EVELYN UNDERHILL AFTER MYSTICISM:

AN ASSESSMENT OF HER LATER YEARS

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination and assessment of the life and work of Evelyn Underhill. Particular emphasis is given to the development of her thought after she had written the classic, Mysticism: A Study in the Nature of Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness.

After more than a decade of being virtually a non-communicating Roman Catholic, Underhill returned to the church of her baptism and confirmation, the Church of England.

The "shift" in her thought which led to this decision and subsequent commitment resulted in what she herself called her "vocation." This was followed by an involvement in the retreat movement and in an increase in the task of that classic art, called in the church, the "cure of souls."

To her writings on philosophy and religion she added collections of retreat addresses. Together with the correspondence between Underhill and Friedrich von Hügel, many of her works offer an important contribution to spirituality today - its history, theory and practice.

Résumé

Cette thèse fait l'objet d'un examen et d'une évaluation de la vie et de l'oeuvre d'Evelyn Underhill. Une attention toute particulière sera donnée au développement de sa pensée à la suite de la publication de Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness.

Après avoir été, pendant plus d'une dizaine d'années, Catholique de rite romain sans toutefois recevoir l'eucharistie, Underhill retourne à l'église de son baptême et de sa confirmation, l'Eglise d'Angleterre.

Le changement de pensée qui mena éventuellement à cette décision et à l'engagement qui s'ensuivit, résulte de ce qu'elle appellera plus tard, sa "vocation." Dès lors, s'engage dans le mouvement de retraites et participe activement à la tâche que l'église nomme "la guérison des âmes."

A ses écrits de philosophie et de religion, viennent s'ajouter des collections de discours adressés à ses retraitants. Plusieurs des travaux d'Underhill, auxquels on ajoutera la correspondance qu'elle entretint avec Friedrich von Hügel, offrent une importante contribution à la spiritualité contemporaine, son histoire, sa théorie et son application.

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PREFACE

The initial inspiration for this thesis came from an article on Evelyn Underhill by Michael Ramsey, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury. Ramsey suggested that Underhill's development from Mysticism (1911) to Worship (1936) showed that at the end of her life she had reached quite a different position. He went so far as to say that by that time she could have been called a doctor of the church.

This thesis is an attempt to trace that development by an examination of the works of Underhill, and to demonstrate the enduring legacy which Underhill has left to Christian spirituality.

The original work in this thesis concerns the examination of the works of Evelyn Underhill for indications of a "shift" or "conversion" from a deep interest in mysticism and religious experience to being a committed Anglican with a vocation to teach a Christian spirituality which included all aspects of the religious life.

The original sections are as follows:

1. The influence of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola on the formation of Underhill as a spiritual director.
2. The development of her thought from 1911 to 1920 as traced in The Essentials of Mysticism.
3. The third of Underhill's conversions resulted in a shift to sacramentalism.

The first evidence of this shift in her writings is found in an article titled "Lucie Christine."

4. The contrast between a 1921 article in The Hibbert Journal and the same article reprinted (with modifications) in The Life of the Spirit (1922) show the first change in her attitude to "Church."

5. A clear indication of the shift is shown in the contrast of her classification of types of mystics in Mysticism (1911) and The Life of the Spirit (1922).

6. The development of her concept of grace (from élan vital to "prevenient grace") is traced from 1919 to 1922.

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Introduction

Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941) was a public figure most of her life. She followed the trends in the development of English spirituality from the beginning of this century until her death in 1941. She allowed herself to be influenced by the issues, the movements, and the outstanding figures in her field of interest. At times this influence was fleeting; at other times it was so comprehensive it resulted in radical shifts in her life and work.

Underhill enjoyed the respect of many noted academics. Among them were William Temple, Charles Raven and T.S. Eliot, whom she counted as friends. She was elected fellow of King's College for Women in 1913. The college amalgamated with the University of London in 1915, and in 1927 her fellowship was extended to the University (with appropriate pomp and circumstance). In 1938 she received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Aberdeen University in Scotland. She was asked to give the Upton Lectures at Oxford in 1921, making her the first woman to appear on the University lists. We read in her letters in 1924 that she lectured at St. Andrew's University in Scotland.

Beginning in 1924, she conducted retreats for Anglican clergy and for lay people. She was the first woman to do so. She was in demand as a speaker. She first made her mark in the field of mysticism beginning with the unprecedented success of her book of the same name. She went on to write poetry. Later she

published the addresses which she gave at the retreats. She became interested in liturgy and wrote about that. Throughout all this production Underhill wrote articles and book reviews for numerous journals. In addition to this, she gave her time to individuals for spiritual direction and kept in touch with some of them by letter. Her personal correspondence was voluminous.[1] She was a treasured friend and had a busy social and professional life.

Yet all of this was only one part of her life. The other was her private life as Evelyn Stuart Moore, wife of Hubert Stuart Moore, barrister-at-law. Of this side of her life we know very little. She and her husband travelled together a great deal and because of his profession, had many social engagements. Apart from a few scraps of information about his hobbies and his great interest in sailing our knowledge of Hubert Stuart Moore is scant. Underhill's references to married life are limited to her personal correspondence and consist mostly of descriptions of the holidays she shared with her husband. But their friends reported that the home of the Stuart Moores was known to be a hospitable place, and their company engaging.

Above all else, however, it was Underhill's rich inner life which marked her as a woman apart; and it was the fruits of the development of this spiritual life which she put to use in her capacity of retreat conductor and spiritual director.

By examining her writings and her life it is possible to follow her development through the changing influences of her times and to see how she herself became an influence for change in the lives of her contemporaries.

Evelyn Underhill had two close friends, each of whom was a gifted and brilliant woman. One was Ethel Ross Barker, her friend from 1907 to the time of her death in 1921. Barker was a convert to Roman Catholicism and they shared a deep love for Catholic devotion. This relationship will be referred to in the body of the paper. The other friend was Lucy Menzies. Menzies was a Scottish Presbyterian but as a result of her friendship with Underhill (by this time a practising Anglican), she became a member of the Church of England.

Menzies was introduced to Underhill through the latter's publisher in 1917. It was not until 1923 that they met. By then they had been corresponding for six years and Underhill was serving as Menzies' spiritual director.

Lucy Menzies was a theologian, a linguist and an author. She received an honorary doctorate of divinity from Aberdeen. After Underhill's death it was she who edited most of the material that was published in Underhill's name. Even the letters, edited by Charles Williams, were first collected by Menzies. It was she who recovered the letters between von Hügel and Underhill, which had appeared to be irretrievable. They were recovered just before being thrown away as waste.[2] It was to be expected then that Menzies would be asked to write the "official biography" of her great friend. She accepted the task reluctantly (being by then nearly blind). Unfortunately, she died before the "life" was completed. Margaret Cropper was asked to take up the task and she used Menzies' beginning (which covered the period from 1875 to 1922) and completed it in 1958. The English edition was titled Evelyn Underhill, the American, The Life of Evelyn Underhill.

This biography occasioned two influential articles: one by the philosopher,

E. I. Watkin[3], a Roman Catholic; the other by one Miss Valerie Pitt[4], an Anglican. Miss Pitt's article will be discussed at length in Part VI, below.

Watkin's position was that Underhill never reached the Catholic view of the Church. Undoubtedly, he was unable to understand why she would not make a full submission to Rome.

Describing both the book and Underhill, as he knew her, Watkin writes:

> What emerges from the Life [sic] is primarily a portrait of the woman such as her friends, and I was privileged to be in their outer circle, remember her - a woman whose profound inner life, concealed by the reticence she prized so highly, revealed itself in a welcoming open-hearted charity, humble but assured, shrewd and with a strong but gentle sense of humour, critical but never unkind.[5]

Watkin, familiar with Underhill's works and also a colleague, obviously appreciated Underhill's qualities.

He bewails the book's lack of a bibliography as an "inexcusable omission" and suggests that to the Life and the book of Letters a third volume should be added to complete the study: The Writings of Evelyn Underhill.[6]

This challenge was taken up by a Roman Catholic religious, Mary Xavier Kirby, who by 1965 had produced a doctoral thesis for the English Department of the University of Pennsylvania: The Writings of Evelyn Underhill: A Critical Analysis.[7] Kirby's work is of limited interest since it analyses at length Underhill's major works (in the manner of theses), and as a result is a somewhat specialized approach.[8]

Four other doctoral theses have been written with Evelyn Underhill as subject.[9]

On the occasion of the centenary of Evelyn Underhill's birth (1975), Christopher J. R. Armstrong was invited to write a study of her life and work.[10] That the project was completed in some eighteen months may account for the fact that the book does not contain an index (which Cropper's book does). This is a serious drawback in an otherwise rich book, replete with information and detail not generally available. The book does contain the only extensive published bibliography of Underhill's work.[11] The remarks preceding Armstrong's bibliography indicate that a comprehensive bibliography by another author is in progress but this has not yet been published.[12]

Interest in Evelyn Underhill has waxed and waned since her death in 1941. It seems that today, many people have heard her name, many have read her great book, Mysticism, and some, her better book, Worship. Fewer have read her retreat addresses. Still fewer realize that she considered her vocation to be in this latter field - as a retreat conductor and as a spiritual director: all the more remarkable since she was a woman. Her major contribution to the Church lies in this area of spirituality. The full extent of her influence has yet to be assessed. This study is intended to be the beginning of that task.

An able English historian of Christianity has written:

> It must be borne in mind that it is the function of the historical critic to trace the development of Christianity, not to decide on its ultimate truth. He ought to study the evidence neither as an apologist, nor as an opponent of dogma. It is for him to elucidate the facts, not to determine their ultimate significance. The interpretation of history is a matter for faith, not for criticism.[12]

It is the intention of the present writer to bear in mind Vidler's definition

of an historical critic in this study of Evelyn Underhill. The study will examine the major chronological events in Underhill's life and in life around her, and will attempt to see the effects of those several moments of kairos, of conversion, to which she refers so infrequently, but each of which seems to have resulted in a new direction or a new emphasis in her writings. It will examine the good reports of Underhill's friends and the remarks of her critics, friend and foe, to see if they correspond with "the facts." These "facts" will be culled from her writings, her letters, and her biographers. As such, they often will be dependent on the points of view, and the opinions, of Underhill herself, of those who have written about her in the past, and of the present writer. But such material is the "stuff" of all history.

PART I - Underhill's England

1. Modernism.

When Evelyn Underhill was beginning her professional life as a writer, Queen Victoria had just died and Edward VII had been crowned King of England. It was the year 1901. Underhill's first book was published in 1902. In 1903 Pope Leo XIII died and was succeeded by Pius X.

The hope and promise of modern scientific discovery and modern historical criticism were felt throughout Europe. A spirit of criticism affected biblical studies, philosophy, and theology. Though in 1863, in the Munich Brief issued by the Vatican, critical studies of scripture had been censored, it was now hoped that Pius X would allow for greater freedom in disseminating new ideas. Such was not to be the case. By 1907 the "movement" had been defined and declared to be the "heresy of all heresies." In the decree Lamentabili, and the encyclical Pascendi, followed by the anti-modernist oath, "modernism" was virtually crushed in the Roman Church.

What was this feared modernism? The New Catholic Encyclopedia offers this definition.

> The variety of positions among Modernist writers has been so clearly demonstrated that one hesitates to attempt a definition of Modernism. One constant element was the effort to bring theological teaching abreast of what was considered the results of contemporary research; a second element was the conviction that the Church's magisterium had duly usurped the rights of theological research. [1]

But in 1907, the Vatican was not at all hesitant in calling "modernist"

anyone who did not conform to what the Magisterium had decided was orthodox. Alfred Loisy, French priest, and George Tyrrell, English ex-Jesuit, were declared excommunicate: Loisy, vitandus (to be shunned).

Friend to both these brilliant men and an extremely influential writer was Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1845-1925). A self-educated Roman Catholic philosopher living in England, he played an important role in modernism, not as an original thinker, but as a catalyst. He has been called the "mid-wife" of the movement, since it was he who effectively arranged introductions and communications between the leading thinkers in England, Germany, Italy and France. Von Hügel's role in the movement has yet to be fully evaluated.

One of the effects of the Munich Brief was that an anti-laity spirit had entered the Roman Church. The study of theology was to be the prerogative of the clergy and scholasticism was to be the only philosophy taught in seminaries. Laymen no longer had a voice.

Biblical criticism, which had occupied the minds of many brilliant exegetes, came to a halt within the Roman church with the condemnation of modernism. The two disciplines remaining to conscientious scholars were history and liturgy.

As late at 1922, the Abbot of Downside remarked on this situation in a letter to von Hügel: "The only freedom in biblical things and the rest is that of a train, to go ahead as fast as you can on rails, but if you try to arrive at any station not on the line, you are derailed ... liturgy alone remains open."[2]

What was "modern" biblical criticism saying that was so "offensive to pious ears?" In looking at the Gospels "scientifically" it would have to state

quite simply that miracles do not happen. The virgin birth of Jesus and the resurrection were also open to question. What was left of the Gospels was supposed to be "truth" - a gospel which was up to date for the early twentieth century and could therefore speak to the "modern" man.

The Church of Er gland was of course also affected by this spirit of the age, but there the "pursuit" of modernists took a different course. The English historian, Roger Lloyd writes,

> The continental modernists were driven out of the church and excommunicated. Even mildly scholarly views of the Bible were ruthlessly proscribed. The Roman Church itself was driven by the very vigour of its persecution into espousing a theological conservatism of the most rigid kind. [However] , in no Church in Christendom are proceedings for heresy made so extremely tortuous, difficult, chancy, and expensive as they are in the Anglican Church. . . . But inconsistency was a charge everyone understood, and set at its proper value. Thus in English [sic] the questionable position of modernists who publically recited creeds in which they only partly believed, and on the articles of which they put their own glosses and private interpretations, was plainly the right point at which to join issue. It meant in practice that the excommunications and prescriptions which were so marked a feature in the struggle abroad were kept out of the story of the conflict in England. Thus in the end that which was creative in Anglic modernism was able to find its place within and make its contribution to Anglican doctrine.[3]

Modernism in the Church of England was at its peak from 1900 to 1914. One real contribution to its decline was the life and work of Albert Schweitzer. Lloyd writes:

> ... Not the least of the services he rendered to Christendom was to prove in his own person that a man may be the most radical and disturbing of modernist scholars, and at the same time a saint made free of all the riches of spiritual experience.[4]

With his declaration that the Liberal Christ of the German modernists had in fact become a Germanic Christ, the English modernists had something they didn't want. "Schweitzer's book certainly disturbed the modernists at least as greatly as the traditionalists themselves. Anglican modernism was at that moment torn up by the roots, and it has never again found the ground to nourish them."[5]

2. Mysticism.

In 1899, W. R. Inge (Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral from 1911 to 1934) had based his Brampton Lectures on mysticism. It was a bold venture, since scholarly examination of mystical experience was not in vogue. His lectures were published as Christian Mysticism. In 1902 William James published his Gifford Lectures as The Varieties of Religious Experience. In 1908 Friedrich von Hügel's two-volume study of mysticism was published, called The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in St. Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends, and written at the height of his involvement with modernism. It was this climate which stimulated Evelyn Underhill to make her great contribution to the subject, first in Mysticism and later in other works.

To what can be attributed the fact that interest in mysticism suddenly became so popular during this period of church history? The writings of Inge, von Hügel and Underhill certainly fostered its development. Lloyd writes,

> The torch which Dr. Inge had lit was taken up on the Roman side by Baron von Hügel, and on the Anglican side by Evelyn Underhill. Together they (Inge and Underhill) form a landmark in the history of Anglican Theology. . . . It was not, moreover, accidental that Evelyn Underhill's next book of comparable importance was her Worship (1936), for there

> is a real and an easily traceable connection between the revival of interest in mystical theology and the modern concentration of attention upon the importance of liturgical worship for the work of evangelism ... [6]

The striking thing about this passage is that Lloyd claims Underhill for the Church of England as early as 1911, though she did not become a practising Anglican until 1920. Even in 1924 at the opening of "Copec" she wrote that she supposed that she represented everything but the Anglicans and the Free Churches.

Lloyd's claim is ten years too early and discounts the years, more than a decade, when Underhill was virtually a Roman Catholic, albeit a non-communicating one.

Possibly, for all three, Underhill, Inge and von Hügel, the study (and practice) of mysticism, was one way of avoiding certain issues of modernism. Inge, an Anglican modernist himself, tried to explain why mysticism had such great appeal, especially for "the younger generation."

> It brings an intense feeling of relief to many who have been distressed by being told that religion is bound up with certain events in antiquity, the historicity of which it is in some cases difficult to establish, with a cosmology which has been definitely disproved; and with a philosophy which they cannot make their own . . . it knows its true spiritual kin.[7]

"But," continued Inge, "on the other side we see a tendency, even more manifest if we look for external signs, to emphasize the institutional side of religion.... It is a current turning in the opposite direction to the mystical tendency, which regards unity as a spiritual, not a political idea."[8]

Through the influence of these three contemporaries, the study of mysticism became a reputable task.

3. Institutionalism.

In 1914, Inge credited John Henry Newman with an important legacy: "movements which still agitate the Church of England and the Church of Rome, Anglo-Catholicism and Modernism," still carry his "indelible mark." [9]

Llcyd notes that for years the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England had two influential and "virulent" opponents: Queen Victoria and Punch. In their eyes the movement was "un-English."[10] This epithet referred to various rigorous practices which were insisted on by extremists. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the Anglo-Catholic movement also brought to the Church of England a new piety which had long been absent. Unfortunately, this led to a type of rigorism - a need to get things "right." But it also led to the formation of dedicated priests and of new religious orders in the Church of England. Priests such as Charles Gore, E.W. Benson and Walter Frere were pioneers in this movement: great men whose influence has been lasting.

Much of the church ritual was taken from pre-reformation times but to its critics it was the parallels to the Roman liturgy and practice which aroused suspicion.

Lloyd gives this positive description:

> [The] tractarian determination to be made free of the ancient knowledge of devotional principles and practices was certainly one of the things which gave the movement its Roman tinge. The Anglo-Catholics were constantly accused of being the Holy Father's fifth column within the Anglican citadel. The accusation was silly, but believed. Yet they did cherish a rather uncritical tenderness for most things Roman. In part at least this was due to the fact that they knew what other English church-

> men blandly ignored, the extreme richness and variety of the Roman treasury of the devotional life. ... In a later generation this ubiquitous and over-sensitive consciousness of Rome had to be fought by the newer leaders in the movement. ... Men like Gore and Frere were steadily moving far from Rome, and taking most of the movement with them. This they were doing because they had been impelled to add to the characteristic Anglo-Catholic treasury of discipline two elements, which fitted ill with papal Christianity. One was an acceptance of the new learning about the Bible. The other was a renewed sense of the obligations owed by Catholic order to social order. ... These men and their fellow-workers were founding a new kind of Anglo-Catholicism, but they themselves carried on the really vital tradition of the movement, an austere care for holiness, leading to sanctity.[11]

It is understandable that Underhill could bring herself to an affiliation with such a communion. "It spoke to her condition."[12]

Furthermore, she had contact both with Bishop Walter Frere and with Bishop Charles Gore. Frere was to be her first Anglican spiritual director. Later he assisted her in the preparation of her book, Worship. Her contact with Gore came through the "Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship" (Copec). A letter from 1924 states: "My next job is speaking at the West End Copec Conference ... with Bishop Gore as partner, who greatly oppresses me."[13] But by 1937 she had changed her view. "Gore remained an enduring influence because of that hidden dedication, not done for this or that but just as his life towards God."[14]

The Copec Conference was an outcome of Christian social action and was headed by William Temple. Underhill's role in the conference will be discussed

in Part IV. It was said that it was at this conference that Gore ceded to Temple his spiritual and figurative headship in the Church of England.

4. Conclusion.

To say that Underhill was a woman of her time is to say that she played a part in the happenings of the day. As a result she became a public figure. But she was also a woman ahead of her time. She was the first woman to be invited to give a lecture series in theology at Oxford University (in 1921); the first woman to be a retreat conductor for lay people; the first woman to give retreat addresses to clergy. She was chosen for these tasks, not because he was a woman, but because she did her work well, and had established a reputation in her field. For this reason, the history of religious thought in England must recognize Evelyn Underhill's contribution to the study of mysticism and ascetic theology.

PART II - The Early Years, 1875-1910

1. A Biographical Note[1]

Evelyn Underhill was born in Wolverhampton in England, in 1875. Her father, Arthur Underhill, was a lawyer as had been her grandfather. Shortly after her birth the family moved to London where her father rose in his profession. He was knighted in 1922. She was an only child and throughout her life was a caring and dutiful daughter. It would seem that she was particularly fond of her father and that they communicated well. Her first book (1902)[2] was a book of humourous verse concerning law and must have delighted him.

At the age of ten she was sent to a boarding school and at sixteen she returned to London and took courses at King's College in botany and modern languages and later in social science and philosophy.[3] This association with King's College (later part of the University of London) lasted for the rest of her life.

By 1890 she had already met the man who was to become her husband, Hubert Stuart Moore. Their fathers (both lawyers) were friends and since the two sons of the Stuart Moore family had lost their mother, they came under the care of Evelyn's mother. They were all keen sailors and the two families shared their yachting holidays. By 1895 Evelyn and Hubert were "sweethearts."[4] It would seem that that fact was not wholly acceptable to her mother. In a letter to Hubert, dated 2 November, 1900, Evelyn writes, "The air of chastened joy with which the missis [her mother] hears you are getting more work would please you. Like a warhorse,

she scents Armageddon from afar."[5] Perhaps, then, the issue was money. But her mother must have had to accept the inevitable. Finally, in 1906 they were formally engaged, and a year later they married and settled into the house which Hubert had inherited from his father. Evelyn was thirty-two and Hubert, thirty-eight. But it was not unusual at that time for a marriage to be delayed until the husband-to-be was established in his profession. In the family tradition, Hubert had become a lawyer.

2. Early Development.

The Underhill family was not given to regular church-going. In his memoirs, Sir Arthur admits to having had his fill of religion as a boy at school.[6] Nevertheless there was some exposure to Anglicanism in the boarding school which Evelyn attended. In 1891 she was confirmed and made her first communion in the Church of England.

A document survives which was written on the eve of her seventeenth birthday.[7] Several passages are of particular interest since they point to the direction of her future development and opinions.

> ... In real life I most admire Mahomet, because he was sincere, Giordano Bruno, because he was strong for the truth, and Jesus because ethically He was perfect, and always thought of the weak ones first.
>
> ... As to religion, I don't quite know, except that I believe in a God, and think it is better to love and help the poor people round me than go on saying that I love an abstract spirit whom I have never seen. If I can do both, all the better, but it is best to begin with the nearest. I do not think anything is gained by being orthodox, and a great deal of the beauty and sweetness of things is lost by being bigoted and dogmatic. If

> we are to see God at all it must be through nature and our fellow men. Science holds a lamp up to heaven, not down to the Churches.
>
> I don't believe in worrying God with prayers for things we want. If he is omnipotent He knows we want them, and if He isn't, He can't give them to us. I think it is an insult to Him to repeat the same prayers every day. It is as much as to say He is deaf, or very slow of comprehension.
>
> I do not believe the Bible is inspired, but I think nevertheless that it is one of the best and wisest books the world has ever seen.
>
> ... When I grow up I should like to be an author because you can influence people more widely by books than pictures. If I had been a rich man, I would have been a doctor, and lived among the poor, and attended them for nothing. I think that would be one of the noblest careers open to any man. My motto at the present time:
>
> Be noble men of noble deeds,
> For love is holier than creeds.
>
> Goodbye sixteen years old. I hope my mind will not grow tall to look down on things, but wide to embrace all sorts of things in the coming year. [8]

In this declaration of her "state of mind," written for her own sake, we can see that her religion (such as it is) is already theocentric: it remained completely so until she came under the influence of Friedrich von Hügel[9] in the twenties.

We see also the beginning of her concern for the poor. This continued, as we see in a letter written in 1911, where she speaks of doing Health Society and Poor visiting. Later, regular visits to the poor were to become part of her religious rule.

She sees no virtue in orthodoxy and did not become a regular communicant until the early twenties. She and her husband Hubert shared a deep love of nature. All her life she had close relationships with a variety of people. One can even see in her attitudes towards the Bible and Science early signs of her "modernist" sympathies.[10] While she did not become a doctor, she did become an able practitioner of that classic art called in religion "the cure of souls."

Her desires to become an author and to have an "embracing" mind were fulfilled. Finally, in the motto which she chose for herself for the time, we see, perhaps, the mind of the woman she was to become. Nobility, not submission, was her goal. She was to think it more noble to please Hubert because of her love for him, and her own conscience because of the spirit of the times, than become a Roman Catholic. "For love is holier than creeds." It was this deep concern for others and the desire to live nobly which led her to pursue the life of the Spirit, wherein she was empowered to fulfil the dreams of her youth.

3. "Reality."

Much later, in 1932, Evelyn Underhill wrote a letter to her friend (afterwards her biographer) Margaret Cropper.

> ... I come to Christ through God, whereas quite obviously lots of people come to God through Christ. But I can't show them how to do that - all I know about is the reverse route. The final result, when you have the two terms united, is much the same - "the figure and the mountain are one" - but the process is quite different.
>
> I've never in any of my phases been a "good Evangelical" and I expect you have - but on the other hand I'm not sure you have ever been a white-hot Neo-Platonist! So

> I should feel awfully shy and awkward expounding the personal side; whereas I'll go to any length to try and make people "feel God."[11]

There are three points of interest here: firstly, Underhill admits to having had "phases of development:" secondly, one of these phases was Neo-Platonism: thirdly, it appears that she herself did not come to God through "thinking" - since she did not try to "make" people believe - but rather she came through her experience. We shall have cause to comment further on this below.

Just how Underhill became such an ardent Neo-Platonist, we do not know. Perhaps it had begun with her conversations with her father, which in turn had led her to study philosophy at King's College. We do know that Neo-Platonism was to have a marked influence on her and that the writings of Plotinus were to serve as a source of inspiration and a model for mystical experience.

