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Rufus Jones and the Inner Light

Mysticism and the Experience of God

Name: Jarnick S. Vitters
Student Number: 4101685
Course Titel: Thesis Research Master
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Thesis Supervisor: Professor T. (Todd) Weir
Second Assessor: Dr. G. (Gorazd) Andrejč

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Introduction: Rufus Jones and the Quaker Doctrine of the "Light"

'In the stillness of his soul George Fox heard Christ speaking to him so clearly that he could not mistake it.'[1] Rufus Matthew Jones (1863-1948) was one of the most influential Quakers in modern history. In a short portrait of Jones, Quaker biographer and novelist Janet Whitney mentions that the "Religious Society of Friends," more commonly known as the Quakers, depends strongly on a person-to-person influence. Whitney describes in her hagiography of Jones that each generation is made up of Quakers 'who by personal magnetism, a contagious faith, and a devotion to an occasional, voluntary, itinerant ministry, act as a living cement to fix the whole Society together.'[2] Rufus Jones indeed had the arduous task of keeping his faith community united. In his day, American Quakers had become deeply divided by theological disagreements between evangelicals on one side and liberals on the other. Besides, Jones also had to confront the problems of modernity that had emerged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jones, himself a Quaker and a proponent of liberal theology, based his beliefs largely on a strong mystical conviction that religion begins with an inner, personal experience of God and that humans have a deep potential to transform society.[3] Jones' influence extended even beyond his own religious, spiritual community. He was a professor of philosophy at Haverford College in Pennsylvania, was one of the founders and chairs of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and was an active ecumenist who sought to bring Christians of different denominations together. In addition, Jones also democratized mysticism by insisting that mysticism was no longer limited to a select few but was within the reach of all, and that people could experience God's nearness within themselves.[4]

Figure 1: The painting "Presence in the Midst" by James Doyle Penrose. It shows Christ appearing in the middle of a silent Quaker meeting for worship. The core Quaker doctrine of the "Light" referred originally to the Light of Christ or God shining on or within people from the outside.[5]

[1] Rufus Jones, *The Story of George Fox* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1919), 19.
[2] Janet Whitney, "Rufus Jones: Friend," *The Atlantic Magazine*, April 1954 Issue (April 1954): 29. https://cdn.theatlantic.com/media/archives/1954/04/193-4/132440776.pdf.
[3] Birkel, "Said Nursi and Rufus Jones," 52.
[4] Birkel, "Said Nursi and Rufus Jones," 53.
[5] James Doyle Penrose, *Presence in the Midst*, painting, 1916. https://www.ncregister.com/blog/scriptures-and-art-year-a-23rd-sunday.

Central to Jones' mysticism was his reformulation of the core Quaker doctrine of the "Light." The doctrine of the "Light" has always been central to Quakerism. Early Quakers used to emphasize the significance of the divine Light of Christ, which was universally present in all people.[6] These seventeenth-century Quakers applied the terms "the Light within" or "Inward Light" to refer exclusively to the Light of God or the Light of Christ. This, therefore, implies that the doctrine or term "Inward Light" refers to the notion of a transcendent God shining on or within people from the outside.[7] The writings of George Fox, one of the most prominent co-founders of Quakerism, show that early Quakers viewed human beings as clearly separate or distinct from God. When Fox speaks of God's Light, he views it as apart from human nature. The Light, Fox writes, refers to the Light of Christ that illuminates all who love the Light and walk in the Light.[8] By believing in the Light of Christ, he argues, people can become children of the Light and come to God.[9] Hence, the initial definition of the "Inward Light" did not originally refer to a divine light or "something of God" that each person has in their own soul or in themselves, but rather to the notion that people are illuminated by the Light of God or the Light of Christ and can respond to this external Light.[10] The central issue here is that Rufus Jones reformulated or restated the traditional Quaker doctrine of the Light and used the term "Inner Light" to describe his own interpretation. Jones mainly focuses on the immanent nature of God by conceiving of the Inner Light as a "source of Light within."[11] However, Jones' thought was central to the renewed interpretation of the "Inner Light" because he did not seem to recognize the difference between the traditional and transcendent Quaker view on the one hand and his own more immanent perception of God on the other. Jones thus believed, as Helen Holt notes, that early Quakers used the terms "Inward Light" and "Inner Light" interchangeably, when in fact the latter term dates back to or did not come into use until around the end of the nineteenth century.[12] Jones describes his understanding of the Inner Light most clearly in his book *Social Law*, in which he states that the Inner Light is 'the doctrine that there is something Divine, "something of God" in the human soul.'[13] This means that Jones, unlike Fox and early Quakers, sees an inherent relationship between God and human nature through the Inner Light.

As a result of his great influence on modern mysticism, the reformulation of the Inner Light, and the emergence of modern liberal Quakerism, Jones' religious views were received variably within broader Quaker circles. Evangelical Quakers were generally critical of Jones' beliefs, while many liberal Quakers often accepted them gradually.[14] Later, after Jones' death in 1948, Jones' ideas were interpreted by some as having allowed for a form of Quakerism that was no longer exclusively Christian, even though Jones himself probably would not have

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[6] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light in the Thought of Rufus Jones, Quaker* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 110.
[7] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 109.
[8] George Fox, and Rex Ambler, *Truth of the Heart: An Anthology of George Fox 1624-1691* (London: Quaker Books, 2007), 46.
[9] Fox, and Ambler, *Truth of the* Heart, 30.
[10] Michael P. Graves, "One Friend's Journey," Rhetoric and Public Affairs 7, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 514-516. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939950.
[11] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 110.
[12] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 109.
[13] Rufus Jones, *Social Law in the Spiritual World: Studies in Human and Divine Inter-Relationship* (London: Headley Brothers, 1904), 149.
[14] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 162.

approved of this. As we will discover later, Jones' creative application of different, sometimes contrasting schools of thought for his reformulation of the essential Quaker doctrine of the "Inner Light" contributed to these later misconceptions about his thinking.[15] One of the most recent critics of Rufus Jones is Carole Dale Spencer who blames Jones of taking 'Christ out of the Light, the soul itself was the Light, and the soul became divine.'[16] Dale Spencer believes Jones' interpretation of the Inner Light was responsible for the emergence of a "Christless Quakerism" that made the soul its own authority, thus making it supreme and thereby greatly diminishing the saving role of Christ.[17] The main reasons for her criticism is Jones' reformulation of the Quaker doctrine of the "Inner Light."

Moreover, Jones' entire interpretation of Quakerism as a historical, mystical religion has been criticized by more modern research. Wilmer A. Cooper, for example, argues that before Jones' life and work, there were very few references to the importance of "mysticism" in Quaker history. Cooper recalls that during a meeting, Jones himself implied that 'he knew about these [new] findings and was not afraid to rethink his view, but it was too late to change.'[18]

The aforementioned book *Social Law* is one of the books I thoroughly studied and analyzed before writing this thesis. It is important to note that outside of *Social Law* Jones avoids the term "Inner Light" in most of his corpus and instead uses the phrase "human-divine relationship."[19] This means that when I describe Jones' work, I will often refer to both the Inner Light and the human-divine relationship. Rufus Jones' interpretation of the human-divine relationship, or the Inner Light, and its connection to his particular form of mysticism will be the focus of this thesis. Central to this research is the question of how Rufus Jones formulated the intercourse between humans and God, and how this is related to human nature, mysticism and Jones' view of the immediate, direct experience of God. To study the human-divine relationship in Jones' work, I decided to examine several of his books. Besides *Social Law* (1904), I also thoroughly explored Jones' books *Practical Christianity* (1899), *The Double Search* (1906), *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1909), *The Inner Life* (1917), *The World Within* (1918), *The Story of George Fox* (1919), *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life* (1922), *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion* (1930), *A Preface to Christian Faith in a New Age* (1932), and *A Call to What is Vital* (1949, posthumously). In addition to these books, however, I will also refer to other works that I have not studied in as much detail as the books mentioned above. Furthermore, I have divided this thesis into five distinct chapters, each of which addresses the central focus of this research in its own way; thus, these chapters serve to address several core issues central to Jones' conceptualization of the Inner Light.

The first chapter of this thesis will focus on Jones' confrontation with some of the major issues of his time; his struggle and criticism of naturalism and secularism. Attention will be paid both to Jones' embrace of modern, scientific knowledge as a liberal theologian and to his rejection of naturalistic and secularist notions of truth that exclude other forms of

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[15] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 162.
[16] Carole Dale Spencer, *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism. An Historical Analysis of the Theology of Holiness in the Quaker Tradition* (Eugene; London: Wipf & Stock with Paternoster, 2007, 2008), 204.
[17] Spencer, *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*, 204.
[18] Cooper, "Reflections on Rufus M. Jones," 42.
[19] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 124.

knowledge, such as faith and spirituality. The second chapter examines the influence of William James and psychology on Jones' thought and the Inner Light. Of interest here is the connection between William James' metaphysical speculation about the "subconscious" and Rufus Jones' integration of the subconscious into his own theological and philosophical thinking. In addition, I will also discuss Jones' Christology in this chapter. The third chapter discusses the influence of Josiah Royce regarding "absolute idealism" and "God's immanence" on Jones' religious ideas. I will aim to discuss how Jones' integrates Royce's thought into his own Christian, Quaker framework. The fourth chapter analyzes Jones' beliefs about the connection between divine and human nature, as well as the "mutual and reciprocal correspondence" between God and humans. Jones' interpretation of Clement of Alexandria, the "conjunct" relationship between God and humans, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's conception of the "Over-Soul" are essential to this part of the thesis. Finally, the fifth and final chapter deals with Jones' mysticism and how his form of mysticism can be characterized. Crucial here are Jones' thoughts on the "experience of God" and the social nature of his mysticism. How, then, will I attempt to interpret or portray Rufus Jones' thought?

In writing this thesis, it is not my intention to produce a comprehensive biography or monograph on Jones' life. Some recent, excellent biographies on Jones already exist, see, for example, *Mysticism and the Inner Light in the Thought of Rufus Jones, Quaker* by Helen Holt (2021) and *Friend of Life: The Biography of Rufus M. Jones* by Elizabeth Gray Vining (1958). What I do intend is to make my own interpretation and analysis of Jones' thought and describe his central spiritual message as I perceive it. Moreover, I attempt to place Jones in his proper historical context along with the challenges he encountered; specifically, Jones' struggle with modernity and his lifelong aim to make Christianity and Quakerism ready for modern times. The reason I am emphasizing Rufus Jones' books in this thesis is the fact that Jones' inexpensive and numerous books were used to spread his religious and mystical message and were central to his approach to religious life.[20] To fully understand Jones' mysticism, it is important to focus on several elements of his thought that shaped his understanding of the Inner Light, and thus the human-divine relationship. But first I will outline the profound challenges Jones sought to address. The first chapter will be dedicated to this.

[20] Matthew S. Hedstrom, "RUFUS JONES AND MYSTICISM FOR THE MASSES," *CrossCurrents* 54, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 32-34. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24460448

Rufus Jones' Confrontation with Naturalism and Secularism

Introduction

Rufus Jones saw humanity 'wander about between an old world dead as the dodo and a new world not yet born.'[21] This quotation which originated in an article in *The Atlantic Magazine* in 1947 marked Jones' career as a modernizer of Quaker and Christian thought. It was Jones' mission to offer a modern, vibrant faith for the new age. In the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century, Jones sought his position between the competition of two contrasting worldviews. On the one hand, he faced evangelical and conservative Christians and Quakers who clung to traditional Christian theology and doctrines and saw God as the "Absolute Other," separated from humans, and on the other hand, Jones saw a threat in the spread of naturalistic and secular worldviews that were emerging in both academia and broader society. Essential to Jones' thinking was thus this enormous attempt to bridge what he considered to be "the remnants" of the past with the religious and spiritual void of the times in which he found himself. Jones urgently realized that 'perhaps the point at which to begin the reinterpretation of faith is with *the spiritual significance of man* in this world we now find to be the one we belong to.'[22]

As a liberal theologian, Jones embraced the scientific findings of his day and even the difficulties they posed for Christian and Quaker faith, but he also vehemently opposed the naturalistic or secular "rigidity" that, in his view, reduced religion and spirituality to nothing more than useless symbols of the past that were of no use to the scientific mind. This tension that was visible in Jones' thinking is the focus of this first chapter. The central question of this chapter is how Jones approached the issues of naturalism and secularism and how he attempted to deal with the challenges he faced. It traces the background of Jones' mysticism and Jones' (re)formulation of the concept of the Inner Light, or the human-divine relationship. First, this chapter will focus on the influence of liberal theology on Quakerism and Jones' himself. This section highlights Jones' support for the liberal Quaker agenda that fostered the acceptance of modern thought and modern scientific understanding. Next, it examines Jones' criticism of naturalism, particularly the way he framed naturalism and "rigid science" in his books. Finally, Jones' opposition to secularism as a threat to religion will be analyzed. By analyzing this, I hope to shed more light on the problems Jones faced and how he saw them as motivating his mystical outlook and approach to Christianity.

[21] Rufus Jones, "What the Modern Man Can Believe," *The Atlantic Magazine*, 29 November Issue (November 1947): 89. https://cdn.theatlantic.com/media/archives/1947/11/180-5/132357040.pdf Rufus Jones, *A Call to What is Vital* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1949), 34.
[22] Rufus Jones, "What the Modern Man Can Believe," 91. Rufus Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 39.

Rufus Jones: A Liberal Quaker Theologian

As mentioned in the introduction, Rufus Jones was a liberal Quaker theologian. But what exactly is liberal theology and how did it influence both Quakerism and Jones? American social ethicist and theologian Gary Dorrien defines liberal theology as 'the idea of a theology based on reason and experience, not external authority, which offers a third way between orthodox authority religion and secular disbelief.'[23] Dorrien also views liberal theology as a theology that distances itself from doctrines and theological views that seem contrary to modern thought, and no longer views the Bible as the infallible or literal "Word of God."[24] As Peter J. Bowler, historian of biology, notes, the rise of liberal theology was marked by both liberal Christians' acceptance of the theory of evolution and their attempts to reinterpret the Bible.[25] Liberal theology, at least initially, viewed the world from a perspective of continuous progress.[26]

This influence of liberal theology on Quakerism went both ways. In his study of American Quakers between 1790 and 1920, Thomas D. Hamm found that American Hicksite Quakers (followers of American Quaker minister Elias Hicks) 'embraced ideas about the divinity of Christ and the authority of the Bible that would become prominent in liberal Protestantism in nineteenth-century America.'[27] An increasing number of Quakers began to interact with liberal Protestant theology and adopted its ideas about the immanence of God in this world and the idea that the Kingdom of God was to be realized on earth. Important behind the background of this theological process within Quakerism is the fact that liberal Quaker thought arose in response to Calvinist and Evangelical Christians who maintained and subscribed to a strong belief in the infallibility of the Bible, the relevance of original sin and the literal understanding of redemption through the "blood of Christ."[28] By the early twentieth century, both American Hicksite Quakers and Orthodox Quakers had developed a Quaker faith that had become much more liberal.[29] Joanna Dales notes that in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth, more liberal-minded Quakers attempted to revive "early Quakerism" while at the same time 'borrowed from mainstream liberal theology new attitudes to God, nature and service to society.'[30] Essential to these liberal changes within Quakerism, in addition to Rufus Jones himself, were John Wilhelm Rowntree, Thomas Hodgkin, John William Graham and Edward Grubb. According to Dales, all of these thinkers were instrumental in redefining the meaning of the "Light."[31]

In her book *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, Helen Holt describes a relevant Quaker

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[23] Gary Dorrien, "The Crisis and Necessity of Liberal Theology," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 30, no. 1 (January 2009): 3. https://www.jstor.org/stable/i27944456

[24] Dorrien, "The Crisis and Necessity of Liberal Theology," 3, 4.

[25] Peter J. Bowler, "Christian Responses to Darwinism in the late Nineteenth Century," in *The Blackwell Companion to Science and Christianity*, eds. James B. Stump, and Alan G. Padgett (Malden; Oxford; Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 37, 38.

[26] Bowler, "Christian Responses," 42.

[27] Thomas D. Hamm, *Liberal Quakerism in America in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1790-1920* (Leiden: Brill Research Perspectives in Quaker Studies, 2020), 20.

[28] Hamm, *Liberal Quakerism in America*, 2.

[29] Hamm, *Liberal Quakerism in America*, 79.

[30] Joanna Dales, *The Quaker Renaissance and Liberal Quakerism in Britain, 1895-1930* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 1.

[31] Dales, *The Quaker Renaissance*, 70-74.

Conference in 1895. At this Manchester Conference on Quakerism and modern thought, both evangelical and liberal Quaker speakers made contributions around topics such as biblical authority and the relationship between Quakerism and modern science.[32] Liberal Quakers would eventually prevail in the years following the Manchester Conference and would be of great significance to Jones' thought. The liberal Quakers at the Conference, like Jones, endorsed the idea that religion had to adapt to modern thought and accepted Darwinian evolution and Biblical higher criticism, and also emphasized the immanence of God and the immediate experience of God.[33] Although Rufus Jones himself did not attend this Conference, he was informed of the new theological developments in a letter from Henry Stanley Newman, the editor of the British Quakers' journal *The Friend*.[34] It was ultimately the meeting with his later friend and fellow Quaker thinker John Wilhelm Rowntree in 1897, two years after the Manchester Conference , that would shape Jones' future as a reformer. At that meeting, Jones and Rowntree spoke of their similar aims to reform Quakerism, and it motivated Jones to devote his life to promoting the liberal Quaker agenda.[35]

Jones' commitment to liberal theology is evident in his books. According to Matthew S. Hedstrom, Rufus Jones, like other liberal Christian leaders such as Harry Emerson Fosdick, supported the rise of a new "book culture" designed to create a mass market for inexpensive religious, spiritual books. Hedstrom notes that Rufus Jones wanted both to address America's poor reading habits and to promote 'the reading-and buying-of mass-market books as a central component of the religious life.'[36] This book culture would eventually be essential to Jones' mysticism, which was open to everyone, not just a select number of ordained religious people.[37] In the following chapters we will learn more about this. For now, it is relevant to note that Jones spread his liberal and egalitarian mystical message to "ordinary people," especially through his books.[38]

In his book *The Double Search*, Jones criticizes the traditional Christian conception of "the atonement" and notes that historical theories of atonement 'have been deeply colored by mythology and the crude ideas of primitive sacrifice.'[39] Jones observes that this way of viewing the atonement is contrary to the God who Christ has revealed, turning God into a 'capricious sovereign, angry at sorely tempted, sinning men, and forgiving only after a sacrifice has satisfied Him.'[40] Jones' final book *A Call to What is Vital* expresses the liberal Christian idea that 'religious conceptions must always be constantly and freshly reinterpreted in the light of the best knowledge available at the time.'[41] When it comes to the interpretation of the Bible, Jones believes it can no longer be seen as "infallible" and that the

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[32] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 30, 31.
[33] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 30, 31.
[34] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 33-35.
[35] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 35.
[36] Matthew S. Hedstrom, "RUFUS JONES AND MYSTICISM FOR THE MASSES," *CrossCurrents* 54, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 32-34. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24460448
[37] Hedstrom, "RUFUS JONES AND MYSTICISM," 31, 32.
[38] Hedstrom, "RUFUS JONES AND MYSTICISM," 30-32.
[39] Rufus Jones, *The Double Search: Studies in Atonement and Prayer* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1906), 58, 59.
[40] Jones, *The Double Search*, 59.
[41] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, V.

