

**Chapter 1 : CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: Mysticism**

*False mysticism ignores the statement found in Jude that there is a faith or system of belief "once delivered unto the saints," and that when the Spirit is promised to "guide into all truth" (John ), it is only the truth contained in the Scriptures (cf. 1 Corinthians ,10).*

Peterson is seeking to convey within his Bible version. On the back of his Proverbs Version, he writes, "Discover ancient wisdom you can use in your life today. Peterson goes on to say that his version of "Proverbs makes these words of ancient wisdom accessible to modern generations On the cover page of his New Testament, Mr. Peterson writes, "The Message is a contemporary rendering of the Bible from the original languages, crafted to present its tone, rhythm, events and ideas in everyday speech. Peterson has "crafted" Masonic initiation practices into his version - see Appendix I. Therefore, this study seeks to look at only the paraphrased verses that relate specifically to mysticism, rather than addressing the Greek changes, because most of the Greek changes deal with removed portions of Scripture, and it is much easier to see what "Message" Mr. As for the other endorsers, one is reminded of the old saying, "birds of a feather flock together;" or, as the Lord so wisely said in Matt. After you have finished studying this material, hopefully you will have lost your appetite for this dish. A changed Bible will change three things: This study seeks to show that Mr. The following statement by Eugene Peterson in his article, "Spirit guest," published by Christianity Today , reveals that he is inclined toward mysticism himself. He refers to two mystics, Juliana of Norwich and Teresa of Avila, whom he looks to for personal spiritual encouragement. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good, Abstain from all appearance of evil. The 3 issues mentioned above are the very things that are dealt with in the following study. In the light of I. After studying these issues, we hope that you will come to the same conclusions. Christianity must embrace mysticism "Embracing the Cosmic Christ will demand a paradigm shift, and it will empower us for that shift; a shift We have to turn elsewhere Bible to be interpreted and taught allegorically, not literally "There always has been and Christian doctrine to be changed "We have in the Modernist Movement some kind of attempt within the Church itself to bring Christian doctrines more into line with our modern knowledge and our modern concepts as to the nature of Man and the Universe in which he lives. But can Christian doctrine be thus reconstructed if the Bible is to be taken in its literal narrative and word? The Bible, then, along with other Scriptures, having its origin in this same Ancient Wisdom or Gnosis New Bibles will contain new Gospel and new message "Judaism is old, obsolete and separatist and has not true message for the spiritually-minded The Christian faith has also served its purpose; its founder seeks to bring a new Gospel and a new message that will enlighten all men everywhere. Mysticism to be taught in Christian and Jewish seminaries "Education for Deep Ecumenism - Courses in the mystics, and above all courses that bring out the mystic in each minister, rabbi, or priest-to-be, must be taught in our seminaries" Fox, p. Mysticism to be made accessible to average person "In rare instances these esoteric teachings [Ancient Wisdom] have been presented by an initiate to the public in a way which has made it accessible to the average person Those teaching mysticism to the Church will deny it "Occult writings often twist everything. Strangely enough, many readers fall prey to this deception when the teachings are disguised as something spiritual or "Christian. New Age mysticism to be promoted by the Church and Masonry " The three main channels through which the preparation for the new age is going on might be regarded as the Church, the Masonic Fraternity and the educational field" Cuddy, "President Clinton," p. Mysticism will become the universal religion through the ecumenical movement "A living cosmology cannot happen from science and art alone. Mysticism too must be integral to this awakening, basic to this global renaissance. Indeed, the new science is demanding a mystical awakening Yet mysticism - which represents the depth of religious traditions the world over - has never been tried on an ecumenical level. We have no inkling what power would ensue for creativity, for employing one another, for exciting the young to deep adventures once again World Bible to be based on mysticism "In her Seducers concerning the Bible will become worse and worse, not just "things" II. Message- Unscrupulous con men will continue to exploit the faith. Inspiration of the Bible a. God inspired holy men - not women - to write it II. Every word, not just every part, was inspired

by God II. The Bible is a record of what God thinks and speaks, not of what man thinks and speaks. Every word, not just every promise, of God is pure Prov. Interpretation of the Bible a. Those who are unstable in their doctrine will twist difficult verses II. Message- Some things Paul writes are difficult to understand. They do it to the rest of the Scriptures, too, destroying themselves as they do it. Translation of the Bible a. Many have corrupted the Bible II. Rather, we keep everything we do and say out in the open, the whole truth on display, so that those who want to can see and judge for themselves in the presence of God. We are to guard the sound words of Scripture, not guard our faith and love II. Message- So keep at your work, this faith and love rooted in Christ, exactly as I set it out for you. Avoid those who teach doctrine contrary to what you have learned Ro. Warnings concerning the changing of Scripture Rev. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

## Chapter 2 : Truth - Wikipedia

*In my program *Mysticism: Truth of Falsity*, the deceptions are removed, allowing us to see what precious and profound treasures lie concealed and largely forgotten. In future presentations on philosophy and the western magical tradition, the story will be disclosed further.*

Constructivist epistemology Social constructivism holds that truth is constructed by social processes, is historically and culturally specific, and that it is in part shaped through the power struggles within a community. Constructivism views all of our knowledge as "constructed," because it does not reflect any external "transcendent" realities as a pure correspondence theory might hold. Rather, perceptions of truth are viewed as contingent on convention, human perception, and social experience. It is believed by constructivists that representations of physical and biological reality, including race , sexuality , and gender , are socially constructed. Giambattista Vico was among the first to claim that history and culture were man-made. Hegel and Marx were among the other early proponents of the premise that truth is, or can be, socially constructed. Marx, like many critical theorists who followed, did not reject the existence of objective truth but rather distinguished between true knowledge and knowledge that has been distorted through power or ideology. For Marx, scientific and true knowledge is "in accordance with the dialectical understanding of history" and ideological knowledge is "an epiphenomenal expression of the relation of material forces in a given economic arrangement". Consensus theory of truth Consensus theory holds that truth is whatever is agreed upon, or in some versions, might come to be agreed upon, by some specified group. Such a group might include all human beings, or a subset thereof consisting of more than one person. Pragmatic theory of truth The three most influential forms of the pragmatic theory of truth were introduced around the turn of the 20th century by Charles Sanders Peirce , William James , and John Dewey. Although Peirce uses words like concordance and correspondence to describe one aspect of the pragmatic sign relation , he is also quite explicit in saying that definitions of truth based on mere correspondence are no more than nominal definitions, which he accords a lower status than real definitions. Defined and named by William Ernest Hocking , this variation is known as "negative pragmatism". Essentially, what works may or may not be true, but what fails cannot be true because the truth always works. For Peirce, the idea of " As Feynman noted, an idea or theory " Pragmatism and negative pragmatism are also closely aligned with the coherence theory of truth in that any testing should not be isolated but rather incorporate knowledge from all human endeavors and experience. The universe is a whole and integrated system, and testing should acknowledge and account for its diversity. As Feynman said, " Deflationary theory of truth Modern developments in the field of philosophy, starting with the relatively modern notion that a theory being old does not necessarily imply that it is completely flawless, have resulted in the rise of a new thesis: This thesis is in part a response to the common use of truth predicates e. In common parlance, truth predicates are not commonly heard, and it would be interpreted as an unusual occurrence were someone to utilise a truth predicate in an everyday conversation when asserting that something is true. Newer perspectives that take this discrepancy into account and work with sentence structures that are actually employed in common discourse can be broadly described: Among the theoretical concerns of these views is to explain away those special cases where it does appear that the concept of truth has peculiar and interesting properties. In addition to highlighting such formal aspects of the predicate "is true", some deflationists point out that the concept enables us to express things that might otherwise require infinitely long sentences. This assertion can also be succinctly expressed by saying: What Michael says is true. The idea that some statements are more actions than communicative statements is not as odd as it may seem. Consider, for example, that when the bride says "I do" at the appropriate time in a wedding, she is performing the act of taking this man to be her lawful wedded husband. She is not describing herself as taking this man, but actually doing so perhaps the most thorough analysis of such "illocutionary acts" is J. Strawson holds that a similar analysis is applicable to all speech acts, not just illocutionary ones: Redundancy theory of truth According to the redundancy theory of truth , asserting that a statement is true is completely equivalent to asserting the statement itself. Redundancy theorists infer from this premise that truth is a redundant concept; that is, it is merely a word that

