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Rufus Jones and Mysticism

DANIEL E. BASSUK

Rufus Jones' interpretation of Quakerism, which did so much to revive and reshape a moribund Society of Friends earlier in this century, was mistaken in its central thesis; the very life of contemporary Quakerism is therefore founded on an egregious misunderstanding!\(^1\)

INTRODUCTION

Rufus Jones has been dead now for more than a quarter of a century. In approaching the task of criticizing the works of this imposing figure, we ask: has there yet been a fair and adequate critique of the mysticism of Rufus Jones? Our answer must be "no." Rufus Jones was without question the most formidable Quaker figure during his own lifetime (1863-1948) as well as one of the half dozen most influential figures in the history of the Society of Friends. It would have been a difficult task while he was still alive to criticize a man who held thirteen honorary doctors' degrees. The seeds of discontent with Jones's interpretation of Quaker mysticism were nevertheless sown during his lifetime, but they have not been adequately developed in the thirty years since his death.

In the last ten years of Rufus Jones's life we see the beginnings of research which was uncovering evidence very different from what Jones had been saying. In 1940 Rachel Hadley King wrote a doctoral dissertation at Yale University titled "George Fox and the Light Within, 1650-1660," which interpreted Fox's concept of the Inner Light in a manner totally at variance with the way in which Jones understood it. In 1943 the Quaker scholar Lewis Benson published a pamphlet titled Prophetic Quakerism, which, while never referring to Rufus Jones by name, criticized modern Quakerism for its misunderstanding of Fox and early Quakerism. Later writings

Reviews


We Quakers are in the debt of Donald Nesti for his excellent study of early Quaker "soteriology and sacramentality." Let me add quickly that the book covers considerably more ground than the title or sub-title indicate. In fact, this book comes close to being a systematic theology of early Quakerism and it is so well done that it deserves to be studied by all who are interested in the faith of early Friends, and should be on the shelves of all Quaker libraries.

Donald Nesti first places Quakerism in its religious setting in the seventeenth century and then develops, through broad and sound scholarship, the early Quaker understanding of revelation, the means of salvation through grace and faith, the effects of salvation, Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, church holiness, and spiritual ministry. Finally he presents briefly the differences and similarities between Catholicism and Quakerism in various of these areas. I wish that he had given more space to express his differences and so have opened the door to fuller dialogue. However, that was not a main purpose in his study.

It is challenging and stimulating to see ourselves through the eyes of an able scholar who comes from another tradition. The terminology - for example, the phrase "union with God" and even the word "salvation" - is at times out of the broader Christian tradition and causes one to ask if it truly expresses the Quaker meaning. More important, however, the insights of Donald Nesti often come with freshness and authenticity. With most of this presentation I can heartily agree and say "Thank you," and where there are questions I find myself so impressed by the scholarship that I am forced to re-examine my understanding of early Quaker thought. There is not room in this review to cover the whole of the book, so let me choose a few important areas to demonstrate both my agreements and disagreements.
form of religion which lacks the power, strength, and vigor felt by the early Quakers. I well understand his anguish and his call for the revitalization within Quakerism of the history-making quality that once existed. May we all be guided by the Light that enlightens the world.

2. Ibid., pp. 1-4.

of Benson specifically pointed to Rufus Jones as the modern interpreter of the mystical mode of the Quaker tradition. In 1946, Geoffrey F. Nuttall published his scholarly study, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience. In presenting early Quakerism in its immediate historical context, Nuttall brought out the lack of any influence by Jacob Boehme and the Cambridge Platonists upon George Fox, despite the assertion by Rufus Jones that they had had a major influence. Nuttall demonstrated that early Quakerism was an outgrowth of radical Puritanism rather than of the mystical movements of the continent. He noted that the Spiritual Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries preceded Puritanism and in some cases anticipated the radical Puritanism of the Quakers, but that their influence, if any, was indirect.

In spite of these studies of Fox which were at variance with Rufus Jones's interpretation of Fox, no adequate critique has yet been attempted of Jones and his affirmation mysticism. The following is an attempt in this direction.

I. JONES ON THE "MYSTICAL" AND "MYSTICISM"

In the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (henceforth abbreviated ERE), Rufus Jones wrote the introductory article on "Mysticism" in 1917. In it he makes the following important distinction:

The word ‘mysticism’ has, furthermore, been commonly used to cover both (1) the first-hand experience of direct intercourse with God and (2) the theologico-metaphysical doctrine of the soul’s possible union with Absolute Reality, i.e. with God. It would be conducive to clarity to restrict the word ‘mysticism’ to the latter significance, namely, as an equivalent for the German word Mystik, and as designating the historic doctrine of the relationship and potential union of the human soul with Ultimate Reality, and to use the term ‘mystical experience’ for direct intercourse with God.

First hand, or mystical, experience is primarily a psychological question; the doctrine of mysticism is essentially a metaphysical problem.
In this article Rufus Jones clearly makes the distinction between mysticism and the mystical. However, in 1936 Jones was to modify his earlier understanding of Mystik, writing that “the German language has two words where we have but one. It uses ‘Mysticismus’ for the occult and the abnormal, and ‘Mystik’ for the theory of life that God and man are akin and in reciprocal relationship.” Elsewhere he understands the nature of mysticism to be grounded in “Greek rationalistic metaphysics” and tells us that “the Platonic stream of life and thought is beyond question the greatest single source of European mysticism.” He also realizes that “this intellectual formulation — and it is the metaphysics underlying historical mysticism — necessarily involves a via negativa.”

Of Jones’s fifty-four books, only two have the word “mysticism” in the title: The Flowering of Mysticism: The Friends of God in the Fourteenth Century (1939), and Mysticism and Democracy in the English Commonwealth (1932). Since he does not use the word mysticism in the precise way in which he defined it in the ERE anywhere else in his writings, let us look at these two books to see how Jones means it to be understood.

In Mysticism and Democracy in the English Commonwealth Jones starts out by saying:

I have always used the word mysticism with a much wider meaning, and shall continue to do so. The essential feature of a mystical experience as I view it is not the negative path of approach nor the special scale of ladder-steps upward, nor the empty-handed, or nirvana, state in which the experience culminates. Its essential aspect is rather the conviction of certainty that the person’s own soul has found its goal of reality in God.

Jones makes it clear in this book that he is concerned with the affirmation mystics rather than the negative ones, and sees no reason for denying an extension of meaning to the word mysticism. This indicates an unwillingness on Jones’s part to abide by his earlier definition in the ERE.

In the book The Flowering of Mysticism Jones gives one of his many famous definitions of what mysticism means for

To my dear mentor, Lewis Benson, I can only say that once again I find his inner light radiant, clear, and glowing. The way he reads me is the way I would like everyone to understand what I am trying to convey. I agree with his point that metaphysical mysticism does not exclude experience and that Jones’s own particular form of mystical experience, affirmative mysticism, does not exclude metaphysics. However, I feel that he and I would agree that it is too simple to just slur over the differences between mystical experience and metaphysical mysticism, as Jones would do.