Bible is not a divinely "dictated" Book.[42] He rejects the notion of the Bible as a "unbroken unity" and states that it is a 'library of books, not a single book. It is the chosen and selected spiritual literature of a remarkable people, covering more than a thousand years of history and spiritual development.'[43] Although the Bible is no longer infallible and should not be read literally, Jones still has a 'profound faith that this literature of the ages, which has been passing through an eclipse in this scientific period, will come back into full sunlight splendor.'[44] Once readers with a highly educated scientific mind, Jones says, will notice the Bible for what it really is, they will finally see the spiritual depths it contains.[45]

Naturalism and Issues of Faith

Rufus Jones was certainly not fond of the naturalistic approach to science and observation of the world. In *The Inner Life*, published in 1917, Jones remarks that people 'have been living for a generation – or at least trying to live – on a naturalistic interpretation of the universe which chokes and stifles the higher spiritual life of man.'[46] So what is this "naturalism" that Jones so clearly opposes and which in Jones' view hinders people's spiritual development? As Anyur M. Karimsky notes, naturalism is a term that cannot be so easily defined because there is no single naturalistic tradition and naturalism does not have one uniform meaning. 'Naturalism is [also] not a single doctrine or organized movement.'[47] However, around the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, naturalism was increasingly regarded as 'mechanism, primitive biologism, denial of God, of freedom, and of values.'[48] It is precisely this understanding of naturalism that Jones finds so repugnant. Jones argues that not everything in the world evolves on a mechanical basis and that life is also characterized by spontaneity and unpredictable events.[49] It is also interesting to note Jones' critique of Bertrand Russell who, according to Jones, gives a 'vivid impression of the stern and iron character of this materialistic universe.'[50] His critique of naturalism already appears in his book *Social Law* from 1904. Here Jones insists that the human conscience and will cannot be explained by a naturalistic worldview. He concludes: 'We cannot discover its origin either in the race or in the individual. All naturalistic explanations have broken down at some point when all the facts were marshalled.'[51]

In his 1932 book *A Preface to Christian Faith in a New Age*, Jones also criticizes naturalism. He writes that there are two different kinds of naturalism. The first type of naturalism represents a delineation of a specific area of interest for investigation and observation, and may be considered as a philosophy of the universe. This type of naturalism

[42] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 47.
[43] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 47.
[44] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 63.
[45] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 63.
[46] Rufus Jones, *The Inner Life* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1917), 140.
[47] Anyur M. Karimsky, "American Naturalism from a Non-American Perspective," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 28, no. 4 (Fall 1992): 647. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40320384.
[48] Karimsky, "American Naturalism," 648.
[49] Jones, *The Inner Life*, 144.
[50] Jones, *The Inner Life*, 140.
[51] Jones, *Social Law*, 88.

does not claim to possess all knowledge about other areas of knowledge and is therefore modest.[52] By contrast, the second type of naturalism, according to Jones, 'is one of the dogmatic isms of that order of generalization. It makes its assumptions on very slender capital.'[53] Jones clarifies that this type of naturalism purports to have generalized knowledge even about other forms of knowledge outside its own field of inquiry.[54] This also means that 'wherever "naturalism" of this rationalized type is accepted, and *carried all the way through as a world-system*, it leaves, and can leave, no place for spiritual verities or values.'[55] Because this "naturalistic" system seeks to explain all things, it leaves no room for inner values and spirituality.[56] How, then, does Jones' opposition to naturalism relate to his liberal theology? As Gary Dorrien asserts, the 'entire tradition of liberal theology is naturalistic in the sense of accommodating naturalistic explanation.'[57] He also argues that although liberal theologies sometimes subordinate naturalism to, for example, idealism, mystery and doctrine and sometimes are not radically empiricist, they are to some extent at least partially naturalistic.[58] But how does Jones' theology relate to this?

It is essential to note that Dorrien's interpretation of naturalism corresponds rather to the type of naturalism that Jones regards as a specific field of inquiry or philosophy of the universe. What he rejects is the type of reductive naturalism that can be defined as a worldview that posits only the natural world. Thus, one could say that Jones accepts the fact that religion must adapt to new scientific findings or new insights and acknowledges that when the Bible came into existence, 'not a single law of the universe had been discovered and scientifically attested and formulated.'[59] In other words, Jones reckons that minds not trained by science believed and sometimes still believe in wonders.[60] But Jones also thinks that 'there is vastly more depth, of reality and of mystery to our universe than most of our current philosophies have plumbed.'[61] He relates these possibilities of deeper realities and mysteries that we may not be able to grasp to the limited knowledge of how our mind works and the possible deeper layers of our subconscious mind.[62] As we will read in the coming chapter, the subconscious plays a central role in Jones' conception of the Inner Light and his form of mysticism. For now, it is vital to understand that Jones did not believe in a Christianity that was at its core an ethical system or system of philosophy, strictly separated from a deeper spiritual layer.[63] In his book *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life* from 1922, he even criticizes forms of (liberal) Christianity that present Christ as merely a great thinker or great teacher. Jones argues that it is most important of all that we 'shall not lose any of our vision

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[52] Rufus Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith in a New Age* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1932), 10.
[53] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 11.
[54] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 11, 12.
[55] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 12.
[56] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 12.
[57] Gary Dorrien, "Naturalism as a Theological Problem: Kant, Idealism, the Chicago School, and Corrington," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 38, no. 1 (January 2017): 49. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/amerjtheophil.38.1.0049.
[58] Dorrien, "Naturalism as a Theological Problem," 49.
[59] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 90.
[60] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 90.
[61] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 96.
[62] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 96.
[63] Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1922), 108.

of Christ as Savior, and that we shall live our lives in his presence.'[64] The next chapter will also examine Jones' views on Christ's nature and elaborate on this.

The tension, evident in Jones' writing, is the significance of modernizing Quaker and Christian thought on the one hand and retaining the spiritual element of religion on the other. One of Jones' greatest concerns was the idea that naturalism could mean the end of a vital and spiritual Christian faith. He insists that naturalistic theories leave no place left for faith.[65] As a result of naturalism, we too often 'say to ourselves that only the ignorant and uncultured are led by faith.'[66] Even Jones' book *The Story of George Fox* (1919), which attempts to convey the life and spirituality of George Fox to young people, contains a critique of naturalism. Jones subtly remarks the following:

In the midst of the beauty and glory of this valley [the Vale of Belvoir] he [George Fox] began to "wonder," as so many other persons have done, whether, after all, everything in the world had not come by "Nature," by a simple, natural process. Is not, perhaps, Nature its own author, its own maker and builder? (…) If this were so, then, there might not be any God.[67]

In this passage, Jones ascribes the alleged "threat" of naturalism to George Fox's story and life, although naturalism as a term was certainly not something the early Quakers were familiar with. As noted earlier, the negative association of naturalism as a mechanical and God-denying worldview became more prevalent around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[68] But the passage does show that Jones views naturalism as a threat to the future of Christian faith and spirituality. Jones connected the issue of naturalism to his struggle against secularism. This will be the focus of the next section.

The Struggle Against Secularism

In 1928, "The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council" held a conference on the role of the (ecumenical) Church in the world in relation to secular civilization. Although Jones did not attend this conference himself, he did accept the request to write a paper for it. Whereas in his earlier works Jones particularly criticized the naturalistic worldview, he now also turned his attention to secularism through his ecumenical involvement. Jones' involvement in foreign mission had begun two years earlier, in 1926, when he addressed missionaries in China at the invitation of the Young Men's Christian Association.[69] However, he not only visited China, but also made trips to Japan, India and the Holy Land. Jones' appreciation for non-Christian religions intensified after meeting Mahatma Gandhi and visiting the birthplace of the Buddha.[70] As a result, one of Jones' key messages in

[64] Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, 108.
[65] Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, XV.
[66] Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, XV.
[67] Jones, *The Story of George Fox*, 18, 19.
[68] Karimsky, "American Naturalism," 648.
[69] Stephen W. Angell, "Rufus Jones and the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry: How a Quaker Helped to Shape Modern Ecumenical Christianity," Quaker Theology, accessed on September 18, 2024, https://quakertheology.org/quaker-influence-one-modern-ecumenical-christianity/.
[70] Angell, "Rufus Jones and the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry: How a Quaker Helped to Shape Modern Ecumenical Christianity".

his 1928 paper was the idea that other religions are allies in the fight against secularism and materialism.[71] In addition, he also called on Christian leaders to accept scientific advances.[72] Of interest, for example, is how Jones begins his paper. Jones writes that 'the greatest rival of Christianity in the world today is not Mohammedanism, or Buddhism, or Hinduism, or Confucianism, but a world-wide secular way of life and interpretation of the nature of things.'[73] Jones thus concluded that the secular way of life constituted one of the greatest obstacles and rivalries of the Christian faith. Although "secularism" and "the secular" can have different meanings, Jones seems to use both terms in an almost similar fashion to describe the obstacles he sees to the future of Christian faith. The original meaning of "secular," which is also present in Jones' paper, can be understood as something that cannot be labeled spiritual, religious or sacred, nor clerical; historically, the entire world of "laity" and secular power was considered "secular."[74] When Jones, for instance, refers to "the secular way of life," he implies the absence of religious faith and spirituality.[75]

However, the criticism expressed in his paper seems closer to a certain definition of "secularism" that can be formulated as a philosophical conception with impactful social consequences. This "secularism" is therefore especially affecting public spaces, which, according to Charles Taylor, supposedly 'have been allegedly emptied of God, or of any reference to ultimate reality.'[76] It is rather this second definition against which Jones' paper is directed. Jones observes that the force of secularism is being driven by Marxist anti-religious propaganda and the spread of the scientific mind.[77] This also means that education, while often still nominally Christian, is also affected by a profound process of secularization.[78] At the same time, Jones also acknowledges that organized Christianity cannot claim to hold all the truth and all the goodness, but that there 'are [also] spiritual values of a high order, interpenetrating the secular ranks.'[79] Jones closely identifies secularism with the battle against both naturalism and mechanism. He remarks that this battle 'is in the last grip to be fought out, not in the sky, or in that dread region behind atoms, but in man's soul.'[80] In addition, Jones writes that one of the reasons for the increasing secularization can be found in the loss of faith, or the weakening of faith, in the existence of immortality beyond this world.[81] As a result, the passion for and a faith in a 'life after death has waned with many persons, and where that is not the case the intellectual difficulties which beset the larger

[71] Angell, "Rufus Jones and the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry: How a Quaker Helped to Shape Modern Ecumenical Christianity".
[72] Angell, "Rufus Jones and the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry: How a Quaker Helped to Shape Modern Ecumenical Christianity."
[73] Typescript of Paper Secular Civilization: The Church and the World by Rufus Jones, Circa 1928, MC1130_046_15_01, Box 46, Folder 15, Rufus M. Jones Papers, Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford College, Haverford, PA (hereafter cited as Typescript, Rufus M. Jones Papers). https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/463872, 1.
[74] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 265.
[75] Typescript, Rufus M. Jones Papers, 2.
[76] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 2.
[77] Typescript, Rufus M. Jones Papers, 1-3.
[78] Typescript, Rufus M. Jones, 12.
[79] Typescript, Rufus M. Jones Papers, 13.
[80] Typescript, Rufus M. Jones Papers, 26.
[81] Typescript Rufus M. Jones Papers, 35.

hope have seemed unsurmountable.'[82] Jones' critique of secularism is not only evident in this paper.

In 1932's *A Preface to Christian Faith*, which had a similar missionary spirit and built on his arguments in his essay, Jones addresses similar issues and again provides a brief overview of what is wrong with secularism. According to Jones, secularism has the same effect for practical human beings as naturalism has on academic minds. As explained in the previous section, Jones also rejects naturalism in this same book. Both systems 'put [their] emphasis on things that are seen and handled.'[83] The advances of both the naturalistic and secularist systems have led to a world constantly characterized by a great deal of hurry and rush, leaving no room for meditation and nothing against weariness and disillusionment.[84] Secularism and naturalism are not the only culprits, as Christian leaders and denominations are also responsible for the decline of faith and the spiritual life themselves. Jones believes that the divisions in the Church and the failure of Christian leadership, vision and creative power pose major issues to the Christian faith.[85] Despite all these problems, Jones still believes there is hope for a dynamic and vibrant faith. In his Jerusalem paper, he argues that while the crisis of secularism cannot be overcome by ancient theology, emotional revival methods, more aesthetic rituals or social experiments, there is another way that can.[86] The important solution resides in 'penetrating the lives of the leaders of the churches with a real and dynamic experience of God.'[87] This real and dynamic experience of God, as will be explained later in this thesis, is central to Jones' understanding of mysticism. Jones' mysticism, accessible to all, sought to deal with the crises of his time and through his books reached a wide readership, far beyond a Quaker audience.[88] Moreover, Jones consistently thought that central to the problems of his time was the restoration of 'faith in the actual reality of God and in the fundamental spiritual nature of our world.'[89]

Rufus Jones thus firmly believed that there were no religious alternatives to the direct, inner first-hand experience of God.[90] Despite the central importance of the direct experience of God to his mysticism, some modern scholars paint Jones as someone who was a humanist and not a proponent of true mystical religion. Quaker scholar Hugh Rock relatively recently argued that Jones' thought was not mystical in nature but was, in fact, 'a rational religion and social gospel under the seeming bridle of mysticism.'[91] Rock's central thesis is the notion that Jones did not establish a mystical interpretation of Quakerism but, on the contrary, used the term "affirmation mysticism" to develop a rational humanism that was connected to rational ethics and a social gospel.[92] Rock's assessment of Jones, however, is simplistic. I agree with Helen Holt that Rock's view of Jones is one-sided because he

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[82] Typescript, Rufus M. Jones Papers, 35.
[83] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 13.
[84] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 17.
[85] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 138.
[86] Typescript, Rufus M. Jones Papers, 39.
[87] Typescript, Rufus M. Jones Papers, 39.
[88] Hedstrom, "RUFUS JONES AND MYSTICISM," 37.
[89] Jones, *Inner Life*, 138.
[90] Jones, *Inner Life*, 138.
[91] Hugh Rock, "Rufus Jones Never Did Establish that Quakerism is a Mystical Religion," *Quaker Studies* 21, no. 1 (June 2016): 61. https://doi.org/10.3828/quaker.2016.21.1.5
[92] Rock, "Rufus Jones Never Did Establish that Quakerism is a Mystical Religion," 60-62.

entirely misses the significance of the experience of God in Jones' thought.[93] Moreover, as Holt also argues, Rock's argument is based on an assessment of only three works by Jones: *Studies in Mystical Religion*, *Spiritual Reformers* and *Social Law*.[94] In addition, Jones himself is highly critical of secular or naturalistic humanism. Jones, for instance, writes that this type of humanism 'knows nothing about anything transcendent, of anything "up top." It launches out on no great deeps.'[95] Rufus Jones does believe in another type of humanism, a "lofty Christian humanism." This particular type of Christian humanism, according to Jones, believes in humanity because it points to its potential to become a child of God.[96] Jones' humanism is thus inherently mystical and includes a strong faith in a spiritual world or universe.

Conclusion

As a liberal theologian, Rufus Jones sought to modernize his Quaker tradition. As with other liberal theologians, Jones was seeking a new interpretation of Christianity and the Bible. The influence of liberal theology on Jones' thought already had a relevant antecedent. Around the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, an increasing number of Quakers developed a Quaker faith that became ever more liberal. The 1895 Manchester Conference clearly showed the dominant influence of liberal Quaker theology, which would influence Jones' thinking for the rest of his life. Jones spread his liberal and mystical ideas through the mass production of inexpensive religious, spiritual books that he wrote and made available to a wide audience. This American liberal-Christian book culture would become essential to Jones' approach to mysticism that should be accessible to everyone, not just a select few. Although Jones' life task was to modernize Quaker and Christian thought, he was also critical of scientific explanations that left no room for faith. "Naturalism," at least in its most materialistic and mechanical version, posed for Jones one of the greatest threats to the future of the Christian faith. According to Jones, this type of naturalism tended to generalize knowledge beyond one's own research and to explain everything in the world.

As a result, it denied belief in God and the existence of a deeper spiritual layer beyond the material, outer world. The influence of naturalism, Jones said, leads to the idea that faith is something for the non-scientific or uncultured mind. What naturalism is to the academic or scientific mind, secularism, according to Jones, is to "practical," non-academic people. He believed both systems lead to a hurried and rushed world with little attention to the spiritual matters of life. The rise of secularism, or the "secular way of life," combined with the failure of Christian leaders and denominations, created the troubled phase in which the Christian faith found itself. The only real alternative for this rapidly increasing loss of faith was for Christian leaders to be immersed by a real and dynamic experience of God. This direct experience of God was central to Jones' interpretation of mysticism. Despite accusations that he used mysticism to disguise a rational humanistic and ethical faith, Jones'

[93] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 180.
[94] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 180.
[95] Rufus Jones, *Lighted Lives*. A sermon preached in Trinity Church Boston, 11 December 1932. Available at http://www.qhpress.org/quakerpages/qhoa/rmjll.htm [accessed on 19 September 2024].
[96] Jones, *Lighted Lives*.

faith was in fact deeply mystical. Moreover, Jones opposed dualistic, conservative Christian thinking about God and human nature because he believed it led to a worldview in which God and humans are sundered. In order to a that God and humans are not separate, but inherently connected and close to each other, he had to reformulate the traditional Quaker doctrine of the "Light." The Inner Light, in Jones' view, suggests that God is related and close to the human soul.

Rufus Jones, William James, and Psychology

Introduction

How does one deal with crises that pose complicated challenges to the faith you hold dear and the tradition in which you grew up? This was the question that would keep Rufus Jones busy throughout his career. Pressed by the problems of naturalism and secularism, he sought a solution that could revive religion for the ages to come. This solution could already be found in Jones' own mystical thought. This does not mean that Jones used mysticism merely as a function but rather that he viewed his mystical views as crucial to the vitality of religion. William James (1842-1910) was one of Jones' main sources of inspiration for his interpretation of mysticism, and this chapter is devoted to the ways in which Jones was influenced by James. Rufus Jones and William James had much in common. As this chapter will show, both men interpreted early Quakerism as a historical, mystical movement. Jones applied James' understanding of psychology and the subconscious to redefine the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light. The main purpose of this chapter is to answer the question of how James played an eminent role in influencing Jones' mystical thought, his conception of the Inner Light and what role the subconscious played in it.

