

for Bible study..but not in such a systematic confessional way as the church liked. Preaching in Berlin most of his life, his sharp criticisms of practices in both the German nobility and clergy whereby they looked less than Christian, tended to make him unpopular with the leaders but to make him very popular with the common people and his pietistic scholarship lay with the rank and file. Francke was in many ways the logical successor to Spener..a man of pronounced spiritual experience and interest in the Gospel. He served in the theological faculty at Halle and helped make the university a center for the pietistic Bible instruction.

On the overall picture pietism had some strong defects. By ignoring the intellectual gap, it did not provide a continuing basis. The early pietists were mostly men of great training but gave the impression that the great training was hardly needed and this set the stage for an anti-thinking movement among their followers in the following years. Rationalism often is the long range end and men such as Kant, Reimarus, Wolf, all had pietistic backgrounds...some generations removed from hearty spiritual persons such as Spener.

But in the thrust of turning to Bible study and the personal understanding of salvation, the movement provides a sort of renewal in spiritual interest that is very vital. In the ongoing Bible society groups begun in the pietistic tradition is the stronger value of the total program. It does emphasize an area where, if we are not cautious, we may become head effective and heart paupers. So, if nothing else, a study of pietism suggests again the need for balance in life...particularly the Christian life. Those who seek to develop and pursue it are the happy saints in this age and those who make the more lasting contributions.

IV.4.b Mysticism

Mysticism

All Christians have a mystical side since we think that faith is the "evidence of things not seen," etc. Mysticism is the practice or direction of depending on non-empirical substance for direction and security. It is a dependence on the subjective and non-concrete. In our circles to be called a "mystic" is almost like being put out of the kingdom, but there is a certain amount of mysticism about belief in general. But the mysticism of which we speak is not this generally subjective judgment, but a total