is traditionally used in conversation or writing, generally for emphasis, but not a word that actually equates to anything in reality. This theory is commonly attributed to Frank P. Ramsey , who held that the use of words like fact and truth was nothing but a roundabout way of asserting a proposition, and that treating these words as separate problems in isolation from judgment was merely a "linguistic muddle". A version of this theory was defended by C. Williams in his book *What is Truth?*. Consider the analogy between the sentence "Snow is white" and the character named Snow White, both of which can be true in some sense. To a minimalist, saying "Snow is white is true" is the same as saying "Snow is white," but to say "Snow White is true" is not the same as saying "Snow White. Philosophical skepticism and Certainty Philosophical skepticism is generally any questioning attitude or doubt towards one or more items of knowledge or belief which ascribe truth to their assertions and propositions. Philosophical skepticism comes in various forms. Radical forms of skepticism deny that knowledge or rational belief is possible and urge us to suspend judgment regarding ascription of truth on many or all controversial matters. More moderate forms of skepticism claim only that nothing can be known with certainty, or that we can know little or nothing about the "big questions" in life, such as whether God exists or whether there is an afterlife. Religious skepticism is "doubt concerning basic religious principles such as immortality, providence, and revelation ". Pluralist theories of truth Several of the major theories of truth hold that there is a particular property the having of which makes a belief or proposition true. Pluralist theories of truth assert that there may be more than one property that makes propositions true: Propositions about the physical world might be true by corresponding to the objects and properties they are about. Some of the pragmatic theories, such as those by Charles Peirce and William James , included aspects of correspondence, coherence and constructivist theories. In some discourses, Wright argued, the role of the truth predicate might be played by the notion of superassertibility.

**Chapter 3 : Religious views on truth - Wikipedia**

*NOTE: The foregoing summaries are all drawn from material in High Mysticism; there is further explication of number in Scientific Christian Mental Practice. Comparison of ideas therein with the foregoing will provoke unusual insight.*

Thus at the age of thirty-three he had attained to one of the most distinguished positions in the academic world of his day. Four years later, however, he had to meet a crisis; it had physical symptoms but it was primarily religious. He came to feel that the one thing that mattered was avoidance of Hell and attainment of Paradise, and he saw that his present way of life was too worldly to have any hope of eternal reward. After a severe inner struggle he left Baghdad to take up the life of a wandering ascetic. Though later he returned to the task of teaching, the change that occurred in him at this crisis was permanent. He was now a religious man, not just a worldly teacher of religious sciences. He died at Tus in It is autobiographical, yet not exactly an autobiography. It presents us with an intellectual analysis of his spiritual growth, and also offers arguments in defence of the view that there is a form of human apprehension higher than rational apprehension, namely, that of the prophet when God reveals truths to him. Moreover close study shows that al-Ghazali does not always observe strict chronology, but has schematized his description of his intellectual development. Al-Ghazali introduces his discussions in a manner reminiscent of Descartes. Al-Ghazali had been brought up in this tradition, and did not cease to be a theologian when he became a mystic. His criticism of the theologians is mild. He regards contemporary theology as successful in attaining its aims, but inadequate to meet his own special needs because it did not go far enough in the elucidation of its assumptions. There was no radical change in his theological views when he became a mystic, only a change in his interests, and some of his earlier works in the field of dogmatics are quoted with approval in al-Munqidh. Their philosophy was a form of Neoplatonism, sufficiently adapted to Islamic monotheism for them to claim to be Muslims. Though the part they played in stimulating the medieval Christian scholastics is acknowledged, the contribution of these men to the intellectual progress of mankind as a whole has not yet been fully appreciated. To the great body of Muslims, however, some of their positions were unacceptable, because they tended to contradict principles essential to the daily life of believing Muslims. Undoubtedly al-Ghazali learnt much from these Neoplatonists, but the allegations that he finally adopted some of their fundamental principles, which he had earlier criticized, are to be denied, since they are based on works falsely attributed to al-Ghazali. Sufism, however, was usually something more than asceticism, and the strictly mystical elements which it contained often led to heterodox theology. Al-Ghazali was at great pains to keep his mysticism in harmony with orthodox dogma and with the performance of the common religious duties. The second of the books translated below, *The Beginning of Guidance Bidayat al-Hidayah*, presents one side of the teaching there given, namely, the religious practices and the conduct in social relationships which al-Ghazali set up as an ideal. The ideal resembles that of a monastic third order with a very strict rule; it does not seem to be suited to the hurried life of a modern city. Al-Ghazali has sometimes been acclaimed in both East and West as the greatest Muslim after Muhammad, and he is by no means unworthy of that dignity. His greatness rests above all on two things: Yet perhaps the greatest thing about al-Ghazali was his personality, and it may yet again be a source of inspiration. Deep study of al-Ghazali may suggest to Muslims steps to be taken if they are to deal successfully with the contemporary situation. Christians, too, now that the world is in a cultural melting-pot, must be prepared to learn from Islam, and are unlikely to find a more sympathetic guide than al-Ghazali. For an explanation of the technical terms connected with the Worship see the above volume, or *Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. I have deviated from the printed text of al-Munqidh at the following points: And blessings be upon Muhammad the Chosen, the Prophet and Messenger, and on his house and his Companions, who guide men away from error. You have asked me, my brother in religion, to show you the aims and inmost nature of the sciences and the perplexing depths of the religious systems. You have begged me to relate to you the difficulties I encountered in my attempt to extricate the truth from the confusion of contending sects and to distinguish the different ways and methods, and the venture I made in climbing from the plain of naive and second-hand belief taqlid to the peak of direct vision. You would know, too, what essential truths became clear to me in my manifold investigation