From 1898 to 1913 she began to go abroad each year, at first with her parents, and later with her mother only. In this way she came to know Italy, France, Holland and Switzerland. She was fluent in Italian and French and her great delights seem to have been seeing the Alps, visiting great churches and learning to appreciate art treasures. Thus did she begin to grow in love for the celebrations of the Roman Church. Armstrong quotes a letter of 6 May 1905, "She writes that that Easter she has had 'a perfect orgy of splendid church ceremonies' and feels that she will never be able to bear English services again."[12]

Meanwhile in 1904 she had published the first of her three "mystical novels," The Grey World. This was followed by The Lost World, 1907, and The Column of Dust, 1909. "All three," says Charles Williams, "had a reasonably

good reception, but they are not, it must be admitted, as good as one expects them to be."[13] This would be in the light of her later writings. Underhill must have felt the same as she wrote no more novels.

But the first novel occasioned a letter by one Margaret Robinson, stating that it had been the means of her finding reality. We have Underhill's reply which one might see as the beginning of what was to become a life-long service to others: the practice of spiritual direction. She writes: "As you say, the finding of reality is the one thing that matters, and that always mattered, though it has been called by many different names. Of course on this side of the veil, the perfect accomplishment of the quest is impossible."[14]

We can take it then, that she too had been searching. Underhill had been writing for various publications since 1902. Some of her friends belonged to a "literary set" of London, which included Arthur Waite and Arthur Machen. Through the auspices of the latter, she was recommended to the former and thus became a member of Waite's branch of the "Hermetic Society of the Golden Dawn," probably in the year 1904. It was an occult society complete with hierarchy and grades. The best source of information for Underhill's interest in this comes from Armstrong:

> Seen in retrospect it looks very much the kind of society which a young woman taking an interest in the lively metaphysico-mystical scene at the time and detached from the official churches, might have felt drawn to. ... The Possibility of notable 'happenings' cannot entirely have been precluded and the seriousness with which Evelyn approached all ritual to her dying day is almost certainly a direct consequence of this initiation.[15]

One should also note here that it was her pleasure to attend High Mass when in Italy. Thus it would perhaps be more accurate to suppose that she came to both of these experiences with a taste for ritual. She was in fact a methodical, organized person and from about 1907 to the end of her life followed a "rule," a disciplined routine, in her spiritual life; she also recommended that her counselees do the same.

We can, perhaps, be somewhat reassured and bemused when Armstrong, himself an Anglican clergyman, continues, "There is in fact nothing to be afraid of in Arthur Waite."[16] His influence on Underhill can be seen in her chapter on "Mysticism and Magic" in her first book on mysticism where she speaks of the magical power in the rites of the Roman Church. Armstrong continues,

> Magical rites properly understood and conducted, are therefore, perfectly normal techniques for removing superficial impediments to a higher kind of awareness, and concentrate the attention and will-power on the true if normally inaccessible object of man's quest. Such an adjustment is in effect a perfect vindication of the activities of Waite and his group. There follows, however, a qualification which Evelyn must have considered important since she returns to it again some years later . . . [in 1912]. The trouble with magic [she discovered] is that it awakens desires which it is unable to satisfy.[17]

We do not know the details of Underhill's search for satisfaction in the study of philosophy but it resulted in her continuing to be greatly influenced by Plotinus - an influence which, although it "waxed and waned," lasted for the rest of her life. But she turned her talents to another area during this time and produced a translation of medieval legends which she called, The Miracles of Our

Lady St. Mary Brought Out of Divers Tongues and Newly Set Forth by Evelyn Underhill. Cropper records part of a review from the Illustrated London News: "We doubt if any living English writer could have reconstructed these beautiful and touching prose poems with more grace and feeling than Miss Underhill has proved herself to possess."[18] Obviously this was more her métier than "mystical" novels.

Sometime during these years a friendship developed between Evelyn Underhill and Ethel Ross Barker. Barker was an educated woman who was later to become an archaeologist of note. They were to remain close friends until Barker's death in 1921. Cropper quotes a Mrs. Salter who was friend to both: "... it was through knowing Evelyn that Ethel Barker was drawn back to religion from a period of agnosticism." Thus Underhill already had something to offer. They had a common interest in the Church of Rome and in December 1906 Barker writes to Underhill, "I'm inclined to bet heavily (1) that I never go over, (2) that you go over one day, (3) that in all events you go over first ..."[19] She was to be proven wrong on all three counts.

In a letter written 14 May 1911 Underhill sums up this period and speaks of the "conversion" which never came to "submission." It is addressed to a woman writer (Mrs. Meyrich Heath) who, it seems, had written an admiring letter. Underhill wants to declare her position and writes that althouth they are "at one about the inside" it is clear that they differ a great deal "about the outside." In an attempt to be honest she tries to explain her position. The result is a rare exposure of herself, and justifies this lengthy quote.

You see, I wasn't brought up to religion really - except just in the formal way of course. So when the "youthful crash" arrived it caught me fair and square, and for 8 or 9 years I really believed myself to be an agnostic. Philosophy brought me round to an intelligent and irresponsible sort of theism which I enjoyed thoroughly but which did not last long. Gradually the net closed in on me and I was driven nearer and nearer to Christianity - half of me wishing it were true and half resisting violently all the time. In those days I used to frequent both English and Roman churches and wish I knew what their secret was. Finally I went to stay for a few days at a Convent of Perpetual Adoration. The day after I came away, a good deal shaken but unconvinced, I was "converted" quite suddenly once and for all by an overpowering vision which had really no specific Christian elements but yet convinced me that the Catholic Religion was true. It was so tightly bound up with (Roman) Catholicism, that I had no doubt, and have had none since (this happened between 4 and 5 years ago), that that Church was my ultimate home. So strong is this conviction that to have any personal dealings with Anglicanism seems for me a kind of treachery. Unfortunately, I allowed myself to be persuaded to wait a year before being received; and meanwhile the Modernist storm broke, with the result that now, being myself "Modernist" on many points, I can't get in without suppressions and evasions to which I can't quite bring myself. But I can't accept Anglicanism instead; it seems an integrally different thing. So here I am, going to Mass and so on of course, but entirely deprived of sacraments.

I no more like the tone and temper of contemporary Romanism than you do: it is really horrible; but with all her muddles, she has kept her mysteries intact. There I can touch - see - feel Reality: and - speaking for myself only - nowhere else. Alas, you won't approve of all this, and I don't either - it is all wrong, but at present I don't know what else to do. The narrow exclusiveness of Rome is dreadful - I could never believe it, for I feel in sympathy with every Christian of every sort - except when they start hating each other. But to join any other communion is simply an impossible thought. [20]

So it was that Underhill, moving from the youthful formal practice of Anglicanism, to agnosticism, to theism (presumably the culmination here of her "white-hot Neo-Platonism"), to Christianity, found herself in full sympany with the Roman Catholic Church. But she submitted instead to her fiancée's request that she wait some time before taking the step of converting, presumably since it was so disturbing to him. Her friend Barker made her submission to the Roman communion. Underhill never did.

4. First Spiritual Director.

At the suggestion of Barker, Underhill sought the advice of a Roman priest, Robert Hugh Benson, who was a convert from Anglicanism.[21] At the time she was preparing for her marriage in July 1907. Benson's biographer[22] has edited her correspondence and paraphrased some of it. It does not bear her name but it is obviously Underhill of whom Benson writes:

> In 1907 an inquirer wrote to Father Benson that she had got 'half way from Anglicanism to Catholicism and could get no further' ... Her difficulty was that Catholics declared that their dogmas were true historically as well as spiritually (thus, the Ascension must be as "true" as the Armada); this she could not believe, and could not see to matter. In religion, mystical language was alone intelligible.[23]

His reply (22 March 1907) ends with the suggestion that she spend some time at the Cambridge Convent (perhaps because the time spent in the Southampton Convent in January had produced "results.") Her answer was that that was exactly what she didn't want because she was, in all her efforts, "haunted by the dread of self-suggestion."[24]

Underhill had also hoped that Benson would be able to help her future husband in some way. Stuart Moore was very much opposed to Underhill's becoming a Roman Catholic and persuaded her to wait for a year before making a final decision. His reason was that he considered that the sacrament of confession would necessitate the intrusion of a confessor into their marriage. He deeply resented what he considered a violation of intimacy. It seems ironic that although Underhill never did become a Roman Catholic she did avail herself of the confessional - both before and after she became an Anglican.

So it was that Evelyn Underhill married Hubert Stuart Moore on July 3, 1907 - with Benson saying mass for them on their wedding day.[25] As it happened, the day after, on July 4, the papal decree, Lamentabilis was issued. It was followed in September by the encyclical Pascendi. "Modernism"[26] had been defined and condemned by the Roman hierarchy.

In her letter of 1911 to Heath (quoted above) Underhill indicates that being "Modernist" herself on many points, she could not make a wholehearted submission after the decrees without compromising her principles. Judging by the early letters between Benson and herself there was also a problem of a type of skepticism - in the form of fear of self-suggestion.

The next communication to Benson is on 6 January, 1908. This letter is not printed. Martindale records that she had written that she could now reach what she believed to be the Prayer of Quiet, following the "recipes" of Mme. Guyon's method. But with "considerable shock" she had discovered that the same results could be reached by non-Christians: again, prayer seemed to be a matter of

self-hypnotism.[27]

In the remainder of their correspondence Benson does his best to persuade Underhill that meditation had to be rooted in the corporate life of the mystical body - i.e. Catholicism. She held on to what she considered her intellectual liberty - though it made her "thoroughly wretched." The last letter by Benson is undated and reads, in part, "Please forgive any offensive remarks that, probably, I have made. But I really do not think that you have quite enough reverence for the stupid. . . . Who would dream of treating a child by the policy of, 'If it's true, he'd better know it?' And we Catholics are most of us children . . . and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."[28] Martindale writes, "This letter elicited an answer, humorously penitent for the most part, but, in fine, confessing that the correspondence was stirring up not Christian charity, but mental and moral storms, which could be for no one's good."[29] This seems to have been the end of the exchange. One gets the impression that Underhill chided her "spiritual director" the way he wanted - as a child.

It was, perhaps, not an ideal counselling situation in any case. Martindale quotes a postscript where Benson berates a directee for calling him (Benson) a saint. ". . . if you hint at such stuff again, I shall be extraordinarily angry and give you 'something to cry for.'"[30] A footnote by Martindale follows: "Hugh Benson had quite a definite opinion of the value of 'consecrated bullying.' He once announced to a friend the appalling dogma [sic] that it was impossible to do anything with a woman until you had made her cry."[31]

It is hard to imagine that this method would have had a desirable effect on

anyone, let alone on Underhill. But they must have remained on good terms, since in 1910 it was he who provided the introduction which she needed to get an audience with the Pope [see below] . She comments in a letter to her husband. "very magnanimous of him [Benson] , considering how little credit he has got out of me!"[32] Perhaps the fact that Benson was himself a convert, made "conversion" the only issue in his direction of Underhill. Since she could not "submit" there was no point in continuing with him. Not so with other Roman Catholic directors who were to follow: in each instance she was encouraged to be open to the idea but to be obedient to her inner urgings, one way or another.

The Catholic philosopher, E. I. Watkins, wrote a review of Cropper's biography for The Month. He comments[33] on Underhill's position at the time.[34]

> Surely we cannot doubt that for reasons of His own God did not in fact call her into the Church. What then of her conviction in 1907? A letter written shortly after betrays a fundamental misconception. "I feel," she wrote to Fr. Hugh Benson, "the real point is not so much whether one can keep 'the flame of adoration' burning bright without the Sacraments." And when later she became convinced that the Anglican Church does possess the Sacraments, she regarded this conviction ... as sufficient reason to remain in her communion. "The real point" most emphatically is "whether one is inside or outside the visible Church." That is to say Evelyn Underhill never saw the issue in the Catholic perspective.[35]

In which case, it would seem that Underhill made the right decision: since, as Watkin writes, "Hers was an utter loyalty to conscience."[36]

5. A Major Shift.

All the same, Underhill was "steeped" in Catholic spirituality and in mystical and ascetic theology.

In 1907 Margaret Robinson wrote to her again (see above, 1904). Underhill's reply of 22 April marks the beginning of a long association - of Underhill as her director and later, of Robinson as sometime research assistant, translator and typist for Underhill. In this first letter she advises her to take time each day to be quiet, interprets her fear of "losing the light and getting entangled in the material world" as a sign of "spiritual adolescence," and tells her to avoid like poison the modern sects and creeds which lead to nowhere. "Follow where you feel that you are being led, wherever that may be."[37] All this sounds as though Underhill has been through it herself.

In writing to her fiancé about her "initiation" into spiritual direction she speaks of having received the letter from Robinson who has asked for help for her spiritual tangles: "I think this sort of thing is a most horrible responsibility, and rather ridiculous when the person applied to is still in just as much of a tangle as anyone else. A. [no name given] also has been shying her "honest" but rather shallow doubts at my head. I wish I could make them see that I am <u>not</u> an authority."[38]

All the same, whether moved by courtesy or compassion, she tries to answer their questions.

The next month she answers Robinson: "The keys of the Catholic position

(and Anglicanism is of course a slightly diluted Catholicism) are, A. The Incarnation and B. A Mystical continuation of the incarnation in the Sacraments. You see, if you accept these things as realities for you, you have at once something to go upon."[39]

If Watkin is correct in asserting that Underhill did not see things in the Catholic perspective, it could be said, perhaps, that she didn't see them in the proper Anglican perspective either. If she accepted these alone as "realities" she must have had difficulties. She was deprived of the Sacraments of the Roman Church and was a non-communicating Anglican at this time, and as late as the 1920's von Hügel could say that in view of her Christology she was hardly more than a Unitarian.[40] But as she admitted above, she was herself "in a tangle." Perhaps it was her "modernist" stance that made her avoid mention of the passion and resurrection of our Lord.

If we take the following as autobiographical, we can see that she pursued an ascetic life. "You may also take it for granted, of course, that so long as you want the peace and illumination for your own sake, you will not get them. Self-surrender, an entire willingness to live in the dark, in pain, anything - this is the real secret. I think no one really finds the Great Companion till their love is of that kind that they long only to give and not to get."[41]

Again to the same on 30 May: "There are no unbearable responsibilities in this world but those of our own seeking. Once life is realized as a succession of acts of loving service, undertaken in a spirit of joy, all that moonshine vanishes."[42]

And again: "There are plenty of learned persons saying all the time that

what you have found is not there at all. ... Direct spiritual experience is the only possible basis [for judging what is valid];and if you trust yours absolutely you are safe."[43]

On 30 December Underhill writes (to the same), "I do not one bit want to go on harrying you with advice, but I just submit it for your consideration that there are certain attitudes of mind to be cultivated, and certain methods of devotion to be learned, which are quite essential and quite definite."[44] She goes on to say that these have to do with: firstly, controlling the will and secondly, the regular and systematic practice of meditation.[45]

In addition to many such other directives, Underhill's letters to Robinson show loving concern in periods of darkness and despondency. She is supportive but not afraid to be pointed in her advice when it seems necessary. Thus,

> I do not think reading the mystics would hurt you myself: you say you must avoid books which deal with "feelings" - but the mystics don't deal with feelings but with love which is a very different thing. You have too many "feelings" but not nearly enough love. You don't love God in your fellow-creatures a bit... Oh, do turn to, and do and be things for and to your fellow creatures for a bit. Devote yourself to that... You have lost the knack of drawing strength from God: and vain strivings after communion of the solitude à deux sort will do nothing for you at this point. Seek contact with Him now in the goodness and splendor which is in other people, in all people, for those who have the art to find it.[46]

We might ask how Underhill herself had learned this gentle art. She was widely read for one thing. Her letters contain many recommendations. She quotes the "classics" which include works by St. Augustine, Ruysbroeck, Lady Julian and even the Canon of the Mass. Modern authors of her time include George Tyrrell,

M. D. Petre, Coventry Patmore. Other favorites seem to be St. Teresa, Plotinus ("the best of the Neo-Platonists"), St. Bernard, Richard Rollo.

Not as obvious is her attachment to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.[47] These "exercises" are used in the spiritual formation of the Jesuits and by others as well. The rise of Anglo-Catholicism in the nineteenth century had been responsible for a wave of interest in the Exercises. Of course, reading them and "doing" them with a director as Ignatius intended are two different things. How Underhill came to be familiar with them she does not say,[48] but her letters refer specifically to them in at least eight instances. She does not mention Ignatius by name (nor the Exercises) until 1925 (The Mystics of the Church). Since this fact is not stated in any secondary material on Underhill, the references will be cited in full. For the sake of brevity, abbreviations will be used: EUL for The Letters of Evelyn Underhill and SE for the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

EUL p. 73 (1908)
Represent to your mind, some phrase, truth, dogma, event - e.g. a phrase of the Pater Noster or Anima Christi, the Passion, the Nativity are the sorts of things I use.

SE Anima Christi
The prayer which begins the Exercises, "Soul of Christ."

EUL p. 78 (1908)
I believe the whole secret to lie in "detachment": and it is difficult to conceive how anyone who has once seen the "vision splendid" even for a moment can fail to have this detachment in some measure, or fail to see bits of it, hints and shadow, in most of the evidences of sense.

SE n. 23
"First Principle and Foundation" ... Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty,

honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things.

EUL p. 90 (1909)
These are the sorts of times when verbal prayer, if one has assimilated it and made it one's own in more genial seasons, becomes a help: and enables one to go doggedly on, praying more not less, because the light is withdrawn. To do otherwise would be a confession that you have been living by sight and not really by faith at all.

SE n. 319.6
Though in desolation we must never change our former resolutions, it will be very advantageous to intensify our activity against the desolation. We can insist more upon prayer, upon meditation ...

EUL p. 103-104 (1909)
I believe almost the only way in practice to check self seeking is to deliberately force yourself to do actual and concrete things in the opposite direction, however little emotional fervour you can put into them.

SE n. 217
... To overcome better every disorderly appetite and temptation of the enemy, if he is prepared to eat more, let him eat less.

EUL p. 120 (1911)
Accept what you are having, quite simply and obediently. Take it as it comes. Do not "will" or "want" this or that; however virtuous and edifying your wishes may be.

SE n. 23
(see above).

EUL p. 187 (1930)
In all you do, think, or pray about, throw the whole emphasis on God - His work in your soul, His all to you - the fact that you only exist, from moment to moment, by His Act and your whole raison d'être is to praise, reverence and serve Him.

SE n. 23
First Principle and Foundation. Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.

EUL p. 241 (1935)
[Maintaining a certain reserve] is really of course an aspect of detachment - you are to love much and give yourself much and yet maintain an independence of soul, fully given to nothing but God.

SE n. 23
See above on "indifference."

EUL p. 267 (1938)
Tell her to make a little meditation each day on something in the Gospels, picturing the scene and herself there, looking at and listening to Our Lord.

SE n. 47
First Prelude ... Attention must be given to the following point. When the contemplation or meditation is on something visible, for example, when we contemplate Christ our Lord, the representation will consist in seeing in the imagination the material place where the object is that we wish to contemplate ...

The above references span the years from 1907 to 1938. The spirituality of Ignatius obviously influenced Evelyn Underhill from the time of her first conversion to Christianity. It is in October 1908, through a letter to Margaret Robinson, that we first hear of the planned book on mysticism. Robinson was to be of untold help of a very professional nature. By 1909 she was typing another Underhill manuscript which would be published anonymously after Mysticism.

Apart from that readers of Underhill are indebted to Robinson in another way. The letters which Evelyn Underhill wrote to her are filled with Underhill's personal reflections on religious experience and ascetic life. This material is not available elsewhere.

In August 1908 Underhill writes: "One cannot have more than one centre to one's life (at least, not without suffering pretty badly for it ...) and once you are adjusted to Eternity, Time is bound to look a bit thin. Metaphysics produced this

effect in me far more badly than religious mysticism, because they [sic] proved that the world was illusion without providing any reason for its existence."[49]

Here is evidence of a "shift" in Evelyn Underhill's inner being: one might say, a conversion without "conversion."

The following excerpt gives witness to its effect:

> Surely you have perceived for yourself the difference between created things as seen in the indescribable atmosphere which theologians call "the love of God," and seen it in the ordinary worldly light? ... The first thing I found out was exalted and indescribable beauty in the most squalid places. I still remember walking down the Notting Hill main road and observing the (extremely sordid) landscape with joy and astonishment. Even the movement of the traffic had something universal and sublime in it. Of course that does not last: but the after-flavor of it does, and now and then one catches it again. When one does catch it, it is so real that to look upon it as wrong would be an unthinkable absurdity. At the same time, one sees the world at those moments so completely as "energized by the invisible" that there is no temptation to rest in mere enjoyment of the visible.[50]

This is the Underhill who lived between what she called "time and eternity": her everyday life juxtaposed with her religious experience.

As Wyon writes about an early poem she wrote called "Uxbridge Road," "[It] suggests how she lived in two worlds at once: the seen and unseen. Perhaps it refers to the experience described above."

Uxbridge Road

> The Western Road goes streaming out to seek the cleanly wild,
> It pours the city's dim desires towards the undefiled,
> It sweeps betwixt the huddled homes about its eddies grown
> To smear the little space between the city and the sown:
> The torments of that seething tide who is there that can see?
> There's one who walked with starry feet the western road by me!

He drives them east, he drives them west, between the dark and light;
He pastures them in city pens, he leads them home at night.
The towery trams, the threaded trains, like shuttles to and fro
To weave the web of working days in ceaseless travel go.
How harsh the woof, how long the weft. Who shall the fabric see?
The one who walked with starry feet the western road by me!

Behold! he lent me as we went the vision of the seer;
Behold! I saw the life of men, the life of God shine clear.
I saw the hidden spirit's thrust; I saw the race fulfil
The spiral of its steep ascent, predestined by the Will,
Yet not unled, but shepherded by one they may not see -
The one who walked with starry feet the western road by me.[51]

One sees that Evelyn Underhill was already a deeply religious woman, committed, and aware of "the love of God." "Reality" had become "God."

By 1909 she writes of a new "case" for direction. Her help was being sought. Meanwhile she was writing Mysticism and as usual taking holidays abroad with her mother and also with her husband. On one such trip to Rome she managed (through the auspices of Benson) to have an audience with Pius X. She describes it to Hubert and one can't help wondering how he, with his anti-clerical bent, reacted to the comment, "There was a rush when he descended the throne to try and kiss his hand but I was not quite near enough to manage it..."[52]

To Robinson she writes, "It was enormously impressive, not on account of any state or ceremony, but entirely by reason of his personality. I have never received such an impression of sanctity from anyone before. Whatever muddles he may make intellectually or politically, spiritually he is equal to his position. I do not think anyone who had been in his atmosphere could doubt it."[53]

The incident focuses on the enigma of the early Underhill: intellectually unable to submit to Rome because of her sympathies with what Pius X called the

"heresy of Modernism," she, nonetheless, attempts to kiss his hand. As for his "air of sanctity" she was here in full agreement with those of the Church who, in time, caused him to be canonized.

Underhill was thus Catholic in inclination and habits, but not in fact. It was to be a decade before she "submitted" - and then it was to quite an unexpected "authority."

Christopher Armstrong writes that from 1903 to 1909,

> We are able to document a single theme in Evelyn Underhill's work, the theme of mysticism and incarnation [sic]. In short stories mystical experience means the quest of the mysterious truth ... But in the last two novels, 1907 and 1909, the quest is no longer self-justificatory and the theme of sacrifice enters. For, according to the standpoint of these novels, the quest of mystical experience for its own sake is illusory. The deepest meaning of life is not ecstacy alone but ecstacy prepared for by sacrifice. It is not difficult to read some of Evelyn's own history into such a paradigm of the human situation. Called as she no doubt believed to a life of union she was also committed by her love of her fiancé to incarnation. [It would seem that] the decision to accept incarnation was, we may assume, the greatest of her life, whatever particular form it may have taken. Her teaching on mysticism as well as her day-to-day life as Mrs. Stuart Moore in the large house in Campden Hill Square were the continuing reflection of this.[54]

We could speculate that the two experiences, the first at the convent (1907) from which she "fled after four days" and the second, that of the day after, somehow led to the changing of her conception of God as "Reality" to that of God as love - love which gives itself and demands response. "... She associated the rejection of solitude with the loving, positive acceptance of this world, supremely exemplified for Christians in the vocation of Jesus. Her way had henceforth to be by way of <u>inclusion</u> not exclusion. 'Pure' mysticism, bereft of redemptive

values, would continue to be a source of temptation and instability for many years."[55]

Nevertheless, she had made the choice.

PART III - The Influence of Mysticism, 1911-1920

1. Background.

Evelyn Underhill's great and most widely known book, Mysticism[1] was first published in March, 1911. She had worked on the book for some four years, inspired no doubt by the new wave of interest in the subject. Underhill acknowledged Inge's book on mysticism as "a standard work, indispensible to the student."[2] On von Hügel's contribution, Underhill comments, "Indispensible to the student. The best work on mysticism in the English language."[3]

What did Underhill have to offer to this sudden general interest in religious experience? The subtitle of her book was, "A study of the nature and development of man's spiritual consciousness." She was writing for the psychologist, the symbolist, the metaphysician, and the theologian, and each is advised to pass over those parts which they will consider too elementary.[4]

In defining "true mysticism" she first of all dispenses with William James' "celebrated 'four marks' of the mystic state" - i.e. ineffability, noetic quality, transiency and passivity.[5] In their place she sets out :

> four other rules ... which may be applied as tests to any given case which claims to take rank amongst the mystics.
>
> 1. True mysticism is active and practical, not passive and theoretical ...
>
> 2. Its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual ...
>
> 3. [The] One is for the mystic, not merely the Reality of all that is, but also a living and personal object of love ...

