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THE BIBLE AS THE TEXT-BOOK IN SOCIOLOGY

We are accustomed to regard the Bible as *the* text-book, because the authority, in dogmatics and ethics. Our "Confession of Faith" (Chap. i. 10) says: "The Supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." Our "Longer Catechism", in response to the inquiry, "What is the Word of God?" replies: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience." Our "Shorter Catechism", in answer to the question, "What do the Scriptures principally teach?" says: "The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." Our "Form of Government" obliges all our church officers, ministers, ruling-elders and deacons, to affirm that they "believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice" (Chap. xiii. 4 and Chap. xv. 12). Our Book of Discipline says: "Nothing shall be the object of judicial process, which cannot be proved to be contrary to the Holy Scriptures, or to the regulation and practice of the Church founded thereon" (Chap. i. 4). Our "Directory for the Worship of God" in a footnote explanatory of its title is careful to state as follows: "The Scripture-warrant for what is specified in the various articles of this Directory, will be found at large in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, in the places where the subjects are treated in a doctrinal form." These several

This lecture is characterized by Mr. Jordan's well known knowledge of the literature of Comparative Religion, his zeal to define its boundaries more exactly and sharply than seems to us always possible, and his tendency to deny, as we maintain unwarrantably, the exclusiveness of Christianity.

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Mysticism. A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness. By EVELYN UNDERHILL, Author of "The Grey World", "The Column of Dust", etc. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd. [1911.] 8vo; pp. xv, 600. Bibliography: Index.

The Mystic Way. A Psychological Study of Christian Origins. By EVELYN UNDERHILL, Author of "Mysticism", etc. London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. 1913. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Crown 8vo; pp. xiv, 395. Bibliography: Index.

Immanence. A Book of Verses. By EVELYN UNDERHILL. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. [1912.] 12mo; pp. x, 83.

The Miracles of Our Lady Saint Mary, brought out of divers tongues and newly set forth in English. By EVELYN UNDERHILL. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1906. 12mo; xxviii, 308. Short Bibliography. Plate.

The primary object of this notice is to give some account of Miss Underhill's *Mystic Way*, in which she formally presents her views of the origin and nature of Christianity. We have associated with this book in the heading, however, the titles of such others of Miss Underhill's publications that have come into our hands as are serious in form, in order that *The Mystic Way* may be seen in its setting. We should not like to suggest that Miss Underhill's novels by which she has been previously known—*The Grey World*, 1904, *The Lost Word*, 1907, *The Column of Dust*, 1909—were written without serious purpose or are without significance as disclosures of her mind and of the direction of her studies. On the contrary they already reveal to us the intensity of her engagement with what is loosely called the mystical aspects of life, and no doubt embody, in an imaginative form, much of what she would consider symbolically at least wholesome instruction for our sense-preoccupied world. In *The Grey World* we are told how the neurotic son of a London tailor, dying in a hospital, catches a glimpse, as he passes through it to his next incarnation, of that "grey world" which lies behind this, and lived in consequence throughout his next earthly life with the curtain which hides that world from our view worn rather thin. It is a Dean's son, who is the hero of *The Lost Word*; and we are shown in it how, brought into intimate contact from his earliest years with the symbolism and mysterious romance of a great cathedral, he found his way, despite the insistent pull of earthly passion, into dimly apprehended relations with an unseen permanent existence where he held communion with the great artistic spirits of the past. In *The Column of Dust* we learn how a bookseller's clerk in London summons a spirit, who,

however, refusing to be used by her, uses her rather, and how out of it all sacrificial love comes to its rights. In all three alike Miss Underhill seeks her inspiration in praeter-natural themes, and manifests a profound preoccupation with the supernatural, not to say the morbid, phases of life. From these novels alone we might assure ourselves that here is a writer who is ready to insist seriously that there are more things, not in heaven merely but here on earth, than are dreamed of in our starveling five-senses philosophy: and indeed that the most real things which surround us are not those which we touch with our clumsy fingers and gaze at with our dull eyes and taste with our gross tongues. It is not a matter of surprise that such a writer should come forward at length as a serious eulogist of mysticism.

Among Miss Underhill's serious writings we need not delay long over her little volume of verses. In the greater number of the pieces included in it an attempt is made to give expression to mystical moods. These do not seem to us the most successful. Strange to say Miss Underhill's muse does not appear to move easily in such moods. We quickly gain the impression also that verse is not her most happy medium of expression. There are some lofty conceptions; there is much fine language; here and there a well-turned phrase meets us; we can smile at a conceit like that embodied in "The Idol"; we can respond to the stirring counsel of "Memento, Homo"; we can thrill with the grim lesson of "The Backward Glance". But the volume leaves us cold—and uninstructed. Little more need be said of the collection of *The Miracles of Our Lady Saint Mary*. For all that appears on the surface, a purely literary motive might have presided over its production. Here is a by-way of mediaeval literature but little trodden by recent feet. Not merely students but amateurs "of mediaeval manners and Christian mythology" may find interest in exploring it. Certainly Miss Underhill has done her work well and made this sufficiently dreary series of folk-stories and hagiographs as attractive as possible. There is a sentence near the close of the brief but competent Introduction, however, which may suggest that she may have had a deeper than a merely literary purpose in seeking to give new life to the Mary-legends. Speaking of the mediaeval attitude towards the Virgin she remarks upon "the simple and familiar friendship, mystical adoration, and unfailing trust" which were given to "Goddess Mother and ours" by those who, as she phrases it, "were in every sense her children". And then she adds that it is "the aim of this book", "to drag back", not only the "literary expression" of this sentiment "from the shadowland to which it has retreated", but the "sentiment" itself. May we infer that Miss Underhill has had, then, a directly religious motive in seeking to revive the knowledge of the Mary-legends?

