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Baron Friedrich von Hügel and his philosophy of religion

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BARON FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
by
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to survey the life and writings of Baron Friedrich von Hügel, mystic, theologian, philosopher and lover of mankind, seeking to arrive at a fresh appreciation of his contributions to religious thought and life. The versatility and many-sidedness of his thinking, together with its depth and richness, is astonishing. But however profound his thinking may be, his theological conclusions and opinions may, in due time, be transcended and forgotten. Nevertheless, the beauty and quality which is so characteristic of his life will live on in the memory of mankind. His greatness can be measured only in the terms of the spirit that permeated his life. His chief contribution was made in the field of living as he faced, and helped others to face, the struggles and perplexities of life.

In view of this fact this thesis has one chapter devoted to the life and characteristic qualities of Baron von Hügel. A second chapter deals in a general fashion with the Baron's conception of the nature and value of religion. The third chapter is made more
specific. It is concerned with the Baron's theistic doctrines and the relationship between God and man. The fourth chapter has to do with mysticism which occupies a central place in the thinking of von Hügel as well as permeating most of his life and teachings. The fifth chapter deals with immortality as von Hügel sees it. The sixth chapter is an attempt to evaluate the contributions of von Hügel to religious thought. Then in a final, brief chapter an attempt will be made to summarize the considerations set forth in this thesis.
CHAPTER I

BARON FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL: THE MAN

When Baron von Hügel is mentioned to the average educated man he is perplexed as to who is meant. The name holds little or no significance to him. There are two reasons which largely account for this ignorance. First: his greatness was not the kind that would readily command and hold the public eye and applause. Rather his was a greatness of the soul and inner spiritual resources. It was graciously unassuming. Second: the work for which he is significantly great is in the field shared by Philosophy and Theology. It is comparatively technical and therefore outside the sphere of interest of the casual reader. It is fitting, therefore, to devote some consideration to the life and characteristics of Baron von Hügel.

A. Biographical Sketch.

A few words about Carl von Hügel, father of Friedrich, will furnish a background and cast light upon the heritage of Friedrich von Hügel. Carl was born in 1795. At the age of eighteen he joined the Austrian army and served in the campaigns against Napoleon of 1813 and 1814. Ten years later he left the army and built a beautiful home at Hietzing, a small place in the vicinity of Vienna,
and pursued a study of horticulture and natural science. Soon he fell in love with a lovely girl of noble rank. Their ensuing engagement was short-lived and was soon broken off in order that she might marry the famous Prince Metternich. This was to be an unfortunate union resulting in miserable failure for the young girl. The event hurt Carl deeply. He spent six years in travel, particularly in the Orient, hoping that time and new experiences might heal the wound he had suffered. He visited Egypt, Australia, Pacific Islands, India, China, and made an extraordinary journey the entire length of the great Himalaya Mountain Range. After six years of travel he returned to his home at Hietzing where he wrote several books on his experiences and carried on experiments in horticulture with the seeds which he had brought back from his extensive travels over the earth. He made some very valuable contributions in this field.

In 1851 Baron Carl married a Scottish lady much younger than he, whose father he had met in India in 1830. At this time Carl was Austrian minister to Florence. The next year, on May 8, 1852, Friedrich was born. Two other children were born to them before they left Florence in 1859 on account of a revolution. In 1860 Carl was made Austrian minister to Brussels where he
remained for seven years. This was a new and interesting environment for young Friedrich. "Living always at home, in a diplomatic house, with a father distinguished in science as well as in military and civil service, he must have seen a great and interesting variety of people," and enjoyed many broadening cultural advantages. His mother, reared a Presbyterian, accepted the Catholic faith soon after her marriage. She was a well-educated woman and saw to it that Friedrich received fine educational advantages. At first he was taught by a Protestant woman, then later, by a Lutheran pastor in Brussels. Alfred von Reumont, a German Catholic historian sent to Brussels as a minister from Prussia, took an interest in Friedrich and helped with his education. He never attended a school or university. This may seem a disadvantage upon first thought. But if he had attended a school it is very likely that his intellectual interests and hobbies would have been misunderstood and consequently curbed. In contrast, his private tutelage furnished "a more free and individualised flowering of his intellectual and emotional, richly human nature." 2

In 1870 Baron Carl von Hügel died. Soon after his father's death Friedrich was taken seriously ill from typhus. This left him with a slight deafness which

1. Holland, SL, 3
2. Ibid., 4.
grew increasingly worse and caused a real handicap over which he was more or less sensitive. There is the suggestion that this defect caused him to become more introspective in the realm of his own inner resources and thus strengthened his inclination for the study of mysticism. While this is possible, it is merely a conjecture. Soon after his recovery from the attack from typhus he spent a year in Vienna during which he had a religious crisis. He attributed his salvation to the influence of two men, a Dutch Dominican Friar and a French Secular Priest, both men of unusual religious character. It was the Dominican Friar, Father Raymond Hocking, who influenced Friedrich during this first crisis. This served to direct him toward religion. But about fifteen years later he came in contact with the French priest, Abbé Huvelin. Much later in life the Baron wrote, "I owe to this Frenchman more than to any man I have ever known in the flesh." About this time he went into frequent retreats with the Jesuits from whom he learned many things of spiritual value to him.