Both Lewis Benson and John Yungblut criticize me for not making a true analogy between Benson’s categories of prophet and philosophical Quakerism, and experiential and metaphysical mysticism. Allow me to clarify this. First of all, I was not trying to say that they are identical. I merely said that the two traditions are analogous to the categories of mystical and mysticism. I wholly agree that Jones’s affirmation mysticism is vastly different from Benson’s prophetic Quakerism, which is grounded in the biblical tradition. Affirmation mysticism is a mixed breed, combining the Hebraic with the Hellenistic. In this essay I have attempted to draw out the distinction between the mystical and mysticism. In order not to overly complicate matters, I have ignored a third religious mode, the prophetic. As I see it, in Prophetic Quakerism Benson is dealing with the prophetic mode and contrasting it with the mode of metaphysical mysticism, which he calls “philosophical.” On the other hand, I am dealing with the experiential-mystical mode and the mode of metaphysical mysticism. The mode to which Jones’s affirmation mysticism belongs is experiential-mystical — neither Benson’s prophetic nor my metaphysical mysticism, but rather a hybrid which falls somewhere between the two. Jones’s affirmation mysticism helped to create the contemporary trend of mystical Quakers who refer to the Inner Light and that of God in such a way as to fit them in with today’s dabblings with consciousness-raising, nature and aesthetic “highs,” spiritual experiences, peak-experiences, and psychedelic and visionary experiences. This is where Rufus Jones has led contemporary Quakerism. It is for me, as I believe it is for Lewis Benson, a mild and passive
Moore also presents us with the mystical interpretation of Quakerism. According to this view,

Quakerism is one of many outcroppings of mystical religion that have occurred from time to time in Christian history. In support of this view an attempt has been made to trace the spiritual ancestry of the Quakers through a long chain of Christian mystics. The Quakers are represented as one of the links in this chain. . . . Quakers of the mystical type. . . . begin to think of their faith as the Christian version of mystical religion and to claim a spiritual kinship with mystics belonging to non-Christian traditions. In fact, some Friends maintain that the special historical task of the Quakers is to be that Christian denomination that embodies the spirit of Christian mysticism and thereby serves as a bridge between Christianity and the mystical element in other religions. . . . There is a universalism that belongs to mystical Quakerism but it is not the universalism of the Christian faith. It is the universalism of mysticism. For the mystic, Christianity is one particular manifestation in history of an "eternal gospel" whose truth is not dependent on any historical events.

I fully agree with Moore that Rufus Jones did point us in these directions. But what is left unanswered is why Jones had so much trouble with the type of mysticism exemplified in Buddha, Lao-tzu, and Shankara. I should like to ask Moore if he is ready to accept these so-called life-negating mystics, who describe the Godhead as Neti, Neti, into his ethical, rational, social Quakerism?

It is beyond my ken to deal with "the future of the Society of Friends in the world community." My perspective is religious studies, with special attention to mysticism and the mystical. I am concerned with the analysis of Jones and with looking carefully at the way in which he changed Quakerism from within. Even if Rufus Jones was pointing us in the direction of the future world community, should that prevent us from subjecting him to a scholarly analysis? We should have nothing to fear, for Quakerism will undoubtedly survive in the world community regardless of our theological debate.

him: "Mysticism is an immediate, intuitive, experimental knowledge of God, or one may say it is consciousness of a Beyond, or of transcendent Reality, or of Divine Presence." What Jones is saying in all of his definitions of mysticism, including this one, is that mysticism is for him a psychological matter made up of experiential and non-rational experiences. Nowhere but in the ERE does he hold to the distinction made there that mysticism is a metaphysical doctrine and is distinct from the mystical, which is psychological.

It is quite evident that, although Rufus Jones made the distinction between mysticism and mystical experience in the ERE, he decided not to follow it. This is indicated by those two books in which "mysticism" appears in the title and by the feelings expressed in his remark that "I am not interested in mysticism as an ism. It turns out in most accounts to be a dry and abstract thing. . . . It is mystical experience and not mysticism that is worthy of our study." The individual mystics and groups of mystics for whom Jones shows most appreciation in his historical studies — George Fox, St. Paul, the Spiritual Reformers, the Seekers, the Friends of God, and "some exponents of mystical religion" — are all interpreted to be mystical rather than involved with the metaphysical doctrine of mysticism. When he is confronted with mysticism understood in its metaphysical sense, he disagrees and is ready to dispute it. For example, when Jones read Aldous Huxley's Grey Eminence (1941) he disagreed with Huxley's understanding of mysticism: "Aldous Huxley in that remarkable book, Grey Eminence, raises the question, 'Why shouldn't Mysticism die out?' as he thinks (I believe wrongly) that it seemed likely to do at the end of the seventeenth century." The reason for the disagreement about mysticism is that Jones is thinking of it in a psychological sense, while Huxley was thinking of it in a metaphysical sense. And in 1945, when Huxley published The Perennial Philosophy, an anthology of mysticism which emphasized negating the self, Jones explicitly took issue with Huxley. In The Luminous Trail (1947) Jones objects that the perennial philosophy was presented solely as a via negativa. He concedes "that there is an element of truth in this insistence on the
severe reduction of self-importance," since "egoism is an undoubted hindrance." But for Jones, the effort at complete self-naughting means "that you cease to be a person at all," and this he takes to be against the divine purpose.13

Jones took issue not only with Huxley but with the German scholar Friedrich Heiler. In 1936 Rufus Jones disagreed with Heiler's concept of mysticism, saying,

Friedrich Heiler, . . . in his definition of mysticism, has pushed the negative aspect of it to its farthest limits. He defines mysticism as "that form of communion with God in which the world and the self are radically negated, in which the human personality is dissolved, submerged and engulfed in the infinite one-ness of Divinity."

Here, I am convinced, a metaphysical theory is voicing itself, not an experience. Mysticism has taken this form because it is dominated by a metaphysical theory. My contention always has been, and still is, that this particular way of approach was determined by a prevailing type of philosophical outlook, and is in no real sense essential to genuine mystical experience.14

It can be observed that Rufus Jones dispenses with Heiler, as with Huxley, in terms of his own preference for mystical experience rather than for the metaphysical doctrine of mysticism.

It is ironic that both Heiler and Jones cite Archbishop Nathan Söderblom as their source for the idea of dividing up mysticism into two distinguishable types. From Söderblom's division of mysticism into the mysticism of infinity and the mysticism of personality, Heiler derives his distinction between mysticism and the prophetic, while Jones comes away with the concepts of negation mysticism and affirmation mysticism.15 Söderblom's mysticism of personality is the source of both Heiler's "prophetic consciousness" and Jones's "affirmation mysticism," and the two are similar in being biblical, ethical, personalistic, action and service oriented, and concerned with historical time.