> 4. Living union with this One ... is a definite state or form of enhanced life ... It is arrived at by a ... psychological process - the so-called Mystic Way ...
>
> [Mysticism] is the name of that organic process which involves the perfect consummation of the love of God ... It is the art of establishing [one's] conscious relation with the Absolute.[6]

Of these "rules" Armstrong writes,

> It will be seen that Evelyn's four marks so little resemble an analysis that they might almost be said to be a device for emphasizing the single point she wishes to make, namely that the mystical experience involves man in a unique spiritual adventure to which the nearest human analogy is the experience of falling in love. It would not surprise anyone therefore that we should describe her approach as "actual" rather than historical.[7]

Nor should it surprise us that she draws on her own experience as far as she is able. To Robinson (who was helping her so much in translation, locating quotations, etc.) she writes, "The book gets more and more difficult. I am past all the stages at which scraps of experience could guide me and can only rely on sympathetic imagination, which is not always safe." [1909] [8]

Mysticism was written in the genre of the times - it was a psychological study. One chapter was devoted to Vitalism - the new philosophy of which Henri Bergson and Rudolf Euchen were the leading figures at this time. In a letter in 1911 she admits to being "drunk with Bergson, who sharpened one's mind and swept one off one's feet at the same time."[9]

Mary Xavier Kirby[10] notes,

> The vitalist recognized Reality through intuition and apprehended it through union with life at its most intense point. The individual was vital and could rise to a greater Reality through self-fulfillment ... The

> amount of Reality enjoyed would be in proportion to the thoroughness with which he accomplished this. Evelyn Underhill believed that this vitalistic principle would make the Christian mystic a true possessor of freedom for it would give him the power of attaining Absolute Reality.
>
> She recognized the basic differences and diametric opposites between mysticism and vitalism, however. Christianity established a real and essential difference between God and the world, and true mystical experience demanded transcendence as well as immanence. ... Even in this chapter, written at the time of her most enthusiastic endorsement of Bergsonian philosophy, she honored the theory of transcendence and acknowledged the dualism [immanence and transcendence] of the mystics to be more in conformity with human experience than the evolution of the vitalists.[11]

In the revised edition of Mysticism (1930) Underhill adds a "note" to say that the changed philosophic outlook of the times has given her chapter a "somewhat old-fashioned air." The ideas of Bergson and Euchen no longer occupy the intellectual foreground."[12] But since she could not rewrite it (in the fashion of that day) she had to be content with minor revisions, additions and deletions.

Part two of the book is called "The Mystic Way" and offers a wealth of excerpts from the writings of the mystics themselves, illustrating the classic stages of the mystic life - purification, illumination and union. While the first part of the book,"The Mystic Fact," is dated, thus giving a good view of the time in which she was writing, the second part has lasting value of another sort. The results of the gleaning of the works of the mystics to find the quotations which serve to illustrate her points, are extremely useful and show her immense dedication and fine scholarship. Williams writes, "It was a great book precisely not because of its

originality, but because of its immediate sense of authenticity."[12]

From its first appearance in March the book was immensely popular. By July it was in its second edition. A third revised edition appeared in January 1912. By 1930 it had gone into twelve editions. To this day it remains the best-known and most available of her books.

To some extent it is possible to trace Underhill's own spiritual development in the alterations made in the successive revisions of the book, although, by her own admission, the changes were not as many nor as extensive as she herself would have wished. On the other hand, some readers may find the revisions more harmful than useful. Quotations are deleted from some of the authors whose ideas were either out-of-fashion or no longer interesting to Underhill. Inserted are references to more recent writers. Thus the 1930 edition is no longer a "period piece." But neither are the revisions extensive enough to make it a book representative of the thirties. It is, therefore, something of a hybrid. References to Steiner, Waite, Bergson and Euchen are often removed or altered, while references to von Hügel and the psychologist, J. B. Pratt are inserted - these being both more au courant and more influential on the Underhill of this period. These were the people she championed now.

It is obvious that from the beginning the book was written for a particular and limited audience.[13] It is assumed that one can read at least four languages: quotes in Latin, French and Italian are often untranslated. It cannot be called a "popular" book. Rather, it is directed to the well-educated non-specialist of the day.

Another criticism is that theology is eclipsed by philosophy, because of her "infatuation" with Bergson, no doubt.

There is also the issue of Evelyn Underhill's "dualism." In her "Note to the Twelfth Edition" (1930) at the end of the chapter, "Mysticism and Vitalism," she reaffirms the position which she had defended in the original version, that of a "limited dualism," a "two-step philosophy," as being the only type of metaphysic adequate to the facts of mystical experience."[14] This dualism separates the natural from the supernatural: the "real" from "the unseen world."[15] In a 1927 review of Charles E. Raven's book, The Creator Spirit, she had written, "Dr. Raven speaks on page 78 [sic] of this remarkable book of 'the profound religious conviction which demands a monistic interpretation of the universe'." Then she quoted von Hügel to prove the opposite. "Religion has no subtler, yet also no deadlier enemy of the mind, than every and all Monism,"[16] because monism tends to do away with the sense of the "otherness" of God. She explained this opposition by suggesting that while von Hügel's intensely metaphysical soul religion was mainly the thirst for Ultimates, it is for Dr. Raven's scientific temperament very largely concerned with contingents. ... Dr. Raven, where he comes to discuss 'the Spirit and mysticism,' "finds himself compelled to acknowledge this - an interesting and indirect testimony to the inability of monism to express the full content of the religious consciousness."[17]

Dr. Raven's reply to Underhill can be found in his Gifford Lectures of 1952:

> To [Mysticism] and to her my own debt is deep and long-standing. In the days when she and her husband stayed with me ... we debated in a long series of letters the fundamental issue of her dualism. Then, as now, it was impossible for me to accept her "two-step philosophy" ... It seemed to me then, and it seems still, that on her premises she was bound in the last resort to identify the mystic way with negation and to accept so sharp a cleavage between natural and supernatural as to endanger any fully incarnational philosophy. That she protested against this conclusion, and never willingly accepted it, is clear enough. But in fact, like Dionysius the Areopagite and all his school, she was forced into a dualist philosophy and a monophysite Christology. To me the antithesis which occasions this duality is not inherent in the nature of things or in reality but in the difference between our experience and our ability to interpret. As individuals we split up the unity which in our moments of integration we apprehend into a diversity of private worlds.[18]

It was the nature of Greek philosophy to divide man into body and soul. In view of Underhill's early interest in neoplatonism, it was perhaps natural that she should support a limited dualism.

Despite the critics, Mysticism established Underhill as an authority on the subject. The result was that she was now sought out for spiritual direction, asked to review books for various publications, and invited to speak publicly. She began to have many correspondents, and among these was Friedrich von Hügel.[19]

On May 11, 1911, von Hügel wrote a letter (quoted all too often) "To a Lady," in reply to a request for advice concerning a "younger speculative lady" (unnamed but obviously Evelyn Underhill). While "the lady" is attracted to "Rome" she cannot make her submission because of intellectual difficulties. He writes that generally speaking, in such a situation, he is careful to point out both the

present difficulties and the singular riches of the Roman church. "In this way one does, I think, as much good and as little harm as possible.... Such souls, in such times, ought not to be encouraged to come, unless they felt for long, beyond the possibility of any honest doubt, that it would be a grave sin against the light for them to remain where they are. [His emphasis]"[20] This had indeed been Underhill's own line of thought.

In September 1911 she writes to a friend that she has met von Hügel. "I forget whether I told you that I have become the friend (or rather, disciple and adorer) of von Hügel. He is the most wonderful personality I have ever known - so saintly, so truthful, sane and tolerant. I feel very safe and happy sitting in his shadow, and he has been most awfully kind to me."[21] This (also oft-quoted) passage shows Underhill's ever eager disposition to follow what and who attract her. As she was "drunk on Bergson" so now she seems "drunk on von Hügel" - but with different results, as time would show.

One more letter of this decade survives. It is dated 30 October, 1911, and is remarkable for its content. The letter is quoted in Armstrong's book, where it is published for the first time. Von Hügel has praised Mysticism but with certain reservations which he has offered to help her "correct," before the revised edition of January 1912. To this end he has promised to give it a "complete careful reading." Lacking time he proposes an alternate plan "in all simplicity."

> (1) Either you rest content, as far as my little help is concerned, with those corrections proposed for the first 4 chapters, - yet with this extension, - that you would carefully go thro' all the passages concerning (a) the supposed identity of the deepest of man's soul and God, and (b) the supposed non-necessity of institutional,

> historical etc. religion for many or for some, and you would strictly weigh and reconsider them all. Or (2) you would get your publisher to defer reprinting till the beginning of February, in which case I willingly undertake to give January to a careful study of your entire book [his emphasis]. But it must be clearly understood that I cannot touch it (again) till Jan., and that I thus study it then, because you are going to consider, in view of this 3rd edition the results of such a reading. I do not, myself, feel that your waiting these three months, in matters of such extreme importance, would be too much especially since you cannot know that this 3rd ed. may not be the last of the book for a good many years, at least. Yet, this is, of course, entirely a matter for your own judgement. It would not make me drop the reading of the book, but I would, then, probably read it less strenuously. Wishing you every success, I am yours sincerely,
>
> Fr. von Hügel.[22]

We have no idea of how the "school masterish" tone of this letter affected Underhill. But the result of this offer was that she chose the first option - at least to some extent. In her "Note to the Third Edition" she writes, "In revising this edition for the press I have availed myself of suggestions made by several friendly critics: above all, by the Baron von Hügel, to whom I here tender my most grateful thanks."[23] This is dated November 1911.

Von Hügel's reputation as an expert on mystical theology had been established, as noted, by his book, The Mystical Element in Religion. His proposal 1a) is a corrective measure against her bias towards "vitalism": 1b) is against her stance regarding Church and against her modernist tendencies. Despite von Hügel's own modernist leanings and bouts of skepticism he held to his idea that the three necessary elements of religion were the institutional, the intellectual

and the mystical elements. In fact, the explanation of this structure, as outlined in The Mystical Element is probably the most "popular" part of the book and has been duly utilized. It says something of Underhill's independence when we see that she never gets caught up in this particular triad in her writings, although she came to regard each element as necessary.

2. Mysticism.

With the publication of Mysticism, Underhill had more and more requests for "direction" and her letters of 1911 and 1912 abound with advice and methods - all delivered with what seems to be much affection and concern. To Margaret Robinson she suggests that "the Cross has never been the centre of your life really ... Accept what you are having, quite simply and obediently."[24] She makes suggestions for "ascetic" training for Lent,[25] gives instructions for making "an act of recollection,"[26] and other instructions for making a particular examination[27] (i.e. examination of conscience), on prayer, churchgoing and on celebration of festivals.[28]

To Mrs. Meyrick Heath she writes, "Please don't ever talk or think of 'sitting at my feet (!)' or any nonsense like that. If you knew the real animal you would be provoked to either tears or laughter at the absurdity of the idea. ... I am not 'far on' but at the very bottom."[29] Perhaps it was her "modernist" ideas against miracles and other events in the life of Jesus which made her say, "But I cling to St. Paul - and seem to find his inmost teaching over and over again in all one's experience, and in everyone who comes for Christ - Catholic or Protestant or whatsoever he may be."[30]

Heath was a fellow contributor to a journal (The Seeker) and on congratulating her on an article, Underhill writes disarmingly of an article of her own, "My Ruysbroeck is as flat as a pancake and almost an insult to that transcendental genius.. But it was written 'to order' when I was at my dullest and dreariest. The second installment is even worse!"[31]

She describes to her a holiday she took with her husband: "We had a truly divine week at Storrington; walked ten miles each day, mostly on the tops of the downs and soaked our minds in all the trees and flowers and growing things. There was a monastery church for me, with four doddery old monks and one brisk one with a superb voice. ... But as on many previous Easters, I found nature a great deal more spiritually suggestive than ecclesiasticism!"[32]

But in spite of this, Underhill was to all intents and purposes a "faithful Catholic" who did not partake of the sacraments. With her dear friend, Ethel Barker, she went to Mass each Sunday, kept the feasts, partook of the devotions and prayed the prayers of the saints. She went so far as to publish (under the pseudonym of "John Cordelier") two books on symbolic interpretation of traditional devotions: The Path of Eternal Wisdom (1911), on the "Way of the Cross," and The Spiral Way (1912) on the "mysteries" of the rosary. In time she came to dislike both of them.

In 1913 she writes on prayer - specifically on "stuffed specimens" found in books of devotion:

> But once these were the living, personal, spontaneous expressions of the love and faith - the inborn poetry - of those from whom they came. Many a liturgic prayer,

> which now seems to us impersonal and official - foreign to us, perhaps, in its language and thought - will show us if we have but a little imaginative sympathy, the ardent mood, the unforced dignity of the mind which first composed it. [33]

There was at this time, a revival of interest in mysticism and Underhill's work contributed to it in large measure. In 1912 she was elected to a committee of the "Religious Thought Society" which had as its aim the deepening of modern spiritual life. With Dean Inge at its head, she hoped that it would be more than an excuse for "Religious Talk."[34] One assumes that it was more than that. On October 12, 1912,[35] she read the paper, "The Place of Will, Intellect and Feeling in Prayer," which was to be included later in The Essentials of Mysticism.

3. Writings on Mysticism.

Underhill's next major book on mysticism, The Mystic Way, appeared in March, 1913, to mixed reviews. Nonetheless it was reprinted three months later. It was subtitled, "A psychological study of Christian Origins." In the preface she writes that it is "the object of this book to trace out that type of life, that peculiar quality of consciousness, which is called 'mystical,' from its earliest appearance within Christianity."[36] She goes on to say that great Christians of primitive times and great mystics since, all show "an organic growth, pass through a series of profound psychic changes and readjustments," by which they move from being "normal" to the heightened correspondence with Reality which is spiritual maturity. It is this sequence of psychological states which she calls the "Mystic Way."[37] It is a novel idea - but there is no doubt that some of the ideas therein were a little

too novel - if not a little "far-fetched" - such as tracing the steps of the mystic way in the lives of Jesus, Paul and John. The first chapter is replete with quotations from Bergson and Euchen. She writes that she makes no claims for "the" philosophic thread on which the argument is strung, knowing that for some it will be unacceptable. But for her psychology, she makes a higher claim, for the principles whereon it is based are from the experience of the saints.[38]

In the chapter on Christology, she compares Jesus with the mystics: a novel idea. She suggests the possibility that the radiance of the transfiguration may be related to the "so-called aura" which many "psychics" perceive[39] and says that in the story of the transfiguration, "in form poetic, but in substance true," the "companions" of Jesus witness to his "full attainment" of the powers of the "Illuminative Way."[40] Somehow, it is not a satisfying explanation.

The last chapter is called "The Witness of the Liturgy" and is an attempt to demonstrate that the Roman Mass gives witness to the mystic life.

What did her readers think of all this? Armstrong writes that the title "does not prepare the reader for ... the complete 'takeover' of the New Testament and early church history by mysticism and their thorough reinterpretation almost exclusively as a record of mystical experience."[41] No indeed. But in her grappling with the idealist and immanentist ideas current in philosophy at the time,

> Evelyn is ... a fairly rare example of a theological thinker who unashamedly seized upon the alloy of a contemporary philosophical doctrine and attempted to transmute it into the pure gold of a mystical symbol. Even her only partial success makes many of the theologians of her and the preceding age seem rather dull dogs.[42]

Her letters tell us that the book was less acceptable to some of her contemporaries. She received "a rather harrowing letter from Arthur Machen, making it obvious that he no longer considers me a Christian."[43] Her friend J. A. Herbert seems to have accused her of "modernism" and in an apologia she writes to him, "It seems to me that all conceptions of our Lord's person as something ready-made, must eventually land us in Docetism - and personally I find my own heresy, horrible though it be, better to live with than that."[44]

In a second reply to him she writes: "Personally if I didn't think the whole of life was the work of the Holy Spirit, I should give everything up. It is the centre of my creed: so vivid that the things which seem to us disgusting, cruel, unjust - and I don't deny them - can do nothing against it."[45]

In a third reply she writes that she has spoken with von Hügel who has given her a firm but gentle lecture on her Quakerish leanings [i.e. non-institutional, for von Hügel]. "His main point seems to be that such interior religion is all very well for our exalted moments, but will fail us in the ordinary dull jog-trot of daily life, and is therefore not a 'whole religion' for men who are not 'pure spirit'. ... Hard and dreary doctrine, to my mind, but I am not prepared to say it is wrong."[46]

In contrast with this, in a letter in the previous year she writes of some lectures being given by a Miss R. on Christianity. "It [the teaching] aims at making a healthy all-round efficient even-tempered creature, a perfect machine for doing God's will: but not a God-intoxicated spirit, a lover of the Eternal Beauty. ... Rather a tepid, remote impersonal kind of religion, don't you think? And wholly wanting in the great qualities of wildness and romance."[47]

So we see that she was already somewhat subdued by von Hügel's influence and his firm belief in the efficacy of the institutional, historical church.

In time, Underhill herself came to "distrust and dislike [the book] as 'false doctrine'."[48]

With regard to her attraction to Bergson's philosophy, Underhill may have discerned something in his philosophy which was not apparent to many others. Jacques Maritain, the Roman Catholic philosopher, says of Bergson that even in his 1907 book, Creative Evolution, "he aimed at portraying the existence of a transcending and creative God."[49] After his death (1941) Bergson's wife revealed that in his will, written in 1937, he had noted, "My reflections have led me closer and closer to Catholicism, in which I see the complete fulfillment of Judaism." He continued to say that because of the rise of antisemitism, he did not become a convert because he wished to remain among those who would be persecuted in the future. But he hoped that a Catholic priest would be authorized to pray at his funeral. This was indeed arranged.[50]

The year 1914 saw the publication of Practical Mysticism - A Little Book for Normal People. In the preface Underhill notes that "The spiritual is not a special career, involving abstraction from the world of things. It is part of every man's life."[51] To this end she makes a list of the functions of a practical mysticism - half a page of marvelous promises! Its audience is not the learned or the devout but those who find difficult the more technical works on the subject. It is then a handbook, based on a "masterly condensation" of Mysticism, and includes a Bergsonian flavour.

On page three Underhill offers this definition: "Mysticism is the art of union with Reality. The mystic is a person who has attained that union in greater or lesser degree; or who aims at and believes in such attainment."[52] The book contains simple directives on the art of contemplation.

E. I. Watkin criticized the book's dependence on Bergson, which, he claimed, resulted in her unfair depreciation of reason throughout the book -"a common fallacy of modern undenominational mysticism,"[53] he added.

Much of the book is written in direct speech - addressed to "you." This eliminates the need for sexist language, and makes the text more personal. In a rare departure, Underhill appeals to the very personal experience of human love. Trying to explain "other worldliness" she writes, "Was there not an instant when you took the lady who now orders your dinner into your arms, and she suddenly interpreted to you the whole universe?"[54] This effort at "homey metaphor" gives us an idea of the times in which Underhill lived.

For Underhill, perhaps to be "normal" meant to be unchurched, as she was. There is no mention of Jesus or "church" throughout the book. It is still Reality which is to be sought: and the way to find it is through nature, the saints, and the method of contemplation offered.

4. Evelyn Underhill/Mrs. Stuart Moore.

There is ample proof that Underhill lived a disciplined life. She began her day with an hour of prayer. By ten o'clock in the morning she had dispensed with the affairs of her household. Although her friend Lucy Menzies claimed that she had

never boiled a potato in her life, Charles Williams notes that she had taken cooking courses before her marriage (in addition to courses in book binding, in which art she became "almost a professional," she once wrote). She kept servants, which would have been the usual thing for a woman in her position. Nevertheless, it must be said that Underhill, freed from "peeling potatoes" produced at an astounding rate. On weekdays she wrote in the morning, walked to her parents' house and lunched with her mother, then spent the afternoon in various types of social encounters. Evenings were reserved for her husband. They were spent either entertaining or being entertained for social and business reasons, or sitting together before the fire, where she wrote letters on her knee. Perhaps because they were childless, the Stuart Moores had a great fondness for cats.

In 1912 she wrote of a woman mystic, "she was not one of those who are able to harmonize the demands of both worlds."[55] For Underhill, life was pitched between "eternity and time." She lived in two worlds. One was the life of the spirit. The other, her life as a loving and attentive wife, and a successful author. She took seriously all the responsibilities of these positions. An indirect result of this was the recognition of the academic community.

As noted earlier, in 1913 Underhill was elected a Fellow of King's College for Women where she had once taken courses. Armstrong writes: "By 1914, then, Evelyn's position as a major figure in the contemporary religious scene seemed assured. Her books were very widely read and reviewed,[56] and she herself was greatly revered and respected.

In addition, she had made the acquaintance of the Bengali poet,

Rabindranath Tagore and was assisting him in the production of a book of poems.[57]

Underhill writes at that time, "My life is highly complicated at present by my beloved Indian Prophet, who is convalescing from an operation and likes me to go to him every afternoon if possible, to work out some translations of old Indian mystical lyrics."[58] The format of the book is very appealing and it contains many lovely poems. Their collaboration ended with this work.

Underhill had already published a book of her own poems the year before called Immanence (1914). This was followed in 1916 by a second, Theophanies. They were both well-received at the time, though today it is very difficult to find any of them anywhere.[59]

She cannot, of course be classed among the great poets of the early twentieth century. She herself seems to have been fully aware of her limitations in this sphere. Kirby quotes a letter in which Underhill states, "I know nothing about the technique of poetry unfortunately and write it in a casual sort of way and 'hope for the best'."[60] The result was that at times her hope was fulfilled and at times it was not. She was at her best when she was most simple. She wrote of the experiences of her life, seen with the "inner eye of love." The first stanza of a poem of 1914 is an example.

Dynamic Love

Not to me
The unmoved Mover of philosophy
And absolute still sum of all that is,
The God whom I adore: not this!
Nay, rather a great moving wave of bliss,
A surging torrent of dynamic love
In passionate swift career,
That down the sheer
And fathomless abyss
Of Being ever pours, his ecstasy to prove.[61]

5. A Mystical Revival.

From 1913 to 1923 there are only two Underhill letters in Williams' collection.[62] One, addressed to Robinson, tells of the effect of the war years. Robinson has, it seems, described herself as having become "worldly." Underhill negates this and suggests that rather, it is because Robinson is not living up to her own ideals.

> What has happened to you is happening in a greater or less degree to everyone. The present abnormal conditions are as bad for the spiritual life as for every other kind of life. We are all finding it frightfully difficult and most of us are failing badly. The material world and its interests, uproars and perplexities are so insistent that detachment is almost impossible. Some are utterly overwhelmed: others ... take refuge in interest in little things. Transcendence of the here and now demands at present a strength of will and a power of withdrawal which very few possess. ... All the same of course it is essential to hold on as well as you can and make a resolute and regular act of willed attention to God at the times set apart for prayer - only do not fuss at the poor and unappetizing results. The will is what matters - so long as you have that you are safe.[63]

These are not casual words but obviously wrung from her own difficult experiences and temptations to despair.

The second letter is to thank an author for the gift of his book. She comments: "Of course I thoroughly agree with you that Christianity was from the first essentially a mystical religion; to me, the doctrine of the New Testament is only intelligible from that point."[64] This would seem to point to Underhill's return to the "excessive mysticism" which is found in the title essay of The Essentials of Mysticism which will be examined at length.

Since only these two letters survive the period, this hitherto valuable source of information concerning Underhill's life and thought will have to be supplemented by something much more open to conjecture and opinion: her various writings intended for publication (and indeed, published) - as her letters certainly were not.

In 1920 Underhill published a collection of essays, called The Essentials of Mysticism. All but one had appeared before in various journals but were revised and/or rewritten for the book. There are thirteen essays, written over the years from 1911 to 1920. They all deal with some aspect of mysticism - the first six with general theory and practice and the rest with its application in the lives and works of specific mystics.[65]

Again, they are written for a limited audience since they contain numerous quotations in foreign languages which are untranslated (Latin, French, Italian). Often quotations - in English as well as in other languages - are not credited as to source. These things can be frustrating to the serious reader.

It is interesting to read these essays in chronological order rather than in the sequential order in which they are arranged. The course of the development of Underhill's thought over the years is apparent. In an early essay, "The Place of Will, Intellect and Feeling in Prayer"(April, 1913),[66] one gets the impression that she tries to refer to God by any other name - i.e. Perfect Reality, Infinite Reality, Divine Will, Absolute Beauty, Supreme Beauty. "Prayer, ... begins by an intellectual adjustment."[67] Then the will takes over. In the essay, "The Mystic as Creative Artist" (July 1913) she writes in the opening paragraph of "the

notorious phrase in which Plotinus defined the soul's fruition of Eternity as "a flight of the alone to the Alone."[68] Later she speaks of his "sublime intuition of reality."[69] Finally, having quoted a poet on "union," she states in the last paragraph, "This [union] is the end of all mysticism."[70] If she is dismissing his "notorious phrase" then it would seem that she has ambivalent feelings concerning Plotinus. By 1918, this ambivalence disappears, as we shall see.

In "The Mystic and the Corporate Life" (January 1915) the word "God" is used extensively - Divine Reality only once. (Divine Light, Divine Life, once each). This is a new development. She makes a long list of saints and mystics and writes that they were all "convinced institutionalists."[71] The church and the mystics need one another and the "key to the connection between the great mystics and the corporate life within which they rise"[72] is the doctrine of the communion of saints. This would seem to indicate a shift towards the value and necessity of institutionalism in the author herself.

But then in 1918 she writes an essay on "The Mysticism of Plotinus." This is occasioned by a review she had written on Dean Inge's recent book on Plotinus.[73] From all indications she is enchanted all over again. The article seems to be an attempt to give Plotinus a respectable "family tree" - tracing his influence down through Augustine and Richard St. Victor to Thomas Aquinas.

Augustine was initially deeply influenced by Plotinus. Because of this, in future developments in mystical theology the "ecstatic vision of the One is definitely put forward as the summit of Christian experience,"[74] "and the Neo-platonic colour was never lost. Whenever Christian mysticism passes from the emotional

and empirical to the philosophic, the colour is clearly seen, and the concepts of Plotinus, more or less disguised, reappear."[75] A "close approximation to the thought, and especially to the psychology of Plotinus is found in Richard St. Victor."[76] St. Thomas, she writes, has actually "lifted" a famous phrase from Plotinus in what she calls a "remarkable passage" and in speaking of the same writes, "and by the knot of love she unites herself with God, and [italics] is with Him as the Alone with the Alone.[77] Remarkable it is, but in 1914 she had called a similar passage "notorious."