The central argument I will make is that the subconscious served to reduce the distance between God and humans through the Inner Light. It was precisely to make the relevance of Christianity and the Quaker faith relevant to modern times. In the first part of this chapter, I will focus on James' influence on Jones in viewing Quakerism through a mystical lens. Significant to this is the creation of modern mystical Quakerism. Then I turn to James' theory of the "subconscious" and its relevance to religious experience. I will analyze how Jones applied the subconscious for his reformulation of the Inner Light and why Jones saw the subconscious as a meeting place between humans and God. Finally, I will explore the potential risks of applying the subconscious to the role of Christ in relation to Jones' Christology. In fact, critics have accused Jones of stripping the Quaker faith of its Christian roots by diminishing the relevance of Christ. In doing this, I hope to provide an understanding of Jones' views on the nature of Christ and address some of the criticisms Jones has received on the subject.

A Mystical Quakerism

In 1884, three British Quakers (who initially remained anonymous), Francis Frith, William Pollard and William E. Turner wrote a book that would become important to the history and influence of liberal Quakerism. Their book, *A Reasonable Faith*, addressed concerns about the perceived threat of evangelical Christianity to the identity and future of Quakerism.[97] To counteract the possible Calvinist influence on Quaker beliefs, which these liberals believed was rejected by the early Quakers, they sought to place their emphasis on the traditional Quaker doctrine of the "Light."[98] In addition, they argued that although the Bible was divinely

[97] Hamm, *Liberal Quakerism in America*, 58.
[98] Hamm, *Liberal Quakerism in America*, 58.

inspired, it was not the only way to God; through the "Light," people could gain direct access to God, who expressed Himself continually and progressively.[99] The notion that the "Light," or thus direct contact with the Divine, was the most crucial authority of religious inspiration would become central to liberal Quaker thought. Another indispensable impact on both the theological ideas of liberal Quakers and Rufus Jones in particular came from William James. Later, around the time one of James' most influential books *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) was published, a revitalization movement emerged within British and American Quakerism that aimed to restore the role and importance of the "Light" to the thought and experience of the Quaker faith.[100] Rufus Jones was one of the most influential Quakers of this group, and his reformulation of the Inner Light was partly informed by James' work on mysticism. Jones' own studies of early Quaker mysticism, as Stephen Kent argues, were similar to broader trends in the analysis of religion at the time.[101] According to Kent, those who focus on early Quaker mysticism tend to perceive Quaker origins as supernatural rather than natural or social-cultural because the experience of God through the doctrine of the "Light" is central to this interpretation.[102]

In *Varieties*, James explains that religious leaders, more so than other "geniuses," are influenced by "abnormal psychical visitations." In this view, religious figures are often mentally or psychologically unstable, and, as a result, they develop a type of personality that is susceptible to religious experiences.[103] These type of people, according to James, often suffer from a 'discordant inner life, and had melancholy during a part of their career.'[104] Consequently, these people 'have known no measure, been liable to obsessions and fixed ideas; and frequently they have fallen into trances, heard voices, seen visions, and presented all sorts of peculiarities that are ordinarily classed as pathological.'[105] Moreover, these pathological features or mental problems helped these people with remarkable religious insight to be defined by a high degree of religious authority and influence. James claims that George Fox is such a religious figure.[106] After this brief introduction of Fox as a remarkable religious personality, James offers a very positive assessment of Quakerism. In this description of Fox and Quakerism, he states:

The Quaker religion which he [George Fox] founded is something which it is impossible to overpraise. In a day of shams, it was a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness, and a return to something more like the original gospel truth than men had ever known in England. So far as our Christian sects to-day are evolving into liberality, they are simply reverting in essence to the position which Fox and the early Quakers so long ago assumed.[107]

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[99] Hamm, *Liberal Quakerism in America*, 58.
[100] Stephen A. Kent, "Psychological and Mystical Interpretations of Early Quakerism: William James and Rufus Jones," *Religion* 17, no. 3 (July 1987): 251. https://doi-org.proxy-ub.rug.nl/10.1016/0048-721X(87)90118-7.
[101] Kent, "Psychological and Mystical Interpretations," 252.
[102] Kent, "Psychology and Quaker Mysticism: The Legacy of William James and Rufus Jones," *Quaker History* 76, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 1. https://skent.ualberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Psychology-and-Quaker-Mysticism-The-Legacy-of-William-James-and-Rufus-Jones.pdf.
[103] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., 1982), 14.
[104] James, *Varieties*, 14.
[105] James, *Varieties*, 14.
[106] James, *Varieties*, 14.
[107] James, *Varieties*, 14.

An interesting aspect of James' portrayal of Quakerism and Fox is the contrast or tension between the neurotic and psychological features of religion on the one hand and the mystical elements on the other.[108] Crucial to Jones' mystical interpretation of Quakerism was also James' essential claim that religious experiences should be studied in people's personal acquaintance with the Divine and not in the role of ecclesiastical institutions and organizations that might influence them.[109] To support his argument, James again describes Fox's life as an example of the relevance of personal religious experience. Fox's youth is an example of the "isolation" or journey into the wilderness outside the door that, according to James, mystics like the Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and St. Francis also had to walk.[110] Thus, one idea that would influence Jones' conception of religious or mystical experience is the belief that the individual's awareness of God transcends the position of the churches. It is, in James' view, this particular first-hand contact that 'has always appeared as a heretical sort of innovation to those who witnessed it birth.'[111] In addition, William James interpreted early Quakerism and George Fox as creating an 'impulse for veracity and purity of life.'[112] Therefore, the early Quakers radically challenged the power of ecclesiastical Christianity in their day. James observes:

The battle that cost them most wounds was probably that which they fought in defense of their own right to social veracity and sincerity in their thee-ing and thou-ing, in not doffing the hat or giving titles of respect. It was laid upon George Fox that these conventional customs were a lie and a sham, and the whole body of his followers thereupon renounced them, as a sacrifice to truth, and so that their acts and the spirit they professed might be more in accord.[113]

James' interpretation of early Quakerism as a mystical movement was instrumental in the later self-identification of liberal Quakers as belonging to a mystical tradition. In his 1984 article "Rufus Jones and Mystical Quakerism," Quaker scholar and historian John Punshon describes Jones' influence on modern liberal Quakerism. Punshon notes that Jones saw mysticism as the personal experience of God and that in Jones' view Quaker mysticism delivered a 'positive and life-affirming [vision] rather than being a discipline of self-denial.'[114] The chapter on Jones' mysticism, later in this thesis, will discuss this in more detail. For now, it is important to note that Jones played a vital role in the emergence of modern mystical Quakerism. By providing a mystical basis for Quakerism, Jones also confronted the problems of modernity and the early twentieth century that threatened both the future of Christianity and Quakerism.[115]

In *A Preface to Christian Faith*, Jones notes that mysticism, the essence of Quaker faith, extends far beyond membership in the Society of Friends. According to Jones, the

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[108] Kent, "Psychological and Mystical Interpretations," 253, 254.
[109] James, *Varieties*, 291, 292.
[110] James, *Varieties*, 290, 291.
[111] James, *Varieties*, 290.
[112] James, *Varieties*, 247.
[113] James, *Varieties*, 248.
[114] John Punshon, "Rufus Jones and Mystical Quakerism," *Friends Journal* 30, no. 17 (November 15 1984): 9, 10. https://www.friendsjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/emember/downloads/1984/HC12-50767.pdf.
[115] Punshon, "Rufus Jones and Mystical Quakerism," 9, 10.

Quakers have simply 'gathered up and transmitted a mystical attitude as old and as continuous as the Christian Church.'[116] In *The Story of George Fox* (1919), Jones portrays Fox as a mystic who emphasizes that 'a person who has real, firsthand religious life and power will make everybody in a ten-mile radius see how different that is from a religion of mere empty profession.'[117] In Jones' view, God is always close to the human soul.[118] In his portrayal of Fox, he again relates him to an immediate experience of God and asserts that Fox's teachings pointed to the closeness between humans and God through the soul.[119] The Quaker silence for worship can be vital to this experience of God. Jones remarks: 'If God was near the soul, as he [George Fox] kept saying He was, then one way to discover Him and to hear His voice speaking was to become quiet and still, so that He could be heard.'[120]

The Inner Light and the Subconscious

Why can humans experience God immediately and how is a direct encounter with the Divine possible at all? To formulate an answer to this pressing question, Rufus Jones turned to a psychological explanation and William James. In *Varieties*, James provides his metaphysical theory of the subconscious. James concludes that the visible world is part of a more or larger spiritual universe that provides the visible world with its chief significance.[121] In addition, James argues that every person has a higher part of himself that is 'conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with.'[122] As we will discover later in this thesis, this view of James is consistent with Emerson's concept of the Over-Soul, which will be discussed in chapter four. The "more" in James' thought is related to his notion of the "subconscious self," which James believed had become a recognized psychological entity by this period (early 1900s).[123] This means that 'whatever it may be on its *farther* side, the "more" with which in religious experience we feel ourselves connected is on its *hither* side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life.'[124] There is, therefore, a deeper layer of human existence that lies beyond the "ordinary" state of our conscious life and is connected to the "more" that is essential to religious experiences.

What, then, does this imply for our spiritual life? James states that 'it is one of the peculiarities of invasions from the subconscious regions to take on objective appearances.'[125] He believes that this useful psychological fact, which the theologian generally lacks, ensures that this psychological understanding of religious experience remains in touch with science. Although, according to James, the theologian lacks this psychological basis, the theory of the

[116] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 156.
[117] Jones, *The Story of George Fox*, 36.
[118] Jones, *The Story of George* Fox, 166, 167.
[119] Jones, *The Story of George Fox,* 166-168.
[120] Jones, *The Story of George Fox*, 167.
[121] James, *Varieties*, 420.
[122] James, *Varieties*, 431.
[123] James, *Varieties*, 433.
[124] James, *Varieties*, 433, 434.
[125] James, *Varieties*, 434.

subconscious proves that religious people are influenced by an external force flowing in.[126] In other words, there is an objective basis for the existence of a higher divine force related to the subconscious. It is essential to note that James felt for himself an 'inability to accept either popular Christianity or scholastic theism.'[127] Also relevant are James' comments on the notion of "over-belief." An over-belief in James' view refers to metaphysical beliefs that can be described as speculative views that exceed or go beyond available evidence or evidential reasons.[128] According to James, it would be an over-belief to claim that the "more" in his psychology would refer to one particular religion or theology or to the Christian or Abrahamic God. James notes that this would be unfair to other religions.[129]

Therefore, it is important to point out that James' concept of the "more beyond the subconscious" was not necessarily Christian. However, Rufus Jones still made use of James' work in order to study mysticism through psychology and to establish 'vivid imagery for making God as spirit *real* to our [people's] minds.'[130] Jones had become fascinated with psychologists researching "psychic phenomena," and James' metaphysical speculations about the subconscious had captured his own imagination.[131] In fact, Jones felt so much respect for James that he even had a picture of James hanging on the wall in his wood-paneled study.[132] It is crucial to understand that while Jones and James both shared a deep interest in the phenomenon of "religious experience" and the interpretation of the universe as inherently spiritual, Jones believed in the personal Christian God and sought to integrate James' ideas into a Christian, Quaker framework.[133]

In his book *Social Law* (1904), Jones attempts to lay an intellectual foundation for his work, integrating theology and philosophy. He wrote this book after a deep spiritual crisis facing three consecutive traumatic events, first the death of his first wife in 1899, the loss of his fiancée in 1900 and the tragic passing of his young son Lowell. Additionally, Jones was already struggling with the alienation from modernity due to divisions within Quakerism and scientific rigidity caused by naturalism.[134] In *Social Law*, Jones pays special attention to the subconscious and its significance in the encounter between God and humans. Jones writes that everyday and more ecstatic or pathological mystical experiences 'alike show that the margins of the self sweep indefinitely beyond the horizon of which our consciousness illumines.'[135] According to Jones, this means that 'the self we know is related to a larger life, which belongs to, is in some sense its own, and yet lies below the margin of primary consciousness.'[136] In other words, the subconscious life marks a deeper self that can be distinguished from our primary state of consciousness. Thus, in *Social Law*, Jones relies

[126] James, *Varieties*, 434.
[127] James, *Varieties*, 455.
[128] Michael R. Slater, "James' Critique of Absolute Idealism in *A Pluralistic Universe*," in *William James and the Transatlantic Conversation: Pragmatism, Pluralism, and Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Martin Halliwell, and Joel D.S. Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 174.
[129] James, *Varieties*, 433.
[130] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 46.
[131] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 46.
[132] Kent, "Psychological and Mystical Interpretations," 251.
[133] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 46.
[134] Hedstrom, "RUFUS JONES AND MYSTICISM," 34.
[135] Jones, *Social Law*, 98.
[136] Jones, *Social Law*, 98.

heavily on James' ideas about psychology and the subconscious, and he even uses a diagram of human consciousness that he took from James to describe the inner human-divine relationship, or the Inner Light.[137]

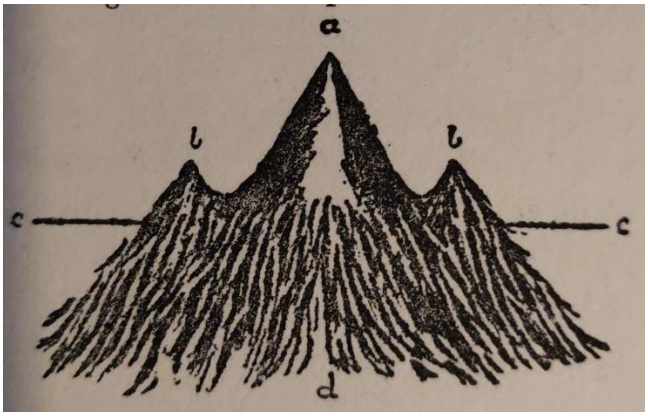

Figure 2: This figure shows Jones' diagram of consciousness (Social Law, p. 99). According to Jones, the human consciousness was vital to understanding the Inner Light and the inherent relationship between God and human nature.[138]

In this diagram, the letter (a) refers to the "peak" of consciousness, while (b) shows the "dying peak" and the "dawning peak" that lie around the peak of consciousness and symbolize that the thought of each moment is influenced by what is "dying out" and what is "coming in."[139] Furthermore, (c) shows the "threshold" or "horizon" of consciousness, while (d) below this threshold points to the vast realm of the subconscious, which, according to Jones, 'borders upon the infinite Life, *rises out of it*, and may receive "incursions" from it.'[140] He therefore believes that below the threshold of consciousness 'something goes on which is a part of the self - that incursions may occur from above down and from below up.'[141] Jones also suggests that in the subconscious there may exist 'some real shekinah where we may meet with the Divine Companion, that More of Life, in whom we live.'[142]

So how is the subconscious related to Jones' formulation of the Inner Light? As mentioned earlier, the Inner Light is, in Jones' interpretation, 'the doctrine that there is something Divine, "something of God" in the human soul.'[143] This means that the subconscious is the meeting place where the encounter between humans and God takes place. It also suggests that God is related to human nature through the subconscious. Jones writes that 'to become spiritual is to become a divine-human person – to be a person in whom the human nature and the Divine nature have become organic and vital.'[144] This implies, then, that a true spiritual or mystical union is characterized by the Inner Light, or human-divine relationship, that brings about an organic whole created from both God and humans. Because of this reason, Jones does not always make a sharp distinction between the

[137] Jones, *Social Law*, 98, 99.
[138] Jones, *Social Law*, 99.
[139] Jones, *Social Law*, 98, 99.
[140] Jones, *Social Law*, 98, 99.
[141] Jones, *Social Law*, 115.
[142] Jones, *Social Law*, 120.
[143] Jones, *Social Law*, 149.
[144] Jones, *Social Law*, 157.

creator on the one hand and the created on the other. In chapter four, I will elaborate on the organic or "conjunct" relationship between humans and God.

For now, it is essential to know that Jones rejects dualistic thinking about the relationship between humans and God for this reason. For example, Jones criticizes the seventeenth-century Quaker theologian and writer Robert Barclay by noting that 'Barclay treats it [God's Light or Seed] exactly as Descartes treats "innate ideas," as something injected into the soul.'[145] Barclay, Jones asserts, views the Light or Seed as 'something entirely foreign to man and unrelated to his nature, *as a man*.'[146] In seeking to refute Barclay's "dualism," Jones insists that humans are not merely passive instruments of the spiritual. Jones believes that humans and God are not strictly separate from each other as dual opposites, and God as the "Absolute Other," but that human nature is connected to Divine nature.[147] According to Jones, the Inner Light should be considered as the 'Divine Life personally apprehended in an individual soul. It is both human and Divine.'[148] Consequently, we could state that the Inner Light, or the human-divine relationship points to the notion that God and humans are inherently related and that the 'actual inner self [is] formed by the union of a Divine a*nd* a human element in a single-undivided life.'[149] In short, we can conclude that the metaphysical theory of the subconscious played a crucial role in Jones' understanding of the relationship between humans and God.

Later in his life, Jones would become more critical of William James and the relevance of psychology in examining religious experience. In his article "Psychology and the Spiritual Life," (1921) Jones states that psychology's hope for the spirituality reality within us has not been very encouraging and that 'most so-called "psychologies of religion" reduce religion either to a naturalistic or to a subjective basis.'[150] He also criticizes the scientific theory of behaviorism popularized by John B. Watson. Jones argues that through behaviorism emotions are reduced to a bodily resonance produced in the muscular and visceral systems by instinctive movements in the presence of objects. With behaviorism, there can be no 'standing to religion or to any type of spiritual values.'[151] In addition, Jones also complains about James' "mind-state" psychology, which Jones believes is also a form of naturalism. This view of James, according to Jones, can be understood as the idea that the mind or consciousness consists of a large number of elementary units and that psychology has the task of analyzing and describing these states and units.[152] This naturalistic perspective on psychology, Jones writes, leaves no room for the soul and then 'there is no soul, there is no creative spiritual pilot of the stream, there is no freedom, there are no moral values, there is nothing but passing "cosmic weather."'[153] Thus, Jones denounced the fact that psychology was increasingly adopting a naturalistic worldview, in which he felt spiritual affairs had no

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[145] Jones, *Social Law*, 155.
[146] Jones, *Social Law*, 155.
[147] Jones, *Social Law*, 155-157.
[148] Jones, *Social Law*, 157.
[149] Jones, *Social Law*, 157.
[150] Rufus Jones, "Psychology and the Spiritual Life," *The Journal of Religion* 1, no. 5 (September 1921), 450. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1195403.
[151] Jones, "Psychology and the Spiritual Life," 451.
[152] Jones, "Psychology and the Spiritual Life," 451-452.
[153] Jones, "Psychology and the Spiritual Life," 453.

place.