It is not altogether easy to make quite sure of Miss Underhill's precise religious standpoint. On the basis of her two solid works on Mysticism alone—which embrace her professed contribution to religious discussion—we might readily think of her as a Modernist

Romanist. We do not suppose we do her injustice at any rate in imagining her in congenial society when in the company of, say, Friedrich von Hügel or George Tyrrell. Many of their points of view she certainly holds in common with them; some of their suggestions she works out in detail; and, if we mistake not, the ultimate issue of her religious thought is very much theirs—perhaps, we may add, in somewhat extreme expression. The whole argument of the work which is more especially in our mind as we write—*The Mystic Way*—might be represented as the detailed explication of a tendency apparent in von Hügel (it is no doubt present in more or less strength in all Mystical writers) to which Söderblom calls sharp attention—the tendency, we mean, to think of Jesus as only a high-point in the religious development of humanity, which attracts the eye of men and to which we must also aspire, while there is withheld from Him all truly creative effects on the religious life of the world. Perhaps it is not right to hold George Tyrrell too closely to everything he wrote in even the last years of his singularly ununified career. But he seems to have seriously meant it when in the early days of the last year of his life he declared: "Houtin and Loisy are right, the Christianity of the future will consist of mysticism and charity, and possibly the Eucharist in its primitive form as the outward bond: I desire no better". Perhaps even Mysticism no doubt seemed to him something less than solid ground: "Mystics think they touch the divine," he explains in one of his moods of scepticism, "when they have only blurred the human form with a cloud of words." The precise effect of Miss Underhill's discussion of *The Mystic Way*, in any event, is to place her in the same category with Houtin and Loisy and Tyrrell as here expounded. She reduces Christianity to simple Mysticism.

The background of the volume called *The Mystic Way* is provided by Miss Underhill's *magnum opus*, the elaborate volume on *Mysticism*. This volume is brilliantly written. All the resources of a trained literary art are expended upon it, and its pages are not only illuminated with numerous well-chosen extracts from the Mystical writers who are thus permitted to tell in their own quaint and often singularly impressive language exactly what they are, but are also gemmed with vivid phrases caught from the Mystics and used by Miss Underhill in her own composition with exquisite skill. Above all it is written with a verve and enthusiasm which impart to it an *élan* (as Miss Underhill would call it, in deference to Bergson) that sweeps the reader well-nigh off his feet. It is divided into two parts, called respectively "The Mystic Fact" and "The Mystic Way", in the former of which an attempt is made to tell what Mysticism is in contrast with other tendencies, while in the latter the several steps and stages of the Mystical process are described in detail. The effect is that we have what Mysticism is elaborately explained to us twice over, and one would think it must be the reader's own fault if he rises from the book without a clear conception of exactly what it is that Miss Underhill at least would have him think Mysticism to be. It is an indication of the fluidity of the notion—perhaps also of the almost incurable ambiguities

of the current usages of the term—that one requires, even so, to pause and consider before he is quite sure of the precise limits of the sense in which Miss Underhill employs it.

Formal definition of the term begins for us already in the Preface. "Broadly speaking," we read there (p. x), "I understand it to be the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order; whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood." This is "broadly speaking" indeed. By the final clause, Mysticism is at once separated from all "positive religions" whatever; and (as we are immediately told) it is made matter of indifference to the experience of "mystic union" in which it "attains its end", whether that union is conceived to be with "the God of Christianity, the World-Soul of Pantheism, the Absolute of Philosophy" (p. x). "Attempts to limit mystical truth—the direct apprehension of the Divine Substance—to the formulae of any one religion," we are accordingly told later (p. 115), "are as futile as attempts to identify a precious metal with the die which converts it into current coin." It is upon the little word "innate", however, that the hinge of the definition turns. Mysticism is "the expression of the *innate* tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order". In other words it is "natural" religion; and it is therefore that it is quite independent of all possible conceptions of that "only Reality", which is here called "the transcendental order". Let philosophers call it "the Absolute"; let theologians call it "God"; think of it as Personal Spirit, think of it as the impersonal ground of Being, think of it how you choose: the human spirit moves by its own intrinsic gravitation towards it, and this gravitation towards it is Mysticism. Obviously "Mysticism" is used here as but a name for the inherent native religiosity of the human spirit.

Subsequent formal definitions advance us but little beyond this. Thus, for example, when at a later point Miss Underhill is again (as in the Preface) animadverting upon the loosenesses of the current usages of the term, she emerges with this crisp assertion (p. 86): "Mysticism, in its pure form, is the science of ultimates, the science of union with the Absolute, and nothing else." She does indeed go on to declare that "the mystic is the person who attains to that union, not the person who talks about it"; that it is not a matter of "knowing about" but "Being" (she spells it with a big B); but she seems already to have closed that question by defining it as "science"—for "science" is "knowing about" *ex vi verbi*. When, among sciences, she declares Mysticism to be this particular science, namely, "the science of ultimates", she seems to identify it with what we are accustomed to call Metaphysics; but that she can scarcely mean this is manifest from the parallel phrase which she immediately adjoins: "the science of union with the Absolute"—for certainly Metaphysics is not that. What is apparently meant to be asserted is that Mysticism is the systematized knowledge of "union with the Absolute"; or, since the emphasis is thrown on the practical side, perhaps we may say (as we speak of

"pugilistic science") that Mysticism is expertness, acquired skill in attaining "union with the Absolute".

