is, though I met here and there with some things wittily and acutely, and sometimes solidly spoken; yet the most seemed to me either so false or uncertain or else so obvious or trivial that I looked upon myself as having plainly lost my time in the Reading of such authors".²

After this disappointment in his studies, he asked the fundamental question about the nature of knowledge which changed the whole course of his life: - "whether the Knowledge of things was really the Supreme Felicity of Man; or something Greater and more Divine was:"³. It was at this point that Neo-Platonic Philosophers and the mystical divines came to his aid and taught him the truth that Felicity could not be achieved "in the reading of Authors, and

1. Bigg - Neo-Platonism, page 248.
 2. Ward's Life of Henry More, page 10.
 3. Ibid, page 12.

contemplating of Things" but "by the Purging of the Mind from all sorts of vices whatsoever".¹ This conceptions he ascribes to the study of Neo-Platonism and mysticism; he says:

"Especially having begun to read now the Platonick writers, Mersilius Ficinus, Plotinus himself, Mercurius Trismegistus, and the Mystical Divines; among whom there was frequent mention made of the Purification of the soul and of the Purgative course that is previous to the Illuminative; as if the Person that expected to have his Mind illuminated of God, was to endeavour after the Highest Purity".¹ In his notes to Psychozoia, More has clearly described his relation to the various systems of the ancient Philosophy including that of Platonism. He points out that "Love of man and Holy Law"² are not the characteristics of Christianity alone but are common to "Platonisme, Pythagorisme and Stoicisme"; More points out that the destiny of the Christian Soul does not consist in freeing itself from sin but becoming God-like, and this he maintains distinguishes the Christian Philosophy from the Pagan religious thought. He says:

"But our endeavour must be not onely to be without sin, but to become God".³

It was not the Philosophy of Plotinus or Phythagoras which set him on his journey towards mysticism but "Theologia Germanica", which was written in the fourteenth century by a disciple of John Tauler as a "manual of mystical method" for the religious society called the "Friends of God". It was published by Luther in 1516 who

1. Ward's Life of H. More, page 12.

2. Psychozoia III. Canto 50; Bullough page 101.

3. See Bullough Notes, page 224.

ranked it next to the Bible and the teaching of St. Augustine. The cause of More's conversion to mystical method may be ascribed to his dissatisfaction with the intellectual systems of the Philosophy of Aristotle and Julius Scaliger, his reading of the Neoplatonist Philosophers and the mystical fathers; but the clear perception of the mystical method of attaining to not only knowledge of truth but union with God, ^{also} Who 'is the source of all Knowledge, through Purgation and Illumination, he perceived clearly in Theologia Germanica. The necessity of self-surrender, self-denial and humility were the virtues he had not found in the Pagan Philosophy, the passage in which he has described this difference is worth quoting at length; he says "ye to speak truth Stoicisme, Platonisme, and Pythagorisme, are gallant lights, and a noble spirit movés in those Philosophers vains, and so near Christianisme, if a man will look on them favourably, that one would think they are baptised already not onely with water but the Holy Ghost." But I not seeing humility and self-denyall and acknowledgement of their own unworthiness of such things as they aimed at, nor mortification, not of the body (for that's sufficiently insisted upon) but of the more spirituall arrogative life of the soul, that subtill ascribing to ourselves that is Gods, for all is Gods so that I reserve as the true and adequate Character of Christianisme, the most profound and spiritual humility, that any man can have experience, and a perfect self-deadness, which is the begetter indeed of the former so that it must be acknowledged, that though there have been many brave and generous

"lights risen upon the Earth, yet none so plainly perfect, so purely amiable and lovely, as that sweet life of the Messias, to whom the possession of the world is promised". (More's Note to Psychozoia).

This passage not only gives us More's conception of Purgation as not only consisting in the mortification of the body but also in the cultivation of the Christian virtues of humility, self-denial and self-surrender to the Will of God. It also clearly shows his conception of the relation of the Pagan Philosophy to Christian religion. These three Philosophies are "baptised with the holy Ghost", but they are subordinate to the fuller revelation of Christianity. F.J. Powicke has summed up the relation of the Cambridge Platonists to Neo-Platonism; he says:

"The dependence, then, of the Cambridge men on Neo-Platonism was by no means slavish. It did not mould the substance, or even the forms of their thought, to any great extent. They drew far more from the Bible, and their acknowledged Master was Christ. In this respect they repeated the experience of St. Augustine, whose vivid accounts of his relation to Neo-Platonism in the seventh book of his Confessions must have been known to them".¹

Like St. Augustine, More was undoubtedly attracted by the system of Plotinus and in it he discovered the great truth that reason and religion do not contradict each other, that the religious life is the only reasonable life, and that the soul was capable of attaining to truth through a discipline of the mind, in ecstasy when it is united to the "one", but the real significance and nature of Purgation and Illumination he learnt from "Theologia Germanica".

1. The Cambridge Platonists - by F.J. Powicke, page 21.

More and Purgation.

The most acute phase in the development of More's mysticism is Purgation, for it was for him an intellectual as well as a religious purgation. He realised the weakness of the Pagan philosophy, and the need of the deeper and critical study of the Bible;¹ purgation to him is not only the mortification of the body but also the complete surrender of the self to the Will of God. He has given an interesting account of the process of purgation in the third canto of *Psychozoia* and in the preface to his *Philosophical Writings*.

(1662). He realised the truth which is inseparable from the desire of Purgation that "God reserves his choicest secrets for the purest Minds; and that it is uncleanness of spirit, not distance of place, that dissevers us from the Deity".²

He now knew that "true Holiness was the only safe Entrance into Divine Knowledge".

The task which he set to himself was the attainment of holiness:

"And having an unshaken Belief of the Existence of God and of his Will that we should be holy even as he is holy; Nothing that is truly sinful, could appear to me unconquerable, afflicted by such a power: which urged me therefore seriously to set myself to the Task".²

He tells us that "of the Experiences and Events of which *Eterprise* my 2d and 3d canto of the Life of the Soul is a real and faithful Record."²

In the third canto More has described the difficulties he encountered in the Purgative stage; his self-surrender, his premature

1. Later in life (after 1660), he interpreted the Prophetic and Apocalyptic portion of the Scriptures.

2. *The Life of Henry More* by R. Ward, page 20.

optimism, his continued love of the Pagan Philosophy, these were his intellectual difficulties. He shows how (see stanza 58, Canto III Psychozoia) Mnemon temporarily forgets the higher truth of Christianity in his admiration of the ancient Philosophy, the greatest difficulty in the Purgative way felt by More was the self-surrender demanded by the Christian faith.

In "Theologia Germanica" he must have read that godliness begins with the complete surrender of the soul to God, - it says, "If there were no self-will, there would be no Devil and no Hell".^{1.}

In order to achieve humility, it teaches that we must surrender all our affections, "Will, wisdom, love, desire, knowledge and the like",^{2.} to the Will of God.