Despite his criticism of James and the naturalistic direction psychology was taking, the importance of the subconscious to the Inner Light never left Jones' thought. In *The World Within* (1918), Jones calls the subconscious the most fruitful of all our modern discoveries. The subconscious and thus the 'normal processes of the world below the threshold are as important for the microcosm as the battlefields of Europe for the great world [World War I].'[154] Moreover, Jones asserts that the 'subconscious life is builded toward truth-telling, truth-living, and the inward self inclines to truth as streams flow to the sea.'[155] Jones also uses James' insights from *Varieties* to claim that religion would be illusory if there were not a 'real, mutual, active intercourse between the human soul and God.'[156] In his final book from 1949 (posthumously), *A Call to What is Vital*, Jones describes a mystic as one who is 'conscious of a direct way of vital intercourse between man and the invading Spirit of God.'[157] While this passage already seems to be a reference to the subconscious as a meeting place between humans and God, he also notes more clearly that 'the actual experience of the invasion of the divine into the human life from beyond the margins floods into [humans].'[158] Finally, in *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life* from 1922, Jones also builds on James' theory of the subconscious, claiming that there is 'every indication and evidence of continuity and correlation between what is above and what is below the threshold which in any case is as relative and artificial a line as is the horizon.'[159] Jones credits James for providing these "subliminal uprushes" as explanations for deeper religious experiences and popularizing the "subliminal theory."[160]

Rufus Jones' Christology

What does the "subconscious" as a meeting place between God and humans mean for traditional Christian theology? If humans can have direct access to God through the subconscious and their own human nature, what does this mean for the nature of Jesus Christ? In traditional Christian theology, the significance of Jesus Christ is characterized by the concept of the "incarnation" of God and the doctrine of the "two natures" of Christ who is both divine and human.[161] Central to Christian theology is also the understanding that Jesus Christ reveals God's presence and that it is impossible for Christians to speak about God without relating statements about God to Christ.[162] In traditional Christianity, Christ is also the bearer of salvation, meaning that human salvation can only be achieved on the basis of Christ.[163] Early Quakers believed that Jesus Christ was the only mediator between humans and God and that through the New Covenant established through Christ, the "cultic bridge"

[154] Rufus Jones, *The World Within* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1918), 14.
[155] Jones, *The World Within*, 16.
[156] Jones, *The World Within*, 99, 100
[157] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 23.
[158] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 23.
[159] Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, 168.
[160] Jones, *Spiritual Energies in Daily Life*, 168.
[161] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Newark: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 327.
[162] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 328, 329.
[163] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 329, 330.

between humans and God was removed.[164] Because Christ had already established the New Covenant, Quakers no longer believed in the need for involvement of a human priesthood and the outward sacraments.[165] In short, Christ was the only mediation between humans and God and the "cultless New Covenant" removed the human and outward barriers between humans and God.[166] Christ brought about a non-cultic way to God.

Rufus Jones' application of the subconscious as a meeting place between humans and God might suggest to some people that he does not place much emphasis on the nature and role of Christ and therefore goes beyond mainstream Christianity. One reason could be that Jones already connects God directly with human nature and therefore, according to this perspective, the mediation of Christ is no longer necessary. We have already seen that Carole Dale Spencer accuses Jones of taking Christ out of the Light, turning the soul into the Light and making the soul divine. According to Spencer, Jones took the importance of Christ out of Quakerism.[167] Furthermore, Hugh Rock argues that the word Christ in Jones' work only serves to point to a set of principles having to do with a concern for the sick and poor, inclusion of outcasts, the equal value of all persons, an ethic of deed and indifference to material wealth.[168] Guy Aiken also asserts that Jones removed the uniqueness and necessity of Christ out of his mystical vision of Quakerism, and that he replaced the significance of Christ with the divine-human Inner Light.[169] However, Aiken's assessment of Jones' Christology is more nuanced than the other two because Aiken rightly points out that Jones never saw the human soul as separate from God.[170]

Thus, did Rufus Jones really remove or downplay the necessity of Christ? I will argue here that this was not the case and that Jones still believed that Christ was necessary for his interpretation of Christianity. Although, as Guy Aiken mentions, Jones could have avoided the confusion over the importance of Christ in his theology by referring his theology more clearly to the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus,[171] the role of Christ was still evident. In *The Double Search* from 1906, Jones provides one of the clearest explanations of his Christology. When it comes to the human or evolutionary perspective, Jones sees Christ as the new Adam and the type and ultimate purpose of humanity. This means, in Jones' words, that Christ is a 'revelation of what man at his height and full stature is meant to be.'[172] According to Jones, this was also Paul's way of thinking about Christ, because Paul refers to Christ as the archetype of the perfect man. The ultimate expectation of all creation is for the

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[164] Paul Anderson, "An Incarnational Sacramentalogy," *Quaker Religious Thought* 109, no. 4 (January 2007), 39. https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt/vol109/iss1/4.

[165] Anderson, "An Incarnational Sacramentalogy," 39.

[166] J. Floyd Moore, David O. Stanfield, and Lewis Benson, "Comments on "Quakers and the Sacraments"," *Quaker Religious Thought* 9, no. 3 (January 1963), 36, 37. https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt/vol9/iss1/3?utm_source=digitalcommons.georgefox.edu%2Fqrt%2Fvol9%2Fiss1%2F3&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

[167] Spencer, *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*, 204.

[168] Rock, "Rufus Jones Never Did Establish that Quakerism is a Mystical Religion," 60.

[169] Guy Aiken, "Who Took the Christ Out of Quakerism? Rufus Jones and the Person and Work of Christ," *Quaker Religious Thought* 116, no. 4 (January 2011), 48. https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt/vol116/iss1/4?utm_source=digitalcommons.georgefox.edu%2Fqrt%2Fvol116%2Fiss1%2F4&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

[170] Aiken, "Who Took the Christ out of Quakerism?," 47.

[171] Aiken, "Who Took the Christ out of Quakerism?, 49.

[172] Jones, *The Double Search*, 34.

manifestation of sons of God, of whom Christ is the firstborn among many brethren.[173] Jones further explains that Christ is the frontal force that has steadily drawn both the individual and the human species to their higher destiny.[174]

Regarding his view of the incarnation, Jones is very clear about his understanding of Christ. Jones states that '[Christ] reveals God as a Father whose very inherent nature is love and tenderness and forgiveness.'[175] Christ thus reveals God as a loving God whose nature is marked on ultimate love and goodness. Jones thus believes that we either must believe in God as Love or we must reject the idea that Christ has revealed God's true nature.[176] In addition, Jones saw the incarnation as inevitable because the revelation of God is central to a God-centered universe: 'The moment it is settled that there is a divine Person as the ultimate reality of the universe, it is also settled that He will reveal Himself.'[177] For this statement, Jones relies on the early Christian theologian and philosopher Clement of Alexandria, about whose influence on Jones the fourth chapter will be partly concerned. Clement interpreted the incarnation as 'the breaking forth in a definite person of the God who had through all previous history been an immanent Word and who had all along been preparing for such a consummation.'[178] Jones also explains how Christ could be both human and divine by observing that modern psychology has undermined the assertion of most theological discussions that humans and God are completely separated or unrelated. Jones believes that 'God and man are *conjunct* and that neither can be separated absolutely from each other.'[179] Although the fourth chapter will shed more light on the assertion that humans and God are conjunct and inherently related to each other, for now it is only essential to conclude that Jones was convinced that there were no metaphysical difficulties in claiming that Christ was the actual incarnation of God.[180]

With respect to the atonement, I have already described that Jones rejects the idea of the atonement as a "primitive sacrifice" and that he does not believe in a God who acts as a "capricious sovereign."[181] Instead Jones viewed the atonement as Christ's will to bridge the chasm between humans and God and to reach across the chasm and take on the sacrifice Himself.[182] In this way Christ abolished the old primitive form of pagan sacrifice characterized by the idea of pleasing a capricious God, while Christ gave Himself on the cross to draw us and lead us to God.[183] In *Spiritual Energies*, Jones also remarks that when we think of God, we should always do so in terms of Christ. Through the cross, Christ shows us His eternal love and lets us know that we should not think of God as a majestic and sovereign figure. On the contrary, Christ wants to bring us back to the loving God.[184] In this view, Christ is not just a great thinker or teacher, but the Savior who triumphs over sin and suffering through the

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[173] Jones, *The Double Search*, 34, 35.
[174] Jones, *The Double Search*, 35.
[175] Jones, *The Double Search*, 68.
[176] Jones, *The Double Search*, 69.
[177] Jones, *The Double Search*, 26.
[178] Rufus Jones, *Selections from the Writings of St. Alexandria* (London: Headley Brothers, 1910), 16.
[179] Jones, *The Double Search*, 24.
[180] Jones, *The Double Search*, 36.
[181] Jones, *The Double Search*, 59.
[182] Jones, *The Double Search*, 76.
[183] Jones, *The Double Search*, 76, 77.
[184] Jones, *Spiritual Energies*, 110.

cross, bringing us as humans face to face with God.[185]

Thus, the meaning of Christ in Jones' theology is that He shows humanity's ultimate purpose and potential, is the ultimate reflection and revelation of God's love and nature, and that He draws humans to God. In *A Preface to Christian Faith*, Jones writes that God's revelation through a Person demonstrates that humans and God are not so sundered as so often supposed. It means that human nature can be an organ for the life of God.[186] Through Christ, humans and God can unite[187] because Christ was both truly human and divine.[188] We can therefore conclude that Jones believed that Christ revealed God's unlimited and unconditional love.[189] This implies that this love 'seems as natural as life itself.'[190]

Conclusion

In his book *Varieties*, William James interpreted the history of the Quakers and George Fox as influenced by religious or mystical experiences. This mystical interpretation of Quakerism eventually became very influential in liberal Quakerism and also reached Rufus Jones. Central to James' comments on Quakerism and George Fox is the tension between the neurotic and psychological features of religion on the one hand and the mystical elements on the other. Important to Jones' interpretation of Quakerism as a mystical religion was James' focus on religious experiences in people's personal experiences rather than focusing on the role of ecclesiastical institutions or organizations. Jones played a vital role in the birth and foundation of modern mystical Quakerism and can even be considered to be its founder. By interpreting Quakerism through a mystical lens, Jones sought to deal with the problems that modernity and the early twentieth century had brought to both Quakerism and Christianity in general. One of the ways Jones attempted to deal with these issues was by incorporating James' metaphysical theory of the subconscious into his thought and his formulation of the Inner Light.

Jones used James' concept of the "more beyond the subconscious" to argue that the subconscious is the meeting place between humans and God. Beyond the margins of our primary state of consciousness lies the subconscious life connected to a deeper self that can be distinguished from our primary consciousness. This notion that the subconscious is the meeting place between humans and a personal God is central to Jones' definition of mysticism. It means that humans are able to have direct access to or experience of God through the subconscious. We could therefore argue that the Inner Light, or human-divine relationship points to the notion that humans and God are inherently related and that the true inner self of humans is formed by the union between a Divine and a human element. In Jones' thought, there is thus no strict separation between humans and God as the "Absolute Other." Although some critics have claimed that Jones replaced the role and necessity of Christ with his formulation of the Inner Light and his interpretation of Quakerism as a

[185] Jones, *Spiritual Energies*, 108-110.
[186] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 128.
[187] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 128, 129.
[188] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 108.
[189] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 117, 118.
[190] Jones, *A Preface to Christian Faith*, 124.

mystical religion, Christ was in fact still central to his theology. The importance of Christ in Jones' theology can be seen in the fact that Jones believed that Christ shows the ultimate purpose and potential of humanity, is the supreme or highest reflection and revelation of God's love and nature, and that He draws humans to God. I have emphasized that Jones' critics have misunderstood him because Jones never attempted to establish a Quakerism without Christ. Moreover, I will argue in the next chapter that Jones certainly believed in the personal God of Christianity. I will also show that Jones' integration of non-Christian ideas about God was not an end in itself, but to prove that the personal Christian God is always close to humans and that individuals can seek Him on their own strength through the Inner Light.

Rufus Jones, Josiah Royce, and Absolute Idealism

Introduction

As influential as the metaphysical theory of the subconscious was for Jones' formulation of the Inner Light, the idea that humans and God are inherently related and that humans can experience God directly, Jones also drew on other sources of inspiration on his intellectual foundation for his thought about the Inner Light and the mystical or religious experience. William James was certainly not the only major influence on Jones' thought. Another academic source of inspiration for Rufus Jones was American philosopher and proponent of absolute idealism Josiah Royce (1855-1916). Interestingly, despite being friends, James and Royce were not each other's allies when it came to their views of God and their understanding of reality.[191] In particular, there was an essential contradiction between James' idea of metaphysical pluralism, and Royce's absolute idealism and his supposed monism and pantheism. What their views of God had in common, however, was that they were both very different from the personal God of Christianity. Nevertheless, Jones integrated them both into his religious thought and his formulation of the Inner Light. As this chapter will show, this integration of conflicting schools of thought brought great challenges to Jones' theological views. James and Royce were not only related in terms of their conflicting ideas, what they had in common was that both were not Christians. As a result, Jones had to integrate various perceptions and interpretations of God that were not particularly Christian into his own Christian, Quaker framework.

The central purpose of this chapter is to answer the question of what the influence of Royce's absolute idealism was on Jones' thought and what its implications were for his conceptions of God. Crucial to this chapter is my argument that Jones applied Royce's absolute idealism to claim that God and humans are not radically distinct, but are connected by the Inner Light. In the first part of this chapter, I will focus on describing Royce's thinking on absolute idealism and his influence on Rufus Jones. Attention will be paid to defining Royce's interpretation of absolute idealism, his understanding of God and his disagreement with William James. Next, this chapter will examine some of the major challenges Jones faced in terms of views about God and Christianity. I will analyze how Jones incorporated idealist views of God into his interpretation of Christianity, and I will argue that despite these challenges, Jones retained a strong belief in the personal Christian God. Finally, I will explore the relevance of human ideals on Jones' formulation of the Inner Light and Royce's influence on Jones' focus on God's immanence. In addition, I will also discuss how God's immanence is important to Jones' interpretation of mysticism.

[191] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 47.

The Influence of Absolute Idealism

Philosophical idealism is difficult to define precisely because there are different types of idealism. But broadly speaking, idealism supports the "priority of the mental" over the physical aspect of reality.[192] This means that reality is identical with mind, spirit and consciousness, and that reality is a mental construct. Josiah Royce was the leading American proponent of absolute idealism, the metaphysical view that all aspects of reality, including those we perceive as disconnected or contradictory, are ultimately united in the idea of a single all-encompassing consciousness, which he often called "the Absolute."[193] Royce was also inspired by Hegel and German idealism. His Hegelian legacy can especially be traced through his reading of the *Phenomenology* and *Logik* in the 1880s, Royce's mature ethics in the *Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908) and his final piece of writing in 1916. As noted by professor of philosophy John Kaag, Royce's interest in Hegel would have a profound influence on a subsequent generation of American philosophers, such as C.I. Lewis, William Ernest Hocking, Horace Kallen and Richard Clarke Cabot.[194]

In his work *The World and the Individual* (1900), Royce writes about the mathematical concept of the determinate infinite and states that the individual is connected to an infinite multitude or community, which can be connected to God.[195] In *The Problem of Christianity* (originally 1913), Royce notes that the infinite Community of Interpretation is the totality of all minds capable of presenting certain elements or aspects of Being to each other or to their future selves.[196] He states that 'the real world is the Community of Interpretation […] If the interpretation is a reality, and if it truly represents the whole of reality, then the community reaches its goal, and the real world includes its own interpreter.'[197] Relevant here is that the infinite Community can be associated with Royce's conception of God. In *The World and the Individual*, Royce provides the following crucial conclusion: 'The one lesson of our entire course has thus been the lesson of the unity of finite and of infinite […] of the World and all its individuals, of the One and the Many, of God and Man.'[198]

This further means that the whole focus of Royce's thought is centered towards unity. Unity brings us as finite beings to the infinite of God. In *The World and the Individual*, Royce also acknowledges that there is a true variety that consists of 'various individual Selves who together constitute, in their unity, the Individual of Individuals, the absolute.'[199] The union between humans and God is thus central to Royce's thought. Royce's work can be seen as a

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[192] Tyron Goldschmidt, and Kenneth L. Pearce, *Idealism: New Essays in Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), ix.
[193] Kelly A. Parker, and Scott Pratt, "Josiah Royce," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, Spring 2021 Edition). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/royce/.
[194] John Kaag, "American Interpretations of Hegel: Josiah Royce's Philosophy of Royalty," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (January 2009), 84. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27745147.
[195] Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Vol. 1 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1900), 566, 579, 587.
[196] Kelly A. Parker, and Scott Pratt, "Josiah Royce," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, Spring 2021 Edition). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/royce/.
[197] Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 339.
[198] Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Vol. 2 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1901), 417.
[199] Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Vol. 2, 102.

constant attempt to comprehend the position of finite individuals in an infinite universe.[200] It is the union of the individual Self and God that is central to the view that the meaning of the Individual is connected to the life of God and the entire universe.[201] Royce's conception of God is complex. He uses different names to describe his understanding of God and refers frequently to "the Absolute," "the Infinite," and "the Universal Thought."[202] These ways of describing the divine already make it clear that Royce's view of God is certainly not Christian, as his ideas about God were quite different from the traditional God of Christianity.

One of Royce's greatest critics was his own friend William James. James and Royce faced each other in their friendly "Battle of the Absolute." James criticized Royce for taking both pantheistic and monistic positions and opposed Royce's absolute idealism.[203] James argued that Royce's conception of God was too abstract and therefore lacked practical implications.[204] He focused his main criticism on Royce's notion of God as the Absolute and affirmed his own belief that the pluralistic description of God was the only correct one, which also led to James' *Varieties*.[205] It was especially the so-called monistic philosophy that became a subject of James' criticism.[206] Royce was initially indifferent about whether his views would be classified as theism or pantheism.[207] Later, however, he believed that his conception of God should be considered theistic. Paul E. Johnson notes that Royce's position, depending on his different ways of describing God, could be characterized by both pantheism and monistic theism.[208]

In 1898, the physician, geologist and natural historian Joseph Le Conte criticized Royce's conception of God by arguing that it was actually not theistic. In his assessment of Royce's view of the Divine, he acknowledges that he admires Royce's conclusion of the Personal Existence of God, but follows his own path to reach the same conclusion. In addition, he also emphasizes the difference between his position from the perspective of science and Royce's philosophical reasoning.[209] Le Conte's tone becomes more critical when he notes that while Royce's God is a conscious Thought, at the same time it is nothing more than a 'passive, powerless, passionless Thought.'[210] Thus, critics of Royce pointed out that Royce's notion of God was abstract and passive. Eventually Royce sought to rethink his concept of Thought and wanted to reframe his understanding of God through the term "Personality." With this term, Royce wanted to express his belief that God is a Person and therefore God is a conscious being.[211] According to Royce, the reason God is a Person lies in

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[200] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 48.
[201] Royce, *The World and the* Individual, Vol. 2, 417, 418.
[202] Paul E. Johnson, "Josiah Royce: Theist or Pantheist?," *The Harvard Theological Review* 21, no. 3 (July 1928), 199, 200. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1507669.
[203] Frank, M. Oppenheim, "How Did William James and Josiah Royce Interact Philosophically?," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (January 1999), 81-96. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27744806.
[204] Oppenheim, "How Did William James and Josiah Royce Interact Philosophically," 87.
[205] Oppenheim, How Did William James and Josiah Royce Interact Philosophically," 88, 89.
[206] Slater, "James' Critique of Absolute Idealism in A Pluralistic Universe," 182.
[207] Johnson, "Josiah Royce: Theist or Pantheist?," 199.
[208] Johnson, "Josiah Royce: Theist or Pantheist?," 203-205.
[209] Joseph Le Conte's reply to Royce's 1895 essay "The Conception of God" in J. Royce, *The Conception of God* (New York: MacMillan, 1898), 67.
[210] Joseph Le Conte's reply to Royce's 1895 essay "The Conception of God" in J. Royce, *The Conception of God* (New York: MacMillan, 1898), 68, 69.
[211] Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Vol. 2, 418.

his understanding that God is self-conscious and that the Self of which God is conscious is a Self composed of the coupled activities of finite Selves, leading to God's consciousness and perfection.[212]

In his article "Why I Enroll With the Mystics (1932)," Rufus Jones acknowledges that 'Professor Josiah Royce had a larger influence on my intellectual development, I think, than any other person.'[213] But in what ways did Royce influence Jones? Royce's main inspiration on Jones seems to be a broad general influence that emerges in Jones' work as a whole. Jones observes that Royce brought him 'inspiration as well as depth and solidity of thought.'[214] Furthermore, it was Royce's approach towards mysticism as one of the major pathways to reality that was of great importance to Jones.[215] In *Social Law*, Jones describes Royce's insistence that mystics are the most profound empiricists who base everything on experience, which is largely tied to private and personal experience.[216] Both Jones and Royce use the term "Divine Life," which Jones interprets to assert that God is no longer foreign to human nature and that humans are capable of developing a conscious relationship with God through their souls.[217] Jones thus used Royce's overall philosophy for his reformulation of the Inner Light, or human-divine relationship, and the view that God is related to the human soul and that God and humans are inherently connected.