In 1873, at the age of twenty-one, Friedrich von Hügel married Lady Mary Herbert, daughter of Sidney Herbert. They had three daughters: Gertrud, Hildegard, and Thekla. They lived at Hampstead, England till 1903.

when they moved to 13 Vicarage Gate, near Kensington Gardens, where the Baron spent the remainder of his life. From 1893 to 1903 he did considerable traveling over the countries of Europe. Due to his wife's health they spent the winters during this period in the countries of Southern Europe, especially Italy. This gave Baron Friedrich an opportunity to form a wide acquaintance within intellectual and ecclesiastical circles.

Ernst Troeltsch and Rudolph Eucken are two influential figures that stand out among his acquaintances. He had two peculiar habits which helped to broaden his acquaintances:

"All through life, if he read any book which much impressed him as that of an earnest and sincere seeker after truth, he endeavoured to make the acquaintance of the writer by letter or meeting. This, and his real desire to assist even persons of small importance who asked for his advice or opinion, involved him in a large correspondence with men and women of various countries, to whom he usually wrote in their own tongues—German, French, Italian, or English—and into his letters, as into all that he did, he put the most minute and conscientious labour. Thus, with this ever-increasing correspondence and intercourse, and immense reading and study, and often interrupted by long periods of always bad and sometimes altogether incapacitating health, he passed away the years before he had actually begun to write his first book (The Mystical Element of Religion), his physical condition having then improved. This was the preparation which made him one of the central figures in the stormy period in the life of the Church, which followed the death of Leo XIII and the accession of Pius X."

In 1897 von Hugel became acquainted with Father Tyrrell who possessed a brilliant mind and was a born

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writer. The similarity of their intellectual interests drew them quickly together in a fast friendship which lasted until Tyrrell's death in 1909. An abundant correspondence was carried on by them. Each was greatly stimulated by the friendship, thought and writings of the other. Friedrich Heiler was another close friend of von Hügel's that highly influenced him during this productive period of his life, also Heinrich Holtzmann, the great New Testament critic. "His German-Scottish mind was far more in real touch with these than with Frenchmen and Italians, or even Englishmen." 5

In 1908 the Baron completed and published his first book, The Mystical Element of Religion, on which he had spent many years of preparation and writing. It is a massive work literally packed full of thought and religious content. His second book, Eternal Life, was published in 1912. It is far more lucid than the first book. In 1916 he published a third book entitled, The German Soul. The World War struck deeply in the soul of von Hügel for he was of German descent. His sympathies were with the cause of the Allies for right and justice. But the fanciful generalizations in regard to the character of the German people as a whole were heart-breaking to him. So he wrote his book with the hope of correcting some of the misunderstandings and prejudices which

the Allies had in regard to the German people.

In 1907 the Baron lost two of his three daughters from his home. The eldest, Gertrud, married a Count from Geneva. The youngest, Thekla, entered a convent at the age of twenty-one. These losses saddened him considerably for he was very much absorbed with his home life. Then in 1915 his eldest daughter, Gertrud, died of consumption. Gertrud had been his favorite daughter and an inspirational correspondent. Consequently he missed her considerably.

He liked to live much in the open air. He was not interested in games and the favorite sports of the Englishmen. But he found his exercise and diversion in long walks usually taken alone except for the usual company of his beloved dog, Puck. His deafness prevented him from enjoying the theatre, concerts or lectures. But with the advent of the cinema he found frequent enjoyment in this form of entertainment for deafness was no obstacle.

Von Hügel's broad learning was recognized by the conferring of an honorary LL.D. degree by St. Andrews University in Scotland and also a degree of D.D. by Oxford University in 1920. The Gifford Lectureship was offered him in 1924-26, but his health became so poor that he was forced to give it up before the completion of the lectures. Much of the material of these abandoned
lectures was incorporated in his next book, *The Reality of God*. He worked on this book till his death in 1925, leaving it incomplete. Some of his numerous lectures and writings during this period were published in a volume called, *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, in 1921. A second series was published in 1926.

In 1923 von Hügel felt keenly the death of his great friend, Ernst Troeltsch. From this time on the health of the Baron grew steadily worse. His exercise became less and less frequent and lacked in its former vigor. He became easily exhausted and could not spend more than an hour or so in any actual work or writing in a day. But up to the last he carried on his correspondence with great care. This demanded much of his fast ebbing strength for many people wrote to him for advice and consolation. He grew steadily weaker. Finally, death claimed him on January 27, 1925. His was a serene and happy death, quietly passing away in like fashion as he had lived. His passing caused the religious circles of Europe to bow in reverent respect and frank recognition of their loss. It left "a lonesome place against the sky" as well as in the hearts of the people.