Accordingly as this discussion approaches its end Miss Underhill reformulates her definitions thus (p. 97): "Mysticism, then, is not an opinion; it is not a philosophy. It has nothing in common with the pursuit of occult knowledge. It is not merely the power of contemplating Eternity. It is the name of that organic process which involves the perfect consummation of the Love of God: the achievement here and now of the immortal heritage of man. Or, if you like it better—for this means exactly the same thing—it is the art of establishing his conscious relation with the Absolute." What was formerly declared to be a "science" has now become explicitly an "art": but in varying the term we do not escape from the thing—behind the "art" the "science" necessarily lies. Miss Underhill says the Mystic is the man who has attained to union with the Absolute. Let us be more modest and say that the Mystic is the man who professes, or supposes himself, to have attained to union with the Absolute. Then Mysticism surely may be fairly described as that congeries of notions which are presupposed or implicated in this profession; or, if we choose, in the practice of the art by which this end is supposed to be attained. It would seem, therefore, that it must inevitably embrace a doctrine of the Absolute; a doctrine of the relation of the human spirit to this Absolute; a doctrine of the possibility of the human spirit attaining "union with the Absolute"; a doctrine of the nature of this "union with the Absolute" which the human spirit may attain. Here certainly there is "an opinion", or rather a body of opinions; and certainly there is here "a philosophy", and, we are afraid we shall have to add, what, despite the vagueness which may be allowed to cling to the several notions involved, looks very much like that specific philosophy which we know as Pantheism. It is notorious that in the history of religious thought the types which it has been commonly agreed to speak of as Mystical have ordinarily been associated with Pantheistic or at least Pantheising conceptions: the very language of Mysticism has been dictated to it by Pantheism, and it is therefore in any event difficult for the Mystic to express himself without at least seeming to declare himself a Pantheist. Miss Underhill has reduced this Pantheising implication to a minimum in her formal definitions. Therefore in the one now before us she avoids even declaring that Mysticism is the "science of union with the Absolute". Instead, she says that it is the process by which man enters into the conscious enjoyment of the love of God—by which, she truly says, he "achieves" "his immortal heritage": and in the alternative clause she explains that what Mysticism seeks is the establishment of "conscious relation with the Absolute". Obviously these are carefully chosen phrases. If we were to abide by the breadth of their suggestion Mysticism would be what indeed Miss Underhill calls it (p. x), just "the science or art of the Spiritual life". Every "other-worldly-minded" man would be a Mystic.

Clearly Mysticism however is not defined by merely declaring that it is the "art of establishing conscious relation with the Absolute".

Its peculiarity resides rather in the nature of the process by which it seeks this end and the nature of the condition in which, when it is achieved, it finds this end accomplished. There are other views proposed to us of what "the immortal heritage of man" consists in, and of how it may be achieved. There is, to go no further, Christianity, which thinks that it can point the way to the enjoyment of "the perfect consummation of the Love of God", and finds the Way in Christ. Mysticism is not sufficiently defined by simply declaring that it differs from all these by—"doing the trick". Many have essayed to penetrate to "the Reality behind the veil", says Miss Underhill (p. 4): "but if we may trust the report of the mystics—and their reports are given with a strange accent of certainty and good faith—they have succeeded where all these others have failed, in establishing immediate communication between the spirit of man, entangled as they declare among material things, and that 'only Reality', that immaterial and final Being, which some philosophers call the Absolute, and most theologians call God." It is a great claim—if only it can be substantiated. Its substantiation is, however, the last thing the Mystic seems to think of. "We have seen," writes Wilhelm Fresenius (*Mystik und Geschichte*, 1912, p. 82) "how the Mystic has never posited the question of the substantiation of religion, has never made inquiry into its moral right, into its truth, but his soul has been filled with the search after the experience of the Eternal. And when he has found this Eternal, when he has felt this Imperishable, then he is content, the fact of this feeling establishes for him its right. Why does the question not now spring forth of the 'How' of this feeling, the investigation into whether this feeling may not rest on illusion,—that is, in the forum of the moral judgment?" So soon, however, as the substantiation of its great claims is seriously attempted Mysticism, it is evident, must emerge from vague phrases and define itself sharply in its method and aim. It is unfortunate, then, that in her definitions Miss Underhill falls into the very common habit of using to describe it terms so wide that they provide no differentiation at all. How persistently this bad method is followed by writers on the subject may be illustrated by the definition given by O. C. Quick in two recent articles in the *Journal for Theological Studies*. "Mysticism," he says, "is the claim made by the soul to the apprehension of a wider reality in no sense mediated by the data of sense-perception" (vol. xiv, p. 2; cf. xiii, p. 164). If that were an adequate definition, Mysticism would be merely spiritual apprehension: and all who believe in the accessibility of spirit to spirit would be Mystics. Even William James' well known definition (*Varieties*, p. 508) is better—for at least it is discriminating. He finds the "nucleus of agreement" among all Mystics in the feeling of the subject that his higher self 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 and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck". Clearly on this conception, Mysticism is fundamentally Pantheistic and therefore Quick

criticises it. It is not inclusive, he says, of Christian Mysticism through which there runs a profound feeling of "infinite otherness" from God; and he goes on to insist that Mysticism embraces every and "any direct consciousness of God's presence and nature" (*JthS.* xiii, 192 p. 172). By thus broadening the skirts of Mysticism to enclose all "sense" of God, we may of course rid it of its Pantheistic stamp; but the question is whether we are not merely merging it thus into a wider category. What it concerns us to take note of here, however, is merely that this is Miss Underhill's method. To her the typical form of Mysticism is Christian Mysticism, as manifested especially in the great Mediaeval Saints. She is therefore careful to define it so as to make it include them; and she then proceeds to expound it from them as its purest examples.* This seems to stand the whole matter upon its head. It is not in virtue of their Christianity that the Christian Mystics are Mystics: Miss Underhill, as we have seen, herself allows that their Mysticism is quite independent of their Christianity. We might better say that it is in despite of their Christianity; and that therefore Mysticism in them is modified by their Christianity just so far as their thought and practice is determined by their Christianity. They are Mystics not by virtue of what they have in common with other Christians, but by virtue with what they have in common with other Mystics,—with Al Ghazzali, say, for instance, or with 'Attar and Sadi and Jelalu'd Din, or to sum it all up in one word, say, with Plotinus. And what they have in common with these other Mystics is precisely Pantheising tendencies of thought. Miss Underhill would have us believe that Mysticism appears always in the train of great periods of abounding culture; it is the consummate flower of human culture (p. 541). We think it truer to say that it appears always in the train of periods of the dominance of a Pantheising philosophy: it is the effect in the religious mind of prevalent Pantheising thought.

Miss Underhill allows (though this is far from all that she allows) that the Mystics at least speak the language of Plotinus (p. 544). So true is this, that even she, though set upon cleansing the idea of Mysticism from the smudge of Pantheism (e.g., pp. 38, 119), yet herself speaks the language of Plotinus, if indeed she stops with that. Though she may on occasion therefor insist that in his achieved "union with the Absolute", the Mystic does not lose his identity in

* Perhaps G. Siedel, *Die Mystik Taulers nebst eine Erörterung über der Begriff der Mystik*, 1911, has fallen into the same trap. "Tauler's Mysticism," he tells us, "is the assurance, obtained through a particular discipline, that the Divine Subject has entered into the human subject, expressed philosophically by means of the Thomist-scholastic doctrine of the vision of the essence of God, experienced in a Christian way as the assumption of man into the intertrinitarian life of God." Assuming Tauler to be the purest example of a Mystic he then asserts that the universal "formula of the only right and possible idea of Mysticism" is "the revival (*Aufleben*) of another subject in man."