What has become of "mysticism" as understood in the sense of the German Mystik, the metaphysical doctrine of the relationship and potential union of the human soul with

Finally, I heartily agree with Yungblut that the synchronicity of mystical experience does have relevance. But so does mysticism, which Jones so disliked and tried so hard to extirpate.

In response to J. Floyd Moore, I can only say that I have indeed read all the literature he has cited, and more (pardon the pun), and that at the editor's discretion my analysis of Alsobrook, Moore, and Dwyer was deleted for lack of space. Since he asks me what I think of Alsobrook's analysis, let me say that Alsobrook's dissertation is primarily an analysis and that the critical evaluation he offered was based mainly on the works of Barth, Brunner, Berdyaev, and Kierkegaard. The fault with this dissertation lies in the contrast between the Quaker views of Jones and the views of the aforementioned neo-orthodox theologians, who are in a tradition totally at odds with Jones's liberal theology. The critical evaluation would have been more pertinent had it been based upon sources from within Jones's own Quaker tradition, rather than from a totally foreign one.

I find it revealing to see Moore referring to Quakerism as a "liberating spiritual movement which can find a meeting place of the divine with all humanity." His view, that Quakerism "has much to learn from Buddha, Lao-tzu, Shankara, the Sufis, Gandhi, and the empiricism of native African religion," shows me that Moore is expressing an attitude which combines two main lines of interpreting Quakerism today: as mystical Quakerism and as liberal Quakerism. For the exponent of the liberal interpretation of Quakerism,

Quakerism means freedom to roam all over the religious map, and he values his liberty to do this and enjoys observing his fellow Quakers roaming freely about, even though they may be moving in directions very different from the direction in which he is moving himself. For many such the Society is primarily a refuge for those who want freedom to follow their own individual bent in an atmosphere that is mildly religious and fiercely tolerant. They see the Society of Friends as one of the liberal denominations and feel a certain kinship with other liberal denominations.16
Response to Comments

DANIEL E. BASSUK

I should like to thank my critics for giving me a thorough reading. I in turn have a profound respect for John Yungblut and greatly treasure the year we spent together.

The difficulty I have with Yungblut’s critique is his refusal to acknowledge the distinctions that I and others have tried to point out. The counsel given by Rufus Jones to Yungblut, “If you seek reality in religion, read the mystics,” is clever advice. However, what did Jones mean by the word “reality”? Did he mean by “reality” a direct and firsthand spiritual experience, or the Reality of the universe? This distinction is essential and corresponds to my distinction between “mystical” and “mysticism,” which Jones adhered to in 1917. Slurring over this difference led Jones to be divided in his feelings toward Plotinus and Eckhart, as my essay points out; Yungblut’s response is to sing of paradoxology. And “read the mystics” is good advice until one finds them disagreeing among themselves (e.g., Fox and Norris, Jones and Eckhart). Then what happens to the search for “reality in religion”?

As for the minor points, first allow me to point out that the word “egregious,” which my critic stumbled over, was in a quotation of our editor. I chose to use it to illustrate that I am not alone in observing the ambiguity into which Rufus Jones has led us.

Second, Yungblut places Jones in the good company of Underhill, Herman, Inge, von Hugel, James, Otto, and Stace, on mystical experience. But upon closer inspection he should see that Otto and Stace moved out from Jones and James and with delight dealt with the metaphysical realm of mysticism as experienced by Eckhart, Shankara, and Plotinus, while Jones cringed over it.
divine light, laid down in the nature and disposition of the soul.”18 From this belief Jones concludes that “Fox belongs obviously enough in the circle of mystics and those who responded to his proclamation were usually of this same mystical type.”19

To surround Fox with the aura of the mystical, Rufus Jones chose for the frontispiece of his book George Fox, An Autobiography a painting by Gerard Honthorst called “George Fox in an Ecstasy.” This is now considered a spurious painting: “The only year Honthorst was in England was 1628, when Fox was 4 years old, and today few I suppose would think it in character with Fox at all,” says John Nickalls.20 In 1903 Jones viewed Fox as an ecstatic mystic in the direct lineage of Plotinus, John of the Cross, and St. Teresa, but gradually over the years he modified his view and began to view Fox as “a new type of mystic.”20 By 1930 Jones perceived Fox’s mysticism to be not of the ecstatic type but of the active, humanist, affirmative type. In Jones’s book George Fox, Seeker and Friend (1930), he says of Fox that “his highest moments are not ecstatic and ineffable. . . . He was always an affirmation mystic.”22 He adds that Fox “must not be judged or estimated in the class of scholarly or critical reformers. He does not belong there. He belongs in the order of the mystical, or intuitional, prophets. He is of the same general type as St. Francis of Assisi, St. Catharine of Siena, and Jacob Boehme of Silesia.”22 According to Rufus Jones the essential message of George Fox was a rediscovery of the truth of the divine immanence in man. Over the years Jones’s view of Fox changed from seeing him first as an ecstatic mystic, then as a spiritual reformer, to seeing him finally as a prophet.

B. JONES AND QUAKER DOCTRINES

I began at once [1894] to interpret to my large list of readers a thoroughly definite type of Quakerism, expressed through two editorials each week. I soon discovered that this was a heroic mission. There were a great many Friends who were thoroughly opposed to any change of outlook. Nearly every issue of the paper reveals lines what is relevant to our present situation is that neither the mystical nor the Puritan theory of Quaker origins helps us to understand the reason for the explosive power and rapid growth of the early Quaker movement. The mystical theory had the merit of being part of a whole new interpretation of Quakerism that inspired hope in at least one generation of “new Quakers.” The Puritan theory, on the other hand, is not causing young men to see visions nor old men to dream dreams. It puts the early Quakers as far from the present and future as Puritanism itself — and this is very far indeed. This may be one of the reasons why our present leadership has failed to bring us any closer to the power that erupted in the seventeenth century and launched the Quaker revolution.

While we are being treated to a fascinating series of theories about how Quakerism got started, we lose sight of the sources that are available to us. The facts about Quaker beginnings are much more impressive than the most cleverly devised historical theories that have yet appeared. The first Quakers had a clear sense of who they were and what their mission was in history. Their story is a great spiritual resource that could be the means of recovering the power and the vision that made them history-making men and women. It could show us how to be history-makers also.

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modern philosophers.” He is referring here to the philosophical idealism of Kant, Hegel, and others. “Immanuel Kant,” he says, “is next to Plato my guiding philosopher.”

It is strange that an interpreter of Quakerism who repeatedly referred to his debt to Plato, Plotinus, Kant, and Hegel should commend his interpretation to us on the ground that it is non-metaphysical.