In Ruysbroeck's writings "the vision of Plotinus is fully baptized into the Catholic Church,"[78] Underhill states. She concludes by saying, "These men (i.e. St. Dominic, Eckhart, Suso Tuler, Ruysbroeck, Boehme) see philosophy through the haze of Christian feeling. Their work is full of passionate effort; it is centered on the ideas of sacrifice and of pain. Their religion is coloured by the sharp Christian consciousness of sin, and by the difficulty - never squarely faced - of reconciling devotion to a personal redeemer with the mystical passion for the Absolute."[79] There is no doubt that at the time, this was Underhill's own position - as shall be seen below.

In January 1920 she wrote the title essay for the book, The Essentials of Mysticism. It is replete with references to Plotinus. "God" is usually Absolute One, Ultimate, Reality, the One. The structure is a little difficult to follow. She begins with the question, "What are the true essentials of mysticism?"[80] Then asks, "... what is the essential element in spiritual experience?"[81] The second question she answers with the statement that the aim of the mystic is "union be-

tween God and the Soul. This is the one essential of mysticism..." (answering question one).[82] Then she goes on to a "group of essentials,"[83] then "a first essential stage,"[84] then "an essential character,"[85] then "essential factcrs,"[86] with references to Plotinus throughout. It is he who has the penultimate word. He writes that we are like singers in a choir, gathered around the conductor. Only when we look towards the "One" do we "attain the end of our existence and rest." Underhill adds, "In this conception of man's privilege and duty do we have the indestructible essence of mysticism."[87] It seems that it is not until the next year that Underhill begins to get the notion (to follow the analogy) that the conductor could be looking at the choir first, to get its attention.

To all appearances, Underhill has returned to the "pure mysticism" of her younger years. But it was to be the last time. Later, in 1925 and in 1932, two works on mysticism were commissioned. Both were of an historical nature. It was to be a new era. Never again was the word Mysticism used by her in a book title.

6. The War Years and Their Aftermath.

During the war years Evelyn Underhill worked for the most part as a translator for guidebooks in Italian and French.[88] She continued her own writing as well, but with somewhat less output.

In 1915 she wrote an article for The Hibbert Journal: "Problems of Conflict"[89] in which she tried to come to terms with war by justifying it. The saints knew suffering in itself is not an evil thing. As we know gentleness and pity by contrast

to hardness and cruelty, so we come to know peace through war. The true horror of war is in spiritual destruction; its "justification" is that it also fosters spiritual construction. The question about the rightness or wrongness of war is how it affects the national consciousness. The defense of the national ideal is a spectacle of great beauty, for it contains the hope for which personal desires are surrendered at the demand of a greater, more impersonal love.[90]

Underhill's own sacrifices for the war effort, in the name of love, underlie her position: her ideals are steeped in nobility. One wonders if she had trouble holding this position as the war progressed. She confesses later to "having fallen apart."[91] By the time of World War II she had become an ardent pacifist.

From 1915 to 1920 she wrote a few articles each year and two "Introductions" for other people's books on saints. Her own two books of this period (aside from the second book of poems) were written on favourite mystics. Ruysbroeck (1915) was a small book on the life of Jan van Ruysbroeck, a fourteenth century mystic - "thought by some to be the greatest of all medieval Catholic mystics,"[92] - an opinion held by Underhill herself who quotes him often.

In 1919 Jacopone da Todi "poet and mystic 1228-1306" was published. It is a huge work (over five hundred pages). The first half is a "spiritual biography." The second is a text of da Todi's translated into English verse by a friend of Underhill's, Mrs. Theodore Beck. Underhill considered da Todi to be one of the greatest Italian mystical poets and for her, the most interesting of them, perhaps because he wrote philosophic religious poetry. One would suppose that her interest in da Todi was sparked by her review of Dean Inge's book on Plotinus, referred to

above. Her enthusiasm for the mysticism of Plotinus shows when she quotes da Todi thus (the translation):

> O night sea! Thy billows steep
> Have seized me; I would drown within that deep.[93]

She comments: "Though full of reminiscences of earlier mystics, and especially of his well-loved Dionysius the Areopagite, it is one of the most remarkable first-hand descriptions of ecstasy - the Plotinian "flight of the Alone [sic] to the Alone" - to be found in Christian literature.[94] Knowing of Underhill's long and deep attachment to Plotinus, it is difficult not to find the metaphor somewhat unfortunate - drowning compared with flying. Perhaps in mystical experience it makes no difference.

But she vindicates herself later when she writes: 'It is the special glory of Christian mysticism that the union with God to which it leads the self is not a barren ecstasy, but a 'life-giving life.' In its final term it is creative,'[95] as we see in the lives of great saints - who, having come to that state of "union," re-enter "the world," become extremely practical, and bring about reform in numerous ways. Underhill knew well enough that she, for one, had to go beyond Plotinus.

7. Towards a New Beginning.

Underhill's most intimate friend perhaps during her whole lifetime was Ethel Barker. She became seriously ill in 1917 and died in 1921. There is no doubt that her death had a tremendous effect on Underhill, whose Catholic practice was very much related to Barker, from the beginning. But as we see by the follow-

ing, this had already begun to fade. Perhaps Barker's death was the cause of its ceasing altogether. Underhill writes:

> I ... very nearly became a Catholic (in 1907), but didn't quite. However, I went on for a long time going to Mass on Sundays as a sort of free lance and outsider; but gradually this faded out in favour of what I vainly imagined to be inwardness, and an increasing anti-institutional bias.
>
> Then, during the war, I went to pieces ... though with several vivid calls back which I did not respond to.[96]

One assumes that by then she was so caught up with Plotinus (all over again) and with "essentials" of mysticism that anything incarnational lacked "romance," and was all too mundane.

A passage in her January 1920 essay on "The Essentials of Mysticism" would seem to tell something of what she was going through at the time. It is interesting to note that in this paragraph she substitutes "spiritual experience" for "mysticism."

> So we are forced to ask ourselves, what is the essential element in spiritual experience? Which of the many states and revelations described by the mystics are integral parts of it; and what do these states and degrees come to, when we describe them in the current phraseology ... What elements are due to the suggestions of tradition, to conscious or unconscious symbolism, to the misinterpretation of emotion, to the invasion of cravings from the lower centres, or the disguised fulfillment of an unconscious wish? And when all these channels of illusion have been blocked, what is left? This will be a difficult and often a painful enquiry. ... I am sure that at the present moment we serve best the highest interest of the soul by subjecting the whole mess of material which is called "mysticism" to an inexorable criticism.[97]

No doubt for Underhill herself it was "difficult and painful." But it says a great deal that she attempted it.

It has been mentioned in this paper that of the group of essays on mysticism (1920) only one article had not appeared before.[98] Perhaps it was written particularly for this collection. In any case its inclusion here is, perhaps, an indication of the beginning of Underhill's shift to sacramentalism.

Lucie-Christine (1844-1908) was a pseudonym for a French woman who was married, of the leisured class, and a fervent and exact churchwoman. Her spiritual journal had been published in 1912.[99] Underhill writes about Lucie Christine:

> She was a Christian first, and mystic afterwards. Though her expressions may seem startling, her mysticism never goes beyond that of St. John and St. Paul; and her most Platonic utterances can be justified by the New Testament.[100]
>
> ... Her love for the institutional and sacramental side of religion saved her from many of the dangers and extravagances of individualism. It gave her a framework within which her own intuitions could find their place; and a valid symbolism through which she could interpret to herself the most rarified experiences of her soul.
>
> ... She, who had touched the Absolute in her contemplations, was yet deeply impressed by the drama of the Church; by its ceremonies, holy places, festivals, consecrations, Her inner life was nourished by its sacraments. She displayed the power - so characteristic of Christian mysticism at its best - of transcending without rejecting the formulae of belief as commonly understood; of remaining within, and drawing life from, the organism, without any diminution in the proper liberty of the soul.[101]

> Because of [her] double outlook on reality [the world of appearance and the world of pure being] her mysticism was both transcendental and sacramental. .. Lucie Christine makes clear to us, as few mystics have done, the immense transfiguration of ordinary life which comes from such an extension of consciousness.[102]

Perhaps it was this view of "mystical life" and "ordinary life" which caused Underhill to enter the sacramental life of the Church. She doesn't say. All that is known is that by 1921 Evelyn Underhill had returned to the Church of her confirmation - she had become a communicating member of the Church of England.

PART IV - Life as an Anglican

1. The Oxford Lectures.

a) Signs of change.

In January 1922, Underhill's The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today was published. The preface states that the book "owes its origin to the fact that in the autumn of 1921 the authorities of Manchester College, Oxford, invited me to deliver the inaugural course of a lectureship in religion":[1] to be called the Upton Lectures. Underhill expresses gratitude to the Oxford Faculty of Theology for "the great honour of being the first woman lecturer in religion to appear in the University list."[2]

The subject of the book is "the normal life of the Spirit, as it may be and is lived in the here-and-now."[3] This would seem to be a radical departure from "the flight of the alone to the Alone," of Plotinus. No conclusions can be drawn as yet as to how this shift was effected - but some of the circumstances surrounding it are known.

The invitation to give the Upton Lectures came, as she wrote, in the autumn of 1921.[4] Earlier that year she had published an essay in The Hibbert Journal (in April 3, 1921) called "Sources of Power in Human Life."[5] Chapter eight of the book, "The Life of the Spirit and Social Order" incorporates several passages from the essay. The chapter sums up her thesis. Apart from that, it is more didactic and hortatory than the article - and more utopian in its mood. It further suggests a change in her approach to "Church."

In the article she writes:

> ... Whether we regard it from the social or the individualistic point of view, it is plain that the reintegration of our lives, and the achievement of a more complete existence, is demanded of us: and that this is a task hard enough to call forth all our energies and enthusiasm. Instead of a formal religion, bound up with a creed based on marvellous occurrences, or theological doctrines which we, perhaps, find it difficult to accept, we have a new more real life - humanity's next stage of growth - to aim at; a life possible of realisation here and now, which, as the mystics assure us, can 'transform the furnace of the north into a garden of flowers.'[7]

By contrast, we read in the book,

> For anyone who has followed these arguments, and now desires to bring them into practice, asks: "What next?" the answer simply is - Begin. Begin with ourselves; and if possible do not begin in solitude. .. Again and again the history of spiritual experience [shows] ... that its propagation is most often by way of discipleship and the corporate life, not by the intensive culture of purely solitary effort. .. Therefore, join up with somebody, find fellowship; whether it be in a church or society or among a very few like-minded friends.[8]

She wasn't insisting on "Church" but her "exhortation" was a step in that direction. That this was a departure from her former stance is shown in a letter from Baron Friedrich von Hügel, written in 1916. Von Hügel[9] had requested the loan of a journal in which there was a review of two books on mysticism by Underhill.[10] He had read in the Cambridge Review of May 24 that in the review, Underhill had come out "strongly insistent on the value of the historical element in Xtianity" [sic][11] and on the "dangers of its subordination by symbolism or mysticism."[12] "This sounds indeed most satisfactory."[13] It would seem that von Hügel took this as a development towards the correction of his 1911 critique of

Mysticism (as seen above). He continued, "You only required just the sense which this reviewer finds in this piece of work of yours, to be deeply and wholesomely helpful, I felt and feel. Hence I rejoice, I believe [,] more fully than if I discovered some growth in myself - for you can and do reach more people than I can ever expect to reach myself."[14]

This was a generous and kind letter - but perhaps his sentiments were premature since it was not until five years later (1921) that Underhill was able to commit herself to church practice. But it seems obvious from this that it would be von Hügel to whom she would turn, when she needed help. In time, she would find that in doing so, she had chosen wisely.

The content of chapter five in The Life of the Spirit seems to indicate either how determined Underhill was to adopt her new position or how she convinced herself of its efficacy. In "The Institutional Religion and the Life of the Spirit," she divides her subject matter into two parts: church and cultus. The Church gives its "loyal members," 1) group-consciousness; 2) religious union with the present and the past; 3) discipline, and 4) culture. "Insofar as the freelance gets any of these four things, he gets them ultimately from some institutional source."[15] But the danger of the Church is that it cannot give or be expected to give direct spiritual experience.

"A real Church has ... something to give to, and something to demand from each of its members and there is a genuine loss for man in being underchurched."[16] "... If the prayerful attitude of my fellow-worshippers helps me to pray better, surely it is a very mean kind of conceit on my part which would

prompt me to despise their help, and refuse to acknowledge Creative Spirit acting on me through other men?"[17] Perhaps this seemingly radical reversal is really, for Underhill, a return to the faith of earlier days when she had spent so much time attending Mass in Roman Catholic churches. But what was the price for all this? Mutual accommodation and sacrifice - as in the family.[18]

On the cultus, she writes: "The great thing is that by these corporate liturgic practices and surrenders, we can prevent that terrible freezing up of the deep wells of our own being which so easily comes to those who must lead an exacting material or intellectual life."[19]

She sounds convincing. And by January 1923 she was herself so convicted that in the role of "director" herself, she wrote to Lucy Menzies (later her dear friend), "I am not a bit unpleasant about sins and penances ... but apt to be disagreeable on the church question. I stood out against it myself for so long and have been so thoroughly convinced of my own error that I do not want people to waste time in the same way."[20]

In his second edition of The Mystical Element, von Hügel notes her strife in his revised bibliography:

> Evelyn Underhill. Interesting progress from Mysticism, 1911, full of breadth and charm, but lacking the institutional sense, after several excessively mystical works, to The Life of the Spirit, 1922, bravely insistent upon history and institutionalism, and furnishing a solidly valuable collection of papers.[21]

The word "bravely" is rather affective. Von Hügel was at the time seventy-one years of age and Underhill was forty eight. His attitude may have

been paternal but it shows appreciation for her struggle!

b) The old and the new

i) Mystic types

To understand the effect of this "shift" Underhill's classification of types of mystics will be examined, first in Mysticism (1911) and then in The Life of the Spirit (1922)

In the chapter called "Mysticism and Symbolism,"[22] Underhill speaks of the three great classes of symbols of the human's inward history which "play upon" three deep cravings of the self. These are: a) the craving which makes one a pilgrim and wanderer who sets out on a journey in search of a lost home; b) the craving of heart for heart, which makes one a lover; c) the craving for inward purity and perfection which makes one an ascetic and, eventually, a saint.

There are three ways to describe the Absolute reality: a) the pilgrim will describe it as a place; b) the lover, as a person; c) the ascetic, as a state. All of these descriptions are partial symbols of the one "Indescribable Truth."

Further, a) will feel that he/she is on a quest - a journey from the material world to the spiritual world - a "flight"; b) will find in Christ an object of "intimacy, devotion and desire;" c) will see the mystic life as involving inward change rather than outgoing search. Growth or transmutation symbolizes his/her regeneration.

These three goups of mystics stand for three kinds of temperament which take as their symbol a) the Mystic Quest; b) the Marriage of the Soul; c) the "Great work" of the Spiritual Alchemists. (The capital letters are Underhill's.) The rest of the chapter is devoted to a detailed discussion of each of these "types" of mystics.

The first chapter of The Life of the Spirit is entitled "The Characters of Spiritual Life"[23] (i.e. characteristics, in the modern idiom). Underhill's starting point is "man's vague, fluctuating, yet persistent apprehension of an enduring and transcendent Reality." By three main ways do we realize this instinct for God: a) is marked by a profound sense of security, and peace. God is the Ground of the soul, the Unmoved. The spiritual fact is interpreted in a non-personal and cosmic way. Symbols tend to be those of space, stillness, light; b) is marked by the experience of relationship which is felt to be the intimate and reciprocal communion of a person with a Person, characterized by a prevenient and an answering love; c)is marked by the Spirit felt as an inflowing power, an energizing of the self or of the religious group, giving fresh vigour and joy to its existence.

These apprehensions of reality are congruent with three types of spiritual awareness: a) "the cosmic ontological, or transcendent, finding God as the infinite Reality outside and beyond us;"[24] b) the personal, finding Him as the living and responsive object of our love, in immediate touch with us."[25] c) "The dynamic, finding Him as the power that dwells within or energizes us."[26] It should be noted that if spiritual life is to be full and is to achieve perfection in some measure, all three apprehensions must be present. "And thus it seems to me, that what we have in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, is above all the crystallization and mind's interpretation of these three ways in which our simple contact with God is actualized by us. It is, like so many other dogmas when we get to the bottom of them, an attempt to describe experience."[27]

In both passages Underhill probably avoids the division of transcendent-

immanent since these two "types" do not admit to a third "type." What is remarkable is that her referents have changed. In the Mysticism categories they are as follows. In (a) the referent is Plotinus and his idea of flight; in (b) Christ is necessarily the object of such intimacy because "the Christian religion insists upon the personal aspect of the Godhead;"[28] and in (c) the referent is the philosopher's stone of the alchemists, which could purge all baser metals of dross and then turn them to gold.

In The Life of the Spirit the "cravings of the self" have been replaced by the "apprehension of Reality." The referents for the three types are the three persons of the Trinity: a) God is the Ground of the soul. (There is no "flight" here!) b) "Christ as object" is replaced by a Person - "characterized by a prevenient and an answering love," - One who first calls and then responds. c) The magic of the alchemists is replaced by the work of the Spirit.

In the light of her mystical writings her final comment on dogma seems incredible. But one could say, perhaps, that it points to the transforming power of the Trinity in her own life.

ii) The concept of grace

One of the criticisms levelled at Underhill's writings on mysticism was that the effort to "find God" seemed to begin with man's effort - to which God (Reality) responded. E.I. Watkin in his review of Practical Mysticism writes, "... Mysticism is the effect of grace. Miss Underhill ascribes it, for the most part, to works."[29] It should be noted that the word "grace" does not appear in the index of Mysticism.

Is there a development in Underhill's conception of "grace?" A look at her writings might reveal if this criticism is warranted.

In 1909 she writes:

> I think the De Arrha Anima[30] experience is an intensive form of something which happens - or rather may happen - to almost anyone. I had one or two rather sharp pokings of that kind during my blackest years - and still do. If Grace were not more interested in us than we are in Grace, most of us would live and die in hell. It is so much stronger than we are that it will break in, in spite of our automatic resistance: and we are so immeasurably below it that we cannot attain it or keep it by any voluntary activity merely because we want to.[31]

The spacial imagery is interesting. What does she mean by our being so "below grace" that we cannot attain it merely by will?

In 1912 she advises the same correspondent:

> Try to make acts of faith and trust and to cultivate the power of resting in God, even in the darkness. Remember, grace is pouring in on you all the time and is not conditioned by the fact that your eyes are shut.[32]

In this excerpt (written after the publication of Mysticism), grace is clearly seen as a gift and affirmed as always present.

In a 1913 article she states:

> "Grace" is, of course, the theological term for that inflow of spiritual vitality which is the response made by the divine order to the human motions of adoration, supplication, and love; and according to the energy and intensity with which our efforts are made - the degree in which we concentrate our attention upon this high and difficult business of prayer - will be the amount of new life that we receive. ... Grace presses in upon life perpetually and awaits our voluntary reception of it.[33]

In the above, God (divine order) becomes again the respondent.

A 1914 article defines grace thus:

> ... What the theologians call "grace" [is] that essential factor of the mystic life process - a making good by the addition of a new dower of transcendent vitality, of the shortcomings of the merely human creature regarded as an "inheritor of Eternal Life."

Here grace is available as an "additional vitality" - the élan vital of Bergson, perhaps?

Watkin's review of Practical Mysticism (see above) was published in October 1915.

In a book review by Underhill herself, in April 1916[34] she corrects the author's emphasis on "self-fulfillment" and writes:

> Now as regards the voluntarist character of mystic apprehension, though the large amount we can do for ourselves in developing the spiritual consciousness should certainly be realized, yet no account of the unfolding of that consciousness can be complete which ignores the part played by that strange "power other than ourselves" which is technically called grace. The mystical process is best understood when regarded as a "give and take" between our free will and love and God's free will and love. The self-long ethical and religious training does not ensure the Divine communication but merely makes it possible, as its attitude of still receptivity in contemplation ... is but the preparation of an experience which it cannot of itself either induce or control.[35]

Though she acknowledges will a rightful place, she insists that the role of grace must be accounted for. Ascetic life does not ensure "Divine Communication" but makes it possible. Again, God is seen as respondent - as man reaches out in freedom and love, so God responds in freedom and love. Thus His response is made "possible," and, one would have to assume, "probable," but this is not stated.

In her 1920 title essay[36] for the last book on "pure mysticism" Underhill writes, "This sense of a double movement, a self-giving on the divine side answering to the self-giving on the human side, is found in all great mysticism."[37]

In this excerpt from her period of renewed "excessive mysticism," God is again seen as respondent to the mystic's initial effort.

Finally, a quote from a passage from the 1921 Oxford lectures:

> ... The Life of the Spirit is a concrete fact; a real response to a real universe. But this concrete life of faith ... is lived here and now; in and through the self's psychic life, and indeed his bodily life too - a matter which is embodied in sacramentalism. ... It is a characteristic of those in whom this life is dominant, that they are capable of receiving and responding to the highest and most vivifying suggestions which the universe in its totality pours in on us. This movement of response, often quietly overlooked, is what makes them not spiritual hedonists but men and women of prayer. Grace - to give these suggestions of Spirit their conventional name - is perpetually beating in on us. But if it is to be inwardly realized, the Divine Suggestion must be transformed by man's will and love into an auto-suggestion; and this is what seems to happen in meditation and prayer.[38] ... the opposing qualities, humility, love and purity, make us as we say accessible to grace.[39]

In this passage we see evidence again of Underhill's shift away from "excessive mysticism" to "the spiritual life." It is life in "the here and now" that she is speaking of - the "universe" pours in and we respond - a movement often "overlooked," she writes. The reminder, of course, would apply to herself, first and foremost. Now the attitude on the part of the person is quiet receptivity and openness. The willed-effort has become one of attention so that man can receive that which is "being poured forth."

There is no suggestion of "flight" here; rather, one seems to sense that

she has, in the words of St. Paul, been "rooted and grounded in love."[40]

It was to be the ideal preparation for a change which would soon be effected in her philosophical position - from belief in the elan vital to the concept of prevenient grace[41] - the "Givenness" of all religion - the position held by Friedrich von Hügel, after he himself had been convinced by his friend, Ernst Troeltsch.

2. The Influence of Friedrich von Hügel.

When Evelyn Underhill returned to the Church of England, it was without fanfare. She had been baptised and confirmed in that communion so it was only a question of making the decision to become an "active member" once again. It is not surprising that she chose "high-church" Anglicanism. Since most of her adult devotional life had been spent in the Roman Catholic Church, the liturgy and rituals of the Anglo-Catholics would have been familiar to her.

It seems that it was not long after she had begun this practice that she approached Friedrich von Hügel and asked that he "direct" her. Presumably, this was to be on a regular basis of a kind, since she had, over the years, been in touch with him. The effect of his direction on Underhill is apparent in her writings, her philosophy, and in her work as a spiritual director and later as a retreat conductor. In fact, it would seem that his influence affected every facet of her life - spiritual, private, and public. It could be said that while von Hügel had not succeeded in convincing Underhill to undertake an extensive revision of Mysticism (see his letter, 30 October, 1911, quoted above), now, through his

influence ten years later, she herself was changed.

The close relationship lasted some four years - from October 1921 to January 1925, the time of his death. It seems paradoxical that someone as reticent as Underhill was to speak of her own experience, should have such a personal correspondence published for all to see. But, as she had spent a large part of her life writing about the religious experiences of the mystics, perhaps it could be justified that her own account of her experiences should be thus exposed. In another sense, it may have been the price to pay for her being a prominent public figure. To the historian, of course, these papers - apart from mere "interest" - offer an unusual opportunity for study. They record the change and development in a person who was "seeking" - and show clearly the value of having a guide and companion for such an undertaking. "Soul-searching" is a lonely endeavour without a guide, and von Hügel was an experienced "master."

In addition to these letters, there is a personal notebook in which Underhill wrote notes on her feelings and emotional states from 1921-1930. Armstrong is the first to make use of this material (hitherto unavailable, one assumes). He notes that in preparing her biography, information concerning other events in Underhill's life, along with details of her relationship with von Hügel are easily accessible.

> But it will also be possible and, at the risk of appearing to pry unduly, necessary to follow the growth of that inner experience which Evelyn to a large extent revealed to von Hügel but which she communicates more directly in the pages of the little green-covered exercise book... Acquaintance with this material may finally increase our awareness of just how little Evelyn's doctrine was for her simply an intellectual game or mere

> academic cannon-fodder, a matter of tongues and lips, and how deeply all she had to say which people found helpful in these later years was the product of her own suffering.[43]

It will be necessary then to refer both to the letters between Underhill and von Hügel (edited and paraphrased in some cases), and to the contents of the notebook with its cryptic and personal notes.

When Underhill first approached von Hügel for formal "direction" she had "made up her mind," it seems, that church membership was a good and necessary thing. But it took time for her to incorporate this idea into her theology and her philosophy.

On October 29, 1921, Baron Friedrich von Hügel wrote to her, obviously in reply to her letter requesting "direction." Since it describes so well her position at the time, this lengthy passage is quoted.