More held that there were three branches of the Divine Life, Charity, Humility, and Purity. By Charity, Ward has pointed out, he meant an attitude of love and brotherliness to all fellow creatures, the duty "to love God with all our Hearts and our Neighbours as our selves".^{3.}

Humility to More was the essence and touch-stone of purgation; he said "By Humility, I understand an entire submission to the will of God in all things; a Deadness to all self-excellency and Preheminency before others";^{4.} and he maintained that "The Life or Delight of the soul (be it never so Gallant or Glorious) that is not founded upon deep Humility, shall be strongly shaken with storms and Tempests; shall be shatter'd; shall fall down, and perish."^{5.}

1. Theo. Germ. Chap. XLIX.

2. Theo Germanica, Chapter V.

3. Ward, page 84.

4. Ibid page 87, also see his Dialogue 2 No. 23.

5. Ibid, page 89.

He knew that those who would aspire to achieve Divine Knowledge must become Holy; and Purification and mortification would lead to Humility, Charity and the regeneration of the soul in the image of Christ, he held that "the Mortifying all self-will, self-desire, and self-arrogation, that the spirit of Christ may alone rule and act in us, which is the spirit of perfect Humility and Holy Love".^{1.} In his Poem Charity and Humility, he declared that the true mansion for the Love of God was the state of Humility.

"My mansion hight (is called) Humility
 Heaven's vastest capability.
 The further it doth downward tend
 The higher up it doth ascend.
 If it go down to utmost nought
 It shall return with that it sought".

More practised mortification in the period when "strugglings and conflicts followed presently between this Divine Principle and the Animal Nature."^{2.} and "he reduced himself in his First conflicts to almost Skin and Bone".^{3.}

Soon after, he had achieved the perfect control of his Mind as well as his Body he gave it up, as he observed, "when the Horse was more thoroughly attemper'd to his Master's riding, he might be trusted with the Reins on his Neck and would not easily go amiss."^{4.} It is thus evident that Purgation was to More not only the mortification of the body, but also the disciplining of the mind, a surrender of his entire self, in all humility, to the will of God, it

1. Ward, page 138.
 2. Ibid, page 13.
 3. Ibid, page 124.
 4. Ibid, page 140.

was nothing but a process by which our own will, as he says "might be oppos'd, destroy'd, annihilated; that so the Divine Will alone, with the New Birth, may revive and grow up in us".¹ The soul thus purified and disciplined is ready to receive the ray of Divine Love.

"But the clear soul by Virtue Purified
 Collecting her own self from the foul steam
 Of earthly life, is often dignified
 With that pure pleasure that from God doth stream,
 Often is enlighten'd by that radiant beam
 That issues forth from His Divinity,
 Then feelingly immortal she doth deem
 Herself, conjoin'd by so near unity
 With God, and nothing doubts her eternity".

(Psychozoia).

The consciousness that he had attained a perfect control over his affections produced a remarkable effect on his thirst for knowledge; he says:

"When this inordinate Desire after the Knowledge of things was thus allay'd in me and I aspir'd after nothing but the sole purity and simplicity of Mind, there shone in upon me daily a greater Assurance that ever I could have expected, even of those things which before I had the greatest Desire to know: In so much that within a few years, I was got into a most joyous and Lucid state of Mind; and such plainly as is ineffable".²

More does not tell us what is the actual period meant by "a few years" but Mr Bullough thinks that "Purifactory and illuminative

1. Ward, page 14.

2. See Ward, page 15.

stages" lasted three years (1637-39) and More himself tells us that the description of illumination and union in the III Canto of Psychozoia is a faithful record of his own personal experience; he says:

"Not content with this short Epigram, I did afterwards, about the Beginning of the year 1640, comprise the chief speculations and Experiences I fell into by persisting in the Enterprise before Mentioned, in a pretty full Poem called Psychozoia or the Life of the Soul: stir'd up to it, I believe, by some Heavenly Impulse of Mind"¹.
Now the epigram referred to in the above passage does not show any conflicts of purgation, it is a song of thanksgiving of the mystic who has seen a glimpse of Reality in Illumination:

"I come from Heav'n; am an immortal Ray
Of God; O Joy! and back to God shall goe.
And here sweet Love on's Wings me up doth stay.
I Live, I am sure, and joy this Life to know.
Night and Vain Dreams be gone: Father of Lights,
We live, as Thou, clad with Eternal Day.
Faith, Wisdom, Love, fix'd Joy, free winged Might,
This is true Life; All else Death and Decay".²

It is thus evident that the illumination which More has described in the III Canto of Psychozoia, he experienced immediately after the process of Purgation was completed.

Conception of Sin and Evil.

Before describing his experience of (a) illumination and union (b) and its effect on his Philosophy, we must understand his

1. Ward, page 16.
2. Ibid, page 16.

conception of sin and evil which have divided man from God through the Fall.

More's revolt against Calvin's conception of Predestination was almost instinctive, he repudiated it in his school days at Eton: "I had so firm and unshaken a persuasion of the divine justice and goodness" he says "that on a certain day in a ground belonging to Eton College . . . and recalling to my mind this doctrine of Calvin (Predestination) I did thus seriously and deliberately conclude within myself; viz; If I am one of those that are predestined unto hell, where all things are full of nothing but cursing and blasphemy, yet will I behave myself there patiently and submissively towards God, and if there be any one thing more than another that is acceptable to Him, that will I set myself to do with a sincere heart, and to the utmost of my power, being certainly persuaded that if I thus demeaned myself, He would hardly keep me long in that Place"¹. He again argued against Calvinism in Psychozoia, (see Stanza 22, Canto III) and maintained that God's Grace is universally immanent and is given in a special measure to the regenerate soul which has successfully passed through the difficult stage of Purgation.

"God's spirit is no Private empty shade
 But that great Ghost that fills both earth and sky,
 And through the boundless universe doth ly,
 Shining through purged hearts and simple minds
 When doubling clouds of thick hypocrisie
 Be blown away, with strongly brushing winds;
 Who first this tempest feels the sun he after finds."²

1. Ward's Life of H. More, pages 6, 7.

2. Canto II, Stanza 91. Bullough, pages 61, 62.

He believed that both the grace which God bestows upon the soul, and the soul's own disposition to receive the grace are of divine origin:

"For she did not with her own self gin think
So curiously, that it is God alone
That gives both strength when ever we do swink:
Graces and Natures might be both from one,
Who is our life's strong systentation".¹.

The soul when it enters "Pteroessa", - "the land of the winged souls" - its two wings, according to More, are Faith and Love.

"One of the wings is Faith in the Power of God against the forces of the Prince of darkness. The other Love and desire of appearing before God".².