In commenting on my pamphlet, Prophetic Quakerism, Bassuk suggests that there is an analogy between the two contrasting Quaker traditions that I describe, prophetic and philosophical, and Jones’s two kinds of mysticism, experiential and metaphysical, because “the prophetic is mystical while mysticism is philosophical.” I cannot agree that this is a true analogy; there is a vast difference between Jones’s affirmative mysticism and the prophetic Quakerism I described. Jones’s affirmative mysticism is different from the metaphysical mysticism set forth in the landmark books of Inge and Underhill, but it is nonetheless a species of metaphysical mysticism. Bassuk concludes that Jones’s affirmative mysticism “is not [metaphysical] mysticism at all.” I would say that it is not prophetic Quakerism at all.

Along with Jones’s new interpretation of Quakerism came a new theory of the place of the Quakers in history. Under Jones’s influence Quakers began to think of the Christian mystics as their spiritual ancestors. By carefully checking the sources Bassuk has clearly shown that, in order to make the Quakers appear as spiritual descendants of the mystics, Jones portrayed these mystics as much closer to his own affirmative mysticism than the facts warrant.

Bassuk notes that there has been a gradual abandonment of Jones’s mystical theory of Quaker origins, which seemed so firmly established forty years ago. He asserts that “recent scholarship has established other origins.” By this I assume he means the Puritan theory of Quaker origins. Perhaps the word “established” is a bit strong for the less than total acceptance of the theory that the Quakerism of the seventeenth century was essentially a Puritan phenomenon. But at least it can be said that this theory now leads the field.

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It is ironic that in 1940 Rufus Jones wrote the introduction to Rachel King's published version of her doctoral dissertation. He was evidently pleased that she had found Fox a mystic of the Protestant type rather than of the Catholic type, and therefore overlooked her finding that Fox's doctrine of the Inner Light was in the prophetic tradition while all along his interpretation had been in another tradition, the philosophical.

The findings of Geoffrey F. Nuttall, in his scholarly study of *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, correspond to the argument of Rachel King that Fox explicitly denied that the Light Within was natural to man. Fox's idea of the Light was supernatural. It was divine and spiritually derived from Christ and was not the light of nature, of conscience, or of reason.

"Soon after Fox's death there was a total cessation of the preaching that 'Christ has come to teach his people himself.'" From the eighteenth century onward we hear nothing more about Christ the prophet. The Quakers began to think of their whole faith and practice as having one center and one starting point — the doctrine of the Inner Light. This Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light seemed to be evolving into a theory of religion which was increasingly remote from the Christian revelation and the witness of the voice of God. William Penn in the seventeenth century spoke of the Light Within as Christ, while John Woolman in the eighteenth century "never uses the term 'Inward Light' but always 'that which is pure' or 'pure wisdom'" as found in the Epistle of James.

It is crucial to recognize that Rufus Jones seldom referred to the Inner Light as the Christ Within. Jones's Christology views Christ more as a recurrent Christ than as the historical Christ. Since 1903 Jones helped interpret for modern times the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light in Benson's philosophical sense, making it a link in the chain of philosophical mysticism which includes Plotinus, Eckhart, and the Cambridge Platonists. Benson clearly brings out the distinction between the prophetic and the philosophical traditions in the words of...
Without this dimension, Quakerism tends to be another Protestant sect. This dimension provides the basis for an authentic relationship with all men everywhere. It can be truly the nexus of the divine-human community. This, in my judgment, is what Rufus Jones was saying. It is Christian mysticism at its best. In this sense it has potential for all mankind.

This is why it is a wholly justifiable and liberating evolution of the religion of George Fox. It must not stop with Rufus Jones, any more than it should have stopped with Fox. But the contribution of Jones moved the narrow, Puritan Quakerism of the nineteenth century into the world community of the twentieth, where it now has the potential to communicate with all mankind.

In conclusion, it appears to me that the position taken by Bassuk represents a tendency to preserve Quakerism as a static, exclusivistic seventeenth-century Protestant sect rather than a growing, liberating spiritual movement which can find a meeting place of the divine with all humanity. I would invite him to take the next step beyond this thoughtful, conscientious study of Rufus Jones by considering him not merely in the context of scholarly analysis but also in the framework of the future of the Society of Friends in the world community, showing the potential of Quakerism as a corporate, ethical, Christian mysticism. Rufus Jones pointed us in that direction.

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ment in philosophy and may be traced through the evolving religious world-view of the Greeks to the impact of this world-view on Christian thought in all ages, including our own. For Jones this is exactly the link which connected Quakerism with the medieval tradition of mysticism. This nexus which Rufus Jones established has been very influential in creating the “mystical Quakerism” commonly found among Quakers today.

(2) THAT OF GOD IN EVERY MAN

The phrase “that of God in every man” has been widely used in the twentieth century as an expression which signifies the central truth of the Quaker message. Rufus Jones says that the Quakers “form the first organized body of Christians who built their entire faith upon the principle that something of God is present in every man.” George Fox used this phrase or variants of it hundreds of times. When Rufus Jones used it in 1903 he was reviving the use of this phrase after it had lain dormant in the Quaker vocabulary for nearly two hundred years. How did the long-forgotten phrase get into the spotlight and stay there?

Lewis Benson’s research reveals that, when Rufus Jones abridged Fox’s Journal in 1903 and wrote Social Law in the Spiritual World (1904), Jones interpreted the Inner Light to mean that there is something of God in the human soul. But is this what Fox meant by these concepts?

The meaning of “that of God in every man” in early Quakerism was man’s capacity to respond to God and his will, in contrast to the modern Quaker view that man is a self-subsistent portion of divinity or that he is so fused with the great source of divinity that his nature is inherently good and therefore he is not prone to evil. However, there has been a growing tendency in twentieth-century Quakerism to derive man’s dignity and worth from his own innate goodness. This has been accompanied by inroads of humanistic thought into contemporary Quakerism. Insofar as it is admitted today that man derives his goodness from God, one tendency in Quaker thought is the assumption that “that of God in every man” is a spark from the divine — a self-subsistent spark which has come from the main source of goodness. Another tendency
Jones did not claim to demonstrate a direct, confirmed line of antecedency which would convince others that Fox was literally the disciple of Jacob Boehme or other mystics. He never claimed to be constructing a perfect, irrefutable system of Quaker *hadith*, such as Moslem scholars are called upon to do in justification of the authoritative teachings of Mohammed. He made this clear at the outset of his studies: "It is not yet, and probably will not ever be, possible to prove that George Fox and the other leaders of this special movement consciously adopted their ideas and methods... from the Separatist sects which swarmed about them, and which were the product of many centuries of striving after an inward way to God."  