> It has been quite a pain for me not to be able to thank you most gratefully at once for the great joy your long letter has given me. It was indeed good of you to be so frank and so full in your self expression to me on those points which I so deeply care about.
>
> You evidently realized why and where I was hoping and praying for a development in you. Such development did not - at least directly - concern Rome at all. I quite realize how difficult (how dangerous unless definitely called) such a change to the Roman mind of obedience has become for many educated minds.[44] And though I certainly should love to see you simply and completely one of us; and though again I am not going to be sure that you will never be given that special call, I mean <u>that</u> was not what so far made me wistful at the thought of you. No! What I directly and clearly wanted for you was just what you now tell me you have gained and won! <u>Deo gratias</u>! I congratulate you and beg you to persevere most faithfully in all that is positive in this your

> new and, I pray, confirmed outlook. Of course you will have dryness, disgusts, strong inclinations to revert to more or less pure "mysticism." But it is excellent news that, preparing one of these addresses for Manchester College, Oxford, you found you had really come out strongly and self committingly for Traditional, Institutional, Sacramental Religion.
>
> ... With this growth of yours I cease to have any misgivings within my pleasure at your popularity. May you indeed still grow much in influence, so long as you remain firm and grow in these your new lights, adding to and penetrating the old.[45]

For Underhill such an encouraging and supportive letter must have been most welcome. It shows also, perhaps, that von Hügel held his "construct" (the three elements of religion seen above) to be important. Unqualified submission to Rome was not demanded. It was a generous response and showed that he had been concerned for some time. Underhill came to von Hügel on the impetus of a "conversion" experience - the second one. The first had occurred in 1907 and brought her out of a period of agnosticism. But it had promptly led her to question the experience and to ask Benson if it were not all illusion. Now, by Christmas 1921, she had the same problem. She writes to von Hügel,

> The chief point is, am I simply living an illusion? It seems impossible but all the same I felt I must be sure. I don't mean by this any unwillingness to make a venture, or any demand for impossible clearness of faith, but simply to be certain my own experiences are not imaginary. The points in favour of their reality seem to be,
>
> 1. What you call givenness, unexpectedness, entire non-earnedness.
> 2. Overwhelming sense of certitude, objective reality, and of obligation.
> 3. That I have never tried either to obtain or to retain them, and know that such effort would be useless.[46]

Then she adds . . . "Everything has been given back to me that I ever had - and more."[47] She asks if this "completely undeserved restitution is normal and all right, and whether the process of behaving like a rebellious and hardened beast: mind getting into utter blackness; then realizing it, however bitterly - can be an actual way of development? Is this sort of experience what is meant by forgiveness? Because that is what it felt like - final and complete, reharmonizing and secure."[48]

> In my lucid moments I see only too clearly that the only possible end of this road is complete, unconditional self-consecration, and for this I have not got the nerve, the character or the depth. There has been some sort of mistake. My soul is too small for it and yet it is at bottom the only thing that I really want.[49]

She asks about the amount of time given to prayer during dark times - which she has had almost constantly for the past five years.[50]

Finally, on "Christo-centric devotion" she writes:

> This is still a difficulty. I can't do it. And yet the average Christian appears by declaration to do it naturally and instinctively. It seems to involve the fusion of two incompatible conceptions. Yet I really am a Christian - at least I believe so - though in the modernist rather than strict orthodox sense.[51]

This gives a thorough picture of what Underhill was experiencing at the time. It would seem to be remarkably honest: and perceptive as well.

Von Hügel's direction was gentle but firm. She summed it up in a précis dated Christmas 1921 and called "My Rule." There were ten points which incorporated his various suggestions. She was to report her progress in six months, in writing - though she went to see him often.[52]

In six months' time her report included this:

> My old religious life now looks too thin and solitary: this is more various - contemplating, Holy Communion, the felt presence of God, struggles to behave properly, and love for my poor people - all seem articulated points of it.[53]

Because the situation in the Roman Church[54] had changed somewhat since von Hügel's letter to her in 1911, he suggests several times that should the "call" to join the Roman communion come (again) she should dispose herself to obedience. She reminded him of her husband's intense dislike for the idea - which, for von Hügel, was not a problem. However, as the years progressed she became firmly settled as an Anglican and submission to Rome was no longer an issue.

There happened in 1922 two experiences which were important, for each brought about a marked change in Underhill. The account of the first is from her green notebook, and is addressed to von Hügel. (A fair copy was sent to him with a somewhat apologetic air.)

> Probably I ought to tell you this. Last October (1922), one day when I was praying, quite suddenly a voice seemed to speak to me - with tremendous staccato sharpness and clearness. It said only one short thing: first in Latin and then in English! PLEASE don't think I'm going in for psychic automatisms or horrors of that sort. It never happened since and I don't want it to. Of course I know all about the psychological aspect and am not "hallucinated." All the same, I simply cannot believe that there was not some thing deeper, more real, not me at all, behind. The effect was terrific. Sort of nailed me to the floor for 1/2 an hour, which went in a flash. I felt definitely called-out and settled once for all - that any falling back or leaving off after that will be an unpardonable reason. This sense has persisted.[55]

It would seem that this sense of being "called out and settled" stayed with her for the rest of her life. There were to be times of great darkness, times of "deep and real happiness,"[56] "such joy that it almost hurts."[57] But through them all, she knew she was acting in response to another.

The other experience was the gradual development in her relationship to Christ. In 1927 she writes this to a friend:

> Until about five years ago I never had any personal experence of our Lord. I didn't know what it meant. I was a convinced Theocentric, and thought Christo-centric language and practice sentimental and superstitious. .. I had from time to time what seemed to be vivid experience from the time of my conversion from agnosticism (about twenty years ago now). This position I thought to be that of a broadminded intelligent Christian, but when I went to the Baron he said I wasn't much better than a Unitarian. Somehow by his prayers or something, he compelled me to experience Christ. He never said anything more about it - but I know humanly speaking, he did it. It took about four months - it was like watching the sun rise very slowly - and suddenly one knew what it was.
>
> Now for some months after I remained predominantly Theocentric. But for the next two or three years, and especially lately, more and more my whole religious life and experience seem to centre with increasing vividness on our Lord. ... The New Testament which once I couldn't make much of, or meditate on, now seems full of things never noticed.[58]

It was not that she "gave up" being Theocentric - rather a devotion to Christ was added. In 1934 she wrote to a correspondent.

> I ... am quite quite glad you do feel a bit stirred up about the Christo-centric, incarnational side of religion. I expect I rubbed it in, rather, because I am temperamentally like you in that, and left to myself would just go off on God alone. And Baron von Hügel made me see that it simply won't do and does

> lead to a sort of arrogance ... as well as missing some of the loveliest, deepest and most touching parts of Christianity.[59]

If one thinks of her "types" of mystics it can be seen that she is true to her reworking of those ideas as outlined in The Life of the Spirit - experiencing all three types of ways of mystical life and each person of the Trinity.[60]

After the death of von Hügel, Underhill wrote an article for a newspaper, called "Baron von Hügel as a Spiritual Director." It was anonymous - presumably because she quotes some of her own letters from him. But in 1933 she published a collection of essays and addresses, among them the above article. Perhaps by then, the distance made her more willing to acknowledge its authorship. She writes that the key words of "religion - God, adoration, self-oblivion and surrender," even "ontology and transcendence" became incandescent with a super-natural fire when spoken by von Hügel. A letter written by him near the end of his life was an appropriate epitaph, "Full of the breadth, the depth, and the tenderness of the Saints."[61]

For Underhill life was never the same after she had come under his influence.

To a later director she wrote concerning von Hügel, "Under God, I owe him my whole spiritual life, and there would be much more of it than there is, if I had been more courageous and stern with myself and followed his directions more thoroughly."[62]

This statement is a generous acknowledgement of von Hügel's influence, but it is a fact that before she went to him, Underhill had already had two major

conversion experiences. When she was invited to conduct the first of many retreats in 1924, she came with more than fifteen years of varied religious experience - she was not a neophyte. But she was "different."

Armstrong notes that if ever there were a "turning point" in Underhill's life, it was when she came to realize (from 1923) that her experiences "were not articles of faith,"[63] nor was it even a good thing to escape all skepticism since this would lead to pride.[64] The effect of this was that Underhill was able to write in her report of 26 December, 1923, that she had learned two things:

> 1. ... A Deep and clear sense of the all-penetrating Presence of God & of Love as His deepest nature ...
>
> 2. More and more I realize, the union with Christ one craves for can & must be only through union with His redemptive work, always going on in the world. If I ever hesitate before this, & the pain & stress it must mean for us wretched little creatures used as his instruments then I draw back from Him and break the link. So the 'life of supremely happy men' is not 'alone with the alone' - it's the redeeming life, now & in Eternity too, in ever greater & more entrancing union with the spirit of Jesus ceaselessly at work in the world. Only we must have quiet times too, to consolidate that union ...[65]

It was the end of the romance with Plotinus - and the beginning of a life which was to be truly sacrificial and ascetic; always striving, always to give more, to love more, but with "detachment." Perhaps she had first learned this from St. Ignatius, since she was so familiar with his Spiritual Exercises.

In 1925 Underhill wrote The Mystics of the Church. Armstrong writes that this book "serves as an eloquent witness to her new view of the God-centered life as fully embodied in the given historical Christian community."[66]

This shift must have been recognized in the Anglican community since the book was a commissioned work for a series entitled "Living Church."

Charles Williams excused it, saying that Underhill herself came to regard this as a piece of hack-work. It seems that, as a writer himself, he could sympathize with her and excuse the result.[67]

From the preface we learn that it is meant to be a spiritual history of the Christian Church. She writes, "I have therefore left on one side the mystical philosophers, those mystics who are chiefly remarkable for their ecstatic or visionary experiences, and those spiritual indivualists who have rebelled against the institutional side of religion ... [Considered in this book will be the mystics within the Church.] Nothing perhaps has so much conduced to the misunderstanding and discrediting of the mystics as the tendency to isolate them from the Church in which they appear ..."[68] Obviously this is not the same Underhill as that of "The Essentials."

In the same year, while on holiday in Italy with her husband, Underhill had the opportunity of meeting Sorella Maria, foundress of a small contemplative community. They had been in correspondence since 1919. It was a moving event for Underhill and in 1927 she wrote an article about it for the Spectator[69] - carefully concealing the location of the encounter. She writes that she asked this "saintly" woman to tell her something of her conception of the spiritual life. Her response - "startlingly at variance with her peaceful surroundings"[70] was, "In torment and effort to serve the brethren."[71]

In a letter to a friend, Underhill says quite clearly that she had asked for

something for herself and had been given this reply. To another mutual friend she writes that "Maria gave me at my request a 'Word' to take away with me, and a very ferocious one it was."[72]

But there is no reason to think that she did not accept it.

3. Subsequent Directors.

Eighteen months after the death of von Hügel, Underhill sought counsel from the Bishop of Truro, Walter Frere. It would appear that he directed her from 1926 to 1932, but they continued to have a close friendship until his death. Frere was a fine liturgical scholar and was of great assistance to her in her later work on liturgy.

Underhill contributed to a memoir on Frere[73], which was published after her death. She wrote,

> In his method of directing souls there was nothing very new or startling.... The combined common sense, actuality and spirituality so characteristic of St. Francois de Sales, was prominent in his teaching. It was not, however, always easy to get definite advice or opinions from him, for his humility always made him diffident and tentative in his approach to other souls. But if there was a real "spot of trouble" demanding help and care, he sprang to attention at once without any consideration for his own convenience or arrangements. ... Then he spoke and advised firmly and with an absolute certainty ... transforming the situation by his touch.[74]

It seems that Underhill still wanted some "strong direction" and for a time she corresponded with Dom John Chapman, a Benedictine monk, Abbot of Downside. Like Father Benson of the early years, he was a convert from Anglicanism and the son of an Anglican clergyman.

In April 1935 his collected and edited Spiritual Letters were published. Included was a reprint of a booklet on contemplative prayer, which had already been heartily recommended by Underhill, saying that the Abbot "knew more really about prayer than anyone I ever met."[75]

When the Letters appeared, she reviewed the book twice - for both The Criterion and Theology. In her personal correspondence she repeated her recommendations and her high praise.[76] Chapter XXXIV, "To a Married Lady," consisted of excerpts of letters to Underhill herself, written by Chapman.

The edited letters are all of the year 1931. We assume that the relationship ended there. Most of her questions appear to have been the subjects of difficulties and suffering in the Christian life. Chapman responds, albeit reluctantly, as his comments show. "Forgive me for writing so much, as you know it all perfectly well and can express it better than I can. ..."[78]

"I cannot possibly show you a way out. The most I can do is to show you where you are, perhaps."[79]

"I can't tell you anything you don't know."[80]

For someone as anxious as Underhill was to be told, one can see why she did not pursue this further!

Underhill's last director was Reginald Sommerset Ward, an Anglican priest whose ministry of direction in the Church lasted some fifty years. Armstrong writes that Ward toured the country several times yearly in order to meet his "penitents." He believed in "strong direction" - as did Underhill herself. All the same, it would seem that his frequent urgings against overwork and exhaustion were sidestepped.[81]

Ward published two books on the spiritual life - both anonymously and both on prayer. The second is called A Guide for Spiritual Directors.[82] It seems to contain his own method of teaching people to pray. It is based on von Hügel's construct of the three elements in religion. For those who need development of the intellectual (sic) element, he advises that Underhill's books be recommended.[83] No letters between them seem to have survived.

Only a portion of a letter is printed. It was written to Margaret Cropper[84] after the initial meeting:

> My dear Margaret - I must tell you I have just had a most wonderful day with Mr. Sommerset Ward. I think he is the most remarkable soul-specialist I've ever met since the Baron - & the thrilling thing is that tho' apparently so unalike, their method of direction and point of view is very close. ... One felt absolutely in the presence of a specialist working for the Love of God & brimming over with common sense![85]

Each new director seems to have been encountered with renewed and boundless enthusiasm, not unusual in such a situation.

But if Evelyn Underhill felt it necessary to seek the guidance of skillful directors, there is no doubt that when her own counsel was sought, she did not shirk what she felt to be her own responsibility: to offer what help she could. As she had received from others, so she gave. She made herself available for counsel in her home, several afternoons during the week. During the retreats which she conducted, time was set aside for a one-to-one encounter for anyone who desired it. She received many letters requesting spiritual direction and was very diligent in responding, offering counsel and encouragement from her own experience. Often when

an interview was over she sent a letter to reinforce what she had offered by way of experiences from the lives of the saints, from great Christian writers, and her own homely advice. She was gentle and kind but expected that those who came to her would learn to respond to grace by regular prayer, by self-discipline, and if possible, some church affiliation, all of which she practiced herself.[85]

4. Vocation.

a) "Called Out"

By 1923 Underhill's services were in such great demand that she was, understandably, feeling "pushed."

> I feel great uncertainty as to what God chiefly wants of me. Selection has become inevitable. I can't meet more than half the demands made. I asked for more opportunity of personal service and have thoroughly been taken at my word! But there is almost no time or strength left now for study for its own sake; always giving or preparing addresses, advice, writing articles, trying to keep pace with work, going on committees and conferences.[86]

By the next year she was to add to this list the retreats that she conducted, first at Pleshey, and then at retreat houses all over the country. The result of this was that apart from the commissioned work mentioned above (The Mystics of the Church), published in 1925, the books she published during the next decade were all collections of things she had written during the years. They fall into two categories - essays and lectures, and retreat addresses. Perhaps some of her seeming frustration, even in 1923, was caused by the fact that she didn't have the time to do the scholarly research at which she was so apt.

It is not possible here to follow Underhill from one endeavour to the next. Only the general areas of her influence will be surveyed.

b) "Copec"

"The Conference on Politics, Economics and Christianity" (Copec) had as its moving spirit, William Temple.[87] At his invitation Underhill became involved.

The idea of such a conference had occurred to Temple some years before.

In 1920 he was asked to edit a monthly magazine, called The Pilgrim. It was discontinued in 1927 due to lack of support. In Temple's words, "Its aim had been to present a Christian view of the various questions of the day."[88] For Temple, these questions were concerned with Christianity and Politics. Dean Inge's opinion was, "I think you must admit that Christian 'politics' in The Pilgrim and elsewhere are tinged with the roseate hues of early dawn..."[89]

Preparations for Copec began in 1920. It was to be an interdenominational conference - a week of meetings in Birmingham, from April 5 - 12, 1924. Four years of careful preparation led to this climax. "Its object was to seek the will and purpose of God for men and women in every relationship of their lives - political, social, industrial and the rest."[90] Twelve commissions were set up. These prepared "reports," which were studied a year before the conference. Opinions vary as to the value of the outcome but all share one theme: the praise of William Temple.

F.A. Iremonger writes,

> The high level of the Conference never dropped, nor did the initial enthusiasm flag throughout the week. ... The Copec Conference affected the whole Oecumenical

> Movement in the Churches, and gave to international Christian thinking and planning a sense of direction which was to prove of first-rate importance in the subsequent history of that Movement.[91]

Iremonger quotes one Professor W. F. Lofthouse as saying,"I shall always think of this as one of Temple's greatest services to the Church and the Kingdom of God."[92]

Maurice Reckitt writes,

> To say that its presiding genius was William Temple is not in this case to employ a cliché but to give an exact description of the facts.[93]

For Underhill to be approached by Temple to participate in the conference was a sign that her work was recognized as being significant for the times.

Three of her letters refer to different aspects of her contribution. In the first she writes:

> Last Thursday evening was such a joy - we had a great meeting at the Albert Hall for my "Christian Citizenship Conference"; and it was splendid. Packed right up to the roof with people and everyone so keen and such a lovely spirit everywhere ... and the Bishop of Manchester [William Temple] gave a very beautiful address - in fact all did. ... I did really feel the whole thing was a triumph for the Spirit of Christ.[94]

Underhill, like many others, was caught up in the preparations for Copec and the promise it held. She had been part of the committee that produced Volume I of the commission reports: "The Nature of God and His Purpose for the World." It is generally held that this report was the best of the conference. Although the report has fifteen signatories, it would seem that Underhill and one other prepared it.

> I've been having a lurid week-end going through proofs of 80 sheets of galley - mostly by my co-editor who has a talent for pouring forth floods of heliotrope prose and a special love for triads of abstract nouns. ... My own contributions stick out of this with the stark austerity of quotations from the Stores List.[95]

A month later she writes:

> I have just been asked to be one of the three speakers on the opening day of Copec - a truly horrifying responsibility. Dr. Raven for the Anglicans, Mr. Maltby for Free Churches and I (I suppose) for "Any Other Colour," as they say at the cat shows.[96]

As it was, she did not attend, but her address was read by someone else.[97] She spoke elsewhere on behalf of Copec - before and after the Conference. Two addresses were published later in The Pilgrim. These and one other appeared in a collection of essays entitled Mixed Pasture, published in 1933.

All three[98] are on the subject of Christian action, focussing on the Christian in the world (in accordance with the commission of which she was part). The issue was, "What does it take to change the world?"

It is not difficult to understand that Underhill eventually moved away from this gigantic task and concentrated instead on her retreat work and spiritual direction. It was something concrete, a place to begin. Eventually it led her to the study of liturgy - which focussed not on how one should or ought to worship, but simply on how one does worship.

After Underhill's church affiliation became generally known, she herself was asked to speak as an Anglican. As the years passed, she became more selective in her outreach. She avoided politics and social action groups, choosing

instead to limit her ministry to the area of Spirituality. She had been asked to write something for a Crusade in 1933 and writes that she cannot, due to work pressure. She adds,

> Also, to do this would rather conflict with my fixed policy of not identifying myself within any particular parties or movements within the Church: more especially those of a religious-political character. You see I do feel that my particular call, such as it is, concerns the interior problems of individuals of all sorts and all opinions: and therefore any deliberate labelling of myself, beyond the general label of the Church, reduces the area within which I can operate and my help is likely to be accepted.[99]

Her final position can be seen in this excerpt from a letter of 1941 - a month before her death, and in wartime,

> ... No - I had not heard of the meetings you mention; but I never do go to meetings nowadays nor, I fear, have I much belief in their usefulness. All this discussion about a "Christian Society," a "New Christian England," etc., seems so entirely on the surface, doesn't it? ...
>
> The new life when it comes, I think, will not be the result of discussions, plans, meetings, etc., but will well up from the deepest sources of prayer.[100]

Characteristically, she then invites the correspondent to join in prayer with a particular group for spiritual unity. Thus "Christian" politics was for Underhill one of her "transient loves."[101]

c) Settled into pastoral work.

Somewhere during these years Underhill decided on her "particular call," as she wrote in 1933 (see above). Her vocation during these last fifteen years of her life became, primarily, the task of spiritual direction to individuals and through

her retreat work. She was, as she had said, "called out and settled."

In 1922 she had written to von Hügel concerning direction work, "I think I had better take all this sort of work that offers as it is direct and inconspicuous and seems really to be needed."[102]

Her letters through the years show her deep concern for those who sought her counsel. What had begun in 1904 grew to sizeable proportions after the commencement of her retreat work as many who attended the retreats sought her guidance afterwards. Her wise counsel is drawn from the works of spiritual masters with whom she was well acquainted and she speaks from the authority of her personal experience.

It was, perhaps, through her own retreats at Pleshey that she was first asked to conduct a retreat there herself, in 1924. She was also the first woman to be doing this work. She was thoroughly prepared for it by von Hügel and many were to follow. Eventually her method was to prepare a set of addresses, prayers and meditations which she used throughout the year at different retreat houses. The first of this set of materials to be published was Concerning the Inner Life. It had been delivered at a retreat for clergy where she was one of three speakers. She confessed that she came before them with "a great diffidence" since she was an ordinary laywoman, but that she presumed to do so because she cared about these things and had had "some leisure to think about them."[103] But what she said must have had great appeal. After its publication in July it went into three more editions, the same year.

We quote here part of the review from The Spectator - one of many

favourable reviews:

> There may be more learned Christians ... but there is no one writing in English better qualified to express in everyday life the high and secret conversations that the mind may hold with its Maker. There is something infectious about Miss Underhill's style with its deep-rooted common sense, its virile idiom, and its creative appreciation of the beauty of the world. These addresses will bear reading and rereading, for they are the fruits of a life that is all too rare in this day and age.[104]

Cropper notes: "All this made Evelyn write, 'It makes me feel inclined to dive into the nearest burrow, but I think I am going to have my hair cut off instead!'"[105]

This leads to the question of what Underhill looked like to the people who began to seek her out.

A friend describes her thus:

> She was naturally pale and slight; a woman of middle height. ... She was a good and witty talker, and a deeply sympathetic person. Before she became a public character, she dressed in a rather out-of-the world style - not ugly, but peculiar, and a little old-fashioned. But a year or two later all that was changed: [She was forty-one at the time.] She had her hair cut short; she wore charming clothes. ... She was up-to-date, with a difference.[106]

Rather than diving into a burrow, it would seem that she "entered the world"; perhaps one could say that in all respects she had accepted the incarnation. The fact that she did not look as outré as before must have made her more approachable - an "outward and visible sign" of the inner change.

d) Writings.

In 1923 Underhill had edited and introduced The Scale of Perfection by

Walter Hilton, one of her beloved mystics. It was a scholarly work and was well-received. In 1925 The Mystics of the Church was published. In 1927 Man and the Supernatural was published. It was this last book which was the most significant. It incorporated material written from 1922 to 1927. Chapter seven was first read as a paper before a group in 1924. It bore the title, "The Authority of Religious Experience" and appeared in Theology in 1926 under the same title. Finally, it was incorporated in Man and the Supernatural as "The Supernatural in Human Life: Prayer." One can only suppose that: a) she liked what she was saying; and b) she continued to believe in it. The book seeks to provide a direction in wnich a synthesis may be sought. Instead of psychology's "superficial explanation," a philosophy is needed which will harmonize the mystical, intellectual, historical and institutional aspects of spiritual life.[107]

On the first page she writes:

> I wish to write a book about the fundamentals of that which we usually call 'religion'. ... Hundreds of students of 'religious psychology' can now pass an examination in the phenomena of conversion or the degrees of prayer; but few have anything solid to say about that view of reality which the fact of conversion and practice of prayer require of us, and without which these things are meaningless.[108]

It was an attempt to give to others what she had learned herself, from von Hügel and since: a philosophy of critical realism based on the 'Is-ness', not the 'What-ness' of the supernatural.[109]

The philosophy of the mystics has two terms: "the two terms implied in all religious realism - God and the Soul. Spirit infinite, perfect, and uncreated spirit finite, imperfect and created. These are its realities."[110] Men and

women of spiritual genius all come before us, not as the painstaking discoverers of something, but as the astonished receivers of something.[111]

This conception of God's "Otherness," and "Prevenience," was a complete departure from vitalism, and von Hügel's influence was directly responsible for it.

In her chapter on "Supernatural and the Natural," she speaks of "aberrations which constantly appear in the history of religious thought and are specially prominent at the present time."[112] The first of these concerns utility- particularly in " 'social Christianity,' - really altruism with a little evangelical varnish..."

This chapter first appeared in the Hibbert Journal in 1925. One assumes that for Underhill the influence and enthusiasm of Copec had already begun to wane.

In the chapter on prayer[113] we see the construct for prayer that she used in her teaching for the remainder of her life. It was taken from M. Olier,[114] a French priest who taught that prayer in its completeness consists in three things: adoration, contemplation, co-operation,[115]

> and in these words gave one the best of all definitions of the spiritual life. ... There is first the humble, admiring adoration of the transcendent Object; next the loving personal communion with that Object found here and now in the soul's secret life; last, active self-giving to the purposes of the Object. These three together, in their fullness and variety of expression, cover all that we know of the spiritual life in man: directed as it is towards those only three realities of which we know anything - God, the Soul and the World.[116]

Underhill's spirituality was naturally centered on "adoration." Her earliest letters attest to this. It was during the twenties that she added the two concepts of communion and co-operation: "communion" of a person with a Person,[117] and "co-operation with an Agent, the end of human prayer."[118] This construct, based on the Trinity, appears again and again in her works of the next decade. Rooted in incarnation, it signalled the end of her modernist tendencies. "These modernists", she writes to a correspondent in 1928, "are very useful in translating religious truth into current language, broadening the basis of faith, etc., but they are curiously deficient in simplicity."[119]

As "mysticism" came to be replaced by "the spiritual life," in her writings, so her teachings in her retreat work, based on Olier's scheme of prayer, became more and more simplified. But the foundation was always to be self-gift, and as T.S. Eliot was to write, "costing not less than everything."[120]

In 1930, a revised edition of her most popular book, Mysticism, appeared in the twelfth edition. Since it was not a complete revision, in the added preface she outlines her new position and how she would have stated the arguments if the book were now being planned for the first time. She also defends certain former positions which have been criticized. She notes that all the quotations of the mystics have been revised and the bibliography and appendix extended since newer translations and editions have come to hand. Other changes have already been discussed.

For Underhill it had been a decade of radical "shifts": inner change resulting in outward change.

