

Biblical Mysticism ?

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The following is the substance of a address given to the Free Reformed Student Society at its meeting in Dundas, Ontario, on March 5,1993. Appreciation is expressed to Wendy Kranendonk of Ancaster for typing the message from the tape recording. I have reworked the manuscript with the needed changes and clarifications to make it presentable in print. It is my hope that, with God's blessing, it may prove to be helpful to equip our young people to discern the spirits of our time.

I was asked to speak on "Biblical Mysticism". I added a question mark because we enter upon this topic with some uncertainty. There has been so much in the history of mysticism which has been extreme, fanatical, or even pagan. Is there such a thing as Biblical Mysticism?

Mysticism is a phenomenon of history that has its root in the nature of man. Humans were made in the image of God. This image or likeness was given to us not only to reflect our Creator, but in order that we live in communion with God.

Mysticism is the human pursuit to experience God.

There is in our nature a potential to have fellowship with God. We were created in a perfect state as social creatures. We were made able to have fellowship with one another. It was not good that man should be alone. And so God created woman as a companion for him. That was the beginning of human society. There was fellowship. We all experience the in-created desire to experience human fellowship.

But there is in man also an innate desire to have communion with God. In the deepest spiritual dimension of his nature man desires to have fellowship with God. He had it in paradise. But he entered into a communion with the devil and broke his allegiance with God. He was expelled from Paradise where he had enjoyed fellowship with God. The angels guarded the way.

But ever since he was expelled from Paradise there has been something missing in man. Augustine's Confessions is an example of some mystical writing. It contains many philosophical passages, but also a mixture of good and not-so-good mysticism. In the opening paragraph he makes a very true statement: "Thou hast formed us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until we find rest in Thee." History is an ongoing evidence of this restlessness of man.

Man has tried to experience the divine in so many ways. He has become "vain in his imaginations and his foolish heart was darkened". He has tried with his own efforts to climb up to God on some "tower" of his own efforts or he fashions an idol to represent his imagination of God, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. (Romans 1). This vacuum in his heart he tries to fill in some other way. In the darkness of his mind, the perversion of his soul, and the distortion of his affections he rejects the Creator and idolizes the creature.

As a definition of "Mysticism" let me suggest this: Mysticism is the religious pursuit of man to experience a personal knowledge of God (and what makes it false mysticism is when this pursuit is...) apart from God's revelation of Himself in Christ.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

What I want to do is give you something of an overview of the historical development of mysticism.

Mysticism has very often attempted to have a direct communion with God apart from the means of His revelation. The analogy is used is that, just as the sun shines directly upon our eyes, so it is possible for us to experience directly, immediately the knowledge of God. But when you pursue the knowledge of God immediately it means apart from the means of His revelation of Himself and apart from the only Mediator Jesus Christ. Some mystics even spoke of an essential union with God -- of being absorbed into the very nature of God. This is they went false and hence the mystical pursuit got its bad name.

As we look at a historic overview of Mysticism, as it developed since Biblical times, we could look at six general movements of false Mysticism

1. PAGAN MYSTERY RELIGIONS

There have been many forms of pagan attempts to experience the Divine. There have been all kinds of pagan cults. One well-known group was a cult known as the 'gnostic' cult. Gnosticism (from the root word gnosis meaning "to know") already existed in New Testament times. This cult claimed to have access to a secret knowledge -- a knowledge of "mysteries". But you had to be "in" to know them. You had to be initiated. It was like a secret club. In the course of history there have been several cults like this. They had secrets and they didn't want anyone outside to be told. Some of the cults strictly enforced the prohibition of letting anyone outside of the cult know the "mysteries".

Today we have modern versions of these secret societies. We have cults like Rosicrucians, Free Masonry, and the Mormans. You have some Lodges as well that have their secrets -- secrets which the members are not allowed to tell their wives. Even though they may use some traditional Christian terminology, they are principally just modern versions of pagan mystery cults.