Interestingly, Jones also uses the term Infinite to argue that there is a larger life in which we can find the purpose of the Infinite and the systems of the universe.[218] Here, then, Jones interweaves Royce's term of the Infinite with James' influence on the deeper life below the subconscious. Perhaps an even more direct reference to Royce is Jones' confident belief in the existence of an 'infinite Self who is the Life of our lives and that every little inlet of human consciousness opens into the total whole of reality.'[219] This statement reflects Royce's idea that the Absolute or Infinite is made up of finite, smaller lives and the notion of a shared consciousness. As humans, Jones notes, we always strive to look for the things that are not finite; this realization motivates us to search for a higher reality.[220] Despite the great importance of Royce to Jones' thought, Jones admits that he was never a true disciple of Royce and never made Royce's system of thought his own.[221] Incidentally, Jones says something similar about the influence of James.[222]

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[212] Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Vol. 2, 419.
[213] Rufus Jones, "Why I Enroll With the Mystics," in *Contemporary American Theology* (Vol.1), ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York: Round Table Press, 1932), 196.
[214] Jones, "Why I Enroll," 197.
[215] Jones, "Why I Enroll," 197.
[216] Jones, *Social Law*, 129.
[217] Jones, *Social Law*, 200, 201.
[218] Jones, *Social Law*, 216, 217.
[219] Jones, *Social Law*, 220.
[220] Jones, *Social Law*, 193.
[221] Rufus Jones, *The Trail of Life in the Middle Years* (New York: MacMillan, 1934), 5, 6.
[222] Jones, "Why I Enroll," 196.

Rufus Jones and the Christian God

Why could Jones never become a true disciple of Royce and James? The most obvious answer to this is the fact that Jones was a Christian and Royce and James were not. Royce's view of God as "the Absolute" or "the Infinite" and James' view of God as the "more beyond the subconscious" were both perceptions that were not particularly Christian and did not correspond to the God from Christianity that Jones believed in. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Royce and James' interpretations of God were not even compatible with each other because they disagreed on metaphysical grounds; Royce's position often pointed to absolute monism (and sometimes pantheism), while James took a pluralistic approach. His creative use of these sometimes contrasting schools of thought thus brought Jones some profound challenges. Essential here is also Royce's supposed impersonal characterization of God's nature. We have already seen that Le Conte criticized Royce's conception of God for being passive, powerless and passionless.

In addition to this critique, atheist and naturalist psychologist James H. Leuba describes that the God of Christianity and the God of idealism are irreconcilable. Although Leuba does not mention Jones by name, it certainly seems to be addressed to him and his colleagues in the field of mysticism. According to Leuba, religious liberals, supposedly in their interest of religion, attempt to 'conceal the magnitude of the difference between the God of the Christian religion and the impassable, infinite Reality of metaphysics.'[223] Subsequently, he points out that this transition from the God of Christianity to the God of idealism would inevitably lead to 'the disappearance of the religious worship of to-day.'[224] Jones himself does mention Leuba by name in his 1927 book *New Studies in Mystical Religion* in which he declares that 'the main attack in recent years on the validity of mysticism as a religious experience is the characteristic attack of the psychologist.'[225] Jones refers to the accompanying footnote as 'See especially Leuba's *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*.'[226] Here we also see Jones' growing disillusionment with psychology, which in his view took a radically naturalistic turn.

It is important to note that Leuba attempted to confront modern studies of mysticism and was directly opposed to Jones from the standpoint of his naturalistic agenda. Regardless, the fact that Leuba and Jones had two metaphysical worldviews that contrasted did not save Jones from accusations that his own understanding of God was impersonal and that he was therefore not a Christian. Typical, for example, is the claim by Quaker scholar and critic of Jones' mysticism Daniel E. Bassuk that his interpretation of the Inner Light is not biblical-prophetic, but rather Greco-philosophical or Platonic.[227] Bassuk even believes that Jones' "affirmation mysticism" is not mysticism at all and only 'glorifies the mystical experiences of man and rejects the metaphysical type of mysticism.'[228]

If one reads Jones' books, one may indeed notice that he sometimes uses impersonal terms to describe God. In *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1909), for example, Jones refers to

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[223] James H. Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925), 304.
[224] Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, 304.
[225] Rufus Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1927), 9.
[226] Jones, *New Studies*, 9.
[227] Bassuk, "Rufus Jones and Mysticism," 13.
[228] Bassuk, "Rufus Jones and Mysticism," 24.

God as a "More of Consciousness continuous with our own,"[229] while in *Spiritual Reformers* (1914) Jones also speaks of the "infinite Reality."[230] But looking at Jones' work more broadly, it is not difficult to see that Jones' faith was deeply rooted in the personal Christian God. The claim that Jones did not believe in the personal God of Christianity is, as I will show, an incorrect and unfair assessment of his work.

In *The World Within* (1918), Jones uses the example of the prophet Habakkuk to show that the only thing really important about religion is finding God and having close fellowship with Him.[231] Religion is thus about the soul's personal encounter with God and the ability to indulge in the supreme joy of experiencing the living presence of God.[232] What is most important to Jones is the type of Christianity that is based on the direct first-hand experience of God through Christ, which leads to the drive to do God's will.[233] Relevant to Jones' understanding of God is that 'Christ is the place in the universe where God himself breaks through and shows the power of love in full operation.'[234] Through Christ, Jones contends, God comes to seek, find and save us.[235] Although Jones here seems to echo Karl Barth's belief that people can come to know God only through Christ, he actually opposes Barth because of his emphasis on God as the "Absolute Other" or God's will as coming vertically from above, strictly divorced from finite human understanding.[236] Jones states in his book *Pathways to the Reality of God* (1931), 'If nothing of the divine other can be expressed in the human then the incarnation of God in Christ has no real meaning or significance, and nothing that we say about God is anything more than *flatus vocis*, an empty breath of sound.'[237] Because God is also present in people, Jones says, it is possible that God can be revealed in Christ. Crucially, however, Jones sees God not as a distant and passive Consciousness or Thought, but as our "Heavenly Friend" or our "Divine Companion."[238] In his view, humans are in need of God's grace[239] but are also close to God and not separated.

In *A Call to What is Vital* (1949), Jones writes that people long for a God who is with them when they suffer and struggle, and therefore they need a 'Father-God Who cares and Who loves [them] with a love that never lets go.'[240] According to Jones, it is this Father-God Christ has revealed.[241] Jones expresses this powerfully by providing the example of a Renaissance painting that shows God the Father behind the cross of Calvary with nails going through the beams in His hands and feet, implying that God the Father suffers with Christ on the cross and that the true nature of God is love.[242] In *Practical Christianity* (1899), Jones also

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[229] Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1909), xxix.
[230] Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1914), xxxiii.
[231] Jones, *The World Within*, 48, 49.
[232] Jones, *The World Within*, 27.
[233] Jones, *The World Within*, 40, 41.
[234] Jones, *The World Within*, 31.
[235] Jones, *The World Within*, 31, 32.
[236] Rufus Jones, *Pathways to the Reality of God* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1931), 48.
[237] Jones, *Pathways*, 49.
[238] Jones, *The World* Within, 27.
[239] Jones, *The World Within*, 31.
[240] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 117.
[241] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 117.
[242] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 121.

seeks to demonstrate that God is love and mentions that Christianity for him 'means getting to God, [and that] Christ is the way and love is the sign.'[243] *Practical Christianity* (1899) illustrates well that Jones believed in the personal God of Christianity and that he saw God as love rather than the impersonal or impassive God that idealism often showed. In this same book, Jones notes that there is but one God Who is characterized by love and that the Father and Son from the Trinity are not two essences but one.[244] According to Jones, the only way God could truly express Himself to humans was to accomplish this through a perfect human life and a perfect union between the Divine and the human.[245] In chapter four, I will explain how this relates to Jones' interpretation of the "conjunct" relationship between humans and God.

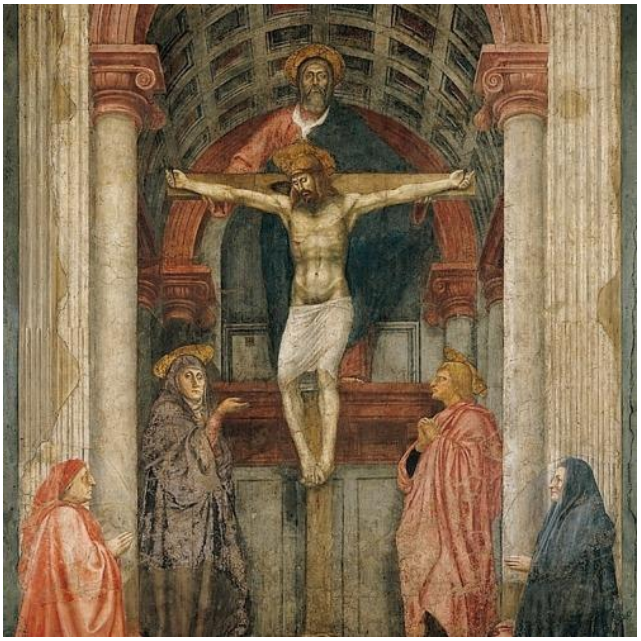

Figure 3: This painting La Santa Trinità by Masaccio depicts the coherence of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is probably the painting Rufus Jones is referring to. In Jones' view, this scene in which God the Father suffers with Christ on the cross shows that the true nature of God is Love.[246]

Despite the fact that, in Jones' view, God is primarily love, Jones still draws on insights from idealism. For Jones' formulation of the Inner Light, or human-divine relationship, it was essential to connect the God of love from Christianity with idealism. One way to reduce the distance between humans and God was to insist that consciousness is vital to understanding reality. It is Jones' aforementioned statement about the reality of an infinite Self leading to a shared consciousness that results in the total whole of reality that is important here.[247] Central to Jones' formulation of the Inner Light is his argument that the true Quaker principle is linked to a primitive experience of God and that early Quakers were able to find God in their own lives. It means, Jones says, that 'they became aware that finite and infinite were

[243] Rufus Jones, *Practical Christianity: Essays on the Practice of Religion* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), 82.
[244] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 103.
[245] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 103, 104.
[246] Masaccio, *La Santa Trinità*, painting, 1425-26. https://www.paulverheijen.nl/masaccio-triniteit.php.
[247] Jones, *Social Law*, 220.

not sundered, but were known in the same consciousness.'[248]

Although, as we have seen Jones criticize Barclay, early Quakers in his view generally felt the closeness between humans and God. It was only around the end of his life when Jones began to doubt 'whether George Fox thought of this 'more' as an inherent part of man's nature, as the mystics of the Fourteenth Century under the influence of Plotinus almost certainly thought of the Divine Spark in the soul, or whether George Fox thought of this 'more' as Barclay certainly did, as a super added bestowal of Divine Spirit; it is a question not easy to answer because he never clarified his position. But is more probable that he agreed with the position of Barclay.'[249] So it was not until the end of his life that Jones realized that Fox was probably closer to Barclay's so-called dualistic position than Jones' own thought about the inherent relationship between God and humans. Before this realization, Jones had always assumed that George Fox's position was close to his own. Anyway, Jones himself asserts: 'Every analysis of personality discovers the fact that God and man are inherently bound up together.'[250] This means that personal consciousness arises from an infinite background. In support of his claim that humans and God are related through human nature, he points not only to consciousness, but also to Blaise Pascal's belief that Thou wouldst not seek God if thou hadst not found Him.[251] It is critical to keep in mind that Jones' application of idealism was not his end goal, but a way to provide an intellectual framework to revitalize Christian and Quaker thought. It was never Jones' goal to turn the Christian God into the passive Absolute of idealism. It was quite the opposite; Jones wanted to work toward a mystical Christianity and Quakerism that was ready for the times to come.

Human Ideals and God's Immanence

How can one connect the loving God of Christianity with the abstract God of idealism? This was the main problem Jones struggled with. How is it possible to even think of similarities between a personal and committed God on the one hand and an impersonal infinite consciousness on the other? In his attempt to solve this great challenge, Rufus Jones once again turned to William James and psychology to find an answer. This was clearly a bold move by Jones because, as I have argued before, James was opposed to Royce's absolute idealism and their metaphysical views contrasted in some cases.

In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), James writes that if iron filings are spread on a table and placed right next to a magnet, they fly through the air over a certain distance and stick to the surface. But the iron filings cannot reach the magnet when there are obstacles in the way.[252] However, if we turn our attention to living beings, we get a very different picture. If we take the example of Romeo and Juliet, we can observe that Romeo wants Juliet as much as the filings want the magnet, but Romeo and Juliet do not "idiotically" keep pressing

[248] Jones, *Social Law*, 157.
[249] Rufus Jones, *A Call to a New Installment of the Heroic Spirit* (New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1948), 5.
[250] Jones, *Social Law*, 154.
[251] Jones, *Social Law*, 154.
[252] William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1 (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1890), 6, 7.

their faces against an obstacle.[253] Whereas the path of filings and other inanimate objects is already fixed in advance, Romeo and Juliet always find a way to each other because although the end of their path is fixed, their path to it may be modified indefinitely.[254] Because of his reason, living beings and especially human beings have ideals that lead them to a desired end or destination. In his book *On Some of Life's Ideals* (originally, 1899, 1900), James states that by combining ideals with active virtues, humans create a rough standard for shaping their decisions.[255] This also means that when we create new ideals, old ideals vanish. With this, life based on an old ideal disappears.[256]

In *Social Law* (1904), Jones observes that the creation of "personality" is always an achievement. Persons are the only things in our universe that are capable of realizing themselves. In this way, as humans, we ourselves build the personality or being we want to become.[257] According to Jones, ideals point to a better state of existence that is not yet realized and to a conceived future state that attracts something inwardly dynamic in ourselves.[258] Every rational action we take 'helps make this ideal *actual in our lives*, and as fast as it becomes real in us, we realise ourselves as persons.'[259] By drawing on these insights from psychology, Jones attempts to bridge the distance between the loving God of Christianity and the abstract, absolute and infinite consciousness from idealism and bring them together. So how does he do this? Jones argues that our ideals are "good" and that our "good ideals" are rooted in the existence of a "Larger Self."[260] In other words, humans are able to seek good ends because we are already part of a 'larger Life which already possesses the Good. We discover the *good* by discovering the purposes of the Self in whose life we share.'[261] This means that without our dependence on God, we would not seek good causes through our good ideals. People pursue good causes because God is good. This also points to Jones' emphasis on God's immanence. He states that 'The man who goes to work in the line of his duty finds that the God who did not come in the great forces of nature – wind, earthquake, fire – does come in quieter, and in less striking ways, as the power which makes use of a feeble human instrument.'[262] Thus, according to this interpretation, God operates not as a transcendent and external majestic power, but as a subtle immanent power that is close to people's inner lives. Jones makes this claim in relation to prophet Elijah's experience of God (1 Kings 19).[263]

The focus on God's immanence is also closely tied to the social ideals of the Social Gospel Movement, a Protestant social movement that emphasized God's immanence and the conviction that the primary goal of Christianity should be to use its teachings for social

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[253] James, *Principles*, 7.
[254] James, *Principles*, 7.
[255] William James, *On Some of Life's Ideals: On A Certain Blindness in Human Beings; What Makes A Life Significant* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1912), 87, 88.
[256] James, *On Some of Life's* Ideals, 92, 93.
[257] Jones, *Social Law*, 58-61.
[258] Jones, *Social Law*, 62.
[259] Jones, *Social Law*, 71.
[260] Jones, *Social Law*, 210.
[261] Jones, *Social Law*, 212.
[262] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 224.
[263] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 223-225.

reform.[264] Similar to Social Gospel leaders and theologians, Jones also points to the importance of the Kingdom of God. Jones describes the Kingdom of God as 'the perfect, original order of things which has its home in heaven, coming down from hence and realizing itself on the earth.'[265] This Kingdom, according to Jones, also refers to the ideal and realized state of humanity and that God's purpose was to gradually establish it on earth by leading humans there by grace and love.[266] God's immanence is visible in Jones' observation that humans are called to 'manifest the power of God in a practical Christian life.'[267] This practical Christian life is essential to Jones' religious message. As human beings, we must use our powers to promote the realization of the Kingdom of God.[268]

Furthermore, Jones' perception of God's immanence was influenced by Josiah Royce's absolute idealism. Royce's idealism draws on the experience of immanence and points to the interaction between the self and the divine.[269] Royce believes that the experience of immanence can be understood as the fully developed meaning of a finite instant, which in its realized form is identical to the Absolute or the divine will. This means in Royce's view that 'Whole Meaning of the instant becomes identical with the Universe, with the Absolute, with the life of God'.[270] But, as we have seen before, Jones rejected Royce's pantheistic or monistic full identification of humans with God. Even though Jones does not always make a clear separation between the creator and the created, he was firmly opposed to pantheism. Jones emphasized, for example, that although we find it easy and normal to think of God as immanent, we should not allow our belief in God's immanence to lead to an identification of God with the universe itself.[271]

However, Jones was still influenced by Royce's concept of the "homing impulse." Matthew Caleb Flamm notes that Royce's immanence 'is driven by a deep homing impulse, the need to return to a lost or forgotten place of safety'.[272] For Royce, this sense of longing for home had a moral rather than a metaphysical implication.[273] In *The Inner Life* (1917), Jones applies the term "homing instinct" to assert that our souls consist of a native, elemental homing instinct that turns us naturally to God.[274] Through prayer, this homing instinct can lead to a time of intimate personal intercourse and fellowship between humans and God.[275] In *A Call to What is Vital* (1949), Jones repeats this argument and explains that the soul has a native yearning for intercourse and companionship with God.[276] According to Jones, this native homing instinct stems from the divine origin of the soul itself. Because God

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[264] Christopher H. Evans, *The Social Gospel in American Religion: A History* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 79.
[265] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 179.
[266] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 179-181.
[267] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 199.
[268] Jones, *Social Law*, 72.
[269] Matthew Caleb Flamm, "Searching for Rhymes Royce's Idealistic Quest," in *Josiah Royce for the Twenty-First Century: Historical, Ethical, and Religious Interpretations*, eds. Kelly A. Parker, and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2012), 165.
[270] Flamm, "Searching for Rhymes Royce," 166.
[271] Rufus Jones, *Quakergeloof en Quakerleven* (Den Haag: N.V. Servire, 1931), 56.
[272] Flamm, "Searching for Rhymes Royce," 174.
[273] Flamm, "Searching for Rhymes Royce," 174.
[274] Jones, *The Inner Life*, 111.
[275] Jones, *The Inner Life*, 112.
[276] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 239.

is Spirit, Jones says, we can find Him through genuine spiritual activity and return to Him.[277]

Here we also see the importance of God's immanence to Jones' mysticism. Direct and intimate experience and communion with God is possible, according to Jones, because of God's immanent nature. In some of his descriptions of Christ, Jones also emphasizes the inward and eternal Christ over the historical Christ. In *The Inner Life*, Jones mentions that the Gospel of John describes how Christ became 'an ever-living, environing, permeative Spirit, continuing His revelation, reliving His life, extending His sway in men of faith.'[278] This spiritual interpretation of the Resurrection, which Jones says is visible in the writings of Paul and the Gospel of John, has often been missed by the Church, but has come alive again and again in the lives of saints and the experiences of mystics.[279] Jones argues that the idea that God is Spirit is central to the Christian faith and that this faith makes it possible to see Christ as the revelation of God in life and in history. God is thus Spirit and dwells in this world.[280] God's immanence is vital to the formulation of Inner Light, or the human-divine relationship, because Jones believes that humans and God are not strictly separate, but on the contrary, God is close and intimate to humans.