Bernard Lonergan says this of conversion:

> Fundamental to religious living is conversion, it is a topic little studied in traditional theology since there remains very little of it when one reaches the universal, the abstract, the static. For conversion occurs in the lives of individuals. It is not merely a change or even a development; rather, it is a radical transformation on which follows, on all levels of living, an interlocked series of changes and developments. What hitherto was unnoticed becomes vivid and present. What has been of no concern becomes a matter of high import. So great a change in one's apprehensions and one's values accompanies no less a change in oneself, in one's relations to other persons, and in one's relations to God. ...
>
> Conversion is ontic. The convert apprehends differently, values differently, relates differently because he has become different.[121]

On the basis of this definition we could say that the "shifts" we have seen in the life of Evelyn Underhill have been the result of conversion - powerful, affective and lasting: resulting in radical change.

These changes were to shape the remainder of her life and her work.

PART V - Towards a Mature Spirituality, 1930-1941

1. Vocation

a) Resolution

In May, 1930, while Evelyn Underhill was making her personal annual retreat, she came to accept the possibility that she would suffer from ill-health for the remainder of her life. She had been diagnosed as having chronic asthma and had begun to have periodic asthmatic attacks. Her acceptance took the form of a resolution which is recorded in her notebook.

> Since it appears likely I will have indifferent health for the rest of my life, must face this quietly and gratefully, determine that it shall be the least possible worry & detriment to others, & fully used to purify & subordinate me to God's will. Steady effort to avoid dwelling on own physical state, getting into centre of picture, and accept the fatigue, weakness and monotony & humbling details of illness with JOY.[1]

She was to have many opportunities to put this resolution into practice. But for most of the decade she did not allow her physical condition to interfere with her many activities, nor did she even reduce these until she had no choice.

b) Writings

In 1926 Underhill had written a review of a posthumous publication of one of von Hügel's books for the Spectator, a weekly newspaper. She continued to write reviews and articles for this paper over the next few years. In 1928 (or 1929)[2] she became religious editor of the Spectator. She held this post until the end of 1932.

During her editorship she arranged eleven different series of articles on various themes. Her influence at that time must have been considerable, judging by the names of the people she managed to get to contribute to her series: T. S. Eliot, G. K. Chesterton, Charles Raven, Abbe Bremond, Rudolf Otto, Charles Gore. Presumably the titles of the series reflect the issues of the day: "In Defence of the Faith"(first and second series), "Immortality," "Anglican Church Life Overseas," "The Challenge to Religious Orthodoxy," "Psychology and Religion," "The Idea of Deity," "Problems of Christian Conscience, Studies in Sanctity," "The Problem of Suffering," and "A Christian's Faith." Letters to the editor reflect a lively interest in the series. Her own articles and book reviews are replete with her personal opinions and convey her thoughts during this period. This material has not yet been studied to any great extent.

Her sudden departure as religious editor of the Spectator, at the end of 1932, is nowhere explained. It would seem that there was a shift in the management of the paper. This must have led to some basic disagreement in editorial policy and Underhill was not one to compromise. She continued to contribute reviews, occasionally, but in 1934 she wrote to a friend, "I am so pleased to hear your book is nearly ready - I wish I could hope to review it for the Spectator but, alas, under the present (strong Nonconformist and Modernist) editor, I get practically nothing from them and the sort of books which interest me are seldom noticed at all."[3]

Instead, she began to write for two other publications: Time and Tide, a weekly review, and the Criterion, a literary review which began and ended in the 1930's. The latter was edited by T. S. Eliot, with whom Underhill became

acquainted during this period. In January 1932, she contributed an article on von Hügel ("Finite and Infinite") and during the years that followed, to 1937, five book reviews.

In 1932 she wrote the chapter on "Medieval Mysticism" for The Cambridge Medieval History.[4] The change in her approach is apparent. She writes that mysticism is essentially the religion of the heart, and thus present at any or all levels of religious culture. But, "If it is to exert an influence on thought and action and so achieve historical importance, it requires a considerable intellectual equipment. ... With hardly an exception, the great mystics of history have been educated men, fed by tradition as well as by direct experience."[5] Underhill's conception of the mystical life has moved from "the flight of the alone to the Alone" to becoming fully incarnational.

c) Retreat addresses.

In addition to these various endeavours, Underhill was, by the early thirties, giving seven or eight retreats a year. A note in Worship states that whereas in 1913 the Anglican Church had one retreat house, "by 1932 it had twenty-two Diocesan houses and over thirty belonging to religious communities," some of them receiving over a thousant retreatants yearly.[6] Underhill certainly played an important role in this growing movement. She continued to make her retreat addresses available in book form. Eventually nine volumes of these were printed, three of them posthumously. Perhaps the best overview of these would be gained by the following list in the order of publication.

1926 Concerning the Inner Life. Retreat addresses to clergy.

1929 The House of the Soul. The soul is compared to a two-storey house of prayer and work.

1932 The Golden Sequence. A four-fold study of the spiritual life: based partly on the 1930 retreats.

1934 The School of Charity. Written in 1933, this was a "Lenten Book" commission, based on the Nicene Creed.

1938 The Mystery of Sacrifice. A meditation on the liturgy.

1940 Abba. Meditations on the Lord's Prayer from the 1934 retreats.

1942 The Fruits of the Spirit. Retreat addresses from 1936, based on scripture.

1942 Light of Christ. Retreat addresses of 1932, based on the life of Christ.

1960 The Mount of Purification. Retreat addresses of 1931, based on Dante's Purgatory and the Eucharist.

These books were quite unlike her more scholarly works, being written as aids to meditation. The one which was to her the "most personal" and to many of her readers the "best book she wrote about the spiritual life in her Anglican period"[7] was The Golden Sequence. The title was that given by liturgic custom to the hymn, Veni Sancte Spiritus. The book is divided into four parts: Spirit, Spiritual Life, Purification and Prayer. These headings represent the fourfold relation between the created Spirit and the Spirit increate. "They cover first the revelation of its reality and the movement of response which it incites in us, and then the two capital means without which our destiny as spiritual beings can never be fulfilled.[8] Since her early years, Underhill had struggled to live in what she called "time" and "eternity,"

two worlds. It is in this book that one sees the resolution of that problem. "It is the special function of prayer to turn the self away from the time-series and towards the eternal order. ... Prayer opens the door of the psyche to the invasion of another order, which shall at its full term transform the very quality of our existence."[9] In declaring that God is both Spirit and our Heavenly Father, "we hint at the real mystery of our situation. Here, we do stand beyond the time-series, and declare our own deepest being to be rooted in Eternal Life, to consist in a direct relationship with Reality."[10] "Thus the twin names of 'Spirit' and 'Heavenly Father' do give us a sort of picture, imperfect but suggestive, of a Reality which satisfies our metaphysical cravings and is known in the fundamental experience of praying souls."[11]

The last section on prayer is based on M. Olier's triadic structure which she now credits to Cardinal de Bérulle. (Rightly enough, it originated with Bérulle but was developed and popularised by Olier.) Adoration, communion and co-operation become for Underhill, adoration of the Father, communion with the Son, and, rather than Olier's "co-operation" with the Spirit, she calls the third part of the triad "action," meaning the action of the Spirit in the soul, resulting in intercession.

The material for the book came from her own experience of prayer and meditation and has a ring of authenticity. At the time of its publication, the critics were generally enthusiastic. Underhill read the reviews of her books and her reaction in this case is recorded in a letter to the author of one of them.

> I have just received the Dublin [Review] with your terribly generous review of The Golden Sequence. I really can't thank you properly for all you say; or - most particularly for the fact that you do seem to like the book personally!

> I am particularly interested in the points you pick out and am rather pleased you think I go too far on the anti-emotion, anti-audition-and-vision-tack! It is because I am so dreadfully afraid of the opposite excess![12]

This is another sign of a clear departure from her days of "excessive mysticism" when experience was all. She had had her "black" periods over the years and had come to rely on faith rather than on feeling. Von Hügel had in fact counselled her to have two "rules": a maximum for fair weather and a minimum for foul.[13] The "foul" was to include more time gardening, needlework and other diversions and less time praying. It seems that even her closest friends had no idea that she suffered from periods of depression and desolation since she did not allow her moods to affect her relationships. Perhaps this is one reason that she found it expedient to have a confidante in the form of a spiritual director. In fact, after the positive effects of her relationship with von Hügel, she was never again without one for any period of time.

In her letters she often speaks of what von Hügel calls "fair weather," that is, the times of joy when prayer came easily.

In this excerpt from a letter of 1932, she speaks of the dark times.

> The number of hours I've spent apparently in prayer but really raging in Hell these last 18 months don't bear thinking of. Hard continuous work or people one has to talk to, are the only things that keep it off; and here, I'm a great deal alone and entirely at the mercy of furious and miserable thought, a large part of which I know are imaginary but for all that can't escape from. ... I simply dare not let my mind be passive. What I mind most is that it makes one feel absolutely wicked and vile, and I don't <u>want</u> to be wicked.

> And all the books, and everything else one has always loved, are implicated, and merely make one feel sick, and so everything is spoiled and there is absolutely nothing left.[14]

All of this proves that it is one thing to know what classic "desolation" is (as she described it in Mysticism) and quite another to experience the "nothingness" of it. She had had the heights and depths of the spiritual life - the joy and the "purification."

2. The Last Years.

a) Writings

It was in 1933 that Underhill was asked to write Worship. Cropper comments, "It was a tremendous book to write and no wonder it cost her so much strength and energy. It was a book that demanded all her scholarship, all her willingness to learn new aspects of things."[15]

By this time she knew a great many people who were experts in their various fields and she availed herself of their knowledge. There was a renewed interest in liturgy and she was, as usual, absorbed in this new development. It was to be understood (by the editors of the series) that hers would be a very Catholic approach[16] but she managed in fairness to do justice to the Protestant tradition as well. The book was finished in 1936.

In her preface, Underhill writes, "Worship is here considered in its deepest sense, as the response of men to the Eternal."[17] The core of the book was adoration. But it was not the solitary adoration whose virtue she had once extolled. Now it was sacramental, institutional and communal. The result was

"a masterpiece of the Spiritual life":[18] that faithful living-out of men's response to grace.

Some twenty years before, Mysticism had been followed by Practical Mysticism, a simplified summary for those who preferred it. In the autumn of 1936, after Worship was published, Underhill gave four radio broadcast talks which contained the essence of her thought at the time. These were published in 1937, under the title, The Spiritual Life. She defined it thus: "A spiritual life is simply a life in which all that we do comes from the centre, where we are anchored in God: a life soaked through and through by a sense of His reality and claim, and self-given to the great movement of His will."[19] The relation of man to God is summed up again in the triad, and this time goes back to Bérulles' original three terms, adoration, adherence and co-operation. Since the talks were for broadcast this was perhaps the easiest way of presenting it. The last part, "Some Questions and Difficulties" was no doubt drawn both from her own experience and from those who sought her counsel. These questions concerned the nature of God, the problem of evil, the will of God, the claim of psychology and finally, how to begin "the life of communion with God."[20] The book ends with a short recommended bibliography.

All the essentials of her teaching are contained in this book, in simplified format. Perhaps she felt the need for this simple approach in the light of the increased interest in liturgy since the beginning of the decade. In 1940 she was to note, "The liturgic revival ... has now rather got the bit between its teeth and threatens to snuff out individual prayer altogether. What a pity it is that religious thinkers always seem to find it necessary to bang about between two extremes

instead of keeping steady and trying to remember the inclusiveness of God."[21] An added attraction is the beautiful typeset and decorative pages separating the chapters - the only one of her books to be presented with this visual appeal.

In 1939 she published Eucharistic Prayers from the Ancient Liturgies, chosen and arranged by herself. She had been a "collector" of prayers for years and had copied into a special book those that withstood the test of time in her own affections. She had once advised a correspondent to use these formal prayers of "experts" because "they got to the place you want to get to, and their prayers presumably helped them to do it."[22] Although she was increasingly ill, her work during these years was as meticulous and as carefully prepared as it had always been.

b) Work

With the beginning of World War II Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Moore moved out of their well-loved house to stay with friends. This was both to reduce expenses for all concerned and because she was increasingly weakened with asthma and lung trouble and needed the care which her friend (Marjorie Vernon) could provide.

When she was well enough, Underhill had many visitors, among them T. S. Eliot. She continued to write letters of direction and also wrote letters to a prayer group which she had founded in 1939 in response to a request by twelve women. They met together to study theology in their leisure time. The purpose of the "Prayer Group" was to balance their studies with spirituality. The group was scattered by the outbreak of war and the letters were the link between the distant members. They were first published in 1942 (along with The Fruits of the Spirit)

edited again by Lucy Menzies.[23] Since Williams has omitted the signature in all the letters of his collection, one has no idea as to how Underhill signed herself. Nor are they available otherwise since most of the originals were lost or destroyed afterwards. But in these letters she usually writes simply, "Always your friend," and signs herself, "Evelyn Stuart Moore." Written on the great feast days of the Church, they are full of gentle encouragement and suggestions for prayer and reading material.

By this time Underhill had become an ardent pacifist and her diminishing energies were extended to writing for this cause. She also taught a class of children in the local church, a task which she faced with some trepidation since she was not used to children, and had once declared that they didn't like her.

c) Death

It was at great personal cost that Underhill left her own home for that of her friends. By this time the lung disease was advanced (it was actually a loss of elasticity in the lungs) and to facilitate her breathing, her room had been completely stripped of all unnecessary things. She wrote to a friend,

> Though I am not yet half-way through the sixties, illness, plus age has come to mean a very thorough limitation of freedom, and general slowing down, and dependence upon others; none of which is altogether easy to a person who prefers to do everything for herself at express speed. But it's a marvellous discipline, and introduces one to a completely fresh series of tests and opportunities, and involves the discovery of so much devoted kindness.[24]

On paper, this may seem rather mundane, but in effect this is, as

Thérèse of Lisieux called it, "the small way of the cross": the very stuff of which saints are made. The resolution made in 1930 to prepare herself for ill health had been taken in earnest. She had worked at it.

On 15 June, 1941, Evelyn Underhill died. She had developed a blood clot in her neck and for four weeks had been very ill.

By some seemingly impossible chance, a description of her death on a penciled memorandum, a loose piece of paper, was found in one of her own books, in a secondhand bookshop. It is not dated and provides no clue as to the identity of the author.[25] It reads,

> ... She had a good bit of pain and she set herself with great fortitude to face the situation. She had some deep laid scheme to combat pain by means of prayer, but she sent messages to many people asking for prayers for all sufferers, for union of Christian Churches. She went through a good bit of pain which reached a climax when the distress seemed to be spiritual rather than physical. She was very strange and we thought she was dying. Then next morning she became radiantly happy and remained all day in an ecstasy of triumph, from what she said she knew that something had been accomplished and the sufferers would not be disappointed. She was rejoicing in God and in Christ in a way which was very different from her normally austere devotion. She fell asleep very peacefully. We watched the course of events with the greatest interest and (?) exhileration.[26]

Evelyn Underhill was buried in the churchyard of St. John's Parish Church, Hampstead.

At Pleshey, where she had made her first retreat in 1922, and had begun her vocation as a "conductor" of retreats, a memorial to her has been set up. In the chapel is placed a Donatello plaque of a Madonna which had belonged to her.[27] It

was given by her husband. The quotation accompanying it is from John Donne: "Blessed be God that He is God, only and divinely like Himself."[28]

It fittingly recalls both the transcendent God, always the object and the cause of her adoration, and the Incarnation, His presence amongst us. These were the two aspects of Christianity which she made the central focus of all her later life, through her "co-operation," which was her life and her work.

In The Spiritual Life she wrote,

> To live a spiritual life means subordinating all other interests to that fact.[29] ... We are transmitters as well as receivers. Our contemplation and our action, our humble self-offering to God, keeping ourselves sensitive to His music and light, and our generous self-opening to our fellow creatures, keeping ourselves sensitive to their needs, ought to form one life, mediating between God and His world, and bringing the saving power of the Eternal into time.[30]

It was this life to which she gave her utmost.

PART VI - An Assessment

1. The Influence of Evelyn Underhill.

During her lifetime, Evelyn Underhill enjoyed the reputation of being, first, an influential writer on the subject of mysticism and later, a sound retreat conductor, director of souls, and authority on liturgy and spiritual life.

Twelve years after her death, her works were still being read.

In the introduction to an anthology of her work (1953), Lumsden Barkway (then Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Scotland) was able to state that her books, though never advertised, had a steady sale: "... Evelyn Underhill still exerts a potent influence."[1]

This cannot be said today. There are two biographies of Underhill. The most recent of these, Christopher Armstrong's book published in 1975, is now out of print,[2] and certainly not widely available. It seems that today, Evelyn Underhill is "out of date."

Two questions arise. The first is why is she no longer read. The second is whether to state that she is passée is a valid assessment. To answer these questions one must evaluate her spirituality and the assessments of her critics.

Certainly, part of the reason that Underhill is not widely read today is the fact that she has not always been well-served by her critics, particularly those of her own communion.

It is not easy to label Underhill. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church describes her as an "exponent of the mystical life."[3] The Twentieth

Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge calls her "a writer on spiritual religion, a religious poet and a spiritual counsellor."[4] Perhaps the best description is found in the New Catholic Encyclopedia: "Anglican authority on mystical theology, author, and spiritual director."[5] (Unfortunately, this short article contains numerous errors, calling Worship her second book, substituting Cambridge for Oxford, crediting von Hügel with leading her into full participation in the Church of England, etc..)

Olive Wyon in her study of Underhill asks the question, "Who was she?" and answers,

> Obviously [Underhill] was an exceptional person ... and she was supremely normal; as someone has said, she was 'a great saint and a great human being.' She does not fall into any category. She was not like anyone else ... she was simply herself: a many-sided, witty, lovable, delightful, and fascinating person, who touched life at many points and cared greatly for people.
>
> Yet there was a reticence and a mystery about her which meant that, like so many other people, she could never reveal herself fully to another human being. She was 'at home' only in God.[6]

For Michael Ramsey (former Archbishop of Canterbury), "Underhill was seen from the 1920's onwards not as the exponent of mysticism, or as an evolutionary philosopher but as a doctor of the Christian Church. ... Evelyn Underhill [became] the teacher."[7] This is high praise, and coming from an Anglican authority counts for much.

The fact that numerous critical articles have been written about Underhill demonstrates that the "mystery" of which Wyon speaks has continued to evoke interest over the years.

In a 1958 article, J. Henry Bodgener divides Underhill's books into two categories. These are the "erudite and didactic" works and the devotional books. He describes the difference as that between someone arguing a case and someone devotedly exercising the art of the cure of souls.[8] It is possible for anyone familiar with the field to see the interrelationships and biases. Bodgener has obviously read Charles Williams' introduction to the letters and quotes directly from it, although he does not acknowledge it as a quotation. He writes, "Evelyn Underhill's mind, for a woman, was unusually inclined to the abstract."[9]

Williams writes that Underhill was "not ever primarily a writer; she was something rather less but much better than that, as other writers will realize."[10] One assumes that the "something more" of which he is speaking is what she herself came to call her vocation - spiritual direction and retreat work. But if Charles Williams thought less of her writings there were many who delighted in them. This is evident from the printing history of each of her books.

One must keep in mind, of course, that the various books served different purposes. Williams divides her books into two classes and calls them either "translations" or "guide-books" (taking the terms from the work she did for the First War effort.[11] With "translations" he groups the actual translations, critical editions and journalistic work. "Guide-books" are "those books she wrote which 'serve as direct exhortations of the way'."[12] These are based on the psychology of the time.

This classification would seem to be rather too simple: it gives no indication of her development or, as she herself acknowledged, the many phases of

religious belief that she had passed through during her life.[13] Many of her books can be seen as reflectors or indicators of her own spiritual pilgrimage. What she called her "religious phases" began before her interest in the occult with her passion for Plotinus and the experience of "the alone with the Alone." It ended with her being rooted in Christian history: in the prayers of the liturgy.

The tracing of this development would have to begin with early fascination of the occult that sparked her novels, followed by the study of mysticism (after "conversion"). After this scholarly study came a simplified "condensed and more popular version" - a "how-to" book. Translations of the works of individual mystics followed - these, perhaps, being "models" which had provided inspiration for her. The books of the twenties began to expound on the spiritual life. A second "conversion" led to her embracing institutionalism and sacramentalism. Her books during this period dealt with the question of who God is (philosophy) and with ways of developing a relationship with the "Supernatural" in the England of the twenties. This in turn led her to a study of liturgy: how people worship in different communions. Finally, she undertook to edit a collection of prayers.

Several aspects of this journey need to be examined more closely.

2. The Mystic Germ.

How did Underhill first catch this "mystic germ" (as William James used to call it)?[14] The following excerpt from Plotinus' Enneads would seem to give ample evidence of a likely source:

> The soul has naturally a love of God and desires to be united with Him. ... He who has beheld this Beloved knows the truth of what I say, how the soul then receives a new life when she has gone forth to it, and come to it and participated in it, so that in her new condition she knows that the giver of true life is beside her and she needs nothing else. ... It is possible for us even while here in the body to behold Him and ourselves in such wise as it is lawful for us to see. Ourselves we see illumined, full of the light of the intelligible, or rather as that very light itself, pure, without heaviness, upward rising. Verily we see ourselves as made, nay, as being God himself. Then it is that we are kindled. But when we sink to earth again we are, as it were, put out.[15]

If this explains where Underhill caught "the mystic germ," there is no doubt that many others would do the same from her own writings. In the "Conclusion" of Mysticism (1911) she writes,

> [The] episodes of splendor and of terror [of the great mystics] are hard for common men to accept or understand. ... But the germ of that same transcendent life, the spring of the amazing energy which enables the great mystic to rise to freedom and dominate his world, is latent in all of us; an integral part of our humanity. ... Every person then, who awakens to consciousness of a Reality which transcends the normal world of sense ... is put of necessity upon a road which follows at low levels the path which the mystic treads at high levels. The success with which he follows this way to freedom and full life will depend on the intensity of his love, his steadfastness and courage. It will depend on the generosity, and completeness of his outgoing passion for absolute beauty, absolute goodness, or absolute truth.[16]

We can see that Underhill had picked up James' "germ" (perhaps unconsciously). At the same time, one may find the basis for two common criticisms levelled at Underhill in this early period: the first, that (wo)man makes the initial approach; the second, that everyone is a mystic. The first has been dealt

with in the body of the paper. As for the second, while she holds that each person has "the germ," it is obvious that "success" (as she calls it) is not guaranteed. Even then, a "mystic" is one who follows the same path at "high levels."

In a 1936 article, "What is Mysticism," she writes,

> It is hardly strange that such a transformation of existence, such an ascent to the very summits of human nature, is seldom achieved; and costs those who do achieve it a good deal. We like to look on the spiritual life as something very noble, very holy; but also very peaceful and consoling. The word "contemplation" easily tempts those who have not tried it to think that the mystical life consists in looking at the Everlasting Hills, and having nice feelings about God. But the world of contemplation is really continuous with the world of prayer, in the same way as the Alps are continuous with the lower pastures. To enter it means exchanging the lovely view for the austere reality, penetrating the strange hill-country, slogging up stony tracks in heavy boots, bearing fatigue and risking fog and storm, helping fellow-climbers at one's own cost. It means renouncing the hotel-life level of religion with its comforts and conveniences and setting our face towards the snows; not for any personal ambition or enjoyment, but driven by the strange mountain love. The great mystics experience all of [it], and are well content to do so.[17]

But all this is to be done as a response to prevenient grace, and the only goal is "the supernatural life of perfect union with the self-giving and out-pouring love of God."[18]

A contemporary writer quotes this from her Practical Mysticism, the third form of contemplation: "You are therefore to let yourself go; to cease all conscious, anxious striving and pushing."[19] He adds: "This may be very sensible advice if one succeeds in understanding by mysticism that simple docility to grace that Miss Underhill has in mind, one that she herself undoubtedly practiced. ... She granted to others much the same high fidelity to grace that was character-

istic of her own ways with people and at her prayers. . . . In her own personal life, Evelyn Underhill was a person of deep supernatural refinement and a most dedicated worker for the Kingdom of God."[20] One assumes that this statement is based on her later achievement.

3. Two Spiritualities: Ignatius and Olier.

In the 1930's at a retreat she was conducting, Underhill made the observation that "We are all rather inclined to be a bit romantic about religion. But God is a realist."[21]

By this time she too was a "critical realist"[22] (as von Hügel had been), but it had not always been so. Pratt writes that,

> . . . the mystic is essentially a romanticist. By saying this I mean that he exhibits in a large degree that confidence in emotion and imagination which are at the bottom of romanticism. . . . Not only are his feelings and imaginings intense but his confidence in them is usually considerable, and he often makes a deliberate effort to cultivate both.[23]

While this definition begs the question as to whether Underhill was a mystic,[24] it may provide the clue to her long-lasting interest in Ignatian spirituality. The congruences between phrases in her letters and in the "Ignatian Exercises" have been demonstrated in Part I.

Karl Rahner writes that "Ignatius is less concerned in the Meditations with what commended itself by clarity and depth of insight than with what brought consolation and desolation."[25] (Sp. Ex. n. 6) The emphasis then was on "feelings and imagination"- appropriate tools for Underhill's "romanticism." On Ignatius and

his "method," Pratt comments:

> Ignatius Loyola, one of the great systematizers and [spiritual] directors, recommends to beginners that this form of meditation [practiced concentration] should invoke the imagination ["memory"], understanding, and the will, ... one should exercise one's will and one's affections, arousing in connection with each sacred scene or theological truth [the subject of the concentration], the appropriate emotion.
>
> Let no one think the exercise of meditation an easy matter. ... It is no easy thing to become a mystic by rule. And here let me add that the systematic training prescribed by such writers as Loyola presents the practice of the imitators rather than of the great mystics.
>
> ... The kind of meditation on many sacred themes which has just been described, if faithfully followed, is likely to lead at last to a new kind of experience which the French mystics call the "oraison affective."[26]

It was this method of prayer which Underhill referred to so often in her letters and in her books. It should be noted that much of the material which Ignatius used for his "method" was not new, but its effectiveness rested in his psychological insight and in its final form.