The desire for union with God is the soul's immortal heritage and it is why sin, which is the cause of the soul's separation from God, should be banished from the soul's life before it could again return to God.

More's conception of evil is Neo-Platonic in this sense that like Plotinus he held evil to be a disintegration, a disruptive force in the divine order of things. Evil to Plotinus is so unreal that it can not appear without being mixed with some low form of goodness. Plotinus says: "Evil is not alone. By virtue of the nature of Good, the power of Good, it is not Evil only. It appears necessarily, bound around with bonds of Beauty, like some captive bound in fetters of gold; and beneath these it is hidden so that, while it must exist, it may not be seen by the gods, and that men need

1. Canto III. 10 F. Bullough, p 97.
2. More's Note - see Bullough page 222.

not always have evil before their eyes, but that when it comes before them they may still be not destitute of images of the Good and Beautiful for their remembrance".¹ Evil to Plotinus has no reality of its own; he maintains that "Evil is still human, having been mixed with something opposite to itself".² Evil to More is "Duessa"³ division or duality, and "Deussa" is the bride of 'Daemon,' which as More says is nothing but "self-sensedness it is the very image of the Devil, or the Devil himself, or worse if ought can be worse: it is a life dictating self-seeking, and bottoming a man's self upon himself, a will divided from the will of God, and centred in itself".⁴

Evil is thus the Principle which divides the man from God, and it is manifested in a self-seeking life. More says:

"All division both betwixt God and Man and Man and Man, are from this self-seeking life".⁴

More's treatment of the Problem of evil is marked by the easy optimism of Plotinus and like him he held that "What the ignorant call evil in this universe" is nothing more than "the shadowy stroakes in a fair picture, or the mournful notes in Musick, by which the beauty of the oneis more pleasing and melting".⁵

But Plotinus did not believe in Salvation through suffering, as Dean Inge says, "we have seen that other religions besides Christianity worshipped a suffering and even a dying God; but the Neo-Platonist would, I fear, have shrunk from such a doctrine with horror, or

1. Enneads I. 8. 82. Mackenna's translation.

2. Ibid, I. 8. 13.

3. Psychozoia canto 11, 26.

4. More's Note, Bullough, page 194.

5. Immortality of the Soul, III, 15; 9.

dismissed it with contempt. It would have seemed to undo all the work of deliverance which his Philosophy had built for him, and to plunge him back into the slough of despond, the morass of pleasures and pains".¹.

Though More's fine spirit shrank from the horrors of Hell, he recognised the possibility of eternal damnation for the souls of the wicked. He describes the souls of the damned existing in the "Infernall Night".

"Devouring anguish and anxietie
Do vex their souls ,
Thus with live Hell they concorporate,
United close with that self-gnawing sprite:
And this I wot will breed no sleeping state".².

He recognised the necessity of regeneration through pain and suffering in the stage of Purgation and believed that the soul could again be united to God only through the grace of Christ, the suffering God; Salvation could be achieved, as he says, through the "true crucified Sonne" of "the true God"³, but the salvation through Christ was to be achieved through the inner regeneration, through a rebirth in the image of Christ. More says that "the eternal and imortall sonne of God is to take possession of the world by that which after a manner is mortall and extinguishable, which is the energie of himself, exerted upon the souls of men, or a kind of life diffused in man's heart and soul, whereby God doth inact us...." He believed on the strength of his own personal experience that "Inward Regeneration by the operation of the spirit into the living Image of

1. The Philosophy of Plotinus, Vol.II, 233.

2. Anti-Psycho III. 24-48. Also see Psychozoia Canto II. Stanzas 19-21.

3. Psychozoia Canto III, 35 Bullough, page 92.

4. More's Note, Bullough, page 221.

Christ, is a greater privilege, I say, than to be guided by the external person, and voice of Christ amongst us sounding in our Ears".¹ The soul in order to be united with God who is Unity must overcome evil in its infinite form.

"Suffice it then we taught that ruling Right,
The Good is uniform, the Evil infinite".²

More's Conception of Illumination.

More has carefully described the stage of Illumination in Psychozoia, and as he has himself given an autobiographical significance to this poem, this account of illumination and union is of vital importance to us.

The first glimpse of Illumination which More catches in (Canto III, Stanzas 10-11) is of doubtful nature and therefore More distrusts it. The soul wages an incessant fight against sin and life of self-seeking under Michael who is Christ (Canto III, 25-29). The soul now receives/^{the} "strength of God" and attains to a joyous state (Canto III, 44-48) but before it can enter the land of Theoprepy and be united with God, the soul must purge itself of all traces of the sinful self and it has also to renounce its love of Philosophy (55-60).

Having renounced even the "Gallant light" of Platonism, the process of illumination is completed, self-denial and Patience are the virtues no longer necessary for the illuminated soul and so Auto-parnes and Hypomone die. (67) and Simon now represents the state of soul in complete harmony with the will of God; the soul has

1. R. Ward, page 137.

2. Psychozoia Canto III, 71, Bullough 105.

now achieved union with God, where there is all peace, love and harmony and bodily death is of no account.

"No there's no fear of Death's dart-holding hand;

Fast love, fix'd life, firm peace in Theoprepia land".

(68) III. Canto.

More has claimed to have enjoyed illumination and union with God; in his reply to the charge of enthusiasm levelled against him by Thomas Vaughan, he claims to have received direct light from God, a "true chemical fire that has purged my soul and purified it, and has crystallised it into a bright throne and shining habitation of the divine majesty. This free light is that which having held my soul in itself for a time, taught me in a very sensible manner that vast difference between the truth and freedom of the spirit and anxious impostures of this dark Personality and earthly bondage of the body".¹ He says that his poems were composed after the revelation of truth directly from God.

"Hallelujah from this principle which I have here expressed, have all those poems I have wrote had their original: and as many as are moved with them aright, they carry them to this Principle from hence came".

Then having thus described the state of the Soul in Illumination, he describes the joy of the Soul in the unitive stage, "Joing centres with God". He says:

"How lovely, how magnificent a state is the soul of man in, when the life of God in actuating her shoots her along with Himself through heaven and earth, makes her unite with, and, after a sort,

1. The 2nd Lash of Alazonomastix.

feel herself animate the whole world as if she had become God and all things This is to become Deiform to be thus suspended (not by imagination but by union of life . . . joining centres with God) and by a sensible touch to be held up from the clotty dark personality of this compacted body. Here is love; here is freedom; here is justice and equity in the super-essential causes of them. He that is here looks upon all things as one, and on himself, if he can then mind himself, as a part of the whole".¹. He claims to have experienced the highest bliss which the soul is capable of enjoying. "God hath permitted to me all these things, and I have it under the broad Seal of Heaven. Who dare charge me? God doth acquit me".¹.