2. JUDAISTIC GNOSTICISM

Another form of mysticism, one which even affected the New Testament church, was a Jewish Gnosticism. It was a mixture of the teachings of a certain sect of the Jews together with the gnosticism of the pagan philosophers. It was a strange mixture. Some of it was rooted in divine revelation, while other aspects came from pagan mystery cults. This cult plagued the Church in the New Testament time; for example, the Colossians. Paul writes his letter to the Colossians in order to correct some of the deceptions spread by these teachers.

This Jewish gnosticism was a mystery religion. They taught that there were actually two kinds of believers in the Church: there were the ordinary believers, people who could at best only know the letter of the Word. But if you really wanted to go on to the mysteries, you would become one of the gnostics -- one of the "knowers", as they called themselves. Then you would gain access to the upper level secrets of Christian truth. Then you would be able to know this special knowledge that was received from angels by Moses.

The gnostics claimed that Moses did not only receive what is written, but that he also received a whole body of revelation that was just passed on by word of mouth. They claimed that these things were passed on and were being kept within their secret society. They could know these things. They were the spiritual men. They had this knowledge so that they could dig in deeper into Scriptures, beyond the letter, to understand the spiritual truths. These were the more profound mysteries of God.

Those who were able to dig deeply enough into these mysteries could even achieve the kind of mountain-top experience of Moses who spoke to God "face to face". They could "know God" in a mystical way, they could experience a direct "mystical contemplation" of God.

3. MONASTIC MYSTICISM

A third form of false mysticism is Monastic Mysticism. This was a movement which developed within the monastic schools of the Medieval times -- the Middle Ages.

In the monastic movement, there was a method of prayer that was prescribed for experiencing communion with God. Different methods were found in order that, by means of meditative prayer or a repetitive chanting of a prayer, you could experience a higher state of consciousness, a mystical experience of fellowship with God. These methods were nurtured by certain monastic orders within the Roman Catholic church.

We know that Martin Luther tried almost all the methods prescribed by the church for becoming right with God. He also tried mysticism. But nothing gave him peace of conscience from the conviction of sin.

The Medieval mystics described the soul's behaviour and experiences. They spoke of different ways of achieving the contemplative experience.

There are three ways prescribed by the monastics:

- 1) the purgative way - the way of fasting and penance.
- 2) the illuminative way - the study of theology;
- 3) the unitive way - the direct contemplation of the Divine.

We might call this system of "ways" a mystical methodism: do it this way and you'll achieve the goal. But it was just another form of "works righteousness" which kept Luther from the joy of free grace.

4. MYSTICAL PIETISM

It is with some hesitation that we talk about Pietism. We must distinguish two aspects in this movement. Pietism is a movement in post-Reformation history which can trace some of its roots to Monastic Mysticism. But Pietism was also a reaction to the intellectualism that set in during the 1700's. The Reformers had re-established the doctrines of grace and these were also written into the doctrinal forms; for example, in the Reformed Creeds: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt and other reformed creeds, But a certain dead orthodoxy set in; doctrinal accuracy without spiritual life.

The pietistic movement was an attempt to get back to a personal experience of God; not just to have a knowledge about Him in our head but to have knowledge of Him in our heart. Later the church became unorthodox as a fruit of the so-called "enlightenment". The church began to teach humanistic intellectualism. The Pietists rejected this unspiritual "head knowledge". We may also say that Rev. Hendrik De Kok joined this healthy reaction on the part of the Pietists in the early 1800's. He too came to see that it was necessary to experience the Lord personally. We can identify with this aspect of the movement.

On the other hand, we disagree with the elements in the Pietistic movement that belong to false mysticism. In this reaction to the head knowledge of the theologians, there was also a tendency to despise what was called "the dead letter" and over-estimate the value of "inner light". There were elements in the movement that tended to put the Bible aside or even contradict it on the basis of an elevated view of their inner experience. But one of the most positive elements of the Pietistic movement was that it called for a genuine personal experience of the grace of God -- a real communion with God.

5. CHARISMATIC MYSTICISM

We also find elements of mysticism in the Charismatic Movement. In the 70's and 80's we witnessed a revival of a certain experientialism. But it is not the experientialism that we find in the Puritans and in the better part of the Pietistic movement. This is a movement that has elements of false mysticism in it. Here too, there is an emphasis on experience is not fully based on the objective revelation of God's Word.