into the doctrines held by men, why I gave up teaching in Baghdad although I had many students, and why I returned to it at Naysabur Nishapur after a long interval. I am proceeding to answer your request, for I recognise that your desire is genuine. You must know-and may God most high perfect you in the right way and soften your hearts to receive the truth-that the different religious observances and religious communities of the human race and likewise the different theological systems of the religious leaders, with all the multiplicity of sects and variety of practices, constitute ocean depths in which the majority drown and only a minority reach safety. From my early youth, since I attained the age of puberty before I was twenty, until the present time when I am over fifty, I have ever recklessly launched out into the midst of these ocean depths, I have ever bravely embarked on this open sea, throwing aside all craven caution; I have poked into every dark recess, I have made an assault on every problem, I have plunged into every abyss, I have scrutinized the creed of every sect, I have tried to lay bare the inmost doctrines of every community. All this have I done that I might distinguish between true and false, between sound tradition and heretical innovation. Whenever I meet one of the Batiniyah, I like to study his creed; whenever I meet one of the Zahiriyah, I want to know the essentials of his belief. To thirst after comprehension of things as they really are was my habit and custom from a very early age. It was instinctive with me, a part of my God-given nature, a matter of temperament and not of my choice or contriving. Consequently as I drew near the age of adolescence the bonds of mere authority taqlid ceased to hold me and inherited beliefs lost their grip upon me, for I saw that Christian youths always grew up to be Christians, Jewish youths to be Jews and Muslim youths to be Muslims. I heard, too, the Tradition related of the Prophet of God according to which he said: My inmost being was moved to discover what this original nature really was and what the beliefs derived from the authority of parents and teachers really were. The attempt to distinguish between these authority-based opinions and their principles developed the mind, for in distinguishing the true in them from the false differences appeared. I therefore said within myself: It was plain to me that sure and certain knowledge is that knowledge in which the object is disclosed in such a fashion that no doubt remains along with it, that no possibility of error or illusion accompanies it, and that the mind cannot even entertain such a supposition. Certain knowledge must also be infallibly; and this infallibility or security from error is such that no attempt to show the falsity of the knowledge can occasion doubt or denial, even though the attempt is made by someone who turns stones into gold or a rod into a serpent. Thus, I know that ten is more than three. Let us suppose that someone says to me: No doubts about what I know are raised in me because of this. The only result is that I wonder precisely how he is able to produce this change. Of doubt about my knowledge there is no trace. After these reflections I knew that whatever I do not know in this fashion and with this mode of certainty is not reliable and infallible knowledge; and knowledge that is not infallible is not certain knowledge. I must first bring these to be judged in order that I may be certain on this matter. Is my reliance on sense-perception and my trust in the soundness of necessary truths of the same kind as my previous trust in the beliefs I had merely taken over from others and as the trust most men have in the results of thinking? I proceeded therefore with extreme earnestness to reflect on sense-perception and on necessary truths, to see whether I could make myself doubt them. The outcome of this protracted effort to induce doubt was that I could no longer trust sense-perception either. Doubt began to spread here and say: The most powerful sense is that of sight. Yet when it looks at the shadow sc. Then by experiment and observation after an hour it knows that the shadow is moving and, moreover, that it is moving not by fits and starts but gradually and steadily by infinitely small distances in such a way that it is never in a state of rest. Again, it looks at the heavenly body sc. In this and similar cases of sense-perception the sense as judge forms his judgements, but another judge, the intellect, shows him repeatedly to be wrong; and the charge of falsity cannot be rebutted. To this I said: You used to trust in me; then along came the intellect judge and proved me wrong; if it were not for the intellect judge you would have continued to regard me as true. Perhaps behind intellectual apprehension there is another judge who, if he manifests himself, will show the falsity of intellect in its judging, just as, when intellect manifested itself, it showed the falsity of sense in its judging. My ego hesitated a little about the reply to that, and sense-perception heightened the difficulty by referring to dreams. And is it not the case that when you awake you know that all you have imagined and believed is unfounded and ineffectual? Why then are you confident that all your waking beliefs, whether from sense or

intellect, are genuine? They are true in respect of your present state; but it is possible that a state will come upon you whose relation to your waking consciousness is analogous to the relation of the latter to dreaming. In comparison with this state your waking consciousness would be like dreaming! When you have entered into this state, you will be certain that all the suppositions of your intellect are empty imaginings. So perhaps life in this world is a dream by comparison with the world to come; and when a man dies, things come to appear differently to him from what he now beholds, and at the same time the words are addressed to him: When these thoughts had occurred to me and penetrated my being, I tried to find some way of treating my unhealthy condition; but it was not easy. Such ideas can only be repelled by demonstration; but a demonstration requires a knowledge of first principles; since this is not admitted, however, it is impossible to make the demonstration. The disease was baffling, and lasted almost two months, during which I was a sceptic in fact though not in theory nor in outward expression. At length God cured me of the malady; my being was restored to health and an even balance; the necessary truths of the intellect became once more accepted, as I regained confidence in their certain and trustworthy character. This did not come about by systematic demonstration or marshalled argument, but by a light which God most high cast into my breast. That light is the key to the greater part of knowledge. That light at certain times gushes from the spring of Divine generosity, and for it one must watch and wait as Muhammad peace be upon him said: The point of these accounts is that the task is perfectly fulfilled when the quest is prosecuted up to the stage of seeking what is not sought but stops short of that. For first principles are not sought, since they are present and to hand; and if what is present is sought for, it becomes hidden and lost. When, however, a man seeks what is sought and that only, he is not accused of falling short in the seeking of what is sought. I said within myself: These are the people who tread the paths of the quest for truth. If the truth is not with them, no point remains in trying to apprehend the truth. There is certainly no point in trying to return to the level of naive and derivative belief taqlid once it has been left, since a condition of being at such a level is that one should not know one is there; when a man comes to know that, the glass of his naive beliefs is broken. This is a breakage which cannot be mended, a breakage not to be repaired by patching or by assembling of fragments. The Science of Theology: I read the books of sound theologians and myself wrote, some books on the subject. But it was a science, I found, which, though attaining its own aim, did not attain mine. Its aim was merely to preserve the creed of orthodoxy and to defend it against the deviations of heretics. But Satan too sent, in the suggestions of heretics, things contrary to orthodoxy; men tended to accept his suggestions and almost corrupted the true creed for its adherents. So God brought into being the class of theologians, and moved them to support traditional orthodoxy with the weapon of systematic argument by laying bare the confused doctrines invented by the heretics at variance with traditional orthodoxy. This is the origin of theology and theologians. In due course a group of theologians performed the task to which God invited them; they successfully preserved orthodoxy, defended the creed received from the prophetic source and rectified heretical innovations. For the most part their efforts were devoted to making explicit the contradictions of their opponents and criticizing them in respect of the logical consequences of what they admitted. This was of little use in the case of one who admitted nothing at all save logically necessary truths.

