

revelation made in Christ, which surpasses all possibilities of pagan guesses and ratiocinations, consists however just in this, that the eternally blessed will then know directly, as God knows them even now—face to face (*tunc autem facie ad faciem*) (I Cor. 13, 12).



## MYSTICISM

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**I**F we presume to think that perhaps few of those who use the word 'Mysticism' know its meaning it is because in their simplicity they think it stands for one thing like the word 'oak'; whereas it stands for such things as activities of the intellect and the will, things as different as the ear and the eye, and the oak and the ash.

We may group the meanings of Mysticism thus: Mysticism of the mind or head, and Mysticism of the will or heart. Intellectual mysticism seeks its philosophy, or unity of thought, not in any process of deliberate or formal reasoning but in an unbidden and spontaneous intuition. Mysticism of the heart, with perhaps higher flight, seeks a unity, not of thought or not only of thought, but of life; and seeks it not in intuition or not in intuition alone, but in love.

Like ethics, therefore, mysticism is neither a science nor a philosophy but a life. There is a science of ethics, yet ethics is not a science; just as there is a science of rocks yet rocks are not a science. So too there is a science of mysticism although mysticism is not a science. Moreover, though there is a literature as there is a science both of ethics and of mysticism, yet mysticism is not a literature.

All this goes to show that a man may be a mystical writer or a writer on mysticism without being himself a mystic; even as one man might write a treatise on the Trinity yet remain an atheist, and another might accept all the mysteries of faith on a basis of rationalism.

The real mystics are known to God alone. Only Omniscience can see into the human heart where alone dwells that true love of God which accredits the true mystic.

<sup>1</sup> From the Preface to *The Mistress of Vision*, by Francis Thompson, with a Commentary by John O'Connor (Ditchling, 1918).