One of the most conclusive tests to determine whether a mystical experience is false or not, is whether or not it is in accordance with the Bible. If, in the search for truth, it appeals to an "inner light" or an extraordinary experience apart from the Word then it fails the test. That is one of the most dangerous characteristics of cultic movements.

John McArthur has recently written a book in which he exposes a number of movements that are threatening us today. I want to quote from this book entitled, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*. He makes a very relevant statement about the mystical aspects of the Charismatic Movement. He says:

Mysticism has created a theological climate that is largely intolerant of precise doctrine and sound Biblical exegesis. Note, for example, how wildly popular it has become to speak scornfully of doctrine, systematic Bible teaching, careful exegesis, or bold proclamation of the gospel. Absolute truth and rational certainty are currently out of vogue. Authoritative biblical preaching is decried as too dogmatic. It is rare nowadays to hear a preacher challenge popular opinion with clear teaching from God's Word and underscore the truth with a firm and settled "Thus saith the Lord." (p.182)

We may have heard this sentiment before: "Ah, don't always preach on doctrines. Don't preach the Bible as if it were some collection of absolute truths. What we need is something that we can identify with: we need to hear testimonies. We do not need doctrine; we need experience." We certainly need experience but why throw the Bible out? What we need to experience is Truth.

We are not only facing an anti-doctrine sentimentalism. But it has gone further today to relativism: Don't talk anymore about truth or what is right. That's not nice. You alienate people that way. In our pluralistic and multi-cultural society it comes across as bigoted to absolutize your own religious convictions or moral values. It's just not politically correct. Instead you are to say, this is what feels right for me. What's right for me may not be what is right for you.

This new relativism has made its way into religious society too. Yet the strangest inconsistency has developed. McArthur goes on to comment on this:

Ironically, a new breed of self-appointed prophets has risen. These religious quacks tout their own dreams and visions with a different phrase, "The Lord told me..." That is Mysticism, and it preys on people looking for some secret truth that will add to the simplicity of God's all-sufficient once-for-all delivered Word. (p.182-183)

You may have heard about such T.V. evangelists who appear on "talk-show" type "evangelistic" programs. There seems to be such a flippancy about holy things as they glibly tell their audience, "Guess what the Lord told me this morning...." or "I was shaving this morning and God said this to me...." Such superficial talk about God speaking to them is not only incredulous; it borders on blasphemy. When they describe it in such casual terms we immediately doubt that they have met a Holy God. We are quite certain they have never heard the voice of the Almighty. His voice causes the mountains to tremble. When the Israelites heard the voice of God they ran to Moses and pleaded, "Let not God speak with us lest we die." (Ex.20:19) The glory of His presence causes a man to fall into the dust and cry out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips...." This superficial talk about "the Lord spoke to me" is an example of modern false mysticism.

2. NEW AGE MYSTICISM

A final example of false mysticism is New Age Mysticism. We are witnessing a growing renewal of interest in various forms of the mysticism borrowed from eastern religions and pagan cults. What has happened with the arrival of New Age spirituality is that the history of mysticism has come full circle. From ancient pagan mysticism, to judaistic mysticism, through medieval mysticism we have now come right back to pagan mysticism.

In New Age Mysticism we find the practices of Pagan Spiritism, things which were practiced by Babylonian and Canaanite pagans. It is presented with the promise of an experience of power and contact with spiritual forces. The practices include ancient idolatry, sacrifices, scéances, channeling and other occultic practices. All such things the Bible calls "abominations" (Deut.18:9-14).

The Grand Rapids Press recently reported that certain religious writers are even advocating practices reminiscent of ancient temple prostitution, suggesting that such practices could enhance one's spiritual consciousness. What a gross abuse of the mystical pursuit! In the name of pursuing the divine, many end up in communion with the demonic. (I Cor.10:19,20)

Part of New Age Mysticism is also a Pantheistic Psychology, as I'll call it. What do I mean? I mean this prevailing view of man's inner nature based on pantheism. Pantheism is the idea that All is God. Everything is part of the Divine All. Thus, each of us have something of the divine in us. Humanistic method of psychology are now tapping into these concepts. Counselors urge that you get in touch with your inner self, and, by nurturing the right mindset, you can experience the Divine – the Self within yourself. There is a "spark" of Divinity in each of us and by our will we can "affirm" our inner selves. We can harness this inner potential. By this power within ourself we can do anything we want, as long as we think positively enough. Again we see man trying to gain power and trying to be "God" over his life. He is listening to that old temptation of Satan: "Ye shall be as gods."