6. Edwin Markham, "Lincoln, the Man of the People."
B. Forces which Contributed to His Development.

Baron Friedrich von Hügel was by no means a creature of circumstance or accident. There were several elements which combined and helped him to achieve the rich personality which is so much admired in him.

"He derived from many sources, Scotch mother, Austrian father, Lutheran pastor, Catholic tutor, Dutch Dominican, and French Secular Priest, that immensely varied yet richly massive texture that characterizes all his thought and utterance."

The Baron's mother was a well-educated woman with a Protestant religious background. Perhaps he derived from her his fine tolerance of the religious opinions and beliefs of those people that differ from him in their thinking. But she did not hold the same intellectual interests as did her son, Friedrich, and consequently they had little in common.

Von Hügel more closely resembled his father than his mother. Perhaps the likeness will be more apparent if we study a characterization of Carl von Hügel by Baron Alfred von Reumont, a very close friend of Carl.

"In him the man of the world was combined with the man of science; mature experience of life with profound knowledge of many fields; the enjoyment of social pleasures, and the fulfilment of official duties, with persevering, passionate industry in scientific pursuits. He was considerate, sympathetic, humane, without pretention, and without stiffness. Till middle life notable in salons, he was a loving husband and father. His deep-seated religious feeling and his attachment to his Church had not a trace of narrowness or intolerance, and his Christian charity showed itself both in the mildness of his judgments, and in his beneficence and

liberality. He was a warm patriot without antipathy to other nations; a decided Conservative without political intolerance; in all things full of moderation and equity."

Thus it is highly conceivable that he derived his fertile intellectual capacity and his broad, tolerant outlook on life from his father. It was a rich heritage to which he was never untrue.

We have already indicated the influence that a Dominican Friar and a French priest had on his conversion and religious thinking. We have also mentioned that he had no schooling in the ordinary sense of the word. But he was a well-educated man. Let us listen to him as he tells us of his educational influences.

"Yet my much loved tutor, from eight to fifteen, was a Rhenish Prussian Lutheran, and my education was, for those years, supervised by the well-known Catholic historian, the Rhenish Prussian diplomat, Alfred von Reumont. And my late initiation into Hebrew I owe to the Hessian convert, the strongly anti-Prussian Catholic Priest-Professor, Dr. Gustav Bickell. Most of the recent books that have influenced me much—the great works of Rohde, Oldenberg, Gunkel, Bernard Duhm, Heinrich Holtzmann, Otto von Gierke, Ernst Troeltsch—are all German. And then there have been the friendships, with roots too deep, I trust, for even this terrible war and its poignant differences to destroy, with such Catholic laymen as Martin Spahn and such Catholic clerics as Albert Ehrhard and Joseph Prenner; and with Protestant University Professors, such as Rudolf Eucken and Ernst Troeltsch. Heinrich Holtzmann, that utterly guileless soul and ceaselessly generous friend, has already gone to where wars are no more." 9

Aside from these home and educational influences there were two religious influences that were potent

9. Hügel, GS, 124f.
in his life. The Roman Catholic Church was the object of a strong and fervent devotion on the part of the Baron. Its theology and institutions were accepted on the whole by him. The mystical tendencies of the Catholic faith as represented in some of the saints, especially Saint Catherine, had a strong appeal to him. His views of the Church and institutional religion will be discussed in a later chapter.

Two societies of which he was a highly respected member influenced him greatly. One was the Synthetic Society, composed of notable men of both Catholic and Protestant faiths, and organized for the purpose of considering religious problems and issues. The other was the London Society for the Study of Religion, founded in 1903, having a special interest in religious and moral questions. In these two societies the Baron met numerous men of great importance. They were a source of considerable stimulation to him in his religious studies and in the writing of some of his books.

C. His Temperament and Character.

At no period in his life was Baron von Hügel given to dissipation. His conversion was a religious awakening and did not include a moral crisis as did the conversion of Augustine and others. Throughout his early years his parents were careful to instill moral principles which would enable him to achieve a strong personality. This
he unquestionably did.

Von Hügel appreciated and loved beauty greatly, yet it did not make a first appeal to him. He was afraid of beauty in a sense and did not regard it as a special testimony of God. He says, "We will not idolize form, it is content that matters." He was far more concerned with the inner beauties of the soul, spiritual beauty rather than physical beauty.

He was a great lover of mankind. It was characteristic of him that if he ever found any good in himself that he was anxious to impart it to others. He had what we might call a "tender solicitude for each soul's best." He wanted to see it unfold and realize itself. In this regard also "a beautiful feature in Friedrich von Hügel was his love of, and faith in, youth, and his ardent desire to encourage in it all higher moral and intellectual life."11

Perhaps the Baron obtained his keen, life-long interest in Geology from his father. From it he obtained many of his very apt illustrations and images. It was not so much the geological or natural beauty that fascinated him as the impact of historical facts and scientific data upon his mind. It represented new truth, and that was the object of his life-long quest. Thus truth was far more satisfying to him than beauty.