More thus claims to have enjoyed the highest state of bliss which it is possible for the soul to attain; as we know, More was acquainted intimately with mystical literature, and he must have known the rarity of the experience he was claiming to have enjoyed; and therefore it is not possible for us to pass any judgment about the validity of his mystical experience in Illuminative and Unitive stages. His account of it is lucid and Philosophical, his claim to have experienced it definite and clear. But he has not described the nature of his experience from the psychological point of view, i.e. the state of the soul during its vision of God, the lasting impression which this experience invariably leaves on the mind of the mystic, the consequent eagerness of the soul for the repetition of this experience, and for the fuller and permanent possession of God. His account of the soul's union with God is rather

1. The 2nd Lash of Alazonomastix, see Wardpage 49.

vague and general when compared with the vivid accounts which St. Augustine or St. John of the Cross have given of their own mystical experience to us.

More and Hobbes and Descartes.

Having attained the Knowledge of Truth through the mystical experience, More devoted the rest of his life¹ in fighting, on a philosophical basis, the materialism of Hobbes and Descartes. More's main object as a Philosopher, as Dean Inge says, is "to establish the reality of spiritual or incorporeal being".²

We can not enter into the discussion of More's differences with Hobbes and Descartes, for they belong not to the province of mysticism but to that of Metaphysics and Ethics.³ More in his treatise on the "Immortality of the Soul"⁴ tries to refute the arguments of Leviathan" about the nature of Body, and he refuted Descartes' conception of Matter as Extension in his letters to Descartes and later in his Dialogues. ("The Publisher to the Reader" and later in his "Manual of Metaphysics".)(1671).

In 1648 he had hailed with enthusiasm the Philosophy of Descartes, his rationalism, his clear-cut solid system of thought must have appealed to More. He wrote to Descartes that his Philosophical Ideas "In a sense indeed they appear to be my own - so entirely

1. His principal Philosophical works are: (a) "Immortality of the Soul"(1662). (b) Collection of Philosophical Writings (which also contains the Latin correspondence with Descartes.) (c) Manual of Ethics, (1666). (d) Divine Dialogues (1668). (e) Enchiridium Metaphysicum.
2. The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought, page 56.
3. Flora Isabel Mackinnon, Ph.D. in "Philosophical Writings of Henry More" (1925) has comprehensively dealt with More's Position in the history of 17th Century Philosophy.
4. See Chapters IX, X.

have my own thoughts run in the same channel in which your fertile mind has anticipated me".^{1.}

He thought at first that Descartes' Philosophy was the refutation of atheism; he declared that "There is not Philosophy indeed except perhaps the Platonic which so firmly shuts the door against Atheism"^{2.} and he even tried to make a synthesis of "some points of Cartesianism and Platonism";^{3.} but he soon realised that he could not accept Descartes' conception of Matter as Extension, and the Cartesian world of Matter and Extension appeared to him as a world in which the living energy of God was no longer active. The truth is that in his early appreciation (1648) of the Philosophy of Descartes More had never given up the Neo-Platonic basis of his thought and his reaction against Descartes was due to his adherence to Neo-Platonism and not to "a reliance on spurious . . . forms of the supernatural"^{4.} as is suggested by Powicke.

More refused to accept Descartes' identification of Extension and Matter, for to the Neo-Platonist "space is an expression or emanation of the world-soul, not with matter but given to it by soul"^{5.} We must remember that Plotinus had himself devoted a considerable part of his Philosophy in defining the relation of Spirit and Matter or what he called "Yonder" and "Here", and as Dean Inge says "It is to Plotinus more than to any other thinker that we owe a definite doctrine of spiritual existence".^{6.}

Like Plotinus More also tried to establish the reality of spirit against the rationalistic and scientific materialisation of his age

1. Tulloch, Vol. II, page 369.

2. See Tulloch, Rational Theology, Vol. II, 373.

3. Ibid, page 368.

4. The Cambridge Platonists by F. J. Powicke, page 159.

5. The Philosophical writings of H. More edit. by F.A. Mackinnon, page 283.

6. The Philosophy of Plotinus, Vol. I. page 125.

(though he used the arguments of rationalism and the results of the scientific discoveries to refute the theories of his opponents), he examines and tests the arguments and doctrines of his contemporary Philosophers, Hobbes and Descartes, but he rejects those which do not fit into his scheme of things irrespective of their logical value and significance.

He has not the disinterested vision of the Philosopher who in his search for truth is ready to follow the arguments wheresoever they may lead him. "The value of his thought" says F.I. Mackinnon "is to be found first, in its historical significance as carrying on the tradition of mystical and vitalistic speculation, and secondly, in the vigor and insight with which he suggests certain conceptions which did not attain clear formulation until a triumphing idealism revealed its own creed of criticism and analysis"¹.

His conception of the reality of spirit was no doubt based on his own great experience of Illumination in which he saw into the life of things; and in his method of conducting his controversy in an impassioned and philosophical and reasoned manner, he followed the traditions of the group of the Cambridge Platonists to which he belonged.

Though he was interested as the other seventeenth century divines were (like Sir Thomas Browne and Thomas Vaughan) in Supernaturalism and the Jewish Cabalistic thought, his mysticism was essentially Christian and he was against all forms of mystical activity outside the church as that of ^{the} Familists. He at one time believed that the Quakers also belonged to the Familists, and tried his best to

1. The Philosophical Writings of H. More by F.I. Mackinnon, page XXIII.

convince Lady Conway of the unorthodox practices of the Quakers; he however later changed his view and declared that "those who persist in a serious and sincere desire of this sort of Knowledge which tends to life and godliness will at last return safe to Jesus Christ, the only Great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls".^{1.}

It was his rationalism which kept his mysticism within the bounds of the Anglican Church, and enabled him to revolt against the super-imposed Catholic faith.^{2.}

The significance of the mystical Philosophy of More in the history of the seventeenth century mysticism consists in his attempt to effect a synthesis between reason and religion, rationalism and mysticism, on the basis of the Neo-Platonic Philosophy.

Reason to him was an "oracle of God" but it could only be heard in the "holy temple" of the purified and illuminated soul.

He believed that there were "two temples of God, the one the Universe in which the divine Logos is high priest; the other, the rational soul whose priest is the true man"^{3.} and he recognised the importance of both of these in his Mystical Philosophy.

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1. The Cambridge Platonists by F.J. Powicke, page 169. He has refuted Familism and Quakerism in his "Grand Mystery of Godliness" -
 2. He thought the Roman "Polity" to be the "Grand Seat of Corruption". See ward, page 173.
 3. See Seventeenth Century Men of Latitude by E.A. George, page 128.

THE MYSTICAL ELEMENT IN THE RELIGIOUS POETRY

of

FRANCIS QUARLES.