There are many more elements in the New Age Movement, as you know, but I am just mentioning a few aspects which are samples of mysticism. Let me just list one more: Ecological Mysticism. By now most of us can identify the word "ecological". It seems everything is "ecological" these days. We hear about eco-systems, "eco-this" and "eco-that". A whole new language is being developed in order to make us "eco-conscious". What is it? It has to do with the earth.

"Ecology" means the study of the relation between organisms and their environment. Concern for the earth's land, water and air has been around for some time, and represented by such organizations as the Green Peace association. But what has happened in the New Age movement recently is that it has merged radical feminism together with the ecology movement. Out of the marriage of the goddess worship of radical feminism with this ecological concern, there has developed a spiritualization of the ecology movement. This has revived an interest in the ancient mythical earth-goddess, Gaia. The goddess Gaia is identified with the nurturing spirit of the earth, which is thus personified and revered as "Mother Earth". We now can read billboards, and bumper stickers in our cities across the nation exhorting us, "Love your Mother". Do not get it wrong. It is not a return to traditional family values. It means: love Mother Earth. Get yourself in tune with the "spirit" of the globe. Be in harmony with the creation. Be "earth-friendly". Be nice to animals, and whales, and trees, and birds. Because, after all, they are all part of this global spirit of life. The divine principal of life in you is the divine principal of life in them. Its the same spirit. By way of the evolutionary process we may be at different levels on the ladder, but we are really all children of Mother Earth. All life flows out of this one mystical, cosmic Spirit. The rationale used is that of Pantheism.

The mission call today is: Save your fellow life-force, save the animals, save the trees. Organized industry is identified with the masculine oppressive, abusive spirit. Save the spotted owl and the trees from the cruel tyranny of masculine capitalists. We need the tenderness of the feminine nurturing spirit. Feminism cares. Masculine capitalism doesn't care. In language similar to the debates regarding the abolition of slavery, or equal rights for racial minorities there is now a call to

free the earth from the tyranny of industry.

But the appeal to one divine spirit of life in the earth is pagan mysticism. It is the pursuit of the divine, or an identification with the divine, which centers in the creature rather than in the transcendent Creator. This is where the concern goes off track. Yes, Christians ought to be good stewards of the creation. Let's not take anything away from that as a positive Christian duty. But we ought not to be so occupied and absorbed in the creation that we begin to idolize, or live for the creature instead of Creator. We are called to worship God only (Mt.4:10, Rev.22:9).

As I said, history has come full circle from pagan mysticism all the way back to it. The great need of our time, is that we do not simply admit that the mystical pursuit is unavoidable, and then leave everyone to "find God" in his/her own way. We need to listen to the "God who is there", and who has spoken. We need a Biblical perspective on the mystical pursuit.

CHRISTIAN MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Is there a Biblical Mysticism? Let's put the question in another way, since we often associate the "-ism" words with wrong views. Is there a Biblical mystical experience?

Much of historic mysticism has principally denied the sufficiency of the Bible as God's self-revelation and has ignored the necessity of the mediation of Christ in man's reconciliation with God. These factors would lead us to be very critical of their experiences.

However, there have also been Christian mystics who have quoted many passages of the Bible which seem to support the possibility of such experiences as they have. They have quoted passages like the reference to Moses Mt.Sinai experience of God's glory (Ex.33:12-34:9,29-35; cf.II Cor.3:7), Isaiah's vision of the Lord upon His throne (Is.6), Jesus statement, "That they may all be one,... as we are one" (John 17:21), Paul's rapture up to the third heaven (II Cor.12:1-4) and his statement "Our life is hid with Christ in God..." (Col.3:3). What do we do with these and so many other passages which speak of apparently direct experiences of God?