10. Greene, TW, 141.
11. Holland, SL, 47f.
D. His Inner Spiritual Vigor.

It is impossible to discuss the inner life of any man with any amount of accuracy. That is something known only to himself and his God. However, we can obtain glimpses of the richness of his personal piety through those who knew him well, as well as through his writings and the fruits of his personal living.

Von Hügel is often considered in terms of his mystical characteristics. Yet his niece, who knew him as well as any other human being, writes, "Though we see in him very clearly the touch of the mystical being, yet he is not so peculiarly mystical as immensely rich." 12

One of his intimate friends, Doctor Sauer, Rector of Freiburg University, said of the Baron after his death:

"He was one of the most remarkable of men, and, in consequence, not to be understood by such as knew him not intimately. I have seen him, after the sharpest critical argument, or after slashing away at some abuse or faultiness in clerical or Church questions, go into the nearest Church and pray, rapt and absorbed like a saint—or a child." 13

He had a life-long practice of daily meditation and systematic prayer, either spoken or silent. Also he participated frequently in the Holy Communion and confession.

Abbot Butler, in an article in the Tablet (February 14, 1925), comments upon the "powerful intellect, the

12. Greene, TW, 143.
acute, massive, highly trained metaphysical mind," then adds:

"But beyond all compare greater than the intellectual appeal was the moral appeal of von Hügel's personal religion. The warm flow of deep unaffected piety pulsates through every page of his greater writings as their very life-blood. Everyone who reads them, and still more everyone who came into personal contact with himself, could not but feel that religion was the great all-absorbing interest of his life, the one thing he supremely cared about. .......Such talks were as walks over the mountains in the fresh keen breeze, in the light and warmth of the sun, in view of a panorama of wild scenery or spreading landscape—exhilarating, bracing, deepening, broadening, uplifting; I have never experienced quite the same with any other man. And we always returned home by the little Catholic Church in Holly Place—it was his daily practice—and went in for a long visit to the Blessed Sacrament; and there I would watch him sitting, the great deep eyes fixed on the Tabernacle, the whole being wrapt in an absorption of prayer, devotion, contemplation. Those who have not seen him so know only half the man."14

By means of the above references we are allowed to peer through the key-hole, so to speak, at the richness and depth of the Baron's personality and inner spiritual life. He was truly a great man of untold spiritual resources.

In closing this discussion of Baron von Hügel as a man let us say that his reputation for greatness is well-deserved. He lived well, laughed often and loved much. He filled his niche and accomplished his task. He gained the love of children and the respect and admiration of his fellowmen. His memory is a benediction.

CHAPTER II
RELIGION AND LIFE

"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah;
My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.
Yea, the sparrow hath found her a house,
And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,
Even thine altars, O Jehovah of hosts,
My King, and my God." 1

The Psalmist has well expressed this innate yearning of all life after the Most High in the above passage. Man and beast alike seek a harmonious adjustment with the forces of nature, but man desires and needs spiritual fellowship and communion with the Eternal Creator and Sustainer of life. It is at this point that religion permeates life and physical existence achieves a spiritual significance. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the nature of religion in accordance with the views of Baron Friedrich von Hügel.

Von Hügel recognized three constitutive elements in the history of civilization. Not only do they have racial significance, but he believed them to be equally essential to the complete development and well-rounded life of each individual. First, there is the Greek passion for richness and beauty. It is a characteristic that is embodied in everything that the Greeks bequeathed to civilization by way of art, architecture, sculpture and literature,

including the classics, drama and the extremely influential works in philosophy. The Greeks had a manifest love of and faith in the absolute values of Beauty, Truth and Goodness. We have just seen how pervasive the influence of Beauty became in their culture. Socrates was the famous champion of moral goodness and Plato, as well as Socrates, pleads for Truth. The Greeks gradually approached a theistic belief through their faith in these absolute values. Their search after the Eternal Being behind the structure of the universe led them from the contemplation of physical elements, such as fire, water and air, to moral and intellectual elements such as Goodness, Truth and Beauty. Finally, Plato's view of the "Great Universal" or the "Perfect Absolute" climaxed this religious and philosophical quest of the Greeks.

A much more satisfactory and complete revelation of that Eternal Being, for which the Greeks had been searching, was given to the world in the personality of Christ. This is the second element which von Hügel mentions, and with this we shall concern ourselves in this chapter. The third element is the scientific temper of our day which leads men in a relentless quest for facts to be subjected to the reign of law.

A. The Fundamental Character of Religion.

Religion is not merely an incident in the sequence of life's experiences, such as marriage, having children,
education and decent behavior. It is, in essence, "the supernatural life, the other world, the otherness of God, different from, but penetrating this life." This is a term of extreme indefiniteness in theology and is used loosely by many writers. Consequently, it needs definition according to von Hügel's usage.

In describing his conception of the Supernatural, the Baron mentions five characteristics which he believes are essential to and contained in every manifestation of the Supernatural.