Conclusion

Essential to the larger picture of this thesis is the insight that Jones opposed traditional Quaker views of God and the Inner Light. In particular, he pointed to early Quaker theologian Robert Barclay for adhering to a strongly dualistic way of thinking about God and human nature. Because the Inner Light in Jones' interpretation means that there is "something of God" or the Divine in the human soul, God could never be the "Absolute Other" that the more traditional Christians and Quakers claimed Him to be. This is also the main reason why Jones felt he had to apply the influential, intellectual ideas of his time. James' theory of "the more beyond the subconscious" and Royce's absolute idealism were vital in this regard. In this chapter, I concluded that Royce in particular influenced Jones' broader thought and that Jones could use absolute idealism for his formulation of the Inner Light, or human-divine relationship. By using insights from absolute idealism, Jones could argue that God and humans are inherently related. His integration of Royce's thought had some profound implications though. First, Royce's absolute idealism and his alleged monism and pantheism conflicted with William James' metaphysical pluralism and Royce was criticized for his impersonal and passive perception of God. As a result, Jones was also accused of believing in an impersonal and non-Christian God. The greatest challenge for Jones lay in the fact that he wanted to combine the personal Christian God with insights regarding the impersonal God or Consciousness of idealism.

However, as this chapter has attempted to explain, Jones' faith was deeply rooted in the personal God of Christianity and characterized by an intimate relationship with God. Jones believed that the personal Christian God was primarily associated with love and that

[277] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 242, 243.
[278] Jones, *The Inner Life*, 93.
[279] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 123
[280] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 108, 109.

God could reveal Himself through Jesus Christ; this meant a perfect union between a perfect human life and the Divine. According to Jones, it was Christ who could reveal the loving Father-God from Christianity. Religion, in Jones' view, should be seen as the direct experience of God through Christ. God loves us so much that He does not want to let us go and He wants to be close to us, be with us and save us. Despite the fact that Jones identifies God with love, he still drew on insights from idealism. One approach to reducing the distance between humans and God was to argue that consciousness is crucial to understanding reality. In this way, Jones' application of consciousness was important in his formulation of the Inner Light, or human-divine relationship. To connect the loving God of Christianity with idealism, Jones applied William James' insights on human ideals. By relying on ideals, Jones was able to argue that humans are able to pursue "good ends" through "good ideals" because we are naturally rooted in the life of God. This view of God and ideals was also useful for Jones' emphasis on God's immanence. Jones' emphasis on God's immanence was central to Jones' mysticism because it served Jones to assert that God was close to humans and that God and humans could have an intimate relationship through the Inner Light.

God and Humans: A Mutual and Reciprocal Correspondence

Introduction

Not only do we as humans long for God, but the loving Father of Christianity is also longing for us. Even in our utter despair and during our greatest fears and struggles, God is close to us. This is the message at the heart of Rufus Jones' perspective on Christianity and Quakerism. In the previous chapters, I already described how Jones drew on the academic insights of William James and Josiah Royce to support his formulation of the Inner Light and to argue that humans and God are connected through the human-divine relationship. In this manner, Jones aimed to argue that God is not remote or far away from humans, but instead is related to our human nature. By emphasizing God's immanence, Jones could likewise point out that humans can have a direct and intimate experience of or companionship with God. This fourth chapter further explores Jones' beliefs about the connection between divine and human nature, as well as the "mutual and reciprocal correspondence" between God and humans. Jones' interpretation of Clement of Alexandria, the "conjunct" relationship between God and humans, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's conception of the "Over-Soul" are the focus of this chapter.

Thus, the central question of this chapter is how Rufus Jones applied his interpretation of Clement of Alexandria, the notion of the "conjunct" and the concept of Emerson's "Over-Soul" to claim that humans and God need each other and find themselves in a mutual and reciprocal relationship. First, I will focus on the thought of Clement of Alexandria and his inspiration on Jones. There will be a focus on understanding Clement's thought, Jones' interpretation of Clement and its relevance to his work. Subsequently, I will analyze how Jones integrated American scholar and thinker George Herbert Palmer's thinking on the "conjunct" into his own work and into theological and philosophical views on the connection between God and humans. Finally, I address the relevance of Emerson's concept of the "Over-Soul" to Jones' understanding of God and the Inner Light, and explain how Emerson's unconventional ideas about Christianity were nonetheless appropriate for Jones' Quaker mysticism.

Rufus Jones and Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215 AD) was an early Christian theologian, philosopher, and Church Father. Clement was known as a traveler who spent much of his time traveling from one place to another. After leaving home on an intense quest for knowledge, he visited religious teachers in the eastern Mediterranean. From there, he traveled further from Italy to Egypt and arrived in the ancient city of Alexandria. Clement remained in Alexandria until the year 202, when persecution forced him to flee to Palestine.[281] During his travels Clement found the Bible, Christianity, and converted to the Christian faith. Clement was driven by an evangelical zeal to convert ancient pagans to Christianity and was heavily influenced by

[281] Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1.

Judeo-Hellenistic works, ancient Greek culture and the Johannine view of God.[282] Regarding the Johannine view of God, Clement placed a strong emphasis on the unity between God the Father and God the Son and saw a reciprocity between Father and Son, and God and the Word.[283] Three major works by Clement, who taught at the Catechetical School of Alexandria, include *Protrepticis* (Exhortation), *Paedogous* (*Tutor*) and *Stromateis* (*Miscellanies*).[284]

Rufus Jones was inspired by Clement in several ways. Relevant, for example, is the fact that some of his interpreters understood Clement as having a liberal approach to Christianity even in his day.[285] In addition, Clement has also been interpreted as a Christian who sought to provide the Christian faith with a scientific, comprehensive view of the world.[286] In his own book on Clement's life and thought, Jones notes that '[Clement] did in his century what we are trying to do now. He expressed the Christian message in terms of prevailing thought.'[287] Jones therefore ties his own aim of making Christian faith and Quakerism ready for modern times to the interpretations of Clement as a liberal and scientifically minded Christian. Moreover, both Jones and Clement were inspired by non-Christian schools of thought to solidify their religious views. While Jones felt inspired by James and Royce, Clement applied Greek philosophy to traditional biblical teachings.[288]

Both Jones and Clement were also Christian universalists, believing in the eventual salvation of every person. Clement's belief in the natural human capacity to receive truth and to have direct access to God were central to his Christian universalism.[289] This is similar to Jones' conception of the Inner Light that makes the experience of God open to all through the subconscious.[290] Furthermore, Jones not only believed in humans' ability to experience God directly, but also always thought of God in terms of love and goodness. As Jones states in *Practical Christianity*, there is only one God, and this God is Love.[291] Only once does Jones mention God's wrath, noting that 'those who will not learn this fact [the universe is marked by love and righteousness] by easy methods must have harsh methods, - "the thick bossed shield of God's judgement."'[292] But the significance of God's judgment otherwise hardly appears in Jones' corpus, and even in this example, God's judgment is particularly intended as a corrective punishment to lead people to the right path. In *A Call to What is Vital*, Jones, referring to the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust, notes that 'Christ saw a similar depravity in man. He not only saw it, but He felt this wave of depravity break on Him and sweep over Him [but] He kept His hope and His faith that God and man belonged together, as

[282] Osborn, *Clement*, 1-3.
[283] Osborn, *Clement*, 3.
[284] Osborn, *Clement*, 5.
[285] Osborn, *Clement*, 2.
[286] Osborn, *Clement*, 26.
[287] Jones, *Clement*, 7.
[288] John Hartley, "Induction and Allegory: Clement of Alexandria's Catechetical Method," Homiletic & Pastoral Review, October 18, 2024, https://www.hprweb.com/2024/03/induction-and-allegory-clement-of-alexandrias-catechetical-method/.
[289] Robert P. Casey, "Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Platonism," *The Harvard Theological Review* 18, no. 1 (January 1925), 53. https://www-jstor-org.proxy-ub.rug.nl/stable/pdf/1507869.pdf.
[290] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 91.
[291] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 103.
[292] Jones, *Practical Christianity*, 76.

branches belong to a vine.'[293]

Most crucial to Jones' thinking about the Inner Light were Clement's ideas about the "harmonized man" and the "mutual and reciprocal correspondence" between God and humans. In *Spiritual Energies* (1922), Jones refers to mystical experiences as the fruit of a developed and matured religious life. Jones notes that Clement's harmonized man is an example of such a person 'who has brought his soul into parallelism with divine currents, has habitually practiced his religious insights and has finally formed a unified central self, subtly sensitive, acutely responsive to the Beyond within him.'[294] In short, Jones applies Clement's harmonized man to assert that one must practice one's spiritual activities to become sensitive to God and the mystical experience. Earlier in the same book, Jones notes that Clement spoke of the harmonized man to indicate a fully organized and spiritualized person ready to be a transmissive organ for the revelation of God.[295] In his book *Clement*, Jones writes that a harmonized man is a person who 'has the vision of God and whose life is harmoniously *adjusted* to God's purposes.'[296] In other words, the harmonized man is also someone capable of hearing and following God's will. People like the harmonized man are thus transformed by their experience of salvation, making their goodness natural and habitual.[297]

Even more essential to the human-divine relationship is the notion of the mutual and reciprocal correspondence between God and humans. In *The World Within*, Jones mentions Clement's approach to prayer and his idea that God and humans enter into a mutual and reciprocal correspondence or inner conversation with each other. This means, Jones argues, that prayer should not be seen as a solitary or one-sided act, but as a two-way intercourse and a truly responsive relationship. Real prayer should thus be characterized as a lively, two-way correspondence between God and humans.[298] In *A Call to What is Vital*, Jones explains that the mystical mutual and reciprocal correspondence between people's souls and God has been central to the origins of religion itself and has continually helped religion remain vital.[299] He further contends that the Bible is not the only evidence that God is a living, revealing and communicating God and that He still speaks to us. Jones affirms: 'If He [God] has ever been in mutual and reciprocal communication with the persons He has made, He is still a communicating God, as eager as ever to have listening and receptive souls.'[300]

Furthermore, it is significant that Jones sees Christ not only as the revelation of God, but also as the marker or firstborn of a new order of humanity. Therefore, Jones also believes it is important to regard Christ as a real Person. If God can be revealed through a Person who was truly human, it means that this also leads to a complete reinterpretation of both human nature and the mutual and reciprocal correspondence between the divine and the human.[301] According to Jones, God's revelation through Christ shows us that people are opening

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[293] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 112.
[294] Jones, *Spiritual Energies*, 143.
[295] Jones, *Spiritual Energies*, 140.
[296] Jones, *Clement*, 19.
[297] Jones, *Clement*, 19.
[298] Jones, *The World Within*, 99.
[299] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 24.
[300] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 65.
[301] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 110, 111.

inwardly to the eternal spiritual realm and that God is no longer remote from us.[302] Finally, Jones states in *The Double Search* (1906) that there is such a phenomenon as a "double search," meaning that 'the Divine Other whom we seek is also seeking us.'[303] While we humans deeply long for God, God also wants to find us and bring us close to Him.

"The Conjunct" Relationship Between God and Humans

Rufus Jones' understanding of Clement's mutual and reciprocal correspondence is closely tied to his integration of the "conjunct" into his thinking. As we will see in this section of the chapter, Jones uses this concept to prove that not only do humans seek God, but God also searches for humans. In addition, Jones again attempts to express that God is related to human nature. To argue that humans and God are in a conjunct relationship with each other, Jones draws heavily on George Herbert Palmer's insights on the term "conjunct self." Who was Palmer and what did he mean by the conjunct self? How did Jones apply Palmer's ideas to conclude that humans and God inherently have a conjunct mutual relationship through the Inner Light?

George Herbert Palmer (1842-1933) was an American educator, philosopher and author who taught at Harvard University and who was an inspiration to Jones. When Jones compares him to Royce, he notes that Palmer was not the founder of any particular system or philosophy, but 'was rather the lucid interpreter of the great ethical systems of the centuries.'[304] Palmer's main influence on Jones was thus based on his interpretation of ethics. Jones recalls studying Kant, Fichte and Hegel with Palmer and learning from him both a vital interpretation of the major ethical systems of modern times and Palmer's own philosophy of life.[305] Jones and Palmer would eventually form an intimate and lasting friendship with each other. Interestingly, however, Palmer strongly disapproved of mysticism and did not like the basic beliefs and principles of Quakerism because they did not fit into his system of life and thought.[306] But even when he criticized Jones' "wandering fires," Jones himself remarks, Palmer did this with a "kindly smile" and always ended his criticisms with an affectionate appraisal of his work and aims.[307] In his book *The Nature of Goodness* (1903), Palmer describes the term "conjunct" in terms of ethics and contrasts it to a single, isolated individual. This means, according to Palmer, that a conjunct person is someone who 'stands in living relationship with his fellows, they being a veritable part of him and he of them.'[308] The "conjunct self" is in some sense inseparable from other people and is a self-sacrificing person.[309]

Rufus Jones applies Palmer's concept of the "conjunct self" but also extends it.

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[302] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 110, 111.
[303] Jones, *The Double Search*, 11.
[304] Jones, *Middle Years*, 6.
[305] Jones, *Middle Years*, 6.
[306] Jones, *Middle Years*, 7.
[307] Jones, *Middle Years*, 7.
[308] George Herbert Palmer, *The Nature of Goodness* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903), 170.

[309] Palmer, *The Nature of* Goodness, 171.

Although Jones and Palmer disagreed on mysticism, Jones still used the conjunct to describe the relationship between humans and God by stating that humans and God are conjunct. In *Social Law*, Jones writes that the "isolated self" is no more real than the "conjunct self," insisting that they only function together and not separately. In a footnote, he also acknowledges that the term "conjunct self" is borrowed from Palmer.[310] According to Jones, the conjunct self is associated with self-sacrifice and people generally lose one self to save another self and he gives examples of the sacrifice of the mother, the patriot, the martyr, the saint, lovers and friends.[311] Of importance here is Jones' belief that 'the step is short from this conjunct self to the infinite Companion – the divine Other who is nearer than our neighbour.'[312] Earlier in *Social Law*, Jones claims that if a man cannot be a self alone, neither can God Himself. Contrary to older views of God, we now know that man and God are conjunct and not completely separated from each other.[313] In Jones' view, we must either believe that God is interrelated or conjunct with us, or we are compelled to stop finding Him altogether. If humans and God have no common qualities at all, we cannot come to know God even if we have already found Him.[314]

Central to Christianity, Jones says, is the fact that God and man came together in a single, undivided life. Modern science confirms this, according to Jones; God has managed to reveal Himself humanly, and we have instinctive longings for Him. And so: God and humans are conjunct.[315] In *The Double Search* (1906), Jones again reaffirms that God and humans are conjunct and that neither can be absolutely separated from the other. This means that humans not only need God, but that 'God also needs us and that our lives are mutually organic.'[316] God is thus a spiritual and social Being who is in no way solitary and self-sufficient.[317] This also brings us back to the incarnation of Jesus Christ. But in Jones' eyes, the incarnation, the divine manifestation in Jesus Christ, is merely the crown and culmination of the whole or larger divine process. The incarnation shows us that God and humans are not far apart, but that there is 'something human in God and something divine in man and they belong together.'[318] In *A Call to What is Vital*, Jones says that the fact that the divine can be revealed through and in humans means that God and humans are not separate. Jones notes: 'The greatest single fact of history is the breaking in of the Life of God through this unique Life [Jesus Christ].'[319] Jones further argues that all true religion is characterized by a divine-human relationship. All humans consist of a divine spark, a light within, or a deep spiritual potential that raises them above animals. The difference with Christ, according to Jones, is that Christ possessed this so-called God-endowment to a perfect degree and that despite bodily struggles, the Spirit element in Him triumphed and revealed God.[320]

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[310] Jones, *Social Law*, 84.
[311] Jones, *Social Law*, 85, 86.
[312] Jones, *Social Law*, 89.
[313] Jones, *Social Law*, 16, 17.
[314] Jones, *Social Law*, 17.
[315] Jones, *Social Law*, 17.
[316] Jones, *The Double Search*, 24.
[317] Jones, *The Double Search*, 24.
[318] Jones, *The Double Search*, 37.
[319] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 108.
[320] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 109.