While Braithwaite showed, and Jones was fully aware of, the Puritan soil from which Quakerism sprang in mid-seventeenth-century England, he confirmed and supported Jones's point of view in chapters 1 and 2 of *The Beginnings of Quakerism*. He acknowledged the general mystical influence of the Family of Love and of the writings of Jacob Boehme and Thomas Taylor but made clear, as did Jones, that there was no direct contact evident with either the Familists or the Boehmists. 

This leads to the second observation: Was Jones fundamentally wrong or right? Was this helpful or harmful? Did he reach the heart of the matter or not? My own conclusion is that his position was fundamentally sound and, further, that his basic direction provides one of the best hopes that Quakerism as a spiritual movement can speak to the condition of all men. This does not mean that the mystical experience is the only aspect of Quakerism that is important or that all Friends must agree on its nature and influence. It cannot be understood nor can it survive in a vacuum. Rufus Jones's religion was a religion of the *whole* man for the *whole* society. It requires the keenest attention to reason, education, history, nature, science, social organization, revelation, faith, and work. It stems originally from Judaism, with its prophetic depend-
the human spirit and the divine Spirit have met, have found each other, and are in mutual and reciprocal correspondence as spirit with Spirit." The phrase "mutual and reciprocal correspondence" is a favorite phrase of Jones. He borrowed it from Clement of Alexandria. For Jones the phrase means that there exists a connecting link between man and the divine in which mutuality and reciprocity dwell. Jones holds to a mutual and reciprocal correspondence between man and God because he believes (a) that the Spirit of God and the human spirit are qualitatively the same, and through mutual and reciprocal correspondence the soul can find God, (b) that George Fox referred to a stepladder between God and man, and (c) that there is a "Jacob's ladder" within man by which he can ascend to God and find that mutual, reciprocal communion with the Beyond Within.

However, the phrase "mutual and reciprocal correspondence" is used by Jones in a way that was quite foreign to Clement. For Clement, faith "is the product of 'the exercise of obedience,' and it becomes 'a kind of divine mutual and reciprocal correspondence.'" Another aspect of this mutual and reciprocal correspondence for Clement was prayer. Prayer was another aspect of faith, and both involved this mutual correspondence. Jones does not use this phrase in the way in which Clement did at all.

Rufus Jones revered Clement from his youth. In 1910 he published a little book entitled *Selections from the Writings of Clement of Alexandria.* When we look at this book we find that Jones is using those selections from Clement which most correspond to his Quakerism and his affirmation mysticism. For example, Jones translates Clement's word "Gnostic" as "the complete Christian." Jones also finds that fundamental to the thought of Clement was "the doctrine of an immanent God, moving through all life and in immediate relation with souls of men."

While Jones is stressing the immanent theology of Clement, John Chapman in the *ERE* points out that Clement was truly a mystic of the negative way. His God was to be sought in the darkness (a saying which paved the way for Dionysius the Areopagite and John of the Cross) through the familiar Fox and Quakerism revealed true religion to be that type in which Christ has historically demonstrated the communion of God and man directly, without any necessary intervention or intermediary. He found this authentic religious experience in the Hebrew prophets, in the life and epistles of Paul, in the Gospel of John, and later confirmed partially in the experience of Plotinus, Clement, Meister Eckhart, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, and a good many others, including John Woolman and many "unknown saints." The biblical foundation of Jones's religion may be summarized in two texts: Prov. 20:27 (KJV): "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD," and 2 Cor. 4:6 (RSV): "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." These express both the universality and the particularity of the divine-human community.

Was Jones wrong in believing that the meeting place for the divine possibility — the shekinah — in the individual has important historical, social, rational, ethical, and prophetic dimensions? The fact that Jones distinguished the philosophical, metaphysical doctrine of "mysticism" from the "affirmation mysticism" which he regarded as the distinctive mode of worship for Quakerism should not disturb Bassuk. On the other hand, he should show, if possible, that this was neither characteristic nor distinctive of the religion of George Fox and early Friends, or of Quakerism in its evolution. His paper nowhere seems to do this.

Bassuk does cite the views of Palmer, Benson, Nuttall, and King. He could have added others, such as Hugh Barbour, to support his claim that Rufus Jones placed Quakerism in the main stream of mysticism in Western Christianity rather than in the Puritan reformation in England. This position requires two comments: The first is that anyone who has studied Jones carefully will know that his major life work as a scholar was devoted to a study of the whole of mystical religion and not merely to Quakerism. He certainly made efforts to place Quakerism within that spiritual movement in human history whose authentication is not based upon the authority of a single theory, book, person, church, or society, but upon man's
To these should be added many relevant editorials from the period of 1894 to 1912, when he was either editor or chief editorial writer for The American Friend.

Bassuk cites examples from seven of these volumes to support his views, but omits the supporting historical interpretation by Jones in his studies of Quakerism, such as the "Introduction" to Braithwaite's The Beginnings of Quakerism and The Faith and Practice of the Quakers. While the "Introduction" was omitted from the second edition of Braithwaite, Henry Cadbury made sure that it was included in the Rufus Jones centennial volume in 1963, Quakerism: A Spiritual Movement.

In addition to considering the views of critics whom he cites and with whom he agrees, he could have provided a stronger foundation and broader context for his views if he had also considered the evaluation of Rufus Jones by Mary Hoxie Jones in her short biography, Rufus M. Jones; by Harry Emerson Fosdick in Rufus Jones Speaks to Our Time; by David Hinshaw in Rufus Jones: Master Quaker; by Elizabeth Gray Vining in Friend of Life: The Biography of Rufus M. Jones; and in at least three other doctoral dissertations - E. L. Dwyer's "The Principle of Authority in the Theology of Rufus Jones" (1951), W. A. Alsobrook's "The Mysticism of Rufus M. Jones" (1954), and J. F. Moore's "The Ethical Thought of Rufus Matthew Jones" (1960) — and my Ward lecture, Rufus Jones: Luminous Friend (1958). It is not only surprising that he does not take into consideration the work of Alsobrook on the same subject. How could he possibly disregard Howard Brinton's Ethical Mysticism in the Society of Friends?

Is Bassuk saying that none of these, especially Alsobrook's, is either fair or adequate? What does he really think of Alsobrook's analysis? How does he evaluate the views of such able Quaker interpreters of mysticism as Thomas Kelly, Howard Brinton, and Douglas Steere, who knew Rufus Jones and his thought intimately? Are they non-mystical and non-Quaker?

For such a study as this, it should be basic that Bassuk clarify his own understanding of Quakerism, especially what he considers to be unique or distinctive about George Fox's interpretation of Christianity. Rufus Jones thought that George via negativa, including mortification and contempt of the world and implying a life of self-conquest and of contemplation of God through faith. On the other hand, Jones is giving us an interpretation of Clement stripped of his negative approach, in order to stress immanence and to preserve the mutuality between God and man.