"First, then, the Supernatural experience, act or state, appears always, for us human beings, on occasion of, in contact with, and as the transfiguration of, Natural conditions, acts, states. Indeed, the Spiritual generally, whether natural or even supernatural, is always preceded or occasioned, accompanied or followed, by the Sensible—the soul by the body. The highest realities and deepest responses are experienced by us within, or in contact with, the lower and the lowliest; only in the moments of deepest spiritual experience do these humbler precedents and concomitants disappear from the direct, or at least from the more vivid, consciousness, and does the Natural substratum seem to be entirely submerged by the sheer Supernatural. Hence the genuine Supernatural always brings with it a keen sense of the recipient's littleness—he is so hemmed in by, and indeed so largely bound up with, his small human capacities as they front the immensity of the divine life." 3

Von Hügel here brings out one of the world's finest truths. He points out the interdependence of the Supernatural and the Natural, the spiritual and the physical, then indicates that the finest spiritual experience is often found amid the lowliest surroundings. This was true of Jesus' birth

2. Greene, LHN, xxxi.
3. Hügel, EA, 1, 292.
in Bethlehem. This was also true of Jesus' life for he possessed that admirable ability to find in the sordid and commonplace things an experience of transcending glory. We might call this "glorifying the commonplace." This is the type of a person who can find a heaven in the slums. He finds beauty and happiness wherever he turns. The Baron himself possessed this trait. Let us continue:

"Secondly, the Supernatural experience, act or state, is never quite solitary, but, even in the penumbra of consciousness of the experiencing soul, and still more in unanalysed ways, it is profoundly social as well..........Thirdly, the Supernatural experience, act or disposition always bears an evident, metaphysical, more than human and other than human implication and character; and yet, whilst thus affirming Presence, Reality or Otherness, it also always affirms or implies the incompleteness (even within the range of finite capacities) of this genuine experience of Ultimate Reality. God is here, but not God exhaustively, not in the fullness which He is and which He Himself knows; not even in the fullness with which He may be known by other larger and more devoted human souls..........Fourthly, the genuinely Supernatural experience, act or disposition is always more or less accompanied by Suffering in Serenity, by Pain in Bliss."4

Thus we see that the Supernatural may be experienced by people in a group as well as by an individual. In this point he provides a place for institutional religion. Then he points out the metaphysical character of the Supernatural which man can never directly and completely experience. In other words, we can apprehend God more or less perfectly in His immanence, but in His transcendence we can only experience a very incomplete sense of Otherness. Thus we

4. Hugel, EA, 1, 293f.
see that for von Hügel the Supernatural meant those spiritual values and realities inherent in the structure of the universe as well as that Ultimate Reality transcending the universe. In the fourth point the Baron indicates the value of suffering as a spiritual experience.

"And fifthly, the Supernatural experience always involves (though in this its deepest content often especially obscurely) the reality, indeed some dim sense of God. Qualities, such as reality, transcendence, presence, existence—these are not apprehended as abstractions floating in the air, or fancied in the mind; such qualities, or the impressions of such qualities are, however confusedly, however unuttered even to itself by the apprehending mind, felt and loved as effects and constituents of a Reality distinct from the apprehender, and yet a Reality sufficiently like the human spirit, when thus supernaturally sustained and sublimated, to be recognised by this human spirit with rapt, joyous adoration as its living source, support and end."

In this final characteristic of the Supernatural experience the Baron provides for the mystical experience, the contemplation of and absorption in the Ultimate Reality. The spiritual realities and values, mentioned above, come to their fullest expression and find their true significance in this relationship between the subject and the Object. Religion, therefore, is "evidential, trans-subjective," involving personal relations with its ontologically real Object. Through these five characteristics von Hügel has given us a fine understanding of his conception of the Supernatural.

It is characteristic of Hügel that he should think

5. Hügel, EA, i, 295.
of religion as the outward look of a soul toward the Other. Perhaps for some psychologists the religious experience may seem to be a fanciful glimpse of an imaginary reality accompanied by self-generated emotion, but not for von Hügel. Such subjectivism, being of an illusory nature, was extremely distasteful to him.

"Religion, even more than all other convictions that claim correspondence with the Real, begins and proceeds and ends with the Given—with existences, realities which environ and penetrate us and which we have always anew to capture and to combine, to fathom and to comprehend."7

It may be said that religion

"always affirms more and other than laws of the mind or impressions of the soul. It ever affirms Reality, a Reality, the Reality distinct from ourselves, the self-subsistent Spirit, God. It is, essentially, affirmation of Fact, of what is, what aboriginally, supremely is. It is, in this sense and degree, ontological, metaphysical: it is this, or it is nothing."8

Religion is not a substitute nor a refuge, but it demands positive thought and action. It requires the cultivation, development and expression of all of man's faculties. Religion presupposes that man is moved by, has an appreciation of, and searches for Truth and Reality. Religion is an end in itself. It affirms the Ultimate Reality, the Other, God.