**Chapter 4 : Mysticism: Truth or Falsity - michaeltsarion**

*Genuine mysticism, in other words, recognizes that the distinctions between the One and the Many, between Heaven and Earth, between Body and Soul, are subtle forms of duality. The radical nondual Truth is comprehensive of both the One and the Many, both Heaven and Earth, both Body and Soul, both God and the world.*

From myein, to initiate. Mysticism, according to its etymology, implies a relation to mystery. In philosophy, Mysticism is either a religious tendency and desire of the human soul towards an intimate union with the Divinity, or a system growing out of such a tendency and desire. As a philosophical system, Mysticism considers as the end of philosophy the direct union of the human soul with the Divinity through contemplation and love, and attempts to determine the processes and the means of realizing this end. This contemplation, according to Mysticism, is not based on a merely analogical knowledge of the Infinite, but as a direct and immediate intuition of the Infinite. According to its tendency, it may be either speculative or practical, as it limits itself to mere knowledge or traces duties for action and life; contemplative or affective, according as it emphasizes the part of intelligence or the part of the will; orthodox or heterodox, according as it agrees with or opposes the Catholic teaching. We shall give a brief historical sketch of Mysticism and its influence on philosophy, and present a criticism of it. Historical sketch In his "History of Philosophy", Cousin mentions four systems, between which, he says, philosophical thought has continually wavered, viz. Whatever may be thought of this classification, it is true that Mysticism has exercised a large influence on philosophy, becoming at times the basis of whole systems, but more often entering as an element into their constitution. Mysticism dominated in the symbolic philosophy of ancient Egypt. The Taoism of the Chinese philosopher Lao-tze is a system of metaphysics and ethics in which Mysticism is a fundamental element cf. The same may be said of Indian philosophy; the end of human reflection and effort in Brahmanism and Vedantism is to deliver the soul from its transmigrations and absorb it into Brahma forever. There is little of Mysticism in the first schools of Greek philosophy, but it already takes a large place in the system of Plato, e. The Alexandrian Jew Philo 30 B. The most systematic attempt at a philosophical system of a mystical character was that of the Neoplatonic School of Alexandria, especially of Plotinus A. His system is a syncretism of the previous philosophies on the basis of Mysticism--an emanative and pantheistic Monism. Above all being, there is the One absolutely indetermined, the absolutely Good. From it come forth through successive emanations intelligence nous with its ideas, the world-soul with its plastic forces logoi spermatikoi, matter inactive, and the principle of imperfection. The human soul had its existence in the world-soul until it was united with matter. The end of human life and of philosophy is to realize the mystical return of the soul to God. Freeing itself from the sensuous world by purification katharsis, the human soul ascends by successive steps through the various degrees of the metaphysical order, until it unites itself in a confused and unconscious contemplation to the One, and sinks into it: With Christianity, the history of Mysticism enters into a new period. The Fathers recognized indeed the partial truth of the pagan system, but they pointed out also its fundamental errors. They made a distinction between reason and faith, philosophy and theology; they acknowledged the aspirations of the soul, but, at the same time, they emphasized its essential inability to penetrate the mysteries of Divine life. They taught that the vision of God is the work of grace and the reward of eternal life; in the present life only a few souls, by a special grace, can reach it. On these principles, the Christian school of Alexandria opposed the true gnosis based on grace and faith to the Gnostic heresies. Augustine teaches indeed that we know the essences of things in rationibus aeternis, but this knowledge has its starting point in the data of sense cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, in his various works, gave a systematic treatment of Christian Mysticism, carefully distinguishing between rational and mystical knowledge. By the former, he says, we know God, not in His nature, but through the wonderful order of the universe, which is a participation of the Divine ideas "De Divinis Nominibus". There is, however, he adds, a more perfect knowledge of God possible in this life, beyond the attainments of reason even enlightened by faith, through which the soul contemplates directly the mysteries of Divine light. The contemplation in the present life is possible only to a few privileged souls, through a very special grace of God: The works of Pseudo-Dionysius exercised a great influence on the following ages. In the

twelfth century, orthodox Mysticism was presented under a systematic form by the Victorines, Hugh, Walter, and Richard cf. A legitimate element of Mysticism, more or less emphasized, is found in the works of the Schoolmen of the thirteenth century. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was, as a protest against a sterile dialecticism, a revival of mystical systems, some orthodox --J. Protestantism , by its negation of all ecclesiastical authority and by advocating a direct union of the soul with God , had its logical outcome in a Mysticism mostly pantheistic. Reuchlin developed a system of cabalistic Mysticism in his "De arte cabalistica" and his "De verbo mirifico". We may also assign to the influence of Mysticism the ontological systems of Malebranche and of the Ontologists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The romantic Mysticism of Fichte , Novalis , and Schelling was a reaction against the Rationalism of the eighteenth century. A pseudo-Mysticism is also the logical outcome of the Fideism and evolutionistic Subjectivism of modern Protestants , inaugurated by Lessing , developed by Schleiermacher , A. Criticism A tendency so universal and so persistent as that of Mysticism, which appears among all peoples and influences philosophical thought more or less throughout all centuries, must have some real foundation in human nature. There is indeed in the human soul a natural desire for, an aspiration towards the highest truth , the absolute truth , and the highest, the infinite good. We know by experience and reason that the knowledge and enjoyment of created things cannot give the fulness of truth and the perfection of beatitude which will completely satisfy our desires and aspirations. There is in our soul a capacity for more truth and perfection than we can ever acquire through the knowledge of created things. We realize that God alone is the end of man, that in the possession of God alone we can reach the satisfaction of our aspirations. Thomas Aquinas , Summa Theologica I: But the rational effort of our intelligence and positive aspirations of our will find here their limits. Is there truly possible a union of our reason and will with God more intimate than that which we possess through created things? Can we expect more than a knowledge of God by analogical concepts and more than the beatitude proportionate to that knowledge? Here human reason cannot answer. But where reason was powerless, philosophers gave way to feeling and imagination. They dreamt of an intuition of the Divinity, of a direct contemplation and immediate possession of God. They imagined a notion of the universe and of human nature that would make possible such a union. They built systems in which the world and the human soul were considered as an emanation or part of the Divinity, or at least as containing something of the Divine essence and Divine ideas. The logical outcome was Pantheism. This result was a clear evidence of error at the starting-point. The Catholic Church , as guardian of Christian doctrine , through her teaching and theologians , gave the solution of the problem. She asserted the limits of human reason: She condemned the immediate vision of the Beghards and Beguines cf. Denzinger-Bannwart , "Enchiridion", nn. But she teaches that, what man cannot know by natural reason, he can know through revelation and faith ; that what he cannot attain to by his natural power he can reach by the grace of God. God has gratuitously elevated human nature to a supernatural state. He has assigned as its ultimate end the direct vision of Himself, the Beatific Vision. But this end can be reached only in the next life; in the present life we can but prepare ourselves for it with the aid of revelation and grace. To some souls , however, even in the present life, God gives a very special grace by which they are enabled to feel His sensible presence; this is true mystical contemplation. In this act, there is no annihilation or absorption of the creature into God , but God becomes intimately present to the created mind and this, enlightened by special illuminations, contemplates with ineffable joy the Divine essence. About this page APA citation. In The Catholic Encyclopedia. Robert Appleton Company, This article was transcribed for New Advent by Elizabeth T. Dedicated to Thomas S. The editor of New Advent is Kevin Knight. My email address is webmaster at newadvent. Dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

**Chapter 5 : THE FAITH AND PRACTICE OF AL-GHAZALI**

*"So let the half-gods go. When the half-gods go, the real gods come" Dr. John D. Rankin quotes Emerson in his six-part marathon talks at Unity Village, entitled The Mysticism of Emma Curtis Hopkins.*