God, but "in the Mystic this union is conscious, personal thought"; and even indeed that what the Mystic "calls 'Union with God' is only his utter identification with the interests of the spiritual life"—she naturally cannot maintain this point of view, and everywhere lapses into language with quite other implications. For, as Fresenius (*op. cit.* pp. 50-1) reminds us, it is of the very essence of Mysticism to maintain the immediate presence of the divine in man, needing only to be recognized and felt; and it is therefore that it is by the way of "Contemplation" that the Mystic bids us seek and find God. Miss Underhill herself tells us that "the whole claim of the Mystics ultimately depends on man's possession of pure being in 'the spark of the soul'" (p. 119 note)—"pure being" being but a synonym for the Absolute. Accordingly she tells us that there is a point "where Subject and Object, desirous and desired, are *one*" (p. 86). Or more elaborately: "That there is an extreme point at which man's nature touches the Absolute: that his ground or substance, his true being, is contemporaneous with the Divine Life which constitutes the underlying reality of things; this is the basis on which the whole Mystic claim of possible union with God must rest" (p. 66). And again: "The Mystics find the basis of their method not in logic but in life: in the existence of a discoverable 'real', a spark of true being, within the seeking subject which can, in that ineffable experience which they call the 'act of union', fuse itself with and thus apprehend the reality of the sought Object. In theological language, their theory of knowledge is that the spirit of man, itself essentially divine, is capable of immediate communion with God, the One Reality" (p. 28).

That in this "ineffable experience" called "the act of union", something more is achieved than merely the identification of ourselves "with the interests of the spiritual life"—something very much like the identification of ourselves with God—emerges from such statements as the following. "All pleasurable and exalted states of Mystic consciousness in which the sense of I-hood persists, in which there is a loving and joyous relation between the Absolute as object and the self as subject, fall under the head of Illumination"—(p. 282). "The real distinction between the Illuminative and the Unitive life is that in Illumination the individuality of the subject,—however profound his spiritual consciousness, however close his communion with the Infinite—remains separate and intact" (p. 295). "No doubt there were hours in which St. Catherine's experience, as it were, ran ahead; and she felt herself not merely lit up by the Indwelling Light, but temporally [temporarily?] merged in it. . . . Her normal condition of consciousness, however, was clearly not yet that which Julian of Norwich calls being 'oned with bliss'; but rather an intense and continuous communion with an objective Reality which she still felt to be distinct from herself. . . . Catherine, then, is still a spectator of the Absolute, does not feel herself to be *one* with it" (p. 297). Clearly, then, when the "Unitive Life" itself is attained it is no longer a mere "communion" with the Absolute, but in some more intimate sense a

"union" with it, by virtue of which the "oneness" of the two is experienced as a fact.

That the achievement of this union with the Absolute should be represented by some Mystics at least (p. 496) as "deification" can occasion no surprise. These Mystics certainly do not bate their breath when they speak of it: Miss Underhill herself calls their language with respect to it "blunt and positive" (p. 501). "If we are to allow," she writes, however, "that the Mystics have ever attained the object of their quest, I think we must allow that such attainment involves the transmutation of the self to that state which they call, for want of exact language, 'deified'. The necessity of such transmutation is an implicit of their first position; the law that 'we behold that which we are, and are that which we behold'. Eckhart, in whom the language of deification assumes its most extreme form, justifies it upon this necessity: 'If, he says, 'I am to know God directly, I must become completely He and He I: so that this He and this I become and are one I.'" (p. 502). It is easy to point out that these same Mystics nevertheless protest that by this transmutation the creature does not really become God; and that others prefer the figure of marriage with God to that of deification to express the "mystic union" which they seek in common. But this is only to say that they are Christians as well as Mystics, and that their Christianity modifies their Mysticism: it does not throw doubt upon but rather establishes the fact that the truly—unmodified—Mystical doctrine involves the identification of the creature with the deity. And that for a much deeper reason than the merely epistemological one pointed out by Miss Underhill in the passage just quoted from her (p. 502), or even then that general one adduced by E. Lehmann in the following instructive passage (*Mystik im Heidentum und Christentum*, in *Aus Natur und Geschichte*, No. 217, pp. 4 ff; E.T. p. 7): "What constitutes the main distinction between mysticism and other piety is that the ordinary pious man has above everything an eye for that which *distinguishes* him from God: for his insignificance in contrast with God's greatness, for his finiteness in contrast with God's infinity and eternity, for his sinfulness in contrast with God's holiness. In their feeling of this distinction men remain clearly conscious of their humanity and look upon their God as something peculiar, different from themselves. Of this distinguishableness of God, however, the Mystic will know nothing. God is to him indistinguishable as He is incomprehensible, invisible and infinite and therefore all-embracing. No one is in a position to draw a sharp line between humanity and deity; and therefore this line is capable of being crossed and man accordingly can attain this union." Behind this somewhat negative attitude there lies the positive conviction of the Mystic that there exists in himself a native spark of "pure Being" which is in and of itself divine, and that it is his part to blow this spark into a flame that he may become truly himself in the consciousness that he is really God. "The achievement of reality, and deification," says Miss Underhill (p. 503) "are then one and the same thing; necessarily so, since we know that only the divine

is the real." Accordingly "the Mystic Way" begins "by the awakening within the self of a new and embryonic consciousness; a consciousness of divine reality, as opposed to the illusory sense-world in which she was immersed" (p. 536). There is nothing more fundamental to the whole Mystical consciousness than the conviction that what we shall see when we retreat into the "cell of self-knowledge" is just that Reality which stands to it for God.