Francis Quarles belongs more properly to the school of "theological wit" than to the group of the Metaphysical and mystical poets like Donne, Herbert Crashaw and Vaughan; like Sir John Davies and Phineas Fletcher he is moral rather than mystical in thought though he shows an intimate acquaintance with the mystical divines of the Middle Ages and has definite leanings towards mystical subjects. His earliest poem on the book of Jonah (The Feast of Worms (1620) was followed by other books of biblical paraphrase in which mystical elements are clearly discernible. In Sion's Sonnets (1625), he versified the Song of Songs, that fountainhead of mystical thought, and employed the essentially mystical language of earthly passion to symbolise the Spiritual Nuptials.

Dean Inge has at length explained the reasons for "the Mystical Interpretation of the Song of Solomon".¹

There is no erotic element in Platonic mysticism, and the idea of the spiritual marriage between the human Soul and God seems to have come into Christian mystical literature through the Greek Mysteries and Alexandrian Jewish sources. It were St. Bernard's homilies on the Song of Solomon which popularised the erotic symbolism in Christian mysticism but he had made it plain that the marriage which he conceived was not between the individual Soul and Christ, but Christ and his Church.

Dean Inge sums up the position of the Anglican Church when he says "The employment of erotic imagery to express the individual relation between Christ and the soul is always dangerous; but this objection does not apply to the statement that "the Church is the

1. Christian Mysticism by Dean Inge, Appendix D.

bride of Christ" This use of the "Sacrament" of marriage (as a symbol of the mystical union between Christ and the Church) which alone has the sanction of the New Testament, is one which, we hope, the Church will always treasure".^{1.}

It is in the latter sense of the mystical union between Christ and his Church that Quarles has used the imagery of the Song of Solomon. He does not make Sion's Sonnets a record of his own mystical experience of the marriage of his own Soul with Christ; his vision is not subjective but objective. Quarles says "To the Readers": "Excuse me for soaring so high, else give me leave to excuse myself; Indeed I flue with Eagle's feathers; otherwise I had not flowne or falne. It is the Song of Songs, I here present you with; The Author, King Solomon, the wisest of Kings; the matter mysticall, the divinest of subjects: The speakers, Christ the Bridegroome; the church, the Bride; the end, to invite you all to the wedding".^{2.}

Though these sonnets belong to the early years of Quarles' poetic activity, he shows great skill and mastery in the use of apt words; while his use of the erotic imagery is restrained and chaste. He has given an exquisite expression to the longing of the Church for Divine Love; the Bride (the Church) implores the Bridegroom (Christ) to inflame her soul with his love.

"O, Let the beautie of thy sunne-like face
Inflame my soule, and let thy glorie chace
Disloyall thoughts; Let not the world allure
My chaste desires, from a spouse, so pure;

1. Christian Mysticism, page 372. by Dean Inge.

2. Grosart, Vol.II., page 122.

But when as Time shall place me on thy throne,
 My feares will cease, and interrupt by none,
 I shall transcend the stile of Transitorie
 And full of glorie, still be fill'd with glorie".¹.

The Bridegroom emphasises the fact that his beauty does not consist in outward glory but inward grace.

"The sovereigne Lady of my select desires,
 I, I am Hee, whom thy chaste soule admires;
 The Rose, for smell, the Lilly, to the eye,
 Is not so sweet, is not so faire as I;
 My vailed beautie's not the glorious prize
 Of common sight; within, my beautie lies
 Yet ne'retheless, my glorie were but small,
 If I should want, to honour thee withall".².

He knows that the inner assimilation of the Word of God is only possible through the grace of Christ; thus appropriately enough the last sonnet is not the celebration of the marriage but the prayer of the Bride for the grace of Christ to strengthen her faith in her Lord.

"Most glorious Love, and honourable Lord,
 My heart's the vowed servant of thy word,
 But I am weake, and as a tender vine
 Shall fall, un-propt by that deare hand of thine:
 Assist me therefore"³.

It is instructive to compare Sion's Sonnets with "A Spiritual canticle of the Soul" of St. John of the Cross in which he freely

1. Grosart, Vol.II. page 123.

2. Ibid, page 124.

3. Ibid, page 132.

used the symbolism of the Song of Songs. St. John's Canticle is not a paraphrase of the Song of Solomon like that of Quarles, but it describes, as St. John says, "the career of a Soul from its first entrance on the service of God till it comes to the final state of perfection - the spiritual marriage. They refer accordingly to the three stages or ways of the spiritual training - the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways, some properties and effects of which they explain"¹, - and thus it embodies the personal experience of the "spiritual training" of St. John himself, and this fact gives a new quality and richness to the "spiritual canticle" which is absent from Quarles' "Sion's Sonnets". The canticle is a record of the saint's own journey on the Mystic Way from the time when he was crying,

"O my Love, where art Thou hiding?

Why hast Thou forsaken me?"².

to the great and sublime moment of the union which the saint has so artistically described in the last five stanzas of his great canticle. He says:

"In our common love rejoicing
 My Beloved, let us go
 To the summit of the mountain
 Whence the limpid waters flow.
 To the hill of contemplation,
 There each other to behold

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1. A Spiritual Canticle of The Soul by St. John of The Cross, Translated by David Lewis, page 13.
 2. The Living Flame of Love by St. John of The Cross, Translated by David Lewis, page 263. (This Volume is a collection of the Poems of the Saint).

In Thy beauty. - Let us enter
 Into mysteries untold".^{1.}

and then after describing the nature of the "dark and secret caverns", he quietly remarks,

"I went with my Beloved,
 Seen by no created eye".^{1.}

This reality of personal experience and spiritual exaltation which we recognise in St. John's Canticle (which is also based on the Song of Songs) is not to be found in Quarles' Paraphrase of the Song of Solomon.

"Job Militant" as Quarles tells us, "a work difficult and intricate... is not of the nature of a Parable.... but a true and faithful record of real passages, as appears by the holy scriptures, where the Spirit of God pleaseth to mention the name of this our Job"; but even in this poem, restricted in its scope as it is, Quarles has laid great stress on the significance of the Mystic Quest.

"Great Majesty, since Thou art everywhere,
 Oh why should I misdoubt thy Prescence here?
 I long have sought Thee, but my raging heart
 Ne'er quests, and cannot see Thee where Thou art.
 There's no defect in Thee, Thy light hath shin'd
 Nor can be hid, Great God, but I am blind."

But it was the popularity of Quarles' Emblems which, in the words of Philips, Milton's nephew, won for him "a wonderful veneration among the vulager". Though Quarles was not the originator of Emblems or the form of pictures with appropriate verses, he

1. The Living Flame of Love by St. John of The Cross, Translated by David Lewis, page 263. (This Volume is a collection of the Poems of the Saint).

undoubtedly wrote the best Emblem book of his age in English Poetry. Emblem books were quite popular in Quarles' time such as Whitney's Choice (1586) or Peacham's Minerva Britannia (1604) while the emblems of the famous Dutchman Alciatus were well known in England and were specially bound for King James I. when he ascended the English throne.