The Oxford English Dictionary provides the following definition: Mortimer Adler describes the difficulty in this manner: Unless the person can be in all places of the entire universe at the same time, he has no way of confirming that whatever he claims does not exist, in fact, does not exist. Recognizing their predicament, atheists like Richard Dawkins counter such an argument by saying that while they cannot prove a flying spaghetti monster does not exist, it is highly improbable such a thing actually exists, so the wiser intellectual position to hold is one that says such a thing does not exist. However, such an argument commits two errors. First, comparing God with a flying spaghetti monster commits the logical error of faulty analogy. Second, just because something is improbable does not rule out its existence. Yet they have, and humanity does exist. The question is not whether the existence of God is improbable, but rather is there logical, reasonable evidence that moves one toward a conclusion that God exists? God "Probably" Does not Exist? A recent example of this stance has been the advertorial bus signs that have appeared in various countries the past few years stating: First, it is not the way human beings live many other areas of life they consider important. The atheist truth claim carries with it enormous, irreparable and eternal consequences if it is wrong. Atheism simply cannot meet the test for evidence for the seriousness of the truth claim it makes. Instead, using a supposed argument from silence, the atheist and those whom he convinces of his position slide into death with their fingers crossed hoping they do not face the unpleasant reality that eternity is an awfully long time to be wrong. But first, to understand the rationale behind the position, a little history is necessary. Rather than focusing on religious extremists who use religion to justify violent and murderous actions, the militant atheists lumped all peoples of faith into the same basic bucket and labeled religion, as a whole, dangerous. Problems with Scientism While science has indeed delivered many great gifts to humankind, the hopes atheism has for scientism replacing religion are ill-founded. First, scientism is self-refuting. Second, it ignores other much-respected and used methods for obtaining knowledge. The legal method does not ignore testimony or facts because they are not empirically reproducible or testable. By a process of elimination and corroboration, the legal method allows history and testimony to speak for itself until a verdict is reached beyond a reasonable doubt and the balance of probability is achieved. Third, scientism has proven disastrous from a moral perspective. Militant atheism asserts that if religion can be banished, then humankind will have peace and harmony. But even a cursory look backward at history since the Enlightenment says otherwise. Instead of resulting in peace, the Enlightenment ushered in one secular bloody revolution after another that climaxed in the twentieth century--producing the largest mass grave in history. Lastly, rather pointing away from a transcendent Creator, advances in science have--more than ever--confirmed the existence of a theistic God. The death of the steady state theory and the current understanding that the universe as we know it exploded out of nothing into existence, the incredible fine tuning of the universe for human life, the confirmation of specified complexity like DNA that in a single strand contains digital information equivalent to , pages of intelligence and is mathematically identical to a language all act as pointers to an intelligent source that is behind it all. Atheism demands that a person choose between science and God when in fact no such division needs to occur. Such a requirement can be likened to a person being forced to choose between 1 the laws of internal combustion and 2 Henry Ford--as to why a car exists. The fact is the two choices are not contradictory but complementary. The atheist misses the important difference between agency Henry Ford and mechanism internal combustion. In the same way, God is the intelligent agency and efficient cause behind everything with His natural laws and mechanisms carrying out His intentions to produce His desired-end result. In the end, the atheist cannot rely on science to disprove the existence of a transcendent Creator and is forced into the admission that atheism itself is not a fact but instead a belief system that relies on faith. Atheism and Faith This being the case, the atheistic worldview must address two fatal mistakes it makes regarding the concept of faith: In terms of the first point, some honest atheists will admit that atheism is a worldview and faith. One

example is atheistic scientist George Klein who wrote: My attitude is not based on science, but rather on faith. The absence of a Creator, the non-existence of God is my childhood faith, my adult belief, unshakable and holy. Science has faith in logic, mathematics, natural laws, and the intelligibility of the universe and believes all such things are firm and will never change. People also act on faith every day from meals they eat in restaurants, medicine they take from doctors, and marriages they participate in with their spouse. The Commonality of Faith In conclusion, both atheism and theism make statements on faith that concern ultimate reality. Both must refer back to something that is eternal because each recognizes that everything that exists depends upon and owes its existence ultimately to something other than itself. To the atheist, that ultimate reality is an eternal universe where only physical matter exists. The theist has no such problem because he holds that a personal, conscious, purposeful, intelligent, moral, eternal God created beings in His likeness and established the universe and its laws to govern their existence. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. In the end, Dr. John Lennox makes the choices between atheism and theism clear: Either human intelligence ultimately owes its origin to mindless matter; or there is a Creator. It is strange that some people claim that it is their intelligence that leads them to prefer the first to the second.

**Chapter 6 : Project MUSE - The Mystery of Truth: Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin's Enlightened Mysticism**

*the mystical bible: 'THE MESSAGE' Of MYSTICISM The basis of this study is the English paraphrased text of the New Testament written by Eugene Peterson, called "The Message."*

What is "error" and how does ECH prescribe for its erasure? You know very well that there never was any disease. Why, then, do I speak of one, and tell you to take a case of some kind to cure? Because we take all the appearances in one lot and tell the truth. We say "YES" to what is true. So we meet the children who are working out their life problems. We know wherein it is not the truth they speak by the sight they show. If I am in bondage, I have had some extreme error about God and His relation to my life. The truth tells me how to erase that error. Jesus Christ erased errors very rapidly. You and I will erase errors rapidly or slowly according to our nature. If we stumble at the calling of sin nothingness, unreality, absence in this sea of omnipresence, we shall be slow in demonstration. We shall not be joyous. Our singing will be poor. This is all the sin you or anybody ever committed. You made your mistake in mind, and have lived out that mistake. This Truth erases that mistake. Then your life is free from the cause of its suffering and trouble. If we do not like the world we live in, then we do not like our thoughts. He who loves his thoughts greatly and loves his words greatly is sure to be a musician of some kind. Let no one be surprised at his not being perfect in his science of music while he does not love his thoughts and enjoy the environments they have made. There is nothing more miserable than to feel that by some mistake in life you have not amounted to what you might have, and that your misfortunes all hinge on that mistake. God never made any mistakes in Spirit. Your family never made any mistakes in Spirit. None of you can possibly make any mistake in Spirit. As Spirit is all that is real of you, the facing of the worst trouble of your life with the words that the mistakes that brought them being nothing, the troubles are nothing, will have a marvelous effect in putting them in a new relation with you. I do not mean that you will be hardened to bear them, I mean that they will be gone. It is by the whole lines of reasoning. The study of the lines of reasoning which bring out your healing power is called the study of metaphysics. It is very much like ungluing them. How should we interpret such statements as "If your patient appears a fourth time, you are to give such and such a treatment"? See SCMP et al. Rather than taking such statements literally, interpret them to mean that you they are in need of conscious realization of the fourth proposition of spiritual science, which is: In what way are numbers spiritually significant? But the study of mathematics does not make thoughts and words powerful to heal the sick. But no mathematician is a healer because of his mathematics. He must use the Healing Word, or the reasoning which brings down somewhat of the power of the Healing Word. Number four held the fire of convincing energy. It was the Uriel Angel of divine telepathy. Everything about four was fourth dimensional to the wise men of old. Notice them telling how man is comraded by angels from the city of God when he finds himself touching the fourth side of the city. Give a brief metaphysical equivalent for each number, 1 through 12, drawing on the thought of ECH. One heavenly edict, "Look unto Me! Divine Law, which wraps the conscious mind in sane security. Divine Telepathy; fourth dimensional consciousness. Persevering vision; persistent attention. Enchantment; magic see HM. The foregoing summaries are all drawn from material in High Mysticism; there is further explication of number in Scientific Christian Mental Practice. Comparison of ideas therein with the foregoing will provoke unusual insight. The Mysticism of Emma Curtis Hopkins:

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*their religion. Jesus said, "Enter (heaven) through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads away to destruction (hell), and many are those who are entering through it.*

Giving the matter thought, most minds dart eastward, to think of Hinduism, Buddhism, and holier-than-thou swamis such as Parmahansa Yogananda, Sai Baba, the Dalai Lama, or Eckhart Tolle, and a host of other self-appointed "avatars" in orange robes, rolling beads, talking about the Atman, nirvana, mindfulness, the ending of attachment and desire, and silencing the mind. They teach devotees about pseudo-mystical topics such as timelessness, selflessness, humility, service, devotion, meditation, renunciation reincarnation, and of course the big one - Karma. Saying that none of this charlatanism is true Mysticism is to be greeted with head-scratching, raised eyebrows and kneejerk disbelief. Above all, never mention the superiority of the western mystical tradition. That ruins the fun of genuflecting before Big Daddy. For goodness sake never let it be known that almost every eastern spiritual tradition originated in the west, with prehistoric visitors from Britain and Scandinavia. That is the heresy of all heresies. No, we must never let it be known that Hinduism and Buddhism are cannibalizations and corruptions of a more august Pre-Vedic epoch, when the principles of high Mysticism were taught by adepts of purer, nobler sort. This goes for the Mystical Tradition, and unbiased men of wisdom willingly acknowledge this irrefutable fact. The proofs confirming the existence of Spirit, searched for by so many, emanate from Britain and Europe. They are to be found in the works of William Blake, Nicolas Malebranche, George Berkeley, Friedrich Schelling, Georg Hegel, Rudolf Steiner, Alfred North Whitehead, and other sages whose work has been systematically misinterpreted and largely ignored in favor of eastern mystification. In my video series *Mysticism: Truth or Falsity*, the underlying principles of western Mysticism are examined and tested for strength. Do they hold up sufficiently after centuries of Materialism and absurd reductionism? As I show, they certainly do. Great schools of modern philosophy have come and gone - Cartesianism, Behaviorism, Positivism, Pragmatism, Linguistic Analysis, and others, have largely fallen under their own weight. But in my opinion, Idealism and Mysticism are back with a vengeance. They have stood the test of time, and despite the prejudices of establishment naysayers, recent discoveries in neuroscience support their central tenets. Papers have gone flying in the ivory towers, as the pervading, supposedly iron-clad ideologies of Materialism disintegrate in the light of new discoveries about the brain. In my opinion, the time has come for the world to know exactly what has been going on. These are exceptionally important matters, affecting each of us on so many levels. Additionally, I am personally motivated to make sure that with all the recent paradigm-busting going on, the great sages of the past are not forgotten. The Idealists of the eighteenth century made no secret about their indebtedness. Sadly, as years passed, and as men turned from being lovers of wisdom to cravers of the power knowledge gets them, citation all but ceased. Even when their ideas are acknowledged, we tend to find them drastically misinterpreted and misrepresented. So is it with authentic Mysticism. The disciples of scientism and Materialism deface it repeatedly. It is dirty work, but they are well suited to it. The world must never be informed about the true tenets of Mysticism, and never allowed to discover how empirical, intelligible and rational they are. In my program *Mysticism: Truth of Falsity*, the deceptions are removed, allowing us to see what precious and profound treasures lie concealed and largely forgotten. In future presentations on philosophy and the western magical tradition, the story will be disclosed further. My program follows on from a magnum opus on the symbolism of the Major Arcana. Throughout my earlier *Path of the Fool* series which took over three years to complete, the central principles of Mysticism and Idealism were also explored, leading to some mega revelations about spirituality, existence, identity, time, sexuality, consciousness and meaning. However, despite the depth of the series, it was obvious that no single program can delve into all the details about this mighty subject. So, the great work continues. The fallacies of the Materialists and disciples of scientism come under attack from various sources and minds. I carefully explore these perceptive attacks throughout my program. When deeply contemplated we find them overcoming the apparently impenetrable fortifications of the physicalists. We find them decimating the arguments against mystical thought purveyed by Neo-Materialists such as George Lakoff, Steven Pinker,

Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, and others of their brood who prefer us to believe that explaining consciousness away is the same thing as explaining it. Of course, I am not speaking about tired old religious rebuttals to their arguments. In my opinion religious thinking has done more damage to authentic Mysticism than science. Let us not forget that the obscenities of religion caused the rise of materialist science. To give the latter its fair due, it was a necessary reaction against an imperious demagoguery that espoused its own brand of antihuman, antinatural dogma. In *Philosophy in the Flesh*, he contemptuously sweeps aside every world tradition except for his narrow brand of Materialism. Throughout this propagandist book he repudiates and scoffs at his nemesis. In an earlier book on the same subject, *Metaphors We Live By*, the kid gloves are on. But when the follow-up was prepared, it appears that Lakoff and his publishers were no longer as apprehensive. Lakoff was recast as a Goliath sent out to wield his academic club and bash skulls. I hear you say. The earlier book makes better reading, even though its central arguments about reality and consciousness are painfully weak and unsustainable. I show how and why in the program. We should know by now to distrust institutionalized ideologies. As said, the proprietary tone adopted by Lakoff and other Materialists should be enough to reveal their gang colors and distinguish them from thinkers of a more sincere, sensitive kind. In light of this, the philosophy of Aesthetics must be positioned above Metaphysics, Epistemology and Ethics. Traditionally it has always been tacked on the end, in lonely fourth place. What devastatingly folly, and what disaster this error has wrought for the world. In fact, everything changes. Our worldview and insight into every esoteric matter upgrades and our understanding of reality becomes vividly clear at last. I show in my program just how Aesthetics and Mysticism are connected. My teachings in this regard are consistent with those of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Holderlin, Benedetto Croce, Owen Barfield, Martin Heidegger and Otto Rank, showing that not only is man to be considered an Artist, but also as a work of Art, in the highest heroic sense. With this truism about the supreme importance of Aesthetics grasped and deeply contemplated, we find ourselves able to undertake the deconstruction of scientism and Materialism, not to mention eastern thought. We know why it all came into existence in the first place, and why both western Materialism and oriental mystification has plagued humankind for so long. We see why a posthuman world beckons, and why billions of dollars are awarded to the high priests of cybernetics and artificial intelligence. No matter that Hubert Dreyfus, Raymond Tallis and others have shown conclusively that computers will never replace brains, computation being fundamentally different from thought, conceptualization and knowledge. The advocates of antihuman technology are forging ahead to establish their demented dystopia despite the facts. It is essentially apophatic work. Something wholesome, humane and organic must be put in the place of whatever is exposed, uprooted and discarded. Deconstruction also requires considerable reverence for the past, and the recognition of the legacy of great sages who labored throughout the centuries to counter Materialist demagoguery. Religion and materialistic science are, in this context, simply two sides of a worthless coin - a counterfeit currency. No, I think of the greats of the British, German and European mystical tradition, whose insights are implicitly present within the work of eminent thinkers such as Hegel, Schelling, Goethe, Steiner and Whitehead, etc. These men taught that parts contain wholes, that the greater exists within the lesser, and that man is an ocean in a drop rather than a drop in an ocean. They knew that determinism is an absurd falsity, and that a spiritual will set the laws of nature into motion while extending free will to human consciousness. They knew why two-dimensional perceptions are transformed into three-dimensional images by the brain, and why neurons know where to go and what to do without perceivable directives. Such men were able to account for duality, and why opposites are inevitable factors internally and externally. They also knew the difference between ethics and morality, conscience and law, shame and guilt. They knew why we presume nature something separate from mind, why idiotic supernatural realms and an afterlife as described by religion are accepted without logical proof, and why body and world are falsely deemed cages of spirit. From these hives of group-think come the high priests of Scientific Materialism, programming the minds and hearts of those under their tutelage. The works of such thinkers is heavily plagiarized and disfigured, or consigned to the academic dustbin. In place of it we are assured that the brain is nothing more than a programmable machine, and that the universe is also a mechanism to be understood by intellect alone. Throwing off this nonsense, and questioning every part of it is nigh on impossible today. It takes too much time, time best spent having fun.