One of the natural results of thus conceiving oneself is inevitably a certain intellectual and spiritual pride. The Mystic has a hearty contempt for his fellowmen, who are still shut in by "the hard crust of surface-consciousness", and who know only "the machine-made universe presented by the cinematograph of sense", from which he has escaped (pp. 536-7). For himself—he has been made aware of Reality and has come from out of the cave of illusion, to live hereafter on the supersensual plane (p. 147). According to Miss Underhill the whole external world in which we live is not only of our own creation but is miscreated by us—being but the product of our deceiving senses: nay, each man creates an exclusive world for himself, since the senses of no two men act precisely alike; or rather, each man creates successively a series of exclusive worlds of his own, since his senses never function twice precisely alike; and we have only to imagine what would happen if our senses "were arranged on a different plan" (p. 7)—if for example, as William James suggests, we heard colors and saw sounds—or if "human consciousness changed or transcended its rhythm" (p. 37), to understand in how illusory a world it is that the ordinary man lives. Quite so: if our senses were radically different and "the rhythm of our human consciousness" were radically changed, we should undoubtedly be in a different world—for our senses could not be different nor could the "rhythm of our consciousness" be changed unless we were in a different world. We may find it a pleasant exercise to speculate on what kind of a world would be involved if we had radically different senses or the world-movement proceeded in a radically different rhythm: as we may work out, for example, the nature of a world in which two and two would make five and in which space would have only two or as many as four dimensions. So, holding a key in our hands, we may find a diversion in mentally picturing the changes that would be involved in the wards of the lock by radical differences in the notches on the bit of the key. Meanwhile our senses, the stream of our consciousness, are thus and not otherwise; and that means that the world of which we are a part, and correlated to which we are by means of our senses, and of the movement of which we are aware in the "rhythm of our consciousness", is thus and not otherwise. We may as well "accept the universe": for it is this universe that is; and to be out of harmony with it is only to be intellectually morally, and spiritually mad. It is the condemnation of Mysticism that it must begin by declaring that the world of appearance is illusion and that the rhythm of normal consciousness is a mere jangling, out of tune with reality.

But the Mystic has no more contempt for the man in the street

who persists in accepting the world for what he knows it to be, than for what he calls "popular Christianity", as a religion fit only for the man who "lives in the world of sense". For himself he lays claim to a higher plane of religious functioning. "Thus," we read, "in spite of persistent efforts to the contrary, there will always be an inner and an outer Church: the inner Church of the Mystics who *know*, the outer Church which, operating beneficially it is true, but—roughly speaking—upon the magical plane, only *knows about*" (p. 199). The Mystic has got beyond "prayer" for instance, "as understood by the multitude, with all its implications of conventional piety, formality, detailed petition—a definite something asked for, and a definite duty done, by means of extemporaneous or traditional allocutions addressed to the anthropomorphic Deity of popular religion" (p. 366). He has also got beyond the great redemptive acts of God by which God has intervened in the world to lay an objective basis for the salvation of sinners: each and every one of these—the Incarnation, the Atonement and the rest—is seen by him to be a symbol of a subjective experience which takes place in his own soul. "The one secret, the greatest of all" Coventry Patmore is quoted as saying (p. 141) "is the doctrine of the Incarnation, regarded not as an historical event which occurred two thousand years ago, but as an event which is renewed in the body of every one who is in the way to the fulfilment of his original destiny." The Mystic, Miss Underhill explains, does not so much deny that the Incarnation is an historical event, as merely looks by preference upon it as a symbol of inward experience. And "thus", she adds (p. 142), "the Catholic priest in the Christmas Mass gives thanks, not for the setting in hand of any commercial process of redemption, but for a revelation of reality"—citing in support a passage from the Roman Missal which certainly only in isolation can be pressed into her meaning. Similarly, we read in a little Mystical manual which has come into our hands written quite in Miss Underhill's spirit (*The Path of Eternal Wisdom: A Mystical Commentary on the Way of the Cross*, by John Cordelier (manifestly a pseudonym). London, John M. Watkins, 1911.): "The Cross-bearer of the Universe as He passes in our midst does not act *for* us but *in* us: by an enhancement of our energies, a call to us to use our vitality in greater or less self-regarding efforts" (p. 63).

There is probably nothing in the treatment of Christianity by the Mystical writers which is more offensive than this sublimation of the great constitutive facts—in which the very heart of Christianity is to be found—into symbols of subjective transactions. An unusually inoffensive statement of what is attempted is given in the following explanation by a recent writer (H. Erskine Hill, *The Expositor*. August 1913, p. 192):—"To most men the transitory is the real world, and hence its events and facts assume an absolutely exaggerated importance. To the mystic, on the other hand, the real world is the spiritual, and nothing that happens under conditions of time and space can be anything but reflections. For example, he would not say that the salvation of the world depended on what happened on

Calvary, but that what happened on Calvary made manifest once for all the Eternal Sacrifice on which the salvation of the world depends. He does not think of the Virgin Birth at Bethlehem as the coming of the eternal Christ into the world, but as the manifestation to the world that He is there all the time." It may be, as we are told, that this is "the lifting up of the Son of Man 'out of the earth' which will draw all men unto Him". It is abolishing the scandal of the Cross and removing the offense of the Incarnation by the simple expedient of pushing them both out of sight. He who thinks that the importance of the Incarnation and the Atoning Sacrifice as transactions in time and space is capable of "absurd exaggeration", or doubts that the Eternal Christ came into the world through the Virgin's womb, thus assuming flesh for our redemption, or that the salvation of the world depends absolutely on what happened at Calvary, has assuredly lost all sense of Christian values. He may remain a Mystic, but he has ceased to be in any intelligible sense a Christian.