One thing we need to realize is that there are communications from God which the prophets and apostles experienced during the history and recording of the Bible which we may not, nor do we need to, expect to experience. Revelation is complete and recorded in the Bible. Another point is that not one of the Biblical examples occurred without the mediation of Christ.

For the purpose of testing mystical experiences (our own or others') we must be on our guard for false mysticism. We may not pursue any religious experience apart from the Bible. **Biblical mystical experience is the gracious application by the Holy Spirit of God's self-revelation in Christ, as recorded in Scripture.**

There are several **Biblical Principles** which we need to keep in mind in connection with mysticism:

1. God's Transcendence: God is infinitely above His creation. He is wholly other than what He has made. Unbiblical mysticism denies the transcendence of God. It teaches that creatures are part of the divine All or that it is possible to become absorbed into the divine Being. But that is directly against Biblical teaching. (Job 22:12, Isa.66:1, I Kings 8:27, II Chron.2:6).

2. Man's Depravity: By nature man is spiritually alienated from God. He is without God and without hope (Eph.2:12). Man's natural mind is at enmity against God (Rom.8:7). He is unable to come to God.

Unbiblical Mysticism is an attempt of man to pull himself up by his own bootstraps to get himself up to God. He tries to build a "tower" or climb some "ladder" of his own making to try to reach God. Whether we depend on a tower of good works or try to climb up a ladder of personal experiences it is in vain. Man cannot work his way up to God.

3. By Grace Alone We need to keep in mind that we can never come to God apart from His grace. We need grace work for us and grace working in us to reconcile us and restore us to God. We cannot even come to Christ unless the Father draws us (John 6:44-46).

4. God's Self-Revelation is in Christ: He is Immanuel - GOD- WITH-US. We cannot go up to God, but God has come down to us. It reminds us of Psalm 8: "What is man, that thou art mindful of Him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" It is in Christ that God has revealed Himself -- He is the Word. (John 1:1, Heb.1:2). In Christ, as the Word-made-flesh, God came to dwell ("tabernacle") among us. (John 1:14). It is through the Spirit of Christ that believers become the "habitation of God" (Eph.2:22). Unbiblical mysticism tries to climb up to God; Biblical "mysticism" arises from the fact that God was willing to come down to us.

Instead of climbing some earthly mountain to seek communion with God in some, mystical way, God gave the answer after the Mount of Transfiguration experience and simply said, "This is my beloved Son. Hear ye Him." If you want to have an experience of the Divine then don't try superstitiously to attach importance to some monastic place or method. Simply

listen to Christ. Believe Him. We need to see "Jesus only" (Matt.17:8). He is the Son of God. He is the WAY. Only by a self-surrendering trust in Christ will we experience a loving contact with God.

But what is this experience? We talked about the mystery religions. There is a certain mystery in this as well. The Dutch writers spoke of a "verborgen omgang", a hidden communion with God -- probably thinking of what Paul describes as a "life hidden with Christ in God" (Col.3:3). The apostle was laying the basis for this concept in Colossians 1. In his letter he is opposing the false mysticism of the Gnostics. He presents the Christian alternative by using some of their own terminology in this passage. He states in Colossians 1:25-27,

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you the hope of glory."

You see the mystery of this experience of the Divine is: Christ in you the hope of glory. But this is not a covered mystery any more; it is "manifest". Nor is it restricted to some elite inner club of Christians. Paul goes on to say, Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

The apostle Paul says, we would like to have all the people of the Christian Church, all believers be presented perfect in Christ. This mystery that he is speaking of is that God has come down to be with us -- to dwell among us in Christ -- and in this way we can experience God. It is through the renewing, illuminating and indwelling experience of the God's revelation in Christ. He is the one by whom we can experience God-with-us.

Now that we know by WHOM it is; HOW do we experience this?