It is impossible to give with any preciseness a definition of religion. Possibly it would be difficult to find two theologians who would agree upon a certain

formulation of a definition of religion. The Baron does not leave us any precise formula for the nature of religion. Religion for him was too big and supremely great to be defined. In studying his religious philosophy let us keep in mind that religion for him was like a jewel which has many facets. Each facet gives one approach to the beautiful reality of the whole gem. The gem cannot be fully apprehended and understood in terms of one, two, or even three of its facets, but to appreciate it completely one must consider all of the facets. This alone can give one a true picture of the whole. Such was von Hügel's attitude toward religion. We find him continually discussing phases or aspects of religion, but nowhere does he attempt a final definition of religion as a whole. This observation is born out as he mentions "four characteristics of all religion,—its practical universality, importance, autonomy, and superhumanity." Perhaps this is the nearest that he comes to a definition of religion. Each of these characteristics is really a facet which reflects one picture or attribute of the whole. Again, this fact is born out in his discussion of the nature of religious experience in which "the soul at its deepest is ever profoundly original, isolated, active, daring, interior, penetrative, and superficially pessimist; it moves through suffering on to joy."

After all has been said, religion does not exist.

in the abstract formulations of it, but only in the lives and experiences of men. The perplexing problem has to do with the method of making religion vital in this sphere. This was von Hügel's chief concern. He agreed with Dean Inge that

"man attains in religion, as truly as elsewhere—once given his wholehearted striving—in proportion as he seeks not too directly, not feverishly and strainingly, but in a largely subconscious, waiting, genial, expansive, endlessly patient, sunny manner."11

Religion makes certain demands upon men who would be truly religious. Such men must be heroic, holding fast to their faith amid the flaunting of a skeptical world. They must be pure, living in a world of immorality yet uncolored by such an influence. They must be humble and unpretentious,

"not of my littleness amidst a huge World Machine, or World Soul, or World Process, but of my weakness and poverty as measured by perfect Spirit—of the Spirit not myself, yet sufficiently like me to humble me whilst sustaining me; this beautifully rich virtue still shines out, in its specifically Theistic colour, in Charles Darwin's touching self-oblivion."12

Finally, they must have a fervent capacity for love.

Love is the very essence of all true religion.

"And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing."13

11. Hügel, EA, 11, 60.
12. Ibid. 159.
"Thus love—love of religion, and love of the other kinds, levels, ranges of life—is here the fundamental need—a standing within these living complexes and necessities." Life, then, needs religion to complete its meaning and significance.

The Baron has been criticized for making religion too intellectual. He was told that his type of religion was all right for a select few, privileged in education, who understood it, but the common man who was incapable of much reasoning would be bewildered by it. But such was not the case according to von Hügel, who said that:

"Any poor laundry-girl, who carefully studies and carries out the laws of successful washing, who moves, in alternation, away from this concentration on the Thing, to recollection and increasingly effective prayer and rudimentary contemplation, and who seeks the fuller growth of her spirit and of its union with God, in this coming and going, to and from the Visible and Contingent, to and from the Spiritual and Infinite, and in what these several levels have of contrast and of conflict; or any lowly farm-laborer or blacksmith or miner, who would proceed similarly with his external determinist mechanical work, and with his deeply internal requirements and spiritual growth and consolidation: would all be carrying out precisely what is intended here."

Thus the Baron conceived of religion as something extremely practical and fundamental, the fruits of which everyone might avail himself if he would. From this point let us turn to a study of the relationship which the Baron believed exists between religion and ethics.

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15. Hügel, MER, 11, 379.
B. Religion and Morality.

Von Hügel admits that there is some association between religion and ethics, but he spends considerable effort in showing that they are not identical. Ethics and morals can never displace religion in that they never penetrate beyond the region of "what ought to be" into the region of "what is." Ethics is normative and not descriptive and interpretative. This latter is the sphere of religion which has to do, "not with the production of what ought to be, but with fear, love, adoration of what already is." 16

Historically, the religious sense comes first, according to von Hügel. He relates that some of his earliest reminiscences are those of his boyhood ponderings upon the mysteries and perplexities of life, its why, its source, its purpose and its whither. He admits that these wonderings were inchoate and vague, but nevertheless, he felt, amid his childhood fancies, a sense of the Other. This, he believes, was the beginning of his religious consciousness.

In contrast to this, he places the development of his moral consciousness fairly late in his life. He offers three reasons for this. First, childhood experience falls within a limited sphere. There are few demands upon the child to exercise his faculty of choice, to make moral decisions. His development is fostered and nourished

by fond parents who make his moral decisions for him until he reaches the reasonable age of accountability. Second, it is dependent upon the development of the consciousness of one's selfhood. This, again, makes the achievement of the moral consciousness rather late. One does not become conscious of his own identity and being very early. The child becomes aware of things much sooner than self. Third, ethics arise in connection with society. The child is related to a very small unit of society in the early part of his life. Hence, if Hügel is right, it would tend to retard the development of his moral sensibility.