Although Underhill does not refer to Ignatius by name in her letters of direction, in her books he is often mentioned (beginning in 1925). Particularly, she mentions "the great prayer of St. Ignatius,[27] 'Take Lord, and receive'." (n. 234). It is the prayer of self-offering, which is the prayer of hope. In her later years, Underhill was greatly influenced by the works of John of the Cross (1542-1591). With Ignatius (1491-1556) and Teresa of Avila (1515-1591), these three great Spanish mystics displayed the dual character of mystical life in its fulness. Each was both a profound contemplative and a practical organizer and

reformer. Perhaps it was these two qualities which so appealed to Underhill, herself a woman of prayer and a woman with many responsibilities.

Her devotion and her vocation would also have led her to another form of prayer - that of J.J. Olier, founder of the Sulpicians. In Henri Bremond's great work on French religious thought, two extended footnotes explain Olier's "method" and compare it with that of Ignatius.[28]

Olier divided prayer into three parts: adoration, communion, cooperation. This division was first devised by the Cardinal de Bérulle, passed on to his disciple Charles Condren, then to Olier, and finally to M. Tronson - whence it became the "Sulpician Method." But since the triad was based on attitudes, it was not a method which could be taught, such as that of Ignatius. Whereas a Jesuit will speak of resolutions (id quod volo), the Bérullian will speak of cooperation. The difference between these, according to Olier, is that the word "resolution" is an expression of our will, whereas the word "cooperation" seems to depend more on the virtue of the Holy Spirit. When M. Tronson developed Olier's ideas, although it was called a "method," it is important to remember that it was more of a programme. Bremond adds that just as one cannot compare grammar and poetry so the two schools cannot be compared from the point of view of method, but must be compared spirit with spirit, tendency with tendency.[29]

The fact that Underhill was influenced by these two schools of spirituality would seem to indicate that she did just that: and was able to choose from each that which suited her needs.

She writes a piece on Ignatius and another on Bérulle in her 1925 book,

The Mystics of the Church. Ignatius is typical of Spanish spirituality. The Spiritual Exercises, despite their outward appearance of formalism, are the work of a mystic aware of the reality of God and His work on the soul.[30] Bérulle best represents the doctrinal side of French mysticism, "saturating and transforming dogmatic theology with his own intense consciousness of God."[31] He is profoundly theocentric and always begins with adoration of God.[32]

Underhill changed the word co-operation to "action" in her version of the triad, as demonstrated in The Golden Sequence (1933). In Worship in the chapter "The Principles of Personal Worship" she writes on the Christocentric nature of the "Spiritual Exercises" and of the "Sulpician Method of Prayer."[33] It is quite true that the "Exercises" are centred on the Person of Christ. What is notable is that Underhill could have been so familiar with them and yet proclaim to the end of her days that she, "left to herself would just go off on God alone."[34] Because of her years with von Hügel, she knew that she shouldn't, but awe, leading to adoration, would always be the centre of her spiritual life.

4. The Church of Her Choice

In spite of her established Anglican practice, both von Hügel and Don Chapman urged Evelyn Underhill to remain open to the possibility of yet becoming a "Roman." She writes to Chapman in 1931,

> I have been for years now a practising Anglo-Catholic and solidly believe in the Catholic status of the Anglican Church, as to orders and sacraments, little as I appreciate many of the things done among us. It seems to me a respectable suburb of the city of God - but all the same, part of "greater London." I appreciate the superior food,

> etc., to be had nearer the centre of things. But the whole point to me is in the fact that our Lord has put me here, keeps on giving me more and more jobs to do for souls here, and has never given me orders to move. In fact, when I have been inclined to think of this, something has always stopped me, and if I did it, it would be purely an act of spiritual self-interest and self-will.[35]

From this we can assume that she did think of changing her communion from time to time. Cropper writes, "I remember her telling me that in the thirties various Roman Catholic friends tried again to persuade her to change her obedience, telling her that all her work for souls was wasted if not harmful, since it was heretical. The Rev. R. Somerset Ward (her director from 1933 on) recollects that, when she first came to consult him, she was still troubled by those who made this suggestion."[36]

But she was critical of her contemporary, Vernon Johnson, an Anglican priest who seceded to Rome. She reviewed the latter's book in 1929 for the Spectator. Fr. Johnson seemed to have been influenced almost solely by a visit to the shrine of Thérèse of Lisieux. "And as a special privilege was even allowed to hold her skipping rope in his hand."[37] (One is amused then, to read in a letter of the year before of her own visit to the shrine of the Spanish Teresa: "At the Casa Santa where the room she was born in is turned into a chapel, the friar who showed us around let me hold her rosary in my hand."[38] She ends the review with, "The arguments by which Mr. Johnson proved to himself the Scriptural basis of Papal claims add nothing to it. Their quality has a certain bitter interest for those concerned with the intellectual training of Anglican priests; but they are irrelevant to a conversion in which the factor of intuition so completely outweighs the factor

of thought."[39]

Perhaps one can say that it was "thought" that kept Underhill in the Church of England. But she was even more intolerant of Newman's secession.

The following letter of 1933 is quoted at length because it is so biased as to be almost delightful:

> ... As to that restless feeling that the Roman Church is drawing you (a) mere nature makes us all a bit restless in the spring, and is likely to rouse our dominant interest; (b) the Church of Rome must always have a sort of attraction for those who love prayer because it does understand and emphasize worship. But the whole question of course is, not "What attracts and would help me?" but "Where can I serve God best?" and usually the answer to that is, "Where He has put me." ... It is obvious that people who can pray and help others to, are desperately needed in the C. of E. [sic] . And to leave that job because the devotional atmosphere of Rome is attractive, is simply to abandon the trenches and go back to Barracks. If all the Tractarians had imitated Newman's spiritual selfishness English Religion (unless God had raised up other reformers) would be as dead as mutton! There is a great deal to be done and a great deal to put up with, and the diet is often none too good - but we are here to feed His sheep where we find them, not to look for comfy quarters! At least, that is my firm belief. And the life of prayer can be developed in the C. of E. as well as anywhere else if we really mean it. [40]

While this may sound somewhat self-righteous, it is not her last word. By the time she writes Worship (1936) Newman has become a "great Tractarian"[41] and she seems to have a more balanced view of Anglicanism.

> If you do decide on the Church of England make up your mind to accept it as a whole, for what it is, a "Bridge Church" which can include both those whose emphasis is Catholic and those whose

> emphasis is Evangelical, so long as they accept the only true basis of Catholicity - the Scriptures, the Creeds and the two Sacraments. Don't be sectional and anti-Protestant! Just quietly leave what doesn't suit you and feed your soul on the things that nourish it.[42]

If there are both sudden and gradual conversions, perhaps we could think of this as a fourth conversion or "shift " for Evelyn Underhill: probably occasioned by her scholarly research for her book, Worship. Thus it might be said that un - like Vernon (in her review) the "factor of thought" had come to outweigh "the factor of intuition" and she became in every way, an Anglican at last.[43]

5. The Critics.

It has been noted that E.I. Watkins' critique of Cropper's biography probably inspired the thesis of Mary Xavier Kirby. The "Biographical Introduction" seems to indicate a strong bias towards von Hügel and a tendency to give to him the high compliment of being primarily responsible for Underhill's spiritual development. "One by one, under his guidance, she repudiated her positions."[44] This seems rather strong for one who was already "converted." Twice Kirby strengthens her position by excluding key sentences from Underhill's letters to von Hügel. In the first instance she is writing about the historical events in the Gospels, and of how von Hügel has helped her to accept them as "facts." Kirby omits, "I have never doubted their occurrence but they mean more to me now."[45] Secondly, in speaking of her new acceptance of Christocentric devotion, Underhill writes, "This however does not mean a devotional volte-face."[46] This too is omitted by Kirby.

Kirby has also missed out the fact that Underhill was directed by Bishop

Walter Frere and names Ward as her first Anglican director. In her view, the two traditions of spirituality which Underhill used in her teaching were those which came from St. John of the Cross and from St. Francis de Sales. Thus she omits the strong influence of both Ignatius and Olier. Since Kirby does not claim to be either an historian or a theologian these points, perhaps, need not be emphasized. Her concluding paragraph is based, not on Underhill's life, but on her works.

> [Evelyn Underhill's] spiritual writings, rather than her mystical ones, place her firmly in the forefront of the great religious and social movements of today. ... Her spiritual writings ... reveal a woman belonging more to this generation than to her own. ... She is as important today as she was in her own day, but for different reasons.[47]

It would seem then that Underhill continued to be appreciated by critics of the Roman Communion even though she did not join Rome. Anglican critics appear to be less appreciative. One of these is Valerie Pitt. Her article in Prism, a literary journal, begins with a critique of "people who lay claim to extraordinary spiritual experience." ... "It is horrifying," she continues,

> to watch the drift of people whose gifts could mean so much to the Church, into a world in which Spirituality, 'the prayer-life,' as they call it, is the be-all-and-end-all of existence; in which the Christian's rules, retreats, crosses, consolations and what not have become almost the raison d'être of the Gospel.
>
> It would not be unjust to take our picture of this world from Miss Cropper's Evelyn Underhill. Miss Underhill had an influence on Anglican Spirituality, I do not myself think a good influence, which is certainly dominant in spiritually-minded circles today. ...

> We are confronted in fact with a cosy gossipy world, with a private manner of speech, and almost a private cult.[48]

What Pitt neglects to say is that "we" are also confronted with private correspondence, never intended for publication, between two intimate friends. Can this be called "a private cult?"

Pitt goes on to take Underhill to task for certain remarks written to von Hügel on her work for the poor (which, incidentally, was for her no new thing). Pitt analyses her motive ("outrageous") and writes that Underhill is "sublimely unaware of the insult to personality."[49] It could only be that Pitt is completely ignorant of the facts of the situation.

Pitt's article develops into a critique of spiritual direction in the Church of England.

> If an Anglican has the misfortune to possess exceptional spiritual gifts his chances of wandering into eccentricity or unreality from the mere want of guidance are very high ... [because] there are not more than five or ten clergymen in the Church of England with the knowledge or experience of it. ... The want here is principally one of theology. ... We cannot in fact afford to leave the study of moral, ascetic, and mystical theology to the odd lay person with a general interest. It is the business of the clergy, not of lay people, however, gifted, to direct souls. ... They have the authority, they have the grace of Orders; is it too much to ask that they should now acquire the necessary learning?[50]

It would appear that the Church of England didn't think it was too much to ask at the time of Underhill. She was asked to give retreats to clergy.

Miss Pitt seems to be reacting to a number of things, Cropper, Underhill, those with whom Underhill was in contact, the clergy of her communion, and those

who would have "spiritual experience": quite an agenda for barely five pages. A much-protesting lady indeed! One is left wondering more about Miss Pitt than about the subject she critiques. It would be interesting to know just what Pitt has read by Underhill and of her, other than Cropper.

But one should allow Underhill to answer for herself. The following passage was delivered in a lecture at a clergy convention in 1936. Its importance would seem to justify its length.

> There are two outstanding dangers attending the direction of souls. One is peculiar to our own times; the knowledge - seldom very deep - of the psychology of religion, which is now at the disposal of most people interested in the spiritual life. This often induces an unduly critical attitude towards the imaginative and emotional types of religious experience, which are, after all, common to humanity. ...
>
> The other is worse. It is the inclination to discover a possible mystic in everyone who develops a passive or otherwise unusual type of prayer, or lays claim to visionary or other experiences. The general reading of mystical literature has produced a great crop of this kind of self deception; often unwittingly encouraged by clergy who know themselves to be inexperienced in these matters, and are too humble-minded to deal with them by the obvious standards of common sense. We all know the type to whom his or her - I am afraid usually her - devotional life appears of paramount importance, and who is willing to talk about it at great length. The genuine contemplative is seldom found in this class. Those who are really moving towards deeper states of prayer will probably be those who make the least demands on you, and are not at all anxious to be understood. [She suggests that priests should avail themselves of classical works on prayer.] But your greatest help in this personal work with souls - in fact, your only real source of light and strength - will be your own life of communion with God.[51]

It is fascinating to compare Miss Pitt's article with that of Miss Underhill, written twenty-three years before. The latter answers the former, almost point by point (apart from the discussion on Cropper, of course).

Pitt's article is referred to in the book, English Spirituality by Martin Thornton, also an Anglican. "Some writers - a few very well known - reached the stage where practically any Christian who said his prayers affectively was a "mystic.' Pastorally the whole thing became very unhealthy indeed."[52] It is at this point that he refers to the article. Other references are made to Underhill - such as his opinion that the writings of the particular period in which Underhill and her contemporaries wrote, are "outdated and incompatible with present trends," which he calls a "compliment" as it shows that they "must have sparked off the advances in pastoral religion which have now outrun them ... But it is important to see how obsolete this group of writings is."[53]

A review article of Thornton's book by T. L. Manson would seem to suggest that Thornton's work does not fill the need which he had hoped.[54] Manson writes:

> The ample quotations from great spiritual writers provide a feast of good things. However, it is by no means always possible to agree with the deductions offered for our consumption. ... As alienating as are his instructions to the laity is the wholesale criticism of his brother clergy beyond the bounds of possible real knowledge - and of bishops - and the confident finding fault with Evelyn Underhill, Dame Julian, and St. Anselm.[55]

The most comprehensive recent work on Underhill is that of Christopher Armstrong who is an Anglican clergyman. In writing the biography he had full access to all extant papers belonging to Underhill. He used them well. However,

since the emphasis in his book falls on the earlier part of her work, there is still room for a study on her writings of the twenties and thirties.

Of Underhill's own books, Mysticism is still widely available. An Anthology of the Love of God[56] and three of her retreat addresses in condensed booklet-form have been made available recently, the latter as part of a series called Treasures from the Spiritual Classics.[57] Perhaps these publications will lead to a new interest, particularly in Underhill's work on spirituality. While the retreat addresses may be classified as "treasure" by the editor of the series, they have been for the most part undiscovered by this generation.

6. Conclusion.

Despite all that can be said, Evelyn Underhill still remains something of an enigma. She wrote under her maiden name and her books do not touch on married life. Nor do they give details of her religious experience. She does speak of her faults and in one instance of having had to overcome "claimfulness" (in a letter to von Hügel). In her letters we see often that she refers to people in the possessive: my Italian saint (Sorella Maria), my Bishop, my Old Man (von Hügel), my Abbot, my Irish Margaret, my Indian (Tagore). Her temperament seems to have enabled her to follow eagerly whatever and whoever attracted her. Her attraction to Rome was nourished by the use of the rosary, of holy water, of a devotion to the Way of the Cross and a collection of holy medals.

These "Roman" habits may have caused Anglican readers of her early books to disown her as an Anglican, while they seemed to have endeared her to Catholic readers. In seeking a spiritual director she preferred "strong" direction: someone

to tell her what to do. Perhaps this was a habit since she was the only child of her father whom she both loved and respected. This love and respect, given also to her husband, caused her to delay her submission to Rome. Hubert Stuart Moore's concern that a confessor would come between them as husband and wife perhaps demonstrated his need to be the dominant male. But in her reaction to Pascendi, the encyclical against modernism, we see Underhill's other side. Emotional and romantic she may have been, but she was also uncompromising once her intellect took over. Since she did not agree with the encyclical, she did not become a Roman Catholic, despite her feelings and her devotional fervour. It must have cost her something. As time went on she became a spiritually mature Christian in the Church of England. Now she could write about religious practice in a most practical manner. She urged and encouraged her retreatants to "taste and see that the Lord is good." She wrote that when she was presented with "all the stuff about Christ being a World Teacher ... I just feel what shallow, boring, unreal twaddle it is! But feeling that doesn't win souls for God."[58]

And that is precisely what she came to think of as her vocation: winning souls for God. That is the theme and the intention of her later writings. To say that Underhill is passée is therefore not true. The books dealing with the philosophy and psychology of religion may have value mainly as a witness to the period in which she lived, but certainly the retreat addresses are timeless. A book such as The Golden Sequence is an enduring classic of spirituality: a practical exhortation to holiness, based on God's prevenient grace and the human response in courage, initiative and surrender. There are times when she seems to express the inexpressible: to put

into words experiences and feelings common to all but difficult to verbalize. Her letters over the years show her own process of growth. Her intimate correspondence with Friedrich von Hügel is a privilege to read, revealing as it does her innermost thoughts.

A Swiss philosopher has written,

> History is not a question of memory, but of reflectively taking hold of oneself. ... The present is ... an ever-expanding circle; it is everything we have taken over and made our own. History is thus the matter of our present existence. ... And by historical we mean, not that which is past (révolu), surpassed (dépassé) or no longer present, but conscious tradition, in which the past is recognized both as past and as belonging to us; that is to say, integrated into our present.[59]

As a spokeswoman for this century, Underhill is part of the heritage of the Christian Church. It behoves those who call themselves Christians to take cognizance of her contribution.

A recent article in Pastoral Psychology by Roy W. Fairchild states that because of current shifts in "theological and psychotherapeutic care," there is a growing need in reformed churches "to add what has been traditionally called "spiritual direction" to pastoral counseling and guidance. ... "When we say 'spiritual direction' or 'spiritual guidance' we are referring to the ancient tradition in which one person helps another to discern and respond to God's spirit. ... What we are seeking is one who can aid our integration of the inner and outer journeys of faith."[60]

This development is also taking place within the Anglican and Roman communions. If Underhill's works have been neglected perhaps it was because

there was a period in the Church when retreats and the art of "the cure of souls" were not at the forefront of spirituality. Now they are, for many people.

The article continues, "The simplest way to start mutual spiritual guidance and friendship in the church is by telling the stories of how our lives (even through suffering) have been graced."[61] The life of Underhill is one such witness.

Was Evelyn Underhill a mystic? Opinions vary. Anne Fremantle in her work on Protestant Mystics does not include Underhill because she wrote "meditations rather than revelations."[62] Barkway writes that she was,[63] Cropper writes "like all true mystics, she spoke with authority,"[64] Kirby writes "Lacking omniscience, who can say?"[65]

In a 1929 review Underhill writes that, "it is no compliment to give the vague title of 'mystic'."[66] But what of this witness of a friend, quoted by Charles Williams?

> It was in October 1937 that I first met her. ... As I entered she got up and turned around, looking so fragile as though 'a puff of wind might blow her away' might be literally true in her case, but light simply streamed from her face illuminated with a radiant smile. ... One could not but feel consciously ... that one was in the presence of the extension of the Mystery of Our Lord's Transfiguration in one of the members of His Mystical Body. ... It told one not only of herself but more of God and of the Mystical Body than all her work put together.[67]

If, as Evelyn Underhill wrote, mysticism is a matter of degree - then we can call her a contemplative: one whose goal is, like the mystic, union, but whose way is less extreme. Underhill was not a recluse, nor did she manifest any extreme behaviour. She lived between eternity and time and learned to reconcile

the two through action of the Spirit in her life. She became an incarnationalist and knew "an ever deepening communion" with Jesus Christ. Her need and desire to adore and worship God shaped her religious life, from the time of her earliest conversion to the end. Her life as a contemplative fostered this development. "For," she wrote, "the goal alike of Christian sanctification and Christian worship is ceaseless self-offering of the Church, in and with Christ her head, to increase the glory of God."[68]

APPENDIX. A Poem by Evelyn Underhill

Immanence

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
Not borne on morning wings
Of majesty, but I have set My Feet
Amidst the delicate and bladed wheat
That springs triumphant in the furrowed sod.
There do I dwell, in weakness and in power:
Not broken or divided, saith our God!
In your straight garden plot I come to flower:
About your porch My Vine
Meek, fruitful, doth entwine;
Waits, at the threshold, Love's appointed hour.

I come in little things,
Saith the Lord:
Yea! on the glancing wings
Of eager birds, the softly pattering feet
Of furred and gentle beasts, I come to meet
Your hard and wayward heart. In brown eyes
That peep from out the brake, I stand confest
On every nest
Where feathery Patience is content to brood
And leaves her pleasure for the high emprize
Of motherhood -
There doth My Godhead rest.

I come in little things,
Saith the Lord:
My starry wings
I do forsake,
Love's highway of humility to take.
Meekly I fit My stature to your need.
In beggar's part
About your gates I shall not cease to plead -
As man, to speak with man -
Till by such art
I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan.
Pass the low lintel of the human heart. [1]

List of Abbreviations Used in Notes

AEU - Christopher J.A. Armstrong, Evelyn Underhill (1975-1941): An Introduction to her Life and Writings (London: Mowbray, 1975).

CEU - Margaret Cropper, Evelyn Underhill (London: Longmans Green, 1958).

ESS - Evelyn Underhill, The Essentials of Mysticism and Other Essays (London: J. M. Dent, 1920; reprint ed., New York: E.P. Dutton, 1960).

EUL - The Letters of Evelyn Underhill, edited with an introduction by Charles Williams (London: Longmans Green, 1943; reprint ed., 1947).

KEU - Mary Xavier Kirby, "The Writings of Evelyn Underhill: A Critical Analysis" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1965).

LSP - Evelyn Underhill, The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today (London: Methuen, 1922; reprint ed., 1936).

MY1 - Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1911).

MY2 - Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism 3rd ed., 1st revision (London: Methuen, 1912).

MY3 - Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism 12th ed., 2nd revision (London: Methuen, 1930; reprint ed., New York: Meridian Books, 1957).

MSP - Evelyn Underhill, Man and the Supernatural (London: Methuen, 1927).

SEI - The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius trans. Louis J. Puhl (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951).

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. EUL, p. 341 lists thirty-six different correspondents dated from 1899 to 1941. The book contains only letters by Underhill which were either given or lent for the occasion by the recipients. Since Underhill spent the evenings writing letters, it can be assumed that this collection represents only a small part of her output.

2. Olive Wyon, Desire for God (London: Fontana, 1966), p.91.

3. E.I. Watkin, "Evelyn Underhill," The Month 22 (January, 1959): 45.

4. "Clouds of Unknowing," Prism 3 (1959): 7-12

5. Watkin, "Evelyn Underhill,": 45.

6. Ibid., p.50.

7. Thanks are due to the University of Pennsylvania for the loan of this thesis.

8. Mary Xavier Kirby, s.s.j., Ph.D. dissertation.

9. The four other doctoral theses are:
   A) Regina Maria Bechtle, "The Mystic and the Church in the Writings of Evelyn Underhill." Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1979.
   B) Alice Selby Boyack, "Evelyn Underhill's Interpretation of the Spiritual Life." Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1979.
   C) Rayon Lamon Brown, "The Doctrine of God in 19th and 20th Century England as Found in Baron Friedrich von Hügel, Evelyn Underhill, William Inge." Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1978.
   D) Robert Gail Woods, "Evelyn Underhill's Concept of Worship." Th.D. dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1971.

10. Armstrong does not say who it was that issued this invitation.

11. This fine bibliography lists some one hundred works of Underhill. Details are given of writings from obscure and obsolete publications which even the conscientious researcher would be hard-pressed to find elsewhere. It should be noted, however, that it is incomplete.

12. The would-be author, Joan W. Gartland, was contacted by the Religious Studies Library, McGill University. She asked that this fact be noted. Joan W. Garland to Jennifer Wheeler, 30 March, 1984, McGill University Library.

13. Alec Vidler, The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1934), p. 114.

PART I - Underhill's England

1. New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1974 Supplement, s.v. "Modernism," by J.J. Heaney.

2. Cuthbert Butler to Friedrich von Hügel, 28 December 1922. Cited by J.J. Kelly in "On the Fringe of the Modernist Crisis," Downside Review 97 (Oct. 1979): 298.

3. Roger Lloyd, The Church of England 1900 - 1965 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1966), pp. 99-100.

4. Ibid., p. 89.

5. Ibid., p. 92.

6. Roger Lloyd, The Church in the 20th Century vol. I (London: Longmans Green, 1947), p. 115.

7. William Ralph Inge, Outspoken Essays (London: Longmans Green, 1919), pp. 231-232.

8. Ibid., pp. 232-233.

9. Ibid., p. 204.

10. Lloyd, The Church of England, p. 127.

11. Ibid., p. 134-135.

12. A Quaker expression.

13. Quoted in CEU, p. 125: no date, no addressee.

14. Evelyn Underhill to D.E., 13 May, 1937. EUL, p. 257.

PART II - The Early Years, 1875-1910

1. Biographical details can be found both in AEU and in CEU.
2. A Bar-Lamb's Ballad Book (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Truber, 1902).
3. Olive Wyon, Desire for God (London: Fontana, 1966), p. 86.
4. AEU, p. 2..
5. Cited in AEU, p. 22.
6. AEU, p. 3.
7. Quoted in full in CEU, p. 4 and AEU, p. 8.
8. CEU, pp. 4-6.
9. Baron Friedrich von Hügel - see Part I.
10. "Modernist" - see Part I.
11. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Cropper, Tues (1932), EUL, p. 206.
12. AEU, p. 27.
13. Charles Williams. Introduction to EUL, p. 10.
14. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 29 November, 1904, EUL, p. 51.
15. AEU, pp. 37-38.
16. AEU, p. 42.
17. AEU, p. 43.
18. CEU, p. 27.
19. AEU, p. 51.
20. Evelyn Underhill to Mrs. Meyrick Heath, 14 May, 1911, EUL, pp. 125-126.
21. His father was Archbishop of Canterbury.

22. C.C. Martindale, The Life of Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, 2 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1916).

23. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 258.

24. Ibid., p. 260.

25. AEU, p. 55.

26. "Modernism" - See above, note 10.

27. C.C. Martindale, The Life of Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, vol. 2, pp. 260-261.

28. Ibid., pp. 264-265.

29. Ibid., p. 265.

30. Ibid., p. 237.

31. Ibid., footnote 2.

32. Evelyn Underhill to Hubert Stuart Moore, March 1910, EUL, p. 110.

33. Watkin bases this on the correspondence from C.C. Martindale, The Life of Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, but does not give the reference. "Evelyn Underhill," The Month 22 (January, 1959): 45-50.

34. Since his comments are a paraphrase of C.C. Martindale's paraphrase of Underhill's letter, Watkin is here quoted verbatim, to avoid yet another paraphrase.

35. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

36. Ibid., p. 47.

37. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 22 April, 1907, EUL, p. 60.