We prefer that other people ask the deep questions. Because of this capitulation a state of decay abounds throughout academia and the world at large. Some very deviant people have found the seats of learning vacant of great minds. As professor Allan Bloom and other social critics long ago realized and warned, the navigators who seized the helm of western education are steering headlong toward a precipice from which there is no return. Tell me he was wrong, if you dare. It is not an inconsequential pastime to examine the principles of Mysticism to see if they remain firm and true. I mine these treasures and present the greatest concepts in clear modern language that everyone can understand and embody. The word History should be synonymous with Truth. As I compose my programs and books on these and related subjects, I am profoundly aware of the psychic wounds which underlie consciousness, and what it takes to heal them. I am also aware of the future world to be inherited by the young. Regrettably, every postwar generation has shown its expertise at embodying and replaying the error of centuries, none of the wisdom. Give way to that notion and you sign the death warrant of humanity. The hardest work has already been done by illustrious ancestors, so as long as we respectfully turn to their superlative guidance, there is hope for the future. I dare say that the solutions presented throughout my series on Mysticism will transform existence for the better, personally and socially, in far less time.

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Soon after my conversion I began a quest to become the best possible Christian. In so doing I fell prey to teachings that promised me a Christian life superior to that of ordinary Christians. What I did not know was that I had embraced pietism. So in my search to become an extraordinary Christian I did what he said and joined. By the time I had fully explored many versions of pietism seeking to escape the tainted Christianity found in ordinary churches, I had squandered the first ten years of my Christian life. I was converted in and by I had given up on becoming a superior Christian. I bought a house for my family and began a car repair business to pay the bills while I tried to figure out what to do with my calling to preach now that most everything I had been taught, practiced, and taught others had failed. It took another five or six years to rid myself of the various errors I had embraced and then I taught Romans in Through that study I came to appreciate the doctrines of grace. That understanding opened my thinking and was the turning point for my ministry. I also came to realize that the wrong-thinking that attracted me to pietism was that I held to a theology based on human ability rather than grace alone. Once I grasped that, I never looked back. Understanding the Basics of Pietism Pietism is difficult to define because it can be taught and practiced in an unlimited number of ways. Some versions appear to be innocuous while others are so radical that most people would see that something is wrong. I now know that no version of pietism is actually innocuous. If a teaching is called pietism but teaches no more than what God has always used to sanctify Christians, then it is not really pietism. Real pietism always harms those who embrace it. The essence of pietism is this: It is a practice designed to lead to an experience that purports to give one an elite or special status compared to ordinary Christians. The Bible addresses this error in the book of Colossians. Paul went on to explain that they already had everything they needed through Christ and His work on the cross. Another way of stating this is: Church history is littered with misguided pietistic movements. Many of them are linked with mysticism. I will give examples later in this article. Pietism can be practiced many ways including enforced solitude, asceticism of various forms, man made religious practices, legalism, submission to human authorities who claim special status, and many other practices and teachings. The fact that pietism has many forms can be seen by the litany Paul gives in Colossians: Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day " things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. They all suggest that having been converted by the Lord through the cross and practicing His ordained means of grace by faith are inadequate. They have discovered a better way that leads to a higher order experience. These appear to most poorly taught Christians to be what the Lord wants. No, none of these pietistic statements are true. Such teachings lead to elitism and comparing ourselves to others. The Bible tells us not to do that. He makes them holy through His ordained means of grace. Paul warned both the Galatians and the Colossians against adding anything to the work of Christ: Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? This means that salvation is by grace through faith and sanctification is by grace through faith. There is no secret principle to be discovered that creates higher order Christians. Here is how it is explained in Hebrews: Pietism is an attack on the scriptural truth that Christ has already done it all and that this is true for all Christians. I believe in progressive sanctification, but God is sanctifying all Christians by the same means. But we want to analyze some expressions of it to see why it arises and how it works. Church historian Justo Gonzalez chronicles the beginnings of the monastic movement which was apparently a reaction to a perception that popularity and success had tainted Christianity after it was endorsed by Constantine. Thus, at the very time when churches in large cities were flooded by thousands