Revelation

How do we experience that? By means of the Scriptures. Sola Scriptura. Indeed we need divine illumination but let's not just sit in a corner and say "Well, I'm waiting for God to illuminate me. - I am contemplating - I am meditating - I am concentrating but I just don't seem to experience Him." Psalm 1 teaches us, "Blessed is the man who ... meditates in the law of the Lord day and night." (Ps.1:1,2)

Meditation on some philosophical proof for God's existence, or meditation on something in nature or on my inner SELF is not Christian meditation. Christian meditation directs us away from ourself to God. The means of that meditation is the Bible. It is through the Scriptures that we come to a true knowledge of God. It is by the application of the gospel of Jesus Christ in Whom God has revealed Himself. The apostle Paul was humbled at the thought that this mystery had not only been revealed objectively but that it had been applied subjectively to his own heart and that he could now bring that message to others.

We need to have this revelation applied to our hearts; it needs to be uncovered. That is the case with a mystery: it is at first covered and needs to be uncovered, to be manifest. Now the true knowledge of God is hidden by the distance between us and God. How can we know God? He is infinitely above us, and sin has blinded us. But the Lord has been pleased to reveal Himself. It was hidden. But now it is uncovered. The Light has come. He has manifested Himself in Christ and in His written Word, the Scriptures. Then why do not all who hear the gospel experience this communion with God?

Illumination

There is another covering hiding this mystery. That is the covering of the veil of sin upon our hearts (cf. II Cor.3:12-18). We do not only need to have this mystery uncovered in the coming of Jesus Christ so that God can say to mankind: Here is my Son; here's the mystery. Look at Him. Hear Him. Know Him, believe in Him and love Him. That's the way to come to experience a loving knowledge of God. Indeed the Old Testament veil of the types and shadows "is done away in Christ" (II Cor.3:14).

But we are like a group of blind men and women who are brought into a museum or art gallery in which the curator has unveiled a large new painting. The tour guides who can see exclaim, "Ah! Beautiful!" The visitors may look but they can't see. They're blind.

We are like that. God has manifested Himself in Christ. The mystery has been unveiled objectively but it hasn't been unveiled subjectively. The veil still has to come off our hearts and off the eyes of our soul. We need the experience of a gracious personal illumination (II Cor.3:15-16).

We are in need of the work of the Holy Spirit so that the light of this mystery in Christ may shine into our souls. We need our understanding opened so that with the eyes of faith we may look upon Jesus Christ and know Him as the glorious Lord and Saviour.

When Jesus asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?", they gave some of the common opinions. But when he said, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." To this Jesus responded, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee" -- not the eyes of your flesh and blood -- "but my Father which is in heaven." Peter was given a knowledge of Christ's divine glory by means of a mystical illumination through the Holy Spirit.

We are dependent upon Sovereign Grace in this illuminating experience. It does not come by human effort or choice. It is the work of the irresistible grace of God. He teaches this. (John 6:45)

Transformation

By means of illumination, there is also a transformation of the human nature. The sinner is regenerated. He is spiritually united to the Lord Jesus Christ, in a mystical union -- unio mystica, as the old authors used to call it.

But it is important to keep in mind, that we may never think that this in any way changes us into deity. It does not communicate God's nature to us God. We remain human. [Note: II Peter 1:4 "partakers of the divine nature" -- means the restoration of the image of God in man] The problem with false mysticism is that some in medieval times spoke of being absorbed into the Being of God. This kind of language opened them for suspicion of teaching pantheism. But mystical union does not produce essential union. We do not become part of God.

Rather, what happens is that we come into harmony with God's nature. The genius of Augustine, as he addressed the heresy of gnosticism, was that he already then described this mystical union with God in Christ as being, not an identification of nature, but a harmony of will. It is an enlightenment of the mind, an enflaming of the affections, and a bending of the will so that we are sweetly made to know Him, love Him and submit to Him.

As we come to a close, let me quote the apostle Paul in one of the most explicit Biblical description of this experience. It is II Corinthians 4:3-6:

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That is a clear summary of the Biblical mystical experience of God: seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Probably one of the healthiest mystical writings is that of Isaac Ambrose, who wrote a book entitled "Looking unto Jesus".

Glorification

If we have seen something of the glory of God in the face of Christ, then how we long to see more! Now, we can at best see that glory "through a glass darkly", as Paul wrote. (I Cor.13:12, cf. II Cor.3:17) What an ecstasy of joy it will be for those who love Him to see Christ in all the splendor of His exalted glory, face to face!