While we have shown earlier that Christ was essential to Jones' theology, we also see here that for Jones Christ is not always the second person of the Trinity, but sometimes rather a perfect expression of God's revelation through a human life that explains the idea that God and humans are conjunct. But at the same time, Jones still maintains that there is no reason to worry about the divine nature of Christ. For Jones, it has always been clear that the Gospels and Christian history prove the divine nature of this Son of God and that God was his Father.[321] So even though Jones sometimes clearly misses the traditional Trinitarian understanding of God, the role of Christ as the supreme revelation of God is still crucial. This lack of emphasis on the Trinity stems from Jones' desire to emphasize the practical Christian life and insist that God and humans are no longer separate because God and humans are interrelated or conjunct. Again, this primarily serves to remove the sharp dualistic thinking about the relationship between humans and God and to formulate the Inner Light.[322]

Rufus Jones, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Over-Soul

Another major inspiration for Rufus Jones' formulation of the Inner Light, or the human-divine relationship, was the life and thought of Transcendentalist essayist and author Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). In his early years, Emerson became interested in challenging questions related to his interests in philosophy and theology. He gained these interests largely from readings and sermons that promoted the brand of liberal Christianity that would eventually evolve into Unitarianism.[323] A significant moment in Emerson's personal and pastoral career came in 1829, when he became junior pastor and eventually pastor of Boston's Second Church, and got married to his wife Ellen. The tragic death of his wife Ellen from tuberculosis in 1831 devastated him, and sometime later Emerson also began to increasingly doubt his own religious beliefs.[324]

In 1832, Emerson disagreed with his congregation on the meaning of the Lord's Supper because he saw the sacrament as an example of 'worship in the dead forms of our forefathers.'[325] His disagreement with the church's teachings eventually led to his resignation at the end of the same year.[326] In 1836, Emerson started participating in the "Transcendental Club," a group dedicated to discussing radical theological and philosophical ideas and believed that God was immanent in all aspects of Creation. In 1840, the Transcendental Club established the *Dial* as an unofficial journal, of which Emerson was editor between 1842 and 1844.[327] Essential to the group's beliefs was Emerson's work *Nature*, in which Emerson declares a deep reverence for nature, the divinity of human life and the universality of thought. Adopting insights from Platonic and Neoplatonic thought, Eastern philosophy, religion and natural history, Emerson asserts that nature is the source for individuals to restore "original and eternal beauty."[328] Relevant to Emerson is that he was opposed to both

[321] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 109, 110.
[322] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 111.
[323] Joel Myerson, *A Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11.
[324] Myerson, *A Historical Guide*, 12, 13.
[325] Myerson, *A Historical Guide*, 13.
[326] Myerson, *A Historical Guide*, 13.
[327] Myerson, *A Historical Guide*, 24, 25.
[328] Myerson, *A Historical Guide*, 23, 24.

Puritan Calvinism and liberal Unitarianism.[329]

Emerson's influence on Rufus Jones is evident in Emerson's appreciation of Quakerism and the influence of Quakers on his thought. After once being asked about his religious beliefs and views, Emerson replied 'I am more of a Quaker than anything else. I believe in the "still, small voice," and that voice is Christ within us.'[330] Furthermore, in an article on Transcendentalism that he contributed to the *Dial*, Emerson quotes part of a letter from a Quaker to claim that there are similarities between the early Quakers and "serious persons at this time," such as Transcendentalists. Emerson uses the historical background of early Quakers in a Puritan setting to support his own opposition to Puritanism.[331] His appreciation of Quakerism went so far as to note in 1869 that 'the sect of the Quakers have come nearer to the sublime history and genius of Christ than any other of the sects.'[332]

When Emerson articulated his arguments on the Lord's Supper to explain his break with the church, he took an important part of his part directly from Quaker Thomas Clarkson.[333] In addition, Quakers Edward Stabler and Mary Rotch were instrumental in Emerson's beliefs about the possibility of a direct, first-hand experience of God within, which is also central to Jones's mystical thought. About Stabler Emerson notes that he was a person of authority [334]while Rotch partly shaped his view about the Inner Light as a source of wisdom and guidance.[335] Rotch, like later liberal Quakers, emphasized that 'the Light Within, not the Bible, was the final authority in Religion, for the Bible was only one expression of the spirit constantly active in every human soul.'[336] From Emerson, as from James, Jones thus adopted the idea that Quakerism is an inherently mystical religion. Jones' early religious thought on mysticism, before James and Royce, was influenced by Emerson who made him realize that the core of Quakerism is to be found in mysticism.[337]

Another direct impact on Jones and his formulation of the Inner Light was Emerson's concept of the Over-Soul. In his essay of the same name, Emerson defines the Over-Soul as the Unity 'within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other.'[338] Emerson explains that humans live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles, and that this contrasts with that which is within us. He states that 'within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE.'[339] In other words, our individual selves are connected to and transcended by the eternal Over-Soul, which is related to God. Here Emerson clearly draws on the Hindu "Advaita Vedanta" tradition, as his approach focuses on a supreme underlying unity that transcends both duality and plurality. Emerson read several books on Hinduism, including *Bhagavad Gita*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Kathu Upanishad*, and Colebrooke's *Essays on the*

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[329] Robert D. Richardson Jr, *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 151.
[330] Frederick B. Tolles, "Emerson and Quakerism," *American Literature* 10, no. 2 (May 1938): 142. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2920611.
[331] Tolles, "Emerson and Quakerism," 143-144.
[332] Tolles, "Emerson and Quakerism," 146.
[333] Richardson Jr, *Emerson*, 158.
[334] Richardson Jr, *Emerson*, 157.
[335] Richardson Jr, *Emerson*, 161.
[336] Richardson Jr, *Emerson*, 160.
[337] Rufus Jones, *The Trail of Life in College* (New York: MacMillan, 1929), 91.; Jones, *Middle Years*, 35.
[338] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays* (Boston: James Monroe and Company, 1841), 222.
[339] Emerson, *Essays*, 223.

Vedas.[340] Moreover, the Over-Soul relates to a non-dualistic view of the world in which the Over-Soul itself constitutes the ultimate one reality of which all other forms of being are an ongoing part. Because the individual soul in this thinking is unified and identical with the universal spirit, the concept of the Over-Soul is clearly not rooted in the God of Christianity.[341] Emerson refers directly to the Advaita Vedanta when he notes that the seer and the beholder, the subject and the object are one, and that even though we see the world piece by piece, the whole reality is formed by the soul itself.[342]

Rufus Jones first heard about the Over-Soul in a letter from his later wife Elizabeth, who mentioned Emerson's work in passing. Jones replied to her: 'Now why didn't thee tell me more about the "Oversoul"? […] It has had so much to do with my life and I wish thee had given me thy glimpse.'[343] Jones considers Emerson's essay about the Over-Soul 'the most fresh, natural, and spontaneous piece of mystical writing we have yet produced.'[344] Because with the Over-Soul, Jones is again integrating a non-Christian conception of God into his theological and philosophical views and thus the Inner Light, he places himself in some difficulty. Jones' integration of the Over-Soul is thus similar to his application of James' "more beyond the subconscious" and Royce's conception of God as the impassive and impersonal "Absolute." However, as stated earlier, it is important to understand that the various schools of thought and philosophical ideas Jones integrates are not an end in themselves but a way of emphasizing the direct relationship between humans and God. In addition, he writes that while Emerson and mystics such as Plotinus and Eckhart were not complete pantheists, they were always close to pantheism. Despite the fact that the dividing line is sometimes difficult to draw, Jones says it is essential to note that all of these mystics believed that God was both transcendent and immanent, and believed in the reality of personal differentiation.[345]

In *The Inner Life* (1917), Jones refers to Emerson and mentions his statement that there is "no bar or wall in the soul" that separates God and humans. Jones writes that we are 'lie open on one side of our nature to God, who is the Oversoul of our souls, the Overmind of our minds, the Overperson of our personal selves.'[346] In *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion* (1930), Jones reaffirms that Emerson's concept of the Over-Soul refers to the idea that there is no bar or wall separating humans and God, and proclaims that the same Life, God, which bursts into people as a revealing and invading force, also pours out into nature.[347] In short, Jones simply applies the Over-Soul to insist that our soul or individual self is related to God. The Over-Soul is thus quite similar to Jones' application of James' theory of the subconscious.

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[340] Sachindra N. Pradhan, *India in the United States: Contributions of India and & Indians in the United States of America* (Bethesda: SP Press International, Inc., 1996), 12.
[341] Pradhan, *India in the United States*, 10.
[342] Emerson, *Essays*, 223.
[343] Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Friend of Life: The Biography of Rufus M. Jones* (Philadelphia; New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1958), 92, 93.
[344] Rufus Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1930), 203.
[345] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 204.
[346] Jones, *The Inner Life*, 100.
[347] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 203.

Conclusion

This chapter served to explain how Rufus Jones applied his interpretation of Clement of Alexandria's thought, Palmer's notion of the "conjunct," and Emerson's mysticism and the Over-Soul to support his belief that God and humans and God are inherently connected through the Inner Light. Relying on Clement, Jones claimed that the "harmonized man" is able to become sensitive to the experience of God through spiritual practice and can develop into a true conduit for the revelation of God. The harmonized man can develop himself in such a way that he has a vision of God and that his life is harmoniously aligned with God's purposes. As a result, the harmonized man is able to hear and follow God's will and transform himself and his goodness through this experience of salvation. Even more essential in Jones' thinking and formulation of the Inner Light is the idea that God and humans have a mutual and reciprocal or inner conversation with each other. Real prayer, for example, is a two-way correspondence and a truly responsive relationship between humans and God.

This also means that God does not only speak to us through the Bible, but God still wants to speak to us continually and reveal Himself to us. In short, we humans not only seek God, but God also wants to find us through a "double search" and wants to be close to us. Through the Inner Light, humans are able to seek God and God is able to find humans. Jones' integration of the "conjunct" is closely related to this. Jones emphasizes that we now need to realize that people and God are conjunct and not completely separate. This means, according to Jones, that we can find and come to know God only because humans and God are connected and share common qualities. God Himself is a social and spiritual Being who longs for us. Jones' application of the Over-Soul has a similar purpose and also serves to affirm that God and humans are connected. Although the Over-Soul is clearly not a Christian concept, it helped Jones argue that people are connected to God's nature through the Inner Light and that humans and God can have a direct and vital relationship. This is central to Jones' mysticism.

Mysticism and the Experience of God

Introduction

'But after all, the thing that counted most was his [St. Paul's] own undoubted experience of the invasion of God, the insurging of a divine Spirit which he identified with that Life that was personalized in Jesus Christ.'[348] In the previous chapters, we discovered that Jones' understanding of the Inner Light, or the human-divine relationship, was marked by his conviction that humans and God are related and not sundered. Jones' thought about the Inner Light signifies the notion that God is never far from us and that we can have a direct and intimate relationship with Him. This fifth and final chapter of the thesis will build on this and will be devoted to defining Jones' mysticism and explaining in what ways his mysticism was distinctive. We will also build here on Jones' belief that the direct first-hand experience of God is central to religion itself. In addition, this chapter will show that Jones' Inner Light mysticism is not isolated from the outside world, but rather involved in worldly affairs and social engagement. I will explain how Jones saw the mystical experience of God as the essential foundation for making the external world a better place.

Therefore, the central question of this chapter is how Jones defined mysticism as the direct and intimate experience of God through the Inner Light, how Jones applied mysticism as a practical way of relating to the world, and Jones' scholarship on mysticism and the people he considered mystics. In answering this question, I hope to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of Jones' mysticism and to offer insight into how Jones made an important contribution to the academic study of mysticism. First, I will examine the essential features of Jones' mysticism. In doing so, I will focus on the interrelationship between the Inner Light and the mystical experience. Next, I will examine the activist nature of Jones' mysticism and his concept of "affirmation mysticism." As we will see, affirmation mysticism in Jones' thought is not the ultimate goal of the mystic but, on the contrary, the beginning of an inner transformation and a new way of viewing the world. Finally, I will provide an overview of Rufus Jones' research on mysticism and his description of mystical persons. In this final section, I will show how Jones perceived and described the Inner Light in the lives of historical mystics.

Rufus Jones' Interpretation of Mysticism

Mysticism is a fuzzy and complicated term. Its meaning is difficult to define because it is broad and can encompass different religious traditions. An attempt to define mysticism without excluding some religions would possibly lead to a very broad definition. But as Paul Oliver observes, mysticism is associated with various ideas or views.[349] For theistic traditions, mysticism may be related to direct access to the divine or immediate and personal contact with God. Furthermore, mystics may employ spiritual strategies that aid them in their

[348] Rufus Jones, *The World Within*, 163.
[349] Paul Oliver, *Mysticism A Guide for the Perplexed* (London; New York: Continuum International, 2009), 8.

supposed immediate approach to God.[350] When it comes to his own understanding of mysticism, Rufus Jones is quite consistent throughout his corpus. Central to Jones' mysticism, as we have seen, is someone's direct and immediate experience of a personal God. In his book *Studies in Mystical Religion*, Jones asserts that mysticism is the 'type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine Presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense, and living stage.'[351] What is remarkable about Jones' conception of mysticism is that, according to him, mysticism is not tied to Christianity but is present to some degree in all forms of religion. Because the first-hand experiences of a Divine or Higher Presence are, according to Jones, as old as the human personality, mysticism is a universal phenomenon.[352] In *A Call to What is Vital*, Jones also offers his own unique mystical experience and recalls:

In 1886 I was alone on a solitary walk, near Dieu-le-fit in France, in the foothills of the Alps. I felt the walls grow thin between the visible and the invisible and there came a sudden flash of eternity, breaking in on me. I kneeled down then and there in that forest glade, in sight of the mountains, and dedicated myself in the hush and silence, but in the presence of an invading life, to the work of interpreting the deeper nature of the soul, and direct mystical relation with God, which had already become my major interest.[353]

Mysticism, according to Jones, is thus deeply personal and consists of the entry of God into the soul. The soul itself, as noted earlier, is subconsciously and inherently connected to the Divine Presence encountered by the person having a mystical experience. The Inner Light, or human-divine relationship is essential to the mystical experience because the inherent relationship between humans and God makes it possible for this spiritual communion to "happen" at all. In *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, Jones further argues that although the mystic appreciates the testimonies of others about the reality of God, he longs for a kind of conviction that can only come from his own experience of God.[354] Important to the mystic's assertion of the mystical experience is the idea that the mind comes into immediate contact with a surrounding spiritual reality. This experience, Jones says, extends beyond the operation of the five or more special senses and indicates a first-hand acquaintance with that deeper reality.[355] While Jones believes that mystical experiences are common in various forms of religion, he also recognizes that 'the symbolism through which these inward experiences are expressed […] all bear the mark and colour of their particular age.'[356] As a result, there are no mystical experiences that are completely "pure," because there are no mystical experiences that originate from beyond the person experiencing such an experience.[357] The Inner Light is both human and divine and is specific to each person or personality.

Furthermore, for Jones, mysticism refers not only to ecstatic and ineffable kinds of

[350] Oliver, *Mysticism*, 8.
[351] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, xv.
[352] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, xv.
[353] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 71, 72.
[354] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 15.
[355] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 17, 18.
[356] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, xxxiii, xxxiv.
[357] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, xxxiv.

experiences, but simply denotes the form of religion based primarily on the consciousness of acquaintance with God that comes from a direct and immediate experience of Him.[358] In *A Call to What Is Vital*, Jones writes about his egalitarian view of mysticism and notes that mysticism is not reserved only for a small list of chosen religious geniuses. On the contrary, mysticism, according to Jones, is accessible to the democratic laity as well as the "high pulpit class." In addition, Jones states that there are many people who have experienced the dynamic effect of the divine presence and the invading power of God in their daily lives.[359] As we will see in the next section of this chapter, the notion of everyday mystical experience is akin to Jones's social or activist affirmation mysticism. But what we can already observe is that mysticism is accessible to everyone for Jones and that mysticism is not necessarily an ecstatic or abnormal phenomenon. Jones characterizes mysticism as an intimate and tender experience of God. In *Spiritual Reformers*, he describes how Quaker mystic Isaac Penington joyfully proclaimed, 'This is He, this is He. There is no other: This is He whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood.'[360] In *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, Jones notes that Christ's own experience shows Christ to be the 'pioneer in the discovery of God as Father and in the insight that grace or self-giving is the divine way of life.'[361]

The mystical experience of God is available to humans because of the Inner Light, that spark of God that makes us related to God's nature. Again, it is this meeting place or "Shekinah" in the soul that brings us to God.[362] For his interpretation of mysticism, Jones, as a Quaker, does not emphasize the role of traditional ecclesiastical institutions. The mystical experience, Jones argues, has played a central role in the development of Western Christianity and has 'flowed on beneath dogmatic systems and ecclesiastical structures and sacerdotal forms.'[363] Writing about his own Quaker tradition, he affirms that the Society of Friends sought to 'maintain a religious fellowship without a rigid ecclesiastical system, and with large scope for personal initiative, immediate revelation and individual responsibility.'[364] More important to the mystical experience is the act of "expectancy" or waiting on God to hear the "currents of the Spirit."[365] God comes to the hearer in a 'voice of stillness which must be listened for, and which calls for an alert and cultivated hearer.'[366]

But how can we know that the experience we have really comes from God and is not a product of our own imagination? In *Social Law*, Jones mentions the relevance of testing mystical experiences. He states that the individual must consider his inward spiritual state in the light of the social spiritual group. A person 'must therefore learn to know God's will not merely in private inward bubblings, but by genuinely sharing in a wider spiritual order through which God is showing Himself.'[367] According to Jones, a highly developed and spiritually receptive Quaker Meeting should aim at 'an actual heightening of inward power

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[358] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 31.
[359] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 64, 65.
[360] Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*, xix.
[361] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 25.
[362] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 35.
[363] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 32.
[364] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, xxxviii.
[365] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 39-41.
[366] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 41.
[367] Jones, *Social Law*, 169.

and a gathered sense of truth through union.'[368] He also notes that on rare occasions there has even been the experience that 'a unifying and directing Spirit may make all who are present aware that they no longer live unto themselves, but have their being in a common central Life.' [369] In short, the larger Quaker, or other religious community, can use the experience of the group to determine whether an experience truly comes from God.

The Inner and the Outer: Affirmation Mysticism

Rufus Jones' mysticism is not just an inner affair. In his book *The Inner Life*, Jones states that there is no inner life that is not also an outer life and that there is no sharp dichotomy between the two.[370] True inner religion, according to Jones, is also characterized by 'the joyous business of carrying the Life of God into the lives of men – of being to the eternal God what a man's hand is to a man.'[371] In other words, people can live out their inner faith and experience of God by being God's hands in the world and engaging with the world. Historical mystics, Jones believes, were not impractical and dreamy individuals, but on the contrary spiritual leaders who were responsible for great reforms, who championed movements that were essential to humanity and ensured that Christianity was not marked only by scholastic formalism and ecclesiastical systems.[372] Moreover, their service to humanity was made possible by their mystical experiences, or the realization that they were 'in immediate correspondence with Some One – a Holy Spirit, a Great Companion – who was working with them and through them.'[373] In *Thou Dost Open Up My Life*, a book of sermons by Jones, Jones complains about the horizontal focus of the Book of James and its underrated importance of combining mysticism or faith with social service or good deeds.[374] He notes that the mystical aspect of faith brings about the fullness of God and 'the depth and height that makes a great horizontal life possible.'[375]

This combination of mysticism and social service is central to Jones' term "affirmation mysticism," a form of mysticism that is likewise focused on the outer world. In *Social Law*, Jones distinguishes affirmation mysticism from another negative form of mysticism, which he calls "negation mysticism." While negation mysticism focuses only on the mystical experience or feeling itself and on "the abnormal" or "the ecstatic," affirmation mysticism focuses on the powerful personal transformation of the individual.[376] According to Jones, then, mysticism should not be limited to a rare moment of ecstasy and beatific vision that brings us to an abstract absolute or to an ineffable enlightenment that would extinguish all further search or desire.[377] On the contrary, affirmation mysticism represents a mystical vision that is not the

[368] Jones, *Social Law*, 173.
[369] Jones, *Social Law*, 173.
[370] Jones, *The Inner Life*, v.
[371] Jones, *The Inner Life*, vi.
[372] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, xxx.
[373] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, xxxi.
[374] Rufus Jones, *Thou Dost Open Up My Life: Selections from the Rufus Jones Collection*, edited by Mary Hoxie Jones (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1963), 8.
[375] Jones, *Thou Dost Open Up My Life*, 8.
[376] Jones, *Social Law*, 134-136.
[377] Jones, *Social Law*, 134, 135.

end but rather the beginning. Affirmation mystics are seeking a direct, first-hand experience of God but not for the sake of it. More important to the affirmation mystic is the obedience to the mystical vision than the vision itself.[378] This means that humans 'who see God must gird for service. Those who would have a closer view of the divine must seek it in a life of love and sacrifice.'[379] Furthermore, affirmation mystics do not seek to transcend the finite in the infinite, but finds the revelation of this personal God in the finite world.[380] According to Jones, this means that this mystic seeks to be a 'fellow-worker with God – contributing in a normal daily life his human powers to the divine Spirit who works in him and about him, bringing to reality a kingdom of God.'[381] In other words, the experience of the living God can be made real through a sense of duty and the will to act on it.[382] Affirmation mysticism in Jones' thought, then, is the practical application of the Inner Light or the human-divine relationship, since mysticism here leads to social action.