demanding baptism, there was a veritable exodus of other thousands who sought beatitude in solitude. One was Anthony who gave away all his riches before entering his new life: According to Athanasius, at this time Anthony began having visions of demons that accosted him almost continuously. The monastic movement led to the idea that one could become a higher order Christian and be more pleasing to God. The movement also introduced mystical practices that today are being brought back into the church under the guise that they came from a time when Christianity was pristine and not tainted by modernity. When Christians perceived that the success of churches in times of prosperity caused certain ills, they fled to solitude where they became mystics. This process is happening today again. But these pietistic movements did not lead to a more pristine Christianity in the past, nor do they do so today. They lead to elitism as Gonzalez points out: As years went by, many monks came to the conclusion that, since their life was holier than that of most bishops and other leaders of the church, it was they, and not those leaders, who should decide what was proper Christian teaching. The monastic movement became more organized and still exists today. They are considered works of supererogation in Rome. Those who take the vows are deemed more pious than ordinary Christians. Luther wrote a lengthy essay demonstrating that scripture rejects the validity of monastic vows. One key issue for Luther was that the monastics went beyond the gospel and made commandments out of matters that God has not commanded and in so doing sought to achieve a superior standing before God. One such example was celibacy. Luther condemned this as sinful. A vow of chastity, therefore, is diametrically opposed to the gospel. Though they may think themselves more pious than ordinary Christians because of their special vows, Luther called them gross sinners. Not only that, many movements to fix a perceived problems in the church have taken a mystical, elitist, trajectory which is what characterizes pietists. The problems Spener wanted to cure were caused by the existence of the state church which was not a Biblical idea. They did not need more piety; they needed to define the church in Biblical terms. Unregenerate people forced into a state church because of a war are by nature impious. Even Theosophists claim Boehme as one of their own. One was Jane Leade whose mystical, elitist writings are preserved on websites of her present day followers. But now methinks, I hear some say at the Reading of This, Oh! You have mentioned a high and lofty State, which is as a new thing that hath not been declared; as that in this present Life there should be found any to ascend to the New-Jerusalem, to feast and worship GOD There; This, you will say belongs to the Enochian Life; but That Age of the World is not yet come, so as to know a Translated State. But we may hope This day of the Spirit is coming on, whereby it shall be known more universally; in the which Angelical Spirits shall ascend, and That Divine Principle shall open, that now hath been so long shut up: Then you will know a New-state of Living, that you never knew before; for it will turn the Love of all mortal Things out of the Hearts-door: This will in very deed be known. The Latter Rain movement has now become the latter day apostles and prophets movement that is also pietistic to the core. They claim special status that ordinary Christians know nothing about. Not all versions of pietism are as radical and heretical as that of Boehme and his spiritual descendants. Wesley is an example of a much less extreme pietism. But the idea that some humanly discovered and implemented method can lead to the achievement of a better Christian life than through the ordinary means of grace is nevertheless pietism. Some of our Evangelical denominations have been pietist from their very inception. He too taught Christian perfection. Wesley at least held to prevenient grace so as to avoid Pelagianism. After Finney other perfectionist movements arose. The Holiness movement, for example, came not long after Finney. Both the Holiness movement and the subsequent Pentecostal movement held to second blessing doctrines that by nature are pietist because they create an elite category of Christians who have had a special experience that ordinary Christians lack. The Holiness movement in general is a pietistic movement that claims a special experience that creates higher order, often supposedly perfected Christians. They are in error. Ironically, the deeper life or higher order Christians do have something distinct about themâ€”they have embraced error. Today the largest new pietist movement is the Emergent Church. As I pointed out earlier, pietism often arises in response to the perception sometimes warranted that the church has become too worldly and it seems true once again today. Some now assume that since ordinary Christianity is compromised, they must discover an extraordinary way to become better Christians. It draws on teachings and practices found in other pietist movements in church history. In fact, a recent Emergent book includes essays by those experimenting with communal living,

something I tried in my pietist days! Rick Warren claims there are world class Christians that are in a better category than ordinary Christians. He had his followers take a long oath at a baseball field to pledge themselves to serving his new reformation. I already mentioned the apostles and prophets movement that is pietistic. The three movements seem radically diverse, but each one claims to be a new reformation and each offers a higher status than that of ordinary Christians.

## Chapter 9 : What is Christian mysticism?

*"The Spirit of Truth And The Spirit of Error" 1 John 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in.*

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Throughout the first epistle of John it is clear that the apostle is concerned about Christians being deceived. He wrote with urgency to warn them about anti-Christ in chapter two. In that context the writer said, "no lie is of the truth," and he said, "who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? But he entertained a realistic concern about Christians being deceived; he knew the spirit of error as opposed to the spirit of truth. If that reality escapes our notice, we are in trouble today. In the older translations: If you have ever watched religious television you know it is common for a preacher to tell his audience that he has the Holy Spirit, or that God personally appeared to him and told him to do or say certain things. Apart from the Scriptures and not subject to any verification you can be satisfied with the man or woman simply says "they have the Spirit. Look back into chapter three here in First John, at verse 23 - "And this is His commandment: Belief is encouraged; is urged; is commanded. But here, in 1 John 4: It may be the spirit of error. The only way to know is to read the Word of God. You cannot believe everything you hear! Let me just name several fields of human activity: Can you believe everything you hear? If you listen to the various religious messages about in the world today, you soon discover messages in conflict. All you hear cannot be the truth. All you hear cannot be taught in the Scriptures by God. Some theological systems maintain that we are predestined, without regard to the personal will of heart. Others have built a sacramental system, surrounded by traditions and man-made doctrine and practice. At large in "evangelical" religion, there is a primary concentration on belief in Christ, but often denying the role of baptism and downplaying obedience to the teachings of the apostles. Religious cults claim authority in their writings and structure. Human creeds are enforced. Do we just believe everything we hear? The messages in modern religion are in conflict. Do not believe everybody who claims they are telling you what you ought to believe and do in religion! Try the spirits; test all religious teaching! Every single one of them! Every single religious teacher should be tested in the same way, by simply seeing if what he says is in the Scriptures! Let me state the matter in these terms: Never think that if a man is popular and brings in huge crowds, that means he must be teaching the truth! Never think that if a man is a good public speaker and can hold the attention of an audience, that means he must be teaching the truth. Never think that if you like the person, he must be teaching the truth. Never think that if a man has been baptized and is a member of a local church of Christ, he has to be a perfect teacher of truth. Never think that if a man quotes a lot of Scripture, he must be teaching the truth. Never think that if a man has academic, educational credentials, he must be teaching the truth!! There is only one way to determine if a man is teaching the truth - - see if what he says is in the Bible!! Read and study your Bible! Let me take us to another passage, in Acts When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. They searched the Scriptures daily! And they are commended as being noble in this! If they needed to use the Scriptures to verify the word of an apostle, it is certain we must use the Scriptures today to verify the word of those who are not apostles. John, why is this necessary? Because "many false prophets have gone out into the world. Satan is on the job every day, and he is at work through false teachers; false prophets and false religions. He is busy in the world, in families, in the church, to gradually displace the truth with error. There is a general attitude in the public that every form of religion is all right, nothing should be called "false. John, an apostle of Christ, wants us to face this reality, there are "many false prophets gone out into the world. There were false prophets then and they were denying the human existence of Christ. Jesus came in the flesh; we call

that, "the incarnation. Probably, Gnostic in their view of things opposed to any suggestion of Deity coming in the flesh, so they would not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. John says three things about them: ONE, they are "not of God. THREE, you have heard this was coming; it is now already in the world. The false prophets are wrong and in their false teaching, they show their opposition to Christ they are anti-Christ , and they show their association with the devil. But to faithful Christians John says: They are of the world. We are of God. This whole passage is a distinct contrast between false and true teachers. This is seen in the emphatic use of "they" in verse 5 and "we" in verse 6. They are influenced by the world; associated with the world; so, they keep on speaking out of worldly wisdom, and the world keeps on hearing them. One man said, "The world listens to those who speak its own language. So, there is a difference and by testing the spirits; by comparing what is taught to what is revealed, we can know the difference between truth and error. Now, one way to consider this is The message authenticates the speaker, not the speaker the message. The better approach is take the message, compare that message with what is revealed; then accept the message - not because of the man, but because it is revealed. One thing must influence everything we believe, teach and practice. The Word of God. The Word of God is inspired, authoritative and sufficient to govern all that we do before God 2 Tim. You cannot just listen to a preacher you like and let that govern your responses to God. Hear, believe and obey the gospel. From Expository Files