38. Evelyn Underhill to Hubert Stuart Moore, 1 May, 1907, EUL, p. 60.

39. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 12 May, 1907, EUL, pp. 63-65.

40. Quoted in CEU, p. 98. No addressee given.

41. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 12 May, 1907, EUL, p. 64.

42. Ibid., 30 May, 1907, EUL, p.66.

43. Ibid., 9 October, 1907, p. 69.

44. Ibid., 30 December, 1907, p.70.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., Holy Week, 1909, pp.97-98.

47. St. Ignatius of Loyola was the founder of the Jesuit Order. The "Exercises" are thus defined by Ignatius himself in the "first notation," the numbering system of the Exercises. (References here to various notations will be noted by n. + number.)
S. E. N. 1. "By the term Spiritual Exercises it meant every method of examination, of vocal and mental prayer, and of other spiritual activities that will be mentioned later. For just as taking a walk, journeying on foot, and running are bodily exercises, so we call Spiritual Exercises every way of preparing and disposing the soul toward itself of all inordinate attachments, and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul."

48. In the bibliography of Mysticism (1911), pp. 570-571, there is listed an English translation by E.M. Rix, with a Preface by G. Tyrrell, 1900, in addition to an 1841 Spanish text and an anonymous English translation of 1880.

49. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 20 August, 1908, EUL, p.82.

50. Ibid., 7 July, 1908, p.80.

51. From Immanence, a Book of Verses, pp. 13-15, in An Anthology of the Love of God, from the writings of Evelyn Underhill, edited by Lumsden Barkway and Lucy Menzies (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1953), p.158.

52. Evelyn Underhill to Hubert Stuart Moore, Easter week, 1910, EUL, p.114.

53. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 12 April, 1910, EUL, p.116.

54. AEU, pp. 90-91.

55. AEU, p.93.

PART III - The Influence of Mysticism, 1911-1920

1. For a thorough, illuminating and responsible discussion of this book and its place in its time, see Armstrong, AEU, pp. 95-135.

2. MY1, p. 578. One of the most important sections of Mysticism was the comprehensive bibliography, revised with each new edition.

3. MY1, p. 580.

4. MY2, Preface p. viii.

5. William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902, reprint ed., Mentor Books, 1958), pp. 292-294.

6. MY2, pp. 96-97.

7. AEU, p. 114.

8. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 1 December, 1909, EUL, pp. 106-107.

9. Evelyn Underhill to Mrs. Meyrick Heath, AUL, p. 146. Misdated 1913 by Charles Williams. See AEU, p. 117, who dates the series of four Bergson lectures as having taken place in mid-autumn, 1911.

10. KEU, pp. 115-116.

11. MY3, p. 43.

12. Charles Williams, Introduction to The Letters of Evelyn Underhill, p. 17.

13. The present writer's copy of 1914, a discard from the Fraser Institute in Montreal is stamped, "Adults Only."

14. MY3, p. 43.

15. Ibid., p. 164.

16. Cited in the Spectator 139 (July 16, 1927): 99.

17. Ibid.

18. Charles E. Raven, Natural Religion and Christian Theology. The Gifford Lectures 1952. Second series: Experience and Interpretation (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), pp. 206-207.

19. The Roman Catholic philosopher referred to above.

20. Friedrich von Hügel, "To a Lady," Selected Letters 1896-1924, ed. Bernard Holland (London: J. M. Dent, 1927, reprint ed., 1928), p. 187.

21. Evelyn Underhill to J. A. Herbert, 16 September, 1911, EUL, p. 129.

22. AEU, pp. 131-132.

23. MY2, Preface, xi.

24. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 7 February, 1911, EUL, p. 120.

25. Ibid., 12 April, 1911, p. 124.

26. Ibid., 25 July, 1911, p. 127.

27. Ibid., 6 February, 1912, p. 131.

28. Ibid., p. 132.

29. Evelyn Underhill to Mrs. Meyrick Heath, 31 March, 1911, EUL, p. 122.

30. Ibid., 15 May, 1911, p. 126.

31. Ibid., 15 August, 1911, p. 128.

32. Ibid., "Low Sunday," 1912, p. 134.

33. Evelyn Underhill, "The Place of Will, Intellect and Feeling in Prayer," (1913). Reprinted in ESS.

34. Evelyn Underhill to Mrs. Meyrick Heath, 12 May, 1912, EUL, p. 138.

35. Ibid.

36. Evelyn Underhill, The Mystic Way (London: J. M. Dent, 1913), Preface p. vii.

37. Ibid., Preface, p. viii.

38. Ibid., Preface, p. x.

39. Ibid., p. 120.

40. Ibid., p. 123.

41. AEU, p. 146.

42. Ibid., p. 148.

43. Evelyn Underhill to Miss Nancy Paul, Easter Week, 1913, EUL, p. 140.

44. Evelyn Underhill to J. A. Herbert, 30 March, 1913, EUL, p. 141.

45. Ibid., April 1913, EUL, p. 143.

46. Ibid.,

47. Evelyn Underhill to Mrs. Meyrick Heath, 10 February, 1912, EUL, pp. 133-134.

48. Cited by Charles Williams in Introduction to EUL, pp. 18-19.

49. Jacques Maritain, Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), footnote 1, p. 325.

50. Ibid., footnote 1, p. 337.

51. Evelyn Underhill, Practical Mysticism, A Little Book for Normal People (London: J. M. Dent, 1914, reprint ed., 1940), Preface, p. x.

52. Ibid., p. 3.

53. E. I. W. [E. I. Watkin], Review of Practical Mysticism by Evelyn Underhill, The Dublin Review 157 (October 1915), p. 401.

54. ESS, p. 30.

55. ESS, "The Blessed Angela of Foligno" (1912), p. 169.

56. AEU, p. 121.

57. AEU, p. 157.

58. One Hundred Poems of Kabir, trans. by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted by Evelyn Underhill. Introduction by Evelyn Underhill (London: The Indian Society, 1914). It has since been discovered that these poems are not the work of Kalsir but of another Indian poet.

59. A thorough search yielded two books. The first author discusses several of the poems in Immanence. He does not mention Theophanies, even in his bibliography. See Hoxie Neale Fairchild, Religious Trends in English

Poetry, vol. 5. Gods of a Changing Poetry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).
The second contains a brief discussion of her poetry as mystical poetry. William J. Noon (s.j.) Poetry and Prayer (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1967), pp. 73-77.

60. Evelyn Underhill to May Sinclair, 2 May, 1911, KEU, p. 240.

61. Armstrong notes that this was first published in The Quest, January 1914. Collected in Theophanies, p. 13 ff. AEU, p. 127.

62. The important correspondence between Underhill and von Hügel (1921-1925) had not yet been found by Lucy Menzies. Part IV of this paper includes a discussion of this material.

63. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 6 November, 1917, EUL, pp. 147-148.

64. Evelyn Underhill to Horace Hutchinson, 7 January, 1919, EUL, p. 148.

65. ESS, Preface, p. v.

66. AEU, p. 295. Armstrong gives the original dates of these essays.

67. ESS, "The Place of Will, Intellect and Feeling in Prayer," p. 106.

68. ESS, "The Mystic as Creative Artist," p. 64.

69. Ibid., p. 76.

70. Ibid., p. 85.

71. ESS, "The Mystic and the Corporate Life," p. 33.

72. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

73. The original article was occasioned by a review of W. R. Inge's book on Plotinus, based on his Gifford Lectures. AEU, p. 296.

74. ESS, "The Mysticism of Plotinus," p. 134.

75. Ibid., p. 135.

76. Ibid., p. 138.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p.139.

79. Ibid.

80. ESS, "The Essentials of Mysticism" (title essay), p. 1.

81. Ibid., p.2.

82. Ibid., p.6.

83. Ibid., p.12.

84. Ibid., p.14.

85. Ibid., p.15.

86. Ibid., p.24.

87. Ibid.

88. Charles Williams, Introduction to EUL, p. 31.

89. "Problems of Conflict," The Hibbert Journal 13 (April, 1915), pp. 497-510.

90. Ibid., pp. 505-510.

91. Robert Gail Woods, in an article on Evelyn Underhill's pacifism, suggests that one reason might have been the death of two cousins which deeply affected this small family. "The Future We Shan't See." The Christian Century 96 (May 16, 1979), p.553.

92. Evelyn Underhill, Ruysbroeck (London: G. Bell, 1915), Preface, p. vii.

93. Evelyn Underhill, Jacopone da Todi, with a selection of songs trans. by Mrs. Theodore Beck. (London: J. M. Dent, 1919).

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid., p.244.

96. Evelyn Underhill to Friedrich von Hügel, Before Christmas 1921, CEU, p.72.

97. ESS,"The Essentials of Mysticism," p.2.

98. ESS, "Lucie Christine," PP. 215-227.

99. Ibid., p.215, 220.

100. Ibid., p.244.

101. Ibid., p.255.

102. Ibid., p.226.

PART IV - Life as an Anglican

1. LSP, Preface, p.vii.

2. Ibid., p.x.

3. Ibid., p.viii.

4. Ibid., p.vii.

5. AEU, p.297.

6. LSP, p.viii.

7. Evelyn Underhill, The Hibbert Journal, p.389.

8. LSP, p.221.

9. Friedrich von Hügel to Evelyn Underhill, 26 June, 1916, AEU, p.201.

10. This review is referred to above. Harvard Theological Journal, April, 1916.

11. Reviewer quoted in AEU, p.201.

12. Ibid.

13. Von Hügel to Underhill, op.cit., AEU, p.201.

14. Ibid.

15. LSP, p.125.

16. Ibid., p.128.

17. Ibid., p.131.

18. Ibid., p. 132.

19. Ibid., p. 137.

20. Evelyn Underhill to Lucy Menzies, 25 January, 1923, EUL, pp. 311-312.

21. Friedrich von Hügel, The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends, vol. 1 (London: J. M. Dent, 1923), Preface, p. xiv.

22. The following discussion is based on pp. 151-153, "Mysticism and Symbol," MY2.

23. LSP, Discussion based on pp. 6-11.

24. LSP, p. 10.

25. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

26. Ibid., p. 11.

27. Ibid.

28. MY2, p. 153.

29. EIW, The Dublin Review, p. 26.

30. De arrha anima "Earnest Money" of the spirit. Fig. "A foretaste, installment, pledge, of anything afterwards to be received in greater abundance." Oxford Dictionary.

31. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 25 June, 1909, EUL, p. 99.

32. Ibid., 6 February, 1912, p. 132.

33. ESS, "The Place of Will, Intellect and Feeling in Prayer," pp. 108-109.

34. Review of Mysticism and Modern Life, by John Wright Buckham. Harvard Theological Review 9 (April 1916), pp. 234-238.

35. Ibid., p. 235.

36. ESS, "The Essentials of Mysticism."

37. Ibid., p. 4.

38. LSP, pp. 106-107.

39. Ibid., p. 108.

40. RSV, Ephesians 3: 17b.

41. "The grace of God which precedes repentence and conversion, predisposing the heart to seek God, previous to any desire or motion on the part of the recipient." Oxford Dictionary.

42. The correspondence was first published (in an edited form) by Margaret Cropper, Evelyn Underhill, pp. 69-124, passim. In his Evelyn Underhill, Christopher notes that these letters are copies, and having had access to them, has added, both new passages and whole letters, which were not included in Cropper's book. The interested reader is advised to refer to both books for a thorough study of this material, which is not possible here.

43. AEU, p. 199.

44. The reference is to Pascendi, the Roman Catholic Encyclical of 1907, and its aftermath.

45. Friedrich von Hügel to Evelyn Underhill, 29 October, 1921, CEU, pp. 69-70.

46. Evelyn Underhill to Friedrich von Hügel "Before Christmas," CEU, p. 72. (AEU, p. 217, dates this letter 21 December, 1921.)

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., p. 73.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., pp. 73, 74.

52. CEU, pp. 83-85.

53. Evelyn Underhill to Friedrich von Hügel, Summer, 1922, CEU, p. 87.

54. With the election of a new pope in 1914, the search for "Modernists" was less frantic since delation was not condoned. Von Hügel's niece writes: "He told me often of people who had changed under his influence, and who had become poor or even unpractising Catholic - and how he felt himself to blame in having unsettled them, and given them what they were not ready

for. This was the deepest grief to him: 'When I think of these, and it is quite a long list, how I wish I had never talked to them.'" Gwendolyn Greene, Introduction to Letters from Baron von Hügel to a Niece (London: J. M. Dent, 1928; reprint ed., 1929), p. xxxix.

55. AEU, p. 218.

56. Evelyn Underhill to Friedrich von Hügel, June 1923, p. 105.

57. Ibid.

58. No addressee, no date but obviously written early in 1923. Quoted in CEU, p. 98.

59. Evelyn Underhill to L. K., 21 June, 1924, EUL, p. 234.

60. See Part IV b)

61. Evelyn Underhill, Mixed Pasture (London: Methuen, 1933), p. 233.

62. Evelyn Underhill to Dom John Chapman, 9 June, 1931, EUL, pp. 195-196.

63. Friedrich von Hügel to Evelyn Underhill, 15 March, 1923, AEU, p. 221.

64. Ibid.

65. From the green notebook, 26 December, 1923, AEU, p. 222.

66. AEU, pp. 226-227.

67. Charles Williams, Introduction, p. 31.

68. Evelyn Underhill, The Mystics of the Church (London: Clarke, 1925), pp. 5-6.

69. Evelyn Underhill, "A Franciscan Hermitage," The Spectator 140 (February 11, 1928), pp. 183-184.

70. Evelyn Underhill to Laura Rose, Tues., (1924) sic, EUL, pp. 159-160. This date is given in brackets by Charles Williams. (See n. 71.)

71. AEU, p. 231 and CEU, pp. 133-4 both agree that this date is 1925.

72. No source but likely to be Lucy Menzies, CEU, p. 134.

73. Evelyn Underhill and C. S. Philips, "Spiritual Life and Influence," in Walter Howard Frere (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), pp. 175-182.

74. Ibid., p. 182.

75. Evelyn Underhill to Y.N., 15 February, 1935, EUL, p. 244.

76. Evelyn Underhill to L.K., 8 April, 1935, EUL, p. 245.

77. Evelyn Underhill to L.M., 25 April, 1935, EUL, p. 337.

78. John Chapman to Evelyn Underhill, 20 January, 1931, The Spiritual Letters of Dom John Chapman, ed. Dom Roger Hudleston (London: Sheed and Ward, 1935. Second edition enlarged, 1954), p. 103.

79. Ibid., 9 June, 1931, p. 105.

80. Ibid., 28 September, 1931, p. 107.

81. AEU, pp. 251-252.

82. (Anonymous) A Guide for Spiritual Directors, by the author of The Way (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1957, reprint ed., 1958).

83. Ibid., p. 63.

84. Cropper's biography quotes an even smaller portion of this letter; therefore, the quotation is taken from Underhill's letter to Cropper, as cited in Armstrong's biography.

85. Ibid., p. 251, 8 December, 1932.

86. Evelyn Underhill to Friedrich von Hügel, June 1923 (report for the year), CEU, p. 109.

87. Dr. William Temple, son of Archbishop Fredrich Temple, became Bishop of Manchester in 1921, Archbishop of York in 1929 and in 1942, Archbishop of Canterbury, as his father had been.

88. William Temple, Essays in Christian Politics and Kindred Subjects (London: Longmans Green, 1927), Preface, p. v.

89. Cited in James Walter, The Christian in Politics (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 119. From a note by Dean Inge to William Temple.

90. F.A. Iremonger, William Temple (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 323.

91. Ibid., p. 335.

92. Cited in ibid., p. 336, no source given.

93. Maurice B. Reckitt, A Century of the Social Movement in The Church of England (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 172.

94. Evelyn Underhill to Laura Rose, Saturday 1924, EUL, p. 150.

95. Evelyn Underhill to Lucy Menzies, 6 February 1924, EUL, p. 151.

96. Ibid., 21 March, 1924, p. 152.

97. Because of the recent death of her mother, she thought that her father was not fit to be left alone.

98. These essays are:
    1. "Some implicits of Christian Social Reform," given at Swanwick in 1922.
    2. "The will of the Voice," given at Birmingham in 1924.
    3. "The Christian Basis of Social Action," given at Oxford in 1925.
    (Christopher Armstrong lists these correctly in his bibliography, AEU, p. 237, but errs in the text. The first and second essays were first published in The Pilgrim - not the second and third, as Armstrong writes.

99. Evelyn Underhill to Conrad Noel, 1 March, 1933, EUL, p. 209.

100. Evelyn Underhill to C.D., 5 May, 1941, EUL, p. 307.

101. Evelyn Underhill, "Sources of Power in Human Life," The Hibbert Journal 19 (April 1921), p. 392.

102. Evelyn Underhill to Friedrich von Hügel, June, 1922, CEU, p. 89.

103. Evelyn Underhill, Concerning the Inner Life, 1926. The House of the Soul, 1929. Reprint ed. in one volume (London: Methuen, 1947), p. 1.

104. Cited in CEU, p. 140. No author or volume given.

105. Ibid.

106. Olive Wyon, Desire for God (London: Fontana Books, 1966), p. 98.

107. MSP, Preface, p. viii.

108. MSP, p. 1.

109. Ibid., p. 35.

110. Ibid.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., p. 60.

113. Chapter VII, part 2, "The Supernatural in Human Life," Read, 1924. Published in Theology, 1926.

114. Jean Jacques Olier (1608-1657) was a French priest whose writings on spirituality have been very influential.

115. Henri Bremond, Histoirie Litteraire du Sentiment Religieux, tome iv, p. 116.

116. MSP, p. 204.

117. Ibid., p. 226.

118. Ibid., pp. 232-233.

119. Evelyn Underhill to W. Y., 6 November, 1928, EUL, p. 182.

120. T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," in Four Quartets, 1944, reprint ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 59.

121. Lonergan, Bernard, "Theology in its New Context," in Theology of Renewal Vol. 1: Renewal of Religious Thought, ed. L. K. Shook (Dorval, P.Q.: Palm, 1968), pp. 44-45.

PART V - Towards a Mature Spirituality, 1930-1941.

1. AEU, p. 241.

2. There is some confusion as to when she actually assumed this position. Cropper (p. 152) holds to 1929; Armstrong to 1928 (p. 256). It is not possible to determine from the Spectator itself precisely when the appointment took effect.

3. Evelyn Underhill to E. I. Watkin, 11 June, 1934.

4. "Medieval Mysticism," Chapter XXVI, Cambridge Medieval History vol. 7 (Cambridge: University Press, 1932), pp. 777-812.

5. Ibid.

6. Evelyn Underhill, Worship (London: Nisbet, 1936, reprint ed. 1948), p. 338.

7. AEU, p. 275.

8. The Golden Sequence: A Fourfold Study of the Spiritual Life (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1933; reprint ed., New York: Harper Torch Books, 1960), p. ix.

9. Ibid., p. 3.

10. Ibid., p. 8.

11. Ibid., p. 29.

12. Evelyn Underhill to E. I. Watkin, 12 July, 1923, EUL, p. 212.

13. Friedrich von Hügel to Evelyn Underhill, 12 July, 1933, CEU, p. 113.

14. Cited in EUL, Introduction by Williams, p. 36. (No source given.)

15. CEU, p. 198.

16. Ibid. The "part-editor" who had engaged her feared that this might be a problem but he seemed to be satisfied with the results.

17. Worship, Preface, p. xii.

18. London Times, Obituary Notice.

19. Evelyn Underhill, The Spiritual Life (New York: Harper n. d. 1937), p. 36.

20. Spiritual Life, p. 131.

21. Evelyn Underhill to Nesta de Robert, 23 October, 1940, EUL, p. 295.

22. Evelyn Underhill to Margaret Robinson, 26 September, 1908, p. 84.

23. This was republished later in a collected volume with The Fruits of the Spirit, Light of Christ, Abba (London: Longmans Green, 1956).

24. Evelyn Underhill to Violet Holdsworth, no date, CEU, p. 227.

25. AEU, p. 290.

26. Ibid., p. 291

27. EUL, p. 230, footnote.

28. The Spiritual Life, p. 45.

29. Ibid., p. 85.

30. Ibid., pp. 98-99.

PART VI - An Assessment

1. Introduction to An Anthology of The Love of God, from the writings of Evelyn Underhill, edited by Lumsden Barkway and Lucy Menzies (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1953), p. 15.

2. In North America it is available on microfilm.

3. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1974 ed., s. v. "Underhill, Evelyn."

4. The Twentieth CenturyEncyclopedia, 1967 ed., s. v. "Underhill, Evelyn (Mrs. Stuart Moore)," by Douglass V. Steere.

5. New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed. s. v. "Underhill, Evelyn," by J. T. L. James.

6. Olive Wyon, Desire for God (London: Fontana, 1966), pp. 82-83.

7. "Evelyn Underhill." Religious Studies 12 (3, 1976), p. 277.

8. J. Henry Bodgener, "Evelyn Underhill - Spiritual Director to Her Generation." London Quarterly and Holborn Review 183 (January 1958) pp. 47-48.

9. "Evelyn Underhill," p. 47. Also, see Williams' Introduction to EUL, p. 12.

10. Charles Williams, Introduction to EUL, p. 29.

11. Ibid., p. 31.

12. Ibid., p. 32.

13. Evelyn Underhill to A. M. J., 13 December, 1934, EUL, p. 239.

14. Cited in James Bissett Pratt, The Religious Consciousness (New York: Macmillan, 1920, reprint ed., 1959), p. 347.

15. From the fourth and sixth books of the Enneads in Blakewell's Source Book in Ancient Philosophy (New York: Scribner's, 1907), pp. 386, 389-392. Cited in Pratt, The Religious Consciousness, pp. 363-364.

16. MY 1, pp. 531-532.

17. Collected Papers of Evelyn Underhill, ed. by Lucy Menzies. With an introduction by Lumsden Barkway (London: Longmans Green, 1946), pp. 137-138.

18. Ibid., p. 139.

19. Practical Mysticism, p. 125.

20. William J. Noon s.j., Poetry and Prayer (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1967), p. 76. It should be noted that Noon is a Jesuit priest and that this appreciation is from a Roman Catholic source. See below.

21. Quoted by John W. Donohue, "Two in Search of the Spirit," America 135 (August 1976), p. 53.

22. A "critical" realist is one who holds that "the data in perception are not actually part of external objects but are character complexes ... irrestibly taken in a moment of perception to be the characters of existing outer objects." Dictionary of Philosophy 1967 ed., s.v. "Realism," by R.J. Hirst.

23. J.B. Pratt, p. 367.

24. For a further discussion, see the conclusion of this paper.

25. The Dynamic Element in the Church (Montreal: Palm, 1964), p. 96.

26. Pratt, pp. 390-392.

27. Mixed Pasture: Twelve Essays and Addresses (London: Methuen, 1933), p. 56.

28. Henri Bremond, Histoirie Litteraire du Sentiment Religieux en France, tome III (France: Librairie Armand Colin, 1967), pp. 104-107.

29. Ibid., present writer's translation.

30. The Mystics of the Church, pp. 169-170.

31. Ibid., p. 195.

32. Ibid., p. 196.

33. Worship (London: Nisbet, 1936, reprint ed., 1948), p. 175.

34. Evelyn Underhill to L. K., 21 June, 1934, EUL, p. 234.

35. Evelyn Underhill to Dom John Chapman, 9 June, 1931, EUL, p. 195.

36. CEU, pp. 165-166.

37. Review of One Lord, One Faith by Vernon Johnston. Spectator Literary Supplement, 9 November, 1929, p. 683.

38. Evelyn Underhill to Lucy Menzies, 11 September 1925, EUL, p. 180.

39. Review of One Lord, p. 683.

40. Evelyn Underhill to F. H., 20 March 1933, EUL, p. 210.

41. Worship, p. 330.

42. Evelyn Underhill to C. D., 3 May, 1939, EUL, p. 278.

43. If Evelyn Underhill was "fully converted," Newman was not, according to Dean Inge. cf. W. R. Inge, Outspoken Essays, "Cardinal Newman," pp. 187-191.

44. KEU, p. 28.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., pp. 423-424.

48. Valerie Pitt, "Clouds of Unknowing," Prism 3 (1959), pp. 7-8.

49. Ibid., p. 9.

50. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

51. "The Training of People in Prayer," Theology 34 (February 1937), p. 91.

52. English Spirituality (London: S.P.C.K., 1963), p. 13, footnote 1.

53. Ibid., p. 11.

54. Ibid., p. 12. "My hope is that this present book will in some measure complement Harton." (F.P. Harton's The Elements of the Spiritual Life.)

55. T. L. Manson, Review of English Spirituality by Martin Thornton. The Church Quarterly Review 165 (July 1964), p. 386.

56. An Anthology of the Love of God, ed. Lumsden Barkway and Lucy Menzies (Connecticut: Morehouse-Barlow, 1976).

57. Abba (1940), The Fruits of the Spirit (1942), The Light of Christ (1944). Reprint ed. of each available in booklet form. Compiled by Roger L. Roberts (Connecticut: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982).

58. Cited by Charles Williams in his introduction to EUL, p. 27.

59. Pierre Thévanaz, "The Presence of the Past: The Value of Humanism and the Humanities." The Western Humanities Review, trans. Peter Carpenter, 37 (Spring 1983), pp. 14-15.

60. Roy W. Fairchild, "Guaranteed Not to Shrink: Spiritual Direction in Pastoral Care," 31 (2) (Winter 1982), p. 87.

61. Ibid., p. 94.

62. Anne Fremantle, ed., The Protestant Mystics, Introduction by W. H. Auden (New York: Mentor, 1965), p. xii.

63. Lumsden Barkway, Introduction to Anthology, p. 22.

64. CEU, p. 130.

65. KEU, p. 57.

66. Evelyn Underhill, review of The Inward Vision, by R. H. J. Steuart, in the Spectator 123 (November 23, 1929), p. 775.

67. Cited by Charles Williams in Introduction to EUL, p. 37.

68. Worship, p. 82.

APPENDIX

1. From Immanence, A Book of Verse, collected in An Anthology of the Love of God, edited by Lumsden Barkway and Lucy Menzies, p. 53.

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