In the early years of the Elizabethan age, the Emblem could not be a popular form of poetic composition among the English poets, for they were too creative and exuberant to devote themselves to the writings of an Emblem which is essentially meditative and stationary in its concept. As the seventeenth century advanced and the Metaphysical habit of thought grew among the poets, the Emblem also gained in popularity. The emblem motive in the treatment and isolation of a single idea appears in Chapman.

The following depiction of the figure of death by him is not only drawn in the metaphysical manner, it is also, like an Emblem, stationary and has been elaborately drawn.

"Make Death an angel scaling of a heaven
 And crown him with the asterism of seven:
 To show he is the death of deadly sins:

 Hang on the ivory brawn of his right arm
 A bunch of golden keys; his left a swarm
 Of thrifty bees, in token we have done
 The year, our life's toil"

The poetic image in the Metaphysical poetry and as well as in the emblem is "laboured thoughtfully".¹

1. Miss E. Holmes, "Elizabethan Imagery".

Beachcroft has defined Emblem as a mode of thought and as a "species in the vast genus of poetic imagery"¹ which has definite relations to certain aspects of the Metaphysical poetry.

Emblem on the one hand has its relation with the scholastic allegory, and on the other with the Metaphysical habit of elaborating an abstract thought with a concrete similitude.

The difference between a symbol and Emblem consists in the relation of the idea to the image; the idea is inherent in the Symbol, but the connection of the image and its meaning in the Emblem is quite arbitrary.² The Divine Comedy of Dante is Emblematic in this sense that it is an arbitrary interpretation through concrete symbolism of the intellectual system of St. Thomas Aquinas. Donne has sometimes used the "emblem-motive" in the elaboration of his metaphysical conceits. The difficulties which the students of Donne have felt in the interpretation of Donne's poem "Primrose" are perhaps due to the presence of emblem motive in the poetic imagery used there.

The long title of the poem itself suggests that the poet has an Emblem in his mind "Upon the Primrose, being at Montgomery Castle, upon the hill on which it is situate", and again he points in the opening line of the poem to "this Primrose hill".

"Upon this Primrose hill

Where, if Heav'n would distill

A shoure of raine, each severall drop might goe

To his own Primrose, and grow Manna so!"³

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1. Quarles and the Emblem Habit, Dublin Review, No. 188. 1931.
 2. I am indebted to Beachcroft for this definition of the Symbol and the Emblem which he has himself borrowed from Mignault, a critic of Alciatus.
 3. The Poems of John Donne, by H.J.C. Grierson, 1933 - page 54.

The image in the emblem as in the lives quoted above is static so that the details may be closely examined and their meaning completely realised. This emblem-motive may further be discerned, in the characteristically Donnean images as a "bracelet of bright hair about the bone", "the stilt twin compasses" or in the following Similie of the "Emblem of Ark".

"In what torne ship so ever I embark
That ship shall be my emblem of Thy ark.
What sea so ever swallow me that flood
Shall be to me an emblem of Thy blood."

Herbert's poems such as "The Relique", "The Pulley", "The Collar" and "The Easter Wings" show the influence of Emblem on the Metaphysical habit of thought while Crashaw's poem "Carmen Deo Nostro" was accompanied in the first edition with the pictorial emblems which he had drawn himself.

Though Quarles' manner of handling certain kinds of poetic images is metaphysical in this sense that he brings a series of images to illustrate a single idea as Courthope says that Quarles "was perhaps the first writer of the theological school to introduce those multiplied images in illustration of a single thought which are so freely used in the poetry of George Herbert, Crashaw and Vaughan",¹ he is essentially allegorical in his poetic method. He interprets Scripture in the allegorical and scholastic manner. Quarles has himself given an account of his poetic method in his Preface to Hadassa:

1. Courthope - The History of English Poetry, Vol. III, page 207.

"As for the Matter (so farre as I have dealt) it is Canonical, and indighted by the Holy Spirit of God, not lyable to errour, and needs no balanching.

In it Theology sits as Queen, attended by her hand maid Philosophy; both concurring to make the understanding reader a good Divine and a wise Moralist."¹.

Thus like, the scholastic divines, he thought Philosophy to be a "handmaid" of Theology, and this attitude determined his manner of handling the Paraphrases of the holy Scriptures and as well as the emblem, that is, the idea precedes the Emblem and the poet does not see the idea inherent in the symbol which it represents. This conception of the Emblem is embodied in Quarles' Preface to his Emblems where he says "An Emblem is but a silent Parable Before the knowledge of letters, God was known by Hieroglyphicks: And indeed, what are the Heavens, the Earth, nay every creature, but Hieroglyphicks and Emblems of His Glory?"².

Quarles' Poetic style was not influenced by Donne or his followers, not because as Courthope has suggested that his "View of Nature and Life was firmly founded on the allegorical interpretation of Scripture"³ (for Donne himself interpreted Scripture in the approved scholastic and allegorical manner) but because the higher reaches of the subtle metaphysical thought were not accessible to the moralising and allegorizing habit of Quarles' mind.

But Quarles' handling of Emblem is both varied and original.

Each of the Emblems is based on some text of Scripture, which the poet enlarges in the form of a Meditation, this again is illustrated

1. Grosart, Vol. II, page 42.

2. Grosart, Vol. III, page 45.

by a pictorial engraving; he finishes each Emblem with several quotations from the Fathers followed by his own epigram. The pictorial engravings were not originally meant to illustrate Quarles' own ideas; they were borrowed from the Pia Desideria of Herman Hugo and in fact suggested to him the ideas which he elaborated in his Emblems.¹ The main characteristic of these engravings is that the Deity is represented as a child, an idea which is unwholesome to some minds while comforting to others. Isaac William in "The Baptistry," a work akin to that of Quarles, declared that Quarles' Emblems had made a special appeal to his mind because had represented God as,

"A child with more than angels' ken
 Mixing among the things of men.
 With warning dread and sweet control
 And more than manhood in Thy soul:
 With this huge world of sea and land
 A ball within Thine infant hand".

The Emblems are divided into five books and each book is divided into fifteen parts: each part being a meditation on a text of the holy Scriptures. Quarles' leanings towards the mystical element in the Bible are shown by his choice of the text from St. John, St. Paul, the Psalms and the canticles and the texts taken from the Old Testament emphasise the stern need of repentance and renunciation. The fathers whom he generally quotes are St. Chrysostome, St. Hierome, St. Gregory, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril, Anselm; the two most frequently quoted being St. Bernard and St. Augustine whom he quotes thirty-eight times in the Emblems.