We have no intention of following Miss Underhill further into the intricacies of her rich and closely packed discussion. We have thought it worth while, at the cost of whatever space it might require, to attempt to get a somewhat clear conception of precisely what she represents Mysticism to be, because thus the significance of her volume entitled *The Mystic Way*, with which we are now more immediately concerned, may be most easily and clearly displayed. For, having thus expounded Mysticism in its nature in the one book she simply turns in the other and says, It is just this Mysticism which what we know as Christianity really is. *The Mystic Way* is, in other words, nothing but an elaborate attempt to explain Christianity as natural religion; and as that particular variety of natural religion which is known as Mysticism, the nature of which Miss Underhill has even more elaborately expounded in her work called *Mysticism*. *The Mystic Way* is indefinitely the thinner work of the two. It gives no such impression as *Mysticism* does of being the fruit of long and loving absorption in its subject. It seems rather to be the product of an impulse; to have been somewhat hastily composed; and to resemble a lawyer's brief got up for an occasion and betraying no very large-minded survey or deep consideration of its subject. There is a certain extremity in its contentions, a certain pressure put on the facts which are adduced, a certain over-anxiety to make out a case, a certain—to speak frankly,—appearance of special pleading combined with insufficient familiarity with the subject-matter, which are at least not so apparent in the other volume. We cannot quite say the volume reads like an afterthought, for all that is said here lies implicitly in the earlier volume and there are not lacking hints in it of what was to come; but the explication of the implications as to Christianity of the earlier volume in the later one has proved a task for which Miss Underhill was not quite prepared and indeed has brought her sharply up against a barrier which is to be removed only by an act of supreme violence. To this extent the second volume, while intended as a corollary to the first, is in actual fact a refutation of it.

The thesis sustained in *The Mystic Way* is, as we have just said, that what we know as Christianity is simply a great irruption of Mysticism. What it sets out to prove is accordingly that Jesus was only a Mystic of exceptional purity and energy; that Paul, John, all the great leaders of early Christianity were just so many outstanding Mystics; and that all the phenomena which accompanied the origin of Christianity and have been thought to be supernatural in character, are just Mystical phenomena, and may be paralleled in the experiences of other Mystics and thus shown to be natural,—natural, that is, to Mystics. In the elaboration of this proof the Synoptical record of the life and teaching of Jesus is subjected to a detailed examination with a view to the explanation of all the phenomena as Mystical; and then the teaching of Paul and of “the Fourth Evangelist” is poured into the same molds. This is followed by some account of “three of the special forms taken by the Mystical impulse in the early Church”, with an appendix on “St. Macarius the Great of Egypt”. And finally, an attempt is made to show that the whole underlying spirit of the liturgy of the Mass is Mysticism. The point of view and method of the discussion are given expression in the Preface in the following words: “The examination of Christian origins from the psychological point of view suggests that Christianity began as a mystical movement of the purest kind; that its Founder and those who succeeded Him possessed the characteristically Mystical consciousness, and passed through the normal stages of Mystical growth. Hence its nature is best understood by comparison with those lesser Mystical movements in which life has again and again asserted her unconquerable instinct for transcendence; and the heroic personalities through whom the Christian vision of reality was first expressed, are most likely to yield up the secret of their ‘more abundant life’ when studied by the help of those psychological principles which have been deduced from the general investigation of the Mystical type” (p. viii). It is important to observe that what is proposed here is an essay in comparative religion; that Christianity is defined as just a mystical movement; and that it is placed in its proper position among mystical movements as only one of the class, so that its explanation may properly be sought from the general characteristics of its class.

We say it is important to observe this. For there is an odd suggestion made here and there, that Christian Mysticism may be set off in a class by itself, and separated by a great gulf from other Mysticism—a gulf so wide that one might think that there could be no bridge of inferences cast over it from one to the other. “We are still too often told”, we read on the page immediately preceding that from which we have just quoted, “that Christian Mysticism is no integral part of Christianity; sometimes, even, that it represents an opposition to the primitive Christian ideal. Sometimes we are asked to believe that it originated from Neoplatonic influence; that Pagan blood runs in its veins, and that its genealogy goes back to Plotinus. Far from this being the case, all the doctrines and all the experiences character-

istic of genuine Christian mysticism can be found in the New Testament; and I believe that its emergence as a definite type of spiritual life coincides with the emergence of Christianity itself, in the person of its Founder" p.(vii). Accordingly, exaggerating beyond all recognition the very natural differentiation of Christian Mysticism from other types of Mysticism made by James Leuba and Henri Delacroix, as they confine their study for the moment to this particular class of Mystics, Miss Underhill is ready to proclaim that "the Christian Mystic" "represents, so far as the psychical nature of man is concerned, a genuine species apart" (p. vii), "constitutes a true variation of the human species" (p. xi). This is not figurative language. Miss Underhill really wishes us to greet in the Christian Mystic the actual super-man. As in the age-long process of evolution the emergence of intelligence introduced a new kind of being and set the factors of evolution on a new plane, she explains, so the emergence of the Christian Mystic has again introduced in evolving humanity a new kind of being and raised humanity to yet a new plane. Miss Underhill is never tired of telling us therefore that the Christian Mystic is not merely morally or religiously different from other men, but is in the strictest sense a new "biological species". "Here we see, in fact," she asserts (p. 11) "creative evolution at work; engaged in the production of species as sharply marked off from normal humanity as 'normal' humanity supposes itself to be marked off from the higher apes. The *élan vital* here takes a new direction, producing profound modifications which, though they are for the most part psychical rather than physical, yet also entail a turning of the physical machinery of thought and perception to fresh uses—a cutting of fresh paths of discharge, a modification of the normal human balance of intuition and intelligence" (p. 11). "If this be so", she remarks again (p. 6), "the spiritual evolution of humanity, the unfolding of its tendency towards the Transcendental Order, becomes as much a part of biology as the evolution of its stomach or its sense".

This "fortunate variation" which has befallen humanity as the ultimate (so far) outcome of a process which has been "continuous from the first travail of creation even until now", it must be carefully observed, has come to it only at the advent of Jesus Christ. "And I believe," we read, "that its occurrence as a definite type of spiritual life coincides with the emergence of Christianity itself, in the person of its Founder" (p. vii). Again: "The first full and perfect manifestation of *this* life, this peculiar psychological growth, in which human personality in its wholeness moves to new levels and lives at a tension hitherto unknown—establishes itself in the independent spiritual sphere—seems to coincide with the historical beginnings of Christianity. In Jesus of Nazareth it found its perfect thoroughfare, rose at once to its classic expression; and the movement which He initiated, the rare human type which He created, is in essence a genuinely biological rather than merely credal or intellectual development of the race. In it we see life exercising her sovereign

power of spontaneous creation: breaking out on new paths" (p. 34). And still again: "More and more as we proceed, the peculiar originality of the true Christian mystic becomes clear to us. We are led towards the conclusion—a conclusion which rests on historical rather than religious grounds—that the first person to exhibit in their wholeness the spiritual possibilities of man was the historic Christ; and to the corollary, that the great family of the Christian Mystics—that is to say, all those individuals in whom an equivalent life-process is set going and an equivalent growth takes place—represents to us the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, in respect of the upward movement of the racial consciousness. This family constitutes a true variation of the human species . . ." (p. 41). If these and such deliverances mean anything, they mean that with Jesus Christ something new came into the world, something so new that all that had been in the world before it is inadequate to its explanation. And yet Miss Underhill proposes to treat it as only an instance of "the Mystical type", and on the ground that it manifests "the characteristically mystical consciousness" to explain it from general Mysticism of which it is obviously only a specific manifestation!