B. PLOTINUS (205 - 270 A.D.)

One of the things which Jones admires so greatly in Plotinus, and a reason why he is so fond of quoting him, is his first-hand experience of God and his emphatic doctrine that the universe in its ultimate nature is spiritual. Jones also feels a strong kinship to the Plotinian doctrine of the continuity between the human soul and the divine Soul, which results in the longing of the soul to return to its homeland in the One.

However, Rufus Jones has an ambivalent attitude toward Plotinus. On the one hand he considers Plotinus to be "one of the world's greatest mystics," to whom he is "always deeply indebted," and Jones praises him in these words: "Plotinus... is one of the major figures in the history of the development of human thought. He was one of the greatest of the perennial philosophers of antiquity, and he was one of the profoundest and most influential mystics of all time." The thing which troubles Rufus Jones is that for Plotinus the highest experience of God was found in ecstasy. Jones is saddened by the fact that a mystic who had such a profound first-hand experience of God should have taken the via negativa which led to ecstasy. In The Radiant Life he contrasts the negative mysticism of Plotinus with the affirmation mysticism of Saints John and Paul, Boehme, and Fox. On the Plotinian influence on negative mysticism he says:

The God of this formulation is above and beyond all that is concrete and finite. He is not "this"; He is not "this"; He is not "this." The person who would reach the goal of bliss in union with the Absolute God must therefore rise above all states and processes of mind, above emotions and thoughts, above aspirations and deeds, and find in wordless communion, in a super-consciousness,
transcending images or ideas or mental states of any kind, a junction of the unlost Soul-Center with Absolute Reality — "a flight of the alone to the Alone." That formulation quite obviously makes Mysticism take the way of ecstasy."

Jones declares that Plotinus and the mystics of India returned with empty hands, having seen God but being unable to "tell about it in any words of common speech." Details of the last stage of the mystic path can be divulged only to those who are initiated. The only words he can use are "Neti-Neti," he is not this, he is not that. Jones feels that the ecstasy which the Neoplatonic school introduced into Christianity was a very costly, unfortunate, and dangerous contribution which he connects with abnormal states of mind.

What Jones admires in Plotinus is his first-hand direct experience of God, i.e., the mystical dimension of Plotinus. What he dislikes is the ecstatic culmination arrived at from following the mysticism of the via negativa.

C. MEISTER ECKHART (1260-1327)

Rufus Jones likes the mild and normal type of affirmation mysticism and fears the negative mysticism associated with ecstasies and raptures. Jones tells us that Eckhart "did not strain after ecstasies. He was not interested in psychopathic wonders. He was not fond of emotional surges." In addition, Jones finds in Eckhart a prime example of the personality-building effect of mystical experience and in particular "the creative expansion of the entire personality. Eckhart glowed with the urge of a tremendous new life-impulse. He became quiveringingly alive with powerful vitality. There was a gushing in, a welling up, of new and constructive life-forces — an élan vital plainly operating in him."

Another reason why Eckhart appealed to Rufus Jones is that he views him as a tremendously vital man who put aid to his neighbor above ecstatic rapture. Jones pictures him as "a highly practical man, who did his day's work with fidelity and with telling effect. He eminently preserved his balance, and he kept his spiritual perspective healthy." Further on, Jones says that Eckhart kept "from being over-ascetic" and that

In his paper on "Rufus Jones and Mysticism," Daniel Bassuk makes two claims which appear to cancel out his basic argument. Most of the paper is devoted to the theory that Rufus Jones led Quakerism astray by his emphasis on its mystical character. Then he washes out his carefully constructed theory by concluding that "Rufus Jones's 'affirmation mysticism'... is not mysticism at all." If he really believes in his own conclusion, then he should perhaps revise the body of his paper to show either (a) that Rufus Jones did not lead Quakerism astray, since his position was not really mysticism, or (b) that he led it astray in some other direction. If the latter is the case, Bassuk should clarify his interpretation of Jones's non-mysticism and why Jones dealt such a body blow to Quakerism. It would also help if Bassuk had given two positive definitions of his own, one of Quakerism and the other of mysticism, in order to indicate the incongruity of Jones's views. What he does in his paper, putting it succinctly, is to say that Jones's Quakerism is neither this nor that: Neti, Neti.

It is somewhat puzzling also to note Bassuk's claim in his introduction that there has been no "fair and adequate" critique of Rufus Jones's mysticism. In order to make this claim, one would think, Bassuk would first analyze carefully all of Jones's own major writings in this field, then review the relevant critical scholarship. The six primary sources are Jones's Studies in Mystical Religion (1909), Spiritual Reformers in the 16th & 17th Centuries (1914), New Studies in Mystical Religion (1927), Some Exponents of Mystical Religion (1930), Mysticism and Democracy in the English Commonwealth (1932), and The Flowering of Mysticism (1939). Then one should turn to thirteen additional books which complement these six: A Dynamic Faith (1901), Social Law in the Spiritual World (1904), The Double Search (1906), Quakerism: A Religion of Life (1908), Spiritual Energies in Daily Life (1922), Fundamental Ends of Life (1924), Pathways to the Reality of God (1931), The Testimony of the Soul (1936), The Eternal Gospel (1939), New Eyes for Invisibles (1943), The Radiant Life (1944), The Luminous Trail (1947), and A Call to What is Vital (1948).
to human nature but a divine addition by intervention. But a very strong case can be made that the author of the Fourth Gospel, on which early Friends based many of their convictions, did believe that this Light was inherent in the nature of man. The cause is not far to seek. This author had been strongly influenced by Greek philosophical thought. The great confluence had already taken place between Hebrew and Greek thought before the canon of the Bible was closed. Therefore the recurring theme in *QRT* that would contrast Greek-philosophical thought and biblical-prophetic thought must come to terms with the facts that Greek-philosophical thought also has claim to being biblical in however limited a sense and that the Fourth Gospel has had prophetic influence, notably on the Society of Friends! Do we really want to revive the old controversy as to whether the “Light that enlighteneth every man” is a part of his nature or not?

I suppose a deeper question that confronts contemporary Quakerism is whether the Spirit calls us to a renewed advocacy of the views of Fox and Barclay or to an affirmation of fresh revelation insofar as we are given to know new truth through experimentation, confirmed by the gathered company. Which is truer to the Spirit that animated Fox?

One final point. Schweitzer says of St. Paul that he had “a mind great enough to accept defeat at the hands of a paradox.” If, as G. K. Chesterton claimed, religion sings the paradoxology more consistently than the doxology, perhaps we need not be so troubled by the recurrence of paradoxes in Jones’s attempt to understand the phenomenon of mysticism. What continues to be relevant to contemporary Quakerism is Jones’s insight that the prophetic element in George Fox and in early Quakerism sprang precisely from and was rooted in positive, life-affirming, mystical experience. Christ had returned to teach his people himself through the Inward Light individually and in the gathered company, whether this Christ be identified solely as the Jesus of history or as the eternal God in human terms. The Inner Light revealed in Jesus is present in all men.