While Hügel holds to a separateness between religious values and moral values, yet he does not deny a certain amount of interconnection between them. They complete each other. Religion without goodness would be inconsistent and meaningless. Likewise, morality without religion would eventuate into cold, uninspiring legalism. He holds that religion is closer to the moral sense than to the aesthetic sense. He was not very friendly to forms of beauty, unless it had to do with the beauty and excellence of the soul. He was much more concerned with the content than with form and beauty. He admits that beauty gives us a glimpse of God, of Reality, but religion gives us the sense of the wholly Other.

Jesus said that the pure in heart were blessed for
they should see God. Thus von Hügel was right in his idea of association between morality and religion. Jesus makes the climax of religion fully dependent upon the moral nature of the individual. Hügel would assert a similar dependence.

The Baron made another interesting point. It has been asserted many times in the history of ethics but is particularly interesting in connection with the Baron's mystical tendencies. In such a case, the ethical emphasis is usually forgotten, or at least neglected. The Baron recognized that happiness is conditioned by morality. "Oh, how kind and generous of God when He makes it impossible for us to become very happy unless we become very good." 17

C. Institutional Religion.

Von Hügel distinguishes three elements in the history of religions. The first element has to do with the historical and institutional phase of religion. Reserve forces are accumulated in these religious institutions by successive generations, thus making them "power houses of spirituality." This will be the subject of the present section. Next is the credal, speculative or intellectual element which has to do with the formulae that express the constituents of power. This will be considered in our next chapter. Lastly, is the mystical and sacramental

17. Greene, LHN, 53.
element. This furnishes the means of transforming and releasing spiritual power. This we shall consider to some extent in this section, in so far as the sacramental element of religion has to do with religious institutions. A fuller discussion of the mystical aspect of religion will be given in a following chapter.

Professor Cock thinks that Hügel's division of religion into these three elements is too neat, too schematic and even too mechanical. He suggests that the number, three, seems to hold an irresistible fascination for the mind. There have been many triads in the history of thought. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is an excellent example of this. He doubts the psychology of it, and complains that there is no mention or place given to the aesthetic element in the scheme. Perhaps we can readily understand this in view of our foregoing discussion. But such a criticism is really beside the point since we feel sure that the Baron would have been perfectly willing to divide the elements of religion into four groups, or more, if he had felt it necessary.

It is interesting to note that there is a parallel of these three elements which we might express as physiological, logical and psychological. The institutional element, or the physiological, is concerned with the

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sense impressions of the actual; the rational or logical deals with the processes of abstraction and reflection as contained in the doctrinal aspects of religion; and the mystical, or what is more nearly psychological, has to do with the subjective apprehensions of religion.

Von Hügel recognized that a great fault of modern Catholicism is that it tends to over-emphasize the institutional to the neglect and hurt of the intellectual and mystical elements in religion. Consequently he spent considerable time and effort to set forth the proper significance and meaning of the institutional element.

He thought of the Church, not as an end in itself, but as a means to God and a preserver of great truths coming from God. He preferred Roman Catholicism to Protestantism because it recognized the supernatural life as essential to religion and emphasized the need and value of the institutional element. "Religion derives all its chief power and passion from tradition and institution." 19

In our religious life we begin with a "confused experience of the parts." 20 and gradually grow toward an experience of the ultimate Whole, God. Psychologically, man can not apprehend God directly. We need aids to direct our thoughts and meditation till we achieve that desired spiritual communion. Luther, then, would be wrong, according to von Hügel, in believing that the human soul

20. Ibid, 145.
could launch independently and unaided toward that pure spirituality of God. "I might as well refuse any aid from the stimulating of my senses toward my apprehension of spiritual Reality on the ground that God is not a bluebell, that His grace is not a fern." 21 Then he goes on to say that

"concrete, temporal, and spatial religion brings to our spiritual apprehensions something of the feeling of objectivity, of ease, of rest which our apprehension of the external world brings us, and which we have not felt within the group of facts and reasons derived from the needs of our moral and social life, so far as we have considered these. The human mind, requiring at every turn the support of the temporal and spatial conditions, finds itself here also supported by time and space." 22

Objective forms of religion and worship do have considerable value for us. This is particularly true of those who are just beginning their religious thinking and experience.

"What happens in the normal, that is in historical and institutional religious life, is that, during the periods of obscurity, the soul lives in a very true sense in the faith of its fellows until fresh light makes it in its turn support the others. No man is sufficient unto himself." 23

The Baron is here establishing his claim for institutional religion on the great truth that we live in a connected universe and that we belong to a social structure, whether we will or not. An object or person in our experience suggests or bears relations to the rest of the Whole. The Church, in one sense, is a mutual aid society.

21. Hügel, RGRA, 142.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid, 144.
for the purpose of promoting the spiritual development of each of its members, just as the state guides and protects the social, economic and political welfare of its members. This is a sound point and well establishes his argument for the need and value of institutional religion.

It is fitting that we should say a word concerning the sacraments and von Hügel's attitude toward them before we pass on to a more analytical study of his concept of the Church.