The expedient by which Miss Underhill escapes from the *impasse* into which she has brought herself by her isolation of Christian Mysticism as a new creation in the world, is as remarkable as the exaggerations by which she has brought herself into it. Having separated Christian Mysticism off from all other so-called Mysticismisms as something (in the "biological" sense) specifically different, she cheerfully proceeds at once to mix it up again with them all. Here is the passage in which she does it (p. 42). "This new form of life, as it is lived by the members of this species, the peculiar psychic changes to which they must all submit, whatever the historic religion to which they belong, may reasonably be called Christian, since its classic expression is seen only in the Founder of Christianity. But this is not to limit it to those who have accepted the theological system called by His name. 'There is', says Law, 'but one salvation for all mankind, and that is the Life of God in the soul. God has but one design or intent towards mankind, and that is to introduce or generate His own Life, Light, and Spirit in them. . . . There is but one possible way for man to attain this salvation, or Life of God in the soul. There is not one for the Jew, another for a Christian, and a third for a Heathen. No; God is one, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the way to it is one.' We may, however, define the Christian life and the Christian growth as a movement towards the attainment of this Life of Reality; this spiritual consciousness. It is a phase of the cosmic struggle of spirit with recalcitrant matter, of mind with the conditions that hem it in. More abundant life, said the great Mystic of Fourth Gospel, is its goal; and it sums up and makes effective all the isolated struggles toward such life and such liberty which earlier ages had produced." If we understand this paragraph (in which Christ ceases to be the first to become only the classic expression of Christian Mysticism)

it amounts to saying that we may fairly call by the name of Christian Mysticism, any spiritual movement in which we may discover those characteristics which we have discovered in the movement which we have designated by that name. And this would seem to amount to nothing less than saying that the element common to all Mystical movements is not their Mysticism but their Christianity! It is a complete *bouleversement* of values. Something was originated by Christ. We will say it was Mysticism. But Mysticism obviously was not originated by Christ; it exists apart from Him, it existed before Him. But that can be remedied by recognizing all Mysticism by virtue of our agreement that Mysticism was originated by Christ, as Christianity! If Christianity is just Mysticism, why of course Mysticism is Christianity and Christianity, since Mysticism has nothing to do with Him, has nothing to do with Christ.

We do not intend to enter into the details of Miss Underhill's elaborate explaining away of the whole supernatural element of Christianity in her effort to transmute it into just Mysticism, to her reduction of the prophet to "a spiritual genius", of Paul's mighty works to "a growth of automatic powers", of the Son of Man to "the forward-marching spirit of humanity". There is nothing distinctive about the processes she employs or the conclusions she reaches. We may briefly allude only to her dealing with what she calls "the confused poem of the resurrection" as an instance in point. The only fact that emerges clear from it, she tells us, is that "a personal and continuous *life* was veritably recognized and experienced; recognized as belonging to Jesus though raised to 'another beauty, power, glory', experienced as a vivifying force of enormous potency which played upon those 'still in the flesh'" (p. 149). This cannot be accounted for, she thinks, on purely subjective lines. The thing seized upon was "the indestructibility and completeness of the new, transfigured humanity; the finished citizen of the Kingdom of God" (p. 150). The vision then was "of a *whole man*, body, soul and spirit, transmuted and glorified—a veritable 'New Adam' who came from heaven" (p. 151). And it was of course by the intuition, not the senses, that he was 'seen' (p. 152). Certainly, no such "whole man" existed as the Jesus that was seen. As the Ascended Christ (p. 233), so naturally the Resurrected Christ was "discarnate". All this, of course, we have heard before: Miss Underhill's rationalism is certainly of the commonest garden variety. Take this amazing specimen (p. 219, note 2), relatively to the employment of "John" to designate the author of the Fourth Gospel: "I retain for convenience sake this traditional name, which may well be that of the actual author: 'John' was a common name in Christian circles." Surely enough there are five hundred and ninety-five "Johns" listed in Smith and Wace. But what made "John" so favorite a name "in Christian circles"? And how does Miss Underhill know that "John" was a common name in Christian circles at about the time the Fourth Gospel was written, say at the turning-point of the first and second centuries? None of Smith and Wace's five hundred and ninety-

five "Johns" belong to that period except one ("The Presbyter John")—and he was not invented until later. The irruption of "Johns" in Christian circles means an earlier date by a generation for the Gospel of John; for it is not allusions to John in other books but the writings attributed to him which have made the name of John precious to Christians.