“he has a human interest in the people about him; he feels their sorrows and needs, and is active in his sympathies.” In addition, Eckhart “put Martha above Mary, i.e. activity above contemplation.... ‘Mary is still at school: Martha hath learnt her lesson. It is better to feed the hungry than to see even such visions as St. Paul saw.’”

Rufus Jones thus emphasizes Eckhart’s humanitarian appeal. Jones holds the belief that “God’s purpose in contemplation is fruitfulness in works.” What appealed to Jones was the spirit of Eckhart revealed in such a passage as: “If a man were in rapture such as Paul experienced, and if he knew of a person who needed something of him, I think it would be far better out of love to leave the rapture and serve the needy man.” For Jones, Eckhart had a human interest in the people about him. “He lays down a noble principle: ... ‘What a man takes in by contemplation he must pour out in love.’”

For both Jones and Eckhart the ground of God and the ground of the soul are identical. Jones feels that if Eckhart had been a spiritual reformer in a later age instead of a Dominican priest in the fourteenth century, he probably would have stood unflinchingly for his pantheistical utterances. However, Eckhart’s concept of the Spark was derived from the Plotinian and Gnostic ideas of reabsorption or merging into the source of the Spark, the Eternal Fire. For Fox, the Light was not a part of human nature; it was not even the essence of God or Christ within man, but the activity of Christ within man. And the Seed was the divine potentiality within man which becomes activated by the Light which is Christ. But Rufus Jones in looking at Eckhart and Fox slurs over the differences and emphasizes only the similarities surrounding the imagery of light.

In *The Flowering of Mysticism* Jones quotes Nicholas Berdyaev as follows, “German mysticism is one of the most important manifestations of the human spirit.” But it is significant that Jones does not quote the entire sentence of Berdyaev, which is, “German mysticism, one of the most important manifestations of the human spirit, has been Gnostic in character.” Jones chooses to stress the mystical aspects of...
Eckhart, while Berdyaev in relating these to Gnosticism retains a sense of the metaphysical nature of mysticism.

The partial quoting of Berdyaev points out that there was a negative aspect to Eckhart's mysticism which was incompatible with Jones's thought. Because Rufus Jones advocates an affirmation mysticism he cannot endorse Eckhart's negative mysticism. Jones does not believe that if God is to enter, creatureliness must depart, as did Eckhart. As he read Eckhart's sermons Jones felt that they were stocked with "bad philosophy and worse allegory." And when it comes to Eckhart's via negativa Jones loses sight of him as he got closer and closer to the "unknowing knowing" of God. Concerning the doctrine that the height of knowledge is known in agnostia (unknowing), Jones concludes that "Eckhart is here, no doubt, inconsistent." Eckhart's statement that "to know God God-fashion, one's knowledge must change into unknowing" is rejected as false by Jones. Jones says of Eckhart's mysticism that "this 'negative' philosophy is no proper or inherent part of mysticism. It belongs to a long and tragic stage of human thinking. I do not want to do anything to perpetuate it. I want to transcend its abstract reality by substituting for it a reality that is self-communicative and concrete."

D. THE MYSTICAL POETS OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA

Rufus Jones was a student of Professor George Santayana of Harvard University in the year 1900-1901. Jones probably heard Santayana teach something akin to what he was later to publish in his *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*:

Religion and poetry are identical in essence, and differ merely in the way in which they are attached to practical affairs. Poetry is called religion when it intervenes in life, and religion, when it merely supervenes upon life, is seen to be nothing but poetry.

Poetry raised to its highest power is then identical with religion grasped in its inmost truth; at their point of union both reach their utmost purity and beneficence...
I am not scholar enough to know just how conclusive are the arguments of Geoffrey F. Nuttall, to whom Bassuk refers with regard to the claim that Jones was mistaken in inferring a direct influence upon George Fox by Jacob Boehme and the Cambridge Platonists. I am prepared to accept this judgment, confirmed as it has apparently been by a number of other scholars. No doubt Quakerism was "an outgrowth of radical Puritanism rather than of the mystical movements of the continent," at least in any sense of direct influence. But we must still ask the all-important question: is not mystical experience a hardy perennial that characteristically springs up full-blown, without any traceable direct descent? To put it another way, what about the mysterious but demonstrable factor of synchronicity? Has this no relevance?

Our critic has caught Rufus Jones in some contradictions in the course of a lifetime of prolific writing, much of which centered on his central interest, mysticism. He did not remain consistent. He abandoned close adherence to a distinction made in an article for ERE in 1917. He used "mysticism" later to refer to mystical experience as well as to "the theologico-metaphysical doctrine of the soul's possible union with Absolute Reality," despite his earlier counsel to the contrary. Who was it who said, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself?" He who in life could so readily laugh at himself would not have missed the humor in this predicament of embarrassment.

It is perfectly true that, as his prodigious study of mystical experience ripened with the years, Rufus Jones was saddened by the realization that mystical experience had often been marred by aberration and vagaries. Along with Albert Schweitzer, he distinguished between life-negating and life-affirming varieties. But he continued throughout to corroborate the finding of the other great contemporary researchers in this field, Evelyn Underhill, E. Herman, Dean Inge, Baron von Hugel, William James, Rudolph Otto, and Walter Stace: mystical experience amounts to a new form of consciousness in evolutionary perspective and is religion in its most intense, intimate, and authentic form. I think he would not have been averse to applying it to the currently popular phrase, From this viewpoint it is but a short step to Jones's belief that there were British and American poets who were thoroughly mystical. He declares that "almost every English poet has been mystical, from Richard Rolle to Christina Rossetti and Francis Thompson." For Jones, the English poets who spoke "to the age out of eternity" were Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning. In *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, in a chapter entitled "Mysticism in Robert Browning," Browning is lauded as a poet of affirmation, embodying optimism and courage. According to Jones, he was a mystic because he had had a first-hand experience of God. Jones feels that Browning's account of the soul was also the same as Eckhart's. And for Jones, Browning's mysticism was superior to Tennyson's because it was free of trance and ecstasy.

Concerning mystical poets in America, Jones chooses Walt Whitman as his paradigm. Dr. R. M. Bucke and Ralph Waldo Emerson regarded Whitman as the mystical poet par excellence and as one who had reached the level of "cosmic consciousness." Jones believes that Whitman had experienced mystical insights many times in his life and that the capacity for cosmic identification was present in him. Jones also takes pleasure in pointing out that Whitman was closely related to the Quaker tradition from his youth. Jones says of Whitman, "Whether the young man was a mystic or not, the old gray poet certainly is.... [He] has made his contacts with a World that finger-tips do not touch. He has discovered, not new islands or a new continent, but, rather, a whole new universe of Life and Spirit."