1. For a fuller account of these Engravings see The Complete Works of Francis Quarles by A.B. Grosart, Vol.III.

A careful study of the religious poetry of Quarles shows that he was well-acquainted with the peculiarities and characteristics of the various stages of the Mystic Way; in fact he has emphasised the need of Purgation, and described the Joys of Illumination and Union in "The Emblems".

In the first book, Quarles has emphasised the effect of the Fall and the consequent loss of Freedom and purity which are the eternal heritage of man.

"uxorious Adam; whom thy Maker made.

Equall to Angels that excell in Pow'r,

What hast thou done? O why hast thou obey'd

Thy own destruction? Like a new-cropt flowre

How does the glory of thy beauty fade!

How are thy fortunes blasted in an houre!

How art thou cow'd, that hadst the pow'r to quell

The spite of new-fall'n Angels, baffle Hell,

And vie with those that stood and vanquish those that fell."¹

In his Meditations on the texts such as "All is vanitie and vexation of spirit" (Eccles: 2.17) "Woe be to you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep" (Luke 6.25), or "The World passeth away, and the lust thereof". (I. John 2.17) he emphasises the vanity of the world. The whole trend of Quarles' thought is shown by a suggestive quotation he has given from St. Augustine:

"Two severall Lovers built two generall cities; The love of God

buildeth a Jerusalem; the Love of the world buildeth a Babylon:

Let everyone enquire of himself what he loveth, and he shall resolve

1. Grosart, Vol. III, page 47.

himself of whence he is a citizen.^{1.}

The need of renunciation is urgent, for those who travel on the Mystic way have to reject this world of vanity in favour of the Heavenly World of Eternal glory and joy. To him the only way to be secure in the world is to renounce it.

"Nor length of dayes, nor solid strength of brain
 Can find a place wherein to rest secure,
 The world is various, and the earth is vain:
 There's nothing certain here, there's nothing sure:
 We trudge, we travel but from pain to pain,
 And what's our onely grief's our onely cure:
 The world's a torment; he that would endeavor
 To find the way to rest, must seek the way to leaveher".^{2.}

The need of repentance and disciplining of the self and the renunciation of the world is again emphasised in the second book; and like all other mystics he recognises that "Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and few there be that find it" which forms the text of XIth Meditation in Book 2nd.

"An easie good brings easie gains;
 But things of price are bought with pains:
 The pleasing way is not the right:
 He that would conquer Heav'n must fight".^{3.}

He asks in despair whether he could ever find an object for his "rambling love".

"Can nothing settle my uncertain breast,
 And fix my rambling love?"

1. Grosart, Vol. III, page 55.

2. Ibid, page 52.

3. Ibid, page 64.

"Can my affections find out nothing best?

But still and still remove?

Has earth no mercy? will no Ark of rest

Receive my restless Dove?"¹.

He himself replies that the real purgation is through the Cross and Christ alone can be the object of his love.

"My trust is in the cross: There lies my rest;

My fast, my sole delight:

Let cold-mouth'd Boreas or the hot-mouth'd East

Blow till they burst with spight:

Let earth and hell conspire their worst, their best,

And joyn their twisted might:

Let showres of thunderbolts dart down and wound me,

And troups of fiends surround me,

And this may well confront; all this shall nev'r confound me".².

He realises that those who have passed the Stage of Purgation and, as he says, have been "rebaptiz'd with holy fire" need not renounce the world wholly, for they have developed the faculty of discerning the glory of the Creator in His creation. Addressing the men who have passed the stage of Purgation and experienced the joys of Illumination, he says:

"And you, whose am'rous, whose select desires

Would feel the warmth of those transcendent fires,

Which (like the rising sun) put out the light

Of Venus' star, and turn her day to night;

1. Grosart, Vol. III, page 69.

2. Ibid, page 65.

You that would love, and have your passions crown'd
 With greater happiness than can be found
 In your own wishes;
 draw ye near:

Shake hands with earth, and let your soul respect
 Her joys no further than her joys reflect
 Upn her Maker's glory:"¹.

The book third and the succeeding fourth and fifth books relate the story of the passionate longing of the Soul for God, Joyous illumination and blissful union with Him. He asks in tender loving tones why God does not reveal his lovely face to him?

"Why dost thou shade thy lovely face? O why
 Doth that eclipsing hand so long deny
 The sun-shine of thy soul-enliv'ning eye?"².

He knows that an existence separate from God has no meaning.

"Without that Light what remains in me?
 Thou art my Life, my way, my Light; in thee
 I live, I move, and by thy beams I see".².

To support his main idea in this meditation, he has quoted a famous passage from St. Augustine in which he has expressed his longing for Christ. This quotation further illustrates the mystical longing of Quarles for the love of Christ.

"Why dost thou hide thy face? Happily thou wilt say none can see thy face and live: Ah Lord, let me die, that I may see thee; let me see thee, that I may die: I would not live but die. That I

1. Grosart, Vol. III, Emblems, bk. III, Page 68.
 2. Grosart, Vol. III, page 72.

may see Christ, I desire death; That I may live with Christ, I despise life".¹

In the fourth book we see "the death of vices and the Life of Virtues"²; but the poet has not yet been blessed with the vision of God in Illumination.

"I see my errour; 'Tis not strange I could not
Find out my love: I sought him where I should not.
Thou art not found in downy beds of ease;
Alas, thy musick strikes on harder keyes:
Nor art thou found by that false, feeble light
Of Nature's candle; our Egyptian night
Is more then common darknesse; nor can we
Expect a morning, but what breaks from thee".³

It is in the fifth book that Quarles gives us an account of the joys of Illumination and Union. It is in the third Meditation (V.BK) on the text "My beloved is mine, and I am his; He feedeth among the lillies". (Canticles 2.16), that Quarles reached the high-water mark of his achievement both as a mystic and poet. Though the central idea of the Union of the Soul with God must have been suggested to him by the essentially mystical text which he chose for this meditation, we can not help feeling that it embodies to a certain extent his own experience of the love of God.

1.

"Ev'n like two little bank-dividing brooks,
That wash the pebbles with their wanton streams,

-
1. Grosart, Vol. III, page 73.
2. Ibid, page 83.
3. Ibid, page 85.

And having rang'd and search'd a thousand nooks,
 Meet both at length in silver-breasted Thames,
 Wherein a greater current they conjoyn:
 So I my best-beloved's am: So he is mine.

2.

Ev'n so we met; and after long pursuit,
 Ev'n so we joyn'd; we both became entire;
 No need for either to renew suit,
 For I was flax and he was flames of fire.
 Our firm united souls did more than entwine;
 So I my best-beloved's am; so he is mine.

3.