Quaker scholar Christy Randazzo notes that by connecting mysticism with social action, Jones was able to emphasize the two distinct elements central to Quakerism. Jones integrated the human opening to God through patient waiting of the individual in Quaker community with the idea that the experience of God leads people to social service.[383] This integration helped Jones in his interpretation of Quakerism as a mystical religion based on living religious experience. Moreover, Jones' insistence that through the Inner Light humans are already in an interdependent relationship with God has been highly influential in the development of liberal Quaker social action.[384] The Inner Light that makes God present in human beings implies that by making another human suffer, a human being also inflicts suffering on God. By harming humans, one harms not only the individual human (human) but also the Light, and thus God (Divine) and humans as members of broader humanity (human and Divine).[385] Randazzo argues that one of the most radical aspects of Jones' theology lies in his belief that humans become truly human through both their relationship with God and their connection with other humans that they obtain through God.[386] This means that humans do social service and relief work, not only because they feel obligated to follow God's will, but mostly '*because they are human*, [and] because failing to serve the other is to fail as a human person, and it is only through service to the other that the self truly becomes the self.'[387]

Rufus Jones' formulation of affirmation mysticism can also be seen in its historical context. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Social Gospel movement had gained considerable influence in transforming American Protestantism and had become an intellectual and popular factor within both Protestant churches and American religion

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[378] Jones, *Social Law*, 135.
[379] Jones, *Social Law*, 135.
[380] Jones, *Social Law*, 135, 136.
[381] Jones, *Social Law*, 136.
[382] Jones, *Social Law*, 137, 138.
[383] Christy Randazzo, "Affirmation Mysticism: The Activist Theology of Rufus Jones," *Quaker Religious Thought* 133. no. 3 (September 2019): 16. https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt/vol133/iss1/3
[384] Randazzo, "Affirmation Mysticism," 16.
[385] Randazzo, "Affirmation Mysticism," 19.
[386] Randazzo, "Affirmation Mysticism," 19.
[387] Randazzo, "Affirmation Mysticism," 19.

more broadly.[388] Due to the influence of the Social Gospel and other theological developments, liberal Christians were primarily focused on social reform and were skeptical of ecstatic experiences of God.[389] Jones' mystical interpretation of Quakerism also transcended existing divisions between social reform on the one hand and spiritual matters on the other. In *A Call to What is Vital*, Jones states that it 'has always been the Quaker ideal that a person in contact with divine forces can be a vital organ in the world of *that spiritual dynamic* which will in the long run […] overcome the world and make truth prevail.'[390] And in *The World Within*, Jones proclaims that religion cannot be defined primarily by words or social service, but that the core of religion is the soul's personal encounter with God.[391] It is precisely this personal encounter with God that should lead the individual undergoing the mystical experience into social action.

Rufus Jones and the Mystics

In a small in memoriam booklet written after Rufus Jones' death, a minute from the Board of Managers of Haverford College states that Jones, with his books *Studies in Mystical Religion* and *Spiritual Reformers*, was one of the first to interpret the early mystics in the English language. It also confirms that Jones' work was at the forefront of scholarly production in the field of mysticism at the time.[392] In his books *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1909), *Spiritual Reformers* (1914), as well as *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion* (1930) and *New Studies in Mystical Religion* (1927, among others), Jones shows his readers how the Inner Light, or the human-divine relationship, became visible through the lives and experiences of historical mystics. Because the scope of this thesis is limited, I will focus here only on *Studies in Mystical Religion* and *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*. By using excerpts from these books, I attempt to explore how Jones saw the Inner Light in the lives of these mystics and thus how he applied his ideas to his historical scholarship. The first of these books, Jones' *Studies in Mystical Religion*, originally published in 1909, is a long book of more than 500 pages, and it focuses on the mystics Jones saw as the forerunners of the mystical tradition of Quakerism. As Helen Holt observes, this book is in line with Jones' interpretation of Quakerism and his belief in the importance of inner experience and practical service.[393]

In *Studies in Mystical Religion*, Jones writes that, in his view, the Church Fathers were not "mystics" in the ordinary sense of the word because their type of religion was objective and historical rather than subjective and inward. But although the Church Fathers were more like statesmen and philosophers, there are scattered passages in the writings of almost all of them that Jones believes express the kind of direct and inner experience he considers "mystical."[394] Of these Church Fathers, it is St. Augustine whom Jones calls 'the real father of

[388] Evans, *The Social Gospel in American Religion*, 46.
[389] Randazzo, "Affirmation Mysticism," 16.
[390] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 130.
[391] Jones, *The World Within*, 20.
[392] Board of Managers of Haverford College, *Rufus M. Jones: In Memoriam* (Haverford: Haverford College, 1950), 5.
[393] Holt, *Mysticism and the Inner Light*, 141.
[394] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 80.

Catholic mysticism.'[395] According to Jones, St. Augustine represents both a "religion of authority" and a "religion of the Spirit" that are actually incompatible, something St. Augustine did not realize.[396] Indeed, it is noteworthy that Jones who argues that God and humans are inherently related through the Inner Light refers to St. Augustine as his example of an influential mystic who is consistent with Jones' view of the Inner Light. St. Augustine emphasized, as Jones also notes, that humans are separated from God by original sin and the supposed depravity of humanity and certainly did not focus on the closeness between God and humans.[397] Jones seeks to solve this problem by insisting that St. Augustine the mystic can be separated from St. Augustine the theologian and that his mysticism belonged to St. Augustine's very nature as a human being.[398] Jones remarks: 'Theologically he [St. Augustine] held that man was depraved; his own human *experience* told him that man and God are kindred, are meant for each other, and that man has within himself a direct pathway to the living God.'[399] Thus, in order to align St. Augustine with his interpretation of Quakerism and his view of the Inner Light, Jones had to claim that mystics' thinking about theological dogma and ecclesiastical matters must sometimes be separated from their direct and immediate experiences of God.

According to Jones, St. Francis was a person who sought to rejuvenate Christianity by returning to its original principle and by restoring the eternal quality of Christ's religion. Jones notes that he believes 'nobody has come so near gaining the feeling, the attitude, the *abandon* to the Divine Father, the spirit of human life and fellowship which characterized the Galilean circle as has Francis of Assisi.'[400] Jones writes that St. Francis brought the religion from the Church back to ordinary people and made his spontaneous, uncalculated love for humans central to his spiritual message.[401] In addition, Jones describes the experience of St. Francis in the little church of St. Damian in which the holy Jesus figure on the crucifix came to life and spoke in silence with a voice that reached into the inmost depths of St. Francis' being. This experience, Jones says, was not just a legend, but an experience that was real and important to St. Francis and that changed his life. St. Francis, in Jones' view, was a mystic of the highest order whose 'our psychological laboratories have given us evidence that persons of this type may overpass the normal and the ordinary without any necessity of calling in miracle.'[402] The religion of St. Francis, Jones explains, was one of first-hand experience and was characterized by fellowship with God, imitation of Christ and the love and joy that came from the experience of God in his life.[403]

In *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, Jones discusses the influence of the mystics on Martin Luther. According to Jones, during a certain period of his religious development, Luther was strongly attracted to the sermons of John Tauler and to the small anonymous

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[395] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 87.
[396] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 87.
[397] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 88.
[398] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 88, 89.
[399] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 89.
[400] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 150.
[401] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 151, 152.
[402] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 155.
[403] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, 167.

mystical book *German Theology*.[404] Jones notes that the mystics had a profound influence on Luther's inner life and that Luther's own study of the mystics 'marks the turning-point of his life, and actually swung him from the straight path of a mediaeval monk to the incalculable curve of a dynamic reformer.'[405] In other words, with Luther it is again the mystical experience that is responsible for the inner transformation of the individual. Although, Jones says, Luther derived his dark and pessimistic view of human nature from Augustine's theology rather than Augustine's mysticism, Luther still felt the strong pull of inward, first-hand religion and desired the direct way to God.[406] Jones describes how Luther came to believe more and more in the direct work of God in the soul and how he came to a real discovery of God that is close to Jones' own view of the Inner Light.[407] Jones writes: 'Christ became to him [Luther] now more real and intimate, more warm and tender. Religion from now on was a more heartfelt and inward matter – experience and not debates.'[408] The problem for Luther was not his mysticism, Jones explains, but his fundamental theological thought about God that was still pagan and pessimistic.[409]

Closer to the "affirmation mysticism" of Rufus Jones was, according to Jones himself, the English poet Robert Browning. Browning's affirmative kind of mysticism builds on the normal experiences of the soul and 'insists upon the truth that the Beyond which we are for ever seeking is within ourselves.'[410] According to Jones, in Browning's affirmative view of mysticism, this also means that God and humans are connected and that humans can never be separated from God.[411] Jones describes a passage from Browning's poem "Christmas Eve" as a fine illustration of the immense transition from the God of the cosmos to the God of intimate personal experience.[412] Another poet who also described in his poems a mystical experience similar to Jones' view of the Inner Light is Walt Whitman. Jones argues that Whitman expresses his most revealing passage in his poem *Leaves of Grass* (1855), providing a 'personal account of the invasion of the Larger Life into his inmost being, leaving him transformed, in some sense reborn, by the experience.'[413] God for Whitman, Jones notes, is not a distant mystery but the spiritual reservoir of Life itself.[414] Although Whitman's mysticism is not the mysticism of the great Christian saints, he articulates the experience of a joyful and naïve soul who 'feels in great moments the tides of God's ocean of spiritual reality sweeping back into the channel of his own individual stream of life.'[415]

It is exactly this kind of personal and intimate experience of God that Rufus Jones held in such high regard. It is a kind of mystical experience that embraces the ever-present Life of God close to the human soul, that brings us as humans a first-hand conviction of God

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[404] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 116.
[405] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 117.
[406] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 120.
[407] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 127.
[408] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 127, 128.
[409] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 131.
[410] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 148.
[411] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 151.
[412] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 153.
[413] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 182.
[414] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 190.
[415] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 190, 191.

and helps us to bridge a barren world made up only of atoms and molecules.[416] It is, as Jones himself describes it in his own Christian interpretation of the mystical experience, this eternal principle of spiritual life that becomes so clear in the Gospel of John that points us to a 'warm, intimate concrete personification of Life, Light, and Love who has definitely incarnated the Truth and revealed the nature of God and the possible glory of man.'[417]

Conclusion

In this final chapter of my thesis, I attempted to describe Rufus Jones' interpretation of mysticism. For Jones, mysticism is one's direct, immediate and intimate experience of God. Because God and humans are inherently connected through the Inner Light, or human-divine relationship, humans are able to directly experience God and establish this spiritual communion. According to Jones, mystics always long for direct evidence of God and desire a first-hand conviction of the Divine Life in their own lives. As humans are connected to God through the Inner Light, which is both human and divine, there is no pure mystical experience that is not influenced by a person-specific context. Jones' mysticism is strongly egalitarian and does not take into account the significance of traditional ecclesiastical institutions. Although the Church does not have a monopoly on testing or verifying mystical experiences, Jones believes it is the Quaker Meeting or other religious community that can use the spiritual experience of the larger group to determine whether an experience truly comes from God. Also central to this is the Quaker belief that God's voice can best be heard by patiently waiting and expecting God in silence. Jones' mysticism does not make a sharp distinction between the inner and outer worlds and considers both worlds as interconnected.

Moreover, Jones' term affirmative mysticism refers to the fundamental connection between the mystical experience of God and social action. Ideally, the mystical experience transforms the inner life of the individual and brings him to a committed engagement with the outer world. Affirmation mysticism can be seen as the practical application of the Inner Light because it denotes mystical experience in action and points to a sense of duty and the will to act accordingly. One of the most radical aspects of Jones' Inner Light mysticism is that people can become truly human through both their relationship with God and their connection with other humans that they obtain through God. Therefore, humans serve other humans in need not only because they must follow God's will, but more importantly because they are humans and humans are not supposed to wrong other humans. In his study of historical mystics, we also see how Jones applies his view of the Inner Light to the mystical experiences of these individuals. Through these examples, we find how Jones seeks to re-emphasize the inherent relationship between God and humans. It is interesting to note how Jones often distinguishes in his studies between the theological conceptions or pessimistic ideas of these religious personalities on the one hand and their actual mystical experiences that "prove" the Inner Light on the other. In addition, it is Jones' view of the direct and intimate experience of God that constantly shines through in the lives of the mystics.

[416] Jones, *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion*, 194, 195.
[417] Jones, *The Inner Life*, 94.

A Final Conclusion: Rufus Jones, A Man of His Time

Rufus Jones (1863-1948) was a man of his time. Jones found himself in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries between two opposing worldviews; the evangelical and conservative Christians and Quakers on one side and the proponents of secular and naturalistic worldviews on the other. As a liberal Quaker theologian, Jones supported the rise of the liberal Quaker agenda that promoted the acceptance of modern thought and modern scientific insights, while also opposing what he saw as a naturalistic explanation of the world that left no room for spiritual virtues and the unseen world. To counter a dualistic or conservative Christian understanding of the relationship between humans and God and to foster a deeply spiritual view of the world, Jones sought to reformulate the traditional Quaker doctrine of the "Light." While the early Quakers understood the "Inward Light" or "the Light within" to refer to a transcendent God shining on or within humans from the outside, Jones' interpretation of the "Inner Light" emphasized the immanent nature of God by conceiving of the Inner Light as a "source of Light within." Although Jones did not realize that the Inner Light as a concept came into use around the end of the nineteenth century, he was clearly opposed to the traditional Quaker conception of the "Light" which Jones saw in Barclay's thought as characterized by a strongly dualistic way of thinking about God and human nature. According to Jones, the Inner Light is the doctrine that there is "something of God" or something Divine in the human soul. Since there is something Divine or a "Spark of God" in the human soul, this implies that humans are inherently connected to God through the Inner Light, or what Jones considered the human-divine relationship.

To prove that humans and God are inherently connected by the Inner Light, Jones applied intellectual ideas that were influential in his time. For example, Jones used William James' theory of "the more beyond the subconscious," Josiah Royce's thought about absolute idealism and "the Absolute," George Herbert Palmer's notion of the "conjunct," and Ralph Waldo Emerson's idea of the "Over-Soul" to argue that humans and God are not separate, but close and related. In addition, from the Christian tradition, Jones also used the life and thought of Clement of Alexandria which he used to support his reformulation of the Inner Light. Moreover, to provide an alternative to both evangelical Quakers and scientific views that leave no room for spirituality and religion, Jones sought to interpret Quakerism as a mystical tradition. Central to Jones' mysticism is the idea that humans can have a direct and immediate experience of God through the Inner Light. However, his integration of many different schools of thought and non-Christian conceptions of God into his own Christian, Quaker framework led to accusations that Jones' interpretation of Quakerism and the Inner Light was "Christless" and that his understanding of God differed from the traditional God of Christianity. I have argued that these critics have misunderstood Jones, because Jones never intended to establish a Quakerism without Christ or the personal God of Christianity. Despite the fact that Jones sometimes seems to cross the boundaries of traditional Christianity, Jones evidently believed in the personal God of Christianity and Christ played a crucial role as the supreme revelation of God and likewise the archetype of the perfect man and the new Adam.

It therefore is essential to note that Jones' incorporation of non-Christian conceptions of God was never an end in itself, but rather a means of arguing that the personal Christian

God that Jones believed in was not far removed from human beings, and that humans can make direct contact with Him through the Inner Light. They served as a means to make both Christianity and Quakerism ready for the times to come and to ensure that Christianity, through mysticism, would be assured of a future marked by a vital experience of God. Of course, the confusion that sometimes emerged about Jones' beliefs did not come completely out of nowhere, and it can certainly be said that Jones' integration of non-Christian ideas about God to reduce the distance between God and humans was a very risky endeavor. Yet, looking at Jones' broader corpus, it is still quite possible to see that for Jones, God was deeply personal and intimate, and that for Jones, God was expressed as the "Loving Father of Christianity" who wants to be close to and interact with humans. For Jones, humans not only seek God, but God also longs for humans and does not want to let go of this love.

Therefore, it is even more important to see Jones as a man of his time who was influenced by the context in which he found himself. Questions about how religion, science and modern thought relate to each other are still relevant in the world today. Jones also sought to understand these questions in his day by using some of the tools available to him in his time. This, of course, can also be said of Jones' interpretation of mysticism itself, which he understood from his view of the Inner Light. To reinterpret Quakerism as a vital, mystical faith for the future, Jones had to ensure that his liberal and mystical vision of Quakerism was still in line with some crucial aspects of the historical Quaker tradition. He had to insist that the direct and immediate experience of God in silence remained essential and that through his understanding of "affirmation mysticism" this experience of God could lead to social action and engagement in this world, so that this element of Quakerism was not lost either.

Although Jones never made a clear separation between the inner and the outer, for these are interrelated, it is always the inner, mystical experience that stands for transformation and that also remains central when people engage with the world. This is also exactly what Jones wanted to make clear through the lives of historical mystics and by sharing his own life and experience. God is never far away from the human soul and does not hide high in the clouds to be indifferent to human affairs. God and humans will always be related to each other and will never be completely separated. Through the Inner Light, or human-divine relationship, God will continue to speak to us and search for receptive souls ready to converse with Him and the deeper spiritual layer beyond the material world. This belief was, of course, a result of his opposition to what he saw as the dualistic relationship between God and humans, which in his view was irrelevant to the modern world. For this reason, it seems appropriate to end this thesis with the words of Rufus Jones himself.

The conception of God as a lonely sovereign, complete in Himself and infinitely separated from us "poor worms of the dust," grasshoppers chirping our brief hour in the sun, is in the main a dead notion […] But that whole conception is being supplanted by a live faith in an infinite person who is corporate with our lives, from whom we have sprung, in whom we live, as far as we spiritually do live, Who needs us as we need Him, and Who is sharing with us the travail and the tragedy as well as the glory and bringing forth sons of God.[418]

[418] Jones, *A Call to What is Vital*, 142.

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