That there are elements—fortunately extensive, even dominating elements—in that historical phenomenon which we know as "Christian Mysticism" that derive from Christ and what He brought into the world, of course no one will deny. It is these elements which constitute this Mysticism that particular variety of Mysticism which we call Christian Mysticism, and which justify, or rather require, that it should be studied apart, as Henri Delacroix has done in his excellent volume on *Les Grandes Mystiques Crétiennes* (1908) which Miss Underhill misquotes in her efforts to make Christian Mysticism out to be a wholly new creation in the world. We shall all approve of Delacroix's going to the great Christian Mystics by preference to learn what Christian Mysticism is, lest, as he says, he should see only the lower characteristics of it and so miss the greatness of these great men. And we shall all approve also of his going rather to those of them who have lived and practiced Mysticism than to those who have merely written about it. But we shall not doubt any more than he doubts that a doctrine underlies the practice of even these practical Mystics, or that this doctrine by virtue of which they are Mystics derives not from Christ but from Plotinus. "No doubt," he writes,—“and we shall show it in this book—doctrine intervenes in experience, and there is, to speak it out, no great Mystic who has not grounded his experience in a doctrine and who has not up to a certain point made doctrinal preoccupations intervene in the constitution of his experience. . . . We have shown that throughout the whole course of Christianity there has been an almost continuous mystical doctrine deriving from Neoplatonism. . . . We shall find it again as a substructure and an implicit theory in the Mysticism of experience” (p. iv). In a sense the source of all of Miss Underhill's woes is her determination that Christian Mysticism, as it is Mysticism, shall find its starting point in Christ and not in Plotinus. "Above all," she writes, "we shall be in conflict with those who . . . consider the Mystical element in Christianity to be fundamentally unchristian and ultimately descended from the Neoplatonists" (p. 58). Nevertheless it was she herself who when not so deeply intoxicated with this theory, told us that "Christian philosophy, especially that Neoplatonic theology which, taking up and harmonizing all that was best in the spiritual intuitions of Greece, India and Egypt, was developed by the great doctors of the early and mediaeval Church, supports and elucidates the revelations of the individual mystic as no other system of thought has been able to do" (*Mysticism*, p. 125); that "we owe . . . above all to Dionysius the Areopagite, the great Christian contemporary of Proclus, the preservation of that mighty system of scaffolding which enabled the Catholic Mystics to build up the towers and bulwarks of the City of God" (p. 125).

Least of all can any one deny that there is a sense, a wide sense, a sense too wide for the historical meaning of the term Mysticism, in which Christianity is mysticism. It is of the very essence of Christianity that God has immediate access to the human soul and that the Christian enjoys direct communion with God: it is of the very essence of Christianity that it is in Christ that every Christian lives and that it is Christ who lives in every Christian. If there is nothing that shocks the Christian more in Mysticism than its tendency to seek God apart from Christ—as W. Herrmann says “to leave Christ behind” (*Communion*, E. T. p. 30), he is equally shocked when Herrmann on his own part declares: “There can be no such thing as communion with the exalted Christ” (p. 291). We shall not turn our backs on Mysticism therefore to throw ourselves into the arms of that Ritschlianism in which Miss Underhill, perhaps rightly, sees the most determined modern enemy of all mysticism. But neither need we in revolt from Ritschlianism cast ourselves into the arms of that Mystical individualism which would throw man back on what we have seen Miss Underhill speaking of as the “revelations of the individual” (*Mysticism*, p. 125). There are some words of Herrmann’s which, deeply vitiated though they are by his inadequate view of the person and work of our Lord, and of the relation of the Christian to Him, may yet bring us a needed warning here. “The Christian,” says he (p. 193), “can never even wish that God should specially appear to him or speak down to him from heaven. He receives the revelation of God in the living relationships of the Christian brotherhood, and its essential contents are that personal life of Jesus which is visible in the Gospel and which is experienced in the lives of the redeemed.” It certainly is not merely in the communion of saints that we have communion with God; it is not only in and through the community of Christian men that we receive the impression of the living Christ; “the personal life of Christ”, that is, the aroma of His holy personality lingering behind Him in the world, does not constitute the essential contents of the revelation of God; the whole conception of the work of Christ and of the substance of the Gospel here outlined is in direct contradiction with what the Gospel itself proclaims. But it is true that the Christian ought to be, and will be, satisfied with the revelation of God in Christ, and cannot crave special and particular revelations, each one for himself. The one revelation of His grace which God has given to His people in His Son is enough for the needs of all and floods the souls of all with a sense of its completeness and its all-sufficiency. As Dr. A. Kuyper beautifully expresses it, God the Lord does not feed His people each by Himself but spreads a common table of the abundant supply of which He invites His whole family to partake. But just because the common supply is enough for all, He gives in it personal communion with Him, the Master of the feast, to each and all; and in that communion abundance of life. “Humanity,” says A. H. Strong (*Philosophy of Religion*, pp 220-2) finally “is a dead and shattered vine, plucked up from its roots in God, and fit only

for the fire. But in Christ, God has planted a new vine, a vine full of His own divine life, a vine into which it is His purpose one by one to graft these dead and withered branches so that they may once more have the life of God flowing through them and may bear the fruits of heaven." "It is a supernatural and not a natural process," he adds. And it is only "in Christ", we may add with the utmost emphasis.

Princeton.

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Eternal Life: A Study of Its Implications and Applications. By Baron FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL, Member of the Cambridge Philological Society, Author of "The Mystical Element of Religion, as studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and her Friends". Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. New York: Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. 1912. Elaborate Contents and Index. 8vo; pp. 1, 443.

It is important to understand from the outset that this book was prepared originally as an article for Dr. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, and has been published in book-form rather than as an encyclopaedia article only because it had grown too big for its original destination. There are characteristics of the mode of treatment of its theme which can be explained only from this circumstance. On the other hand it must be said that there probably never was an encyclopaedia article not merely more diffusely written but more diffusely thought. There are few subjects connected with religious philosophy and especially with the recent history of religious philosophy which do not receive as full discussion in it as "eternal life". Indeed it is doubtful if it can be accurately said that Baron von Hügel ever comes to the serious discussion of his proper subject, and we are not sure that the average reader will not lay the book down without having learned anything of importance about it. What the book really is, is a survey of recent religious philosophy, in connection with its historical antecedents, with some, apparently incidental, application to the problem of eternal life. This survey is admirably done and the reader as he passes through the book forms a high opinion of the acuteness, sobriety and balance of Baron von Hügel's own thought. Penetrating expositions and criticisms meet us on every page and occasionally exceedingly felicitous summaries of Baron von Hügel's own views are interjected, which quite illuminate the subject which happens to be in hand. Meanwhile it is only by a hint here and there that the reader is kept reminded that the professed subject of the book is "eternal life".

It is in recent philosophy that Baron von Hügel shows himself most at home. The least satisfactory portions of the discussion are those which deal with the Biblical material. Here Baron von Hügel has fallen into the hands of the Philistines: he orders his material under the direction of the radical critics and he accepts for its exposition the guidance of its least sympathetic interpreters. He who commits himself to the leading of Wellhausen and H. J. Holtzmann can never hope to understand either the Prophets of Jehovah or the