Nor Time, nor Place, nor chance, nor Death can bow
 My least desires unto the least remove;
 He's firmly mine by oath; I his by vow;
 He's mine by faith; and I am his by love;
 He's mine by water; I am his by wine;
 Thus I my best-beloved's am; thus he is mine".¹.

But in spite of the sublimity of the mystical vision in the above lines, we can not definitely say that it represents Quarles' own experience of his union with God. In his XIIth Meditation in the same book he seems to suggest that he did not believe that a direct vision of God was possible in our present life. We can not see him Face to Face, but only through the "eye" of grace.

1. Grosart, Vol. III, page 91.

"O when shall I

View the full beams of thy Meridian eye?

Draw, draw this fleshy curtain, that denies

The gracious presence of thy glorious eyes;

Or give me faith; and by the eye of grace;

I shall behold thee, though not face to face".^{1.}

The difficulty in separating the personal element from the traditional element in the religious poetry of Quarles is inherent in all forms of Biblical paraphrase. The Bible and above all the Canticles and the Psalms are so rich in mystical emotion that their paraphrase in verse ultimately leads to the production of a fine mystical poem in which it is difficult to judge the reality of the mystical experience of the poet himself.

Cowley declared that "If any man design to compose a sacred poem by only turning a story of scripture, like Mr Quarles, or some other godly matter, like Mr Heywood of Angels, into rhyme, he is so far from elevating of poesy that he only abuses Divinity".^{2.}

Though we may not agree with Cowley that all forms of Scriptural paraphrase are an abuse of Divinity, it is true that this kind of religious verse does not give the poet a complete freedom and opportunity to embody his own personal religious or mystical experience.

Quarles had early realised, like all mystics, that knowledge of Truth can not be attained through reason and intellect.

1. Grosart, Vol. III, page 98.

2. Cowley's Preface to "Sacred Poem of the Troubles of David".

He wondered that such an "illustrious witt" as Raymond Sebond should try to know Truth through learning.¹

"So great a Folly, as to goe about,
 By Nature's feeble Light, to blazon out
 Such Heav'n -bred Mistryes; which the hearts of Men
 Cannot conceive, much less the darkened Pen
 Express, such secrets, at whose depth, the Quire
 Of blessed Angels tremble, and admire:
 Could thy vaine-glory lend no easier taske
 To thy sublime Attempt, then to unmaske
 The glorious Trinity; whose Triune face
 Was ne're discovered by the eye of Grace,
 Much less by th' eye of Nature, being a story
 Objected only to the Eye of Glory"².

This realisation of the inadequacy of knowledge had perhaps led him to a life of meditation and piety; we have the testimony of his wife, Ursula that Quarles spent much of his time in Meditation and Prayer.

"As for God he was frequent in his devotions and prayers to Him, and almost constant in reading or meditating on His Word
 As for his religion he was a true son of the Church of England, an even Protestant when he was at home, his exhortations to us to continue in Virtue and godly life, were so pious and frequent, his admonitions so grave and piercing, his

1. "On Raymond Sebond", Grosart, Vol. II, page 225.

2. Grosart, Vol. II, Divine Fancies, - "On Raymond Sebond" page 225. Montaigne had made the philosophy of Raymond Sebond in his "Apology" famous.

reprehensions so mild and gentle, and, above all, his own example in every religious and moral duty so constant and manifest, that his equal may be desired, but can hardly be met withal.

. . . The blessed end of my dear husband was every way answerable to his godly life, or rather, indeed surpassed it; for, as gold is purified in the fire, so were all his Christian virtues more refined and remarkable during the time of his sicknessand that God had forgiven him his sins, and, that night, sealed him his pardon. The rest of his time he spent in contemplation of God and meditating upon His Word, especially upon Christ's sufferings."1.

Though it is doubtful that Quarles' himself enjoyed a direct vision of God in Illumination,⁽²⁾ he has given an exquisite expression to the mystical emotions of Divine Love in his poems especially in "Sion's Sonnets"; and in his meditations on the Canticles (in his Emblems), he has not only shown his definite leanings towards mysticism but has also displayed the qualities of "a penetrative and fine thinker".^{3.}

1. Grosart, Vol.I, pages XXII, XIII. 2. There is no word of it
3. Grosart, Introduction, page XXV. (in his poems.

Appendix to chapter IV.

The religious poems of R. Crashaw arranged according to their various themes.

Christ. 1646 Edition.

on "Lords Baptisme"

Sepulchre of our Lord.

Christs wounds.

Come see the place where the Lord lay.

I am the doore.

Come see the place where the Lord lay.

And he answered nothing.

Neither durst any man from that day aske him any more questions.

Upon our Saviours Tombe wherein never man was laid.

Upon our Lords last comfortable discourse with his disciples.

But now they have seen and hated.

Upon the Thornes taken down from our Lords head, bloody.

She began to was his feet with tears.

Our Lord in circumcision to his Father.

On the wound of our crucified Lord.

On our crucified Lord naked and bloody.

On the bleeding wounds of our crucified Lord.

A Himne on the Nativity sung by Shepherds.

A Himne for the circumcision of our Lord.

Poems in 1648 Edition.

New Years Day.

To the Name above every name.

In glorious Epiphanie of our Lord.

The office of the Holy crosse.

The song of Divine Love.

Evensong.

Complaine.

Charitas Nimia.

Poems in 1652 edition.

The office of the Holy crosse (enlarged).

(2) The Virgin Mary. 1646 Edition.

On the blessed Virgin's bashfulnesse.

Blessed be the Paps which then hast sucked.

In 1648 Edition.

Sancta Maria.

The Virgin Mother.

On the Assumption.

(3) The Saints and Martyrs of the Church. 1646 Edition.

The Weeper.

The Tear.

The sick implore St. Peters shadow.

To the Infant Martyrs.

Upon Lazarus his Teares.

Upon the Infant Martyrs.

On St. Peter casting away his nets at our Saviours call.

In memory of the Virtuouse and Learned Lady. Madre de Teresa.

An Apologie for the precedent Himne.

1648 Edition.

The Flaming Heart.

(4) Church ceremonies and Festivals. 1646 Edition.

Easter Day.

1648 Edition.

A Hymn of the church.

A Hymn on the Blessed Sacrament.

The Hymn of Sainte Thomas in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

5) On Miracles.

On the Miracle of Multiplied Loaves.

The dumb healed.

On the Miracle of the Loaves.

The blind cured by the word of our Saviour.

To our Lord upon the Water made wine.

Upon the dum divell cast out.

6) Other Poems. 1646 Edition,

On a Prayer booke sent to Mrs. M.R.

On Master George Herberts booke sent to a Gentlewoman.

On a Treatise of charity.

Upon Bishop Andrewes.

On Hope.

1648 Edition.

Description of a Religious House.

To the Queen's Majesty.

1652 Edition.

To the Countess of Denbigh.

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