It is quite understandable that Rufus Jones would view Whitman as a great mystical poet, as he had achieved a passionate communion with levels of life deeper than those with which we usually deal. It is also understandable how an advocate of the mysticism of the negative way, Aldous Huxley, would come to the totally different conclusion that "the nineteenth century could tolerate only false, ersatz mysticisms - the nature-mysticism of Wordsworth; the sublimated sexual mysticism of Whitman."
The antithesis of the position of George Santayana and Rufus Jones can be found in the writings of Mark Schorer on Blake. Where Santayana developed the similarities between mystical religion and spiritual poetry, Schorer analyzes the distinctions between the poetic vision and mysticism. Schorer finds that

as the value of vision is the central fact in Blake's religion and aesthetics, so the sanctity of personality, individuality, is the central fact of his philosophy. The mystic silences the faculties and expels personality. Blake exalts personality and demands that it reintege its faculties. Sometimes Blake's language seems to be identical with that of the mystics; but his meaning is usually opposite. Schorer concludes, in direct opposition to Santayana, that "poetry is inadequate to the full mystical experience, and the mystical experience is inadequate to a full poetry." Poetical insights may be about some phase of mysticism; however, they are not mysticism but poetical. If God is like a circle, then the mystic travels to the center and the poet to the periphery. The affirmation mystic often uses language in the rich, multidimensional way distinctive of poetry, in order to intuit the mystical unitary vision of nature. However, the poetic experience differs profoundly from negative mysticism. Carol Murphy says that "poets, as a rule, follow the Affirmative Way; the ascetic mystics, the Negative Way." I am in agreement with Wilmer Cooper, who in his dissertation on Rufus Jones declares that "in some respects Rufus Jones was more of a poet than a metaphysician." Cooper draws parallels between Tennyson's verse and Jones's prose and indeed they are very much alike.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, the demonstrable evidence of interconnection between Quakers and mystics, which Jones emphasizes, is truly quite thin. Jones hypothesizes the probability of unconscious adoption of currents of thought. He finds connections between the mystics and the poets and the Quakers because he

Comments

JOHN YUNGBLUT

At the outset of my response I must confess my prejudice, that the reader may be forearmed. But since the editor was aware of this prejudice in eliciting my response, I need make no apology. The preaching and writing of Rufus Jones were formative in shaping my own spiritual pilgrimage. Because the witness of his own religious experience seemed to me authentic, I simply undertook to follow his reiterated counsel: "If you seek reality in religion, read the mystics."

This said, of course I want to be all the more attentive to what the author of this very thoughtful article is saying. I have profound respect for Daniel Bassuk and admire the spirit of his meticulous scholarship.

The initial assertion of the paper, reflecting as it does a recurring theme in QRT, stumbles me afresh: "Rufus Jones' interpretation of Quakerism... was mistaken in its central thesis; the very life of contemporary Quakerism is therefore founded on an egregious misunderstanding." "Egregious" is a strong word, though apparently chosen with care. Webster defines it, "remarkably bad; flagrant." If this be so, the concession that Jones's interpretation did "much to revive and reshape a moribund Society of Friends earlier in this century" would seem a feckless tribute. The revival, so the author seems to be saying, had a false basis that must now be disowned. There could scarcely be a more sweeping condemnation or a more uncompromising call to the undoing of an unhappy influence. A whole school of thought has sprung up these past two decades with this as its rallying cry. Granted the validity of some of the points that have been made, including a number of new ones in this present writing, one is compelled to ask: does any defense remain for the position espoused by Rufus Jones, despite its historical inaccuracies and inadvertent inconsistencies?
was searching for them rather than because they were really there. He relies too heavily on persuasion by analogy. He finds interdependence because of similarity of belief and metaphor. But mainly he sees mystics, Quakers, and poets through mystical spectacles, regarding them as affirmation mystics regardless of their vision or spiritual path.

We must take note that in the revised editions of William C. Braithwaite's standard history of Quakerism, the introductions to the first two volumes written by Rufus Jones have been deleted. L. Hugh Doncaster in the foreword to the revised edition of Braithwaite's first volume, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, states that "recent studies have ... put Quakerism in a rather different light" from what Jones understood it to be. What this means is that, where Jones's "Introduction" linked Quakerism to the mystical movements of the Continent and England, more recent scholarship has established other origins of Quakerism. Frederick Tolles, in the "Introduction" to Braithwaite's second volume, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, cites the findings of Nathan Soderblom and "his German disciple Friedrich Heiler" for "the crucial distinction between mystical and prophetic religion" as the reason why Jones's "Introduction" was dropped.

The religious thought of Rufus Jones reveals a compound of nineteenth-century liberal religion and a theology whose origins lie in the Greek, Platonic tradition. Jones's intellectual framework is Hellenistic while his spiritual heritage is biblical and Hebraic. Ever since Matthew Arnold, we have been aware that Christian thought is a compound of these two elements, the Hellenic and the Hebraic. The Quaker faith also shares this dual ancestry. In the earlier years of this century Jones re-emphasized the Greek or mystical side of the Quaker tradition. More recent explorations have given us a new appreciation of the Hebraic or prophetic component of early Quakerism. Jones made his reinterpreted Quakerism intellectually respectable and attractive by attempting to graft it onto the Greek metaphysical tradition of mysticism and by injecting into it affirmations of positive thinking and of the social gospel, thus bringing it into line with late nineteenth-century religious liberalism,
Bassuk: Rufus Jones and Mysticism

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Notes
2. Lewis Benson, "That of God in Every Man" — What Did George Fox Mean by It?, Quaker Religious Thought, Vol. 12, no. 2 (Spring 1970), pp. 17-28 (hereafter referred to as Benson, "That of God").
5. Ibid., p. 85; this point is reiterated in Rufus M. Jones, The Radiant Life (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 96 (hereafter referred to as Jones, Radiant Life).
8. ERE, p. 84.
15. Ibid., pp. 202-203.
19. Ibid., p. 15.
22. Ibid., pp. 26-27.
23. Ibid., p. 206.
24. Rufus M. Jones, "A Call to a New Installment of Heroic Spirit," Friends Intelligencer, Vol. 105 (July 17, 1945), p. 409; this was the last paper written by Jones, shortly before his death.
26. Ibid., p. 15.
28. Ibid., p. 119.
38. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
41. Ibid., p. 19n.
42. Ibid., p. 15.
44. Jones, Flowering, p. 27.
45. Rufus M. Jones, Spirit in Man (Stanford University, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1941), p. 55.
50. Jones, Flowering, p. 86.
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18. ibid., p. 14.
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26. ibid., p. 15.
28. ibid., p. 115.
35. Benson, “Prophetic Quakerism,” p. 16.
38. ibid., pp. 18-19.
41. ibid., p. 19n.
42. ibid., p. 15.
44. Jones, Flowering, p. 27.
45. Rufus M. Jones, Spirit in Man (Stanford University, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1941), p. 55.
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