The Baron believed that Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, as parts of the sacramental system, are fruitful means of introducing us to rich spiritual values and realities, perhaps more so than any other possible aid found by man. But a false view is that which holds that these are the only means of experiencing these realities. This is far from the truth. There are many people who belong to the soul of the Church, he claims, who do not belong to its body.

In approaching the sacrament, according to von Hügel, the ideal way is to "drop brain, open wide the soul, nourish the heart, purify, strengthen the will: with this, you are sure to grow; without this you are certain to shrink." 24 It is the procedure of the mystic. Broadly speaking, all of us are subject to the mystical element in religion to

a certain extent. The aim of such religious exercise is to complete the development of the soul which should become "outward moving, humbly welcoming, generously interpretative."^{25}

To the Baron's mind the Church is essential to complete religion. But there are many who would substitute other things in place of institutional religion. Some substitute the individual. They say that religion is man's deepest experience. It is an exclusively private affair and not to be paraded but held sacred between himself and God. Others claim that the family is the highest expression of human love and most nearly approximates divine love of anything that we know. Hence religion receives its finest and fullest expression in the family, and the Church is not needed. A third group say that the sect is more significant than the Church. Notable examples of this in history are Montanus and Tertullian. Richard Rothe and others hold that the state is the logical substitute for the Church. Finally, the Stoics and Neoplatonists, Hume, Hegelians, Bradley, Bosanquet, Croce in Italy, Bergson and his followers, and others would substitute philosophy for the function of the Church.

The Baron recognizes that these attempts at substitution are not due to human perversity. He appreciates the fact that the Church does have its faults. From this point of view he suggests four reasons that might cause the above-mentioned groups to feel as they do toward the

^{25} Hégel, EA, I, 99.
Church and organized religion. First, the Church is a visible institution and hence has to be administered by human beings. Therefore it is subject to all the differences of those who administer it, in motives, purposes and in methods. Secondly, these administrators are often only average in capacity hence they frequently neglect or minimize the great spiritual truths and moral tenets of the Church. Thirdly, the visible institution of the Church under the influence of average men like Constantine changed from a "dying" method of spreading the faith as used by the martyrs to a "killing" or militant method. Lastly, the Church, under the influence of average men, has manifested some hostility to the scientific findings and disinterested scholarship characterizing our day. Because of these reasons 26 men have been driven away from the Church von Hügel thinks. It is a pity that such a thing should happen because there is a persistent need, both individual and social, of the Church today.

He continues to point out three evidences of this need. First, religion, like science, art, ethics and philosophy, rests on a natural capacity in the human spirit which demands satisfaction and development. The visible Church meets this need in a way that nothing else can do. Secondly, the history of religion points

out to us great religious personalities whose development and activities sprang from institutions, and either continued those institutions or founded other institutions. This is true of the great Oriental religious geniuses, the Hebrew Prophets, and both Jesus and Paul. Thirdly, evidence of the impoverishment of the lives of Churchless religionists manifests this great need of the Church. They lack in humility, religious training and discipline. Their groups tend toward sentimental moralism and mutual admiration societies. Such men are intellectually dishonest for they take these so-called substitutes—individual, family, sect, state, and philosophy—as they have been painstakingly nourished and developed by institutional religion and attribute to them the same value that belongs to that which has preserved and given meaning to their existence.

There are certain functions and values in belonging to a Church which one should recognize. Connection with the Church does govern, control and direct the soul’s individual claims to a certain extent. The individual finds that he acquires a set of churchly obligations. Again, the Church in order to exist has certain credal affirmations which are inevitable limitations. But they are really channels of positive religious convictions. One must discriminately consider the facts and principles
which condition our beliefs. One must recognize that truth and goodness are elements which have been operative in the history of religion. A spiritual appreciation of the humbler and tender beginnings of Jewish and Christian religions is necessary. This involves an appreciation of the historical origins of present religious experience, habits, practices and institutions. We must recognize that religion has passed through periods of persecution, revenge, condemnation and use of physical force. The reality of these facts is undeniable in their imperfection. They must be patiently understood and forgiven, and the value and truth in religion sought out and achieved. Finally, and most important of all, is the apprehension that one God operates through all reality and through all man's responses and religious experiences.

Von Hügel had a keen love for the Church. In it he found his chief religious inspiration. "His religious sense was aroused and preserved by Catholic tradition, ritual, architecture, all leading up to and maintaining an invigorating awareness of the Real Presence of God."27 Not only are we stirred by his love for the Church but,

"almost any impartial student of religion, almost any unbiased psychologist in this field, almost any member of one of the World's several great orthodoxes would probably concur with von Hügel's estimation of the place of the sensuous, the material, the traditional, and the institutional as forming the normally necessary occasion, 'apperceptive mass', instrument, and protective shell of the religious life."28

28. Ibid.
In closing this chapter it is fitting that we should consider the contributions of Roman Catholicism as von Hügel saw them. He suggests seven of them.²⁹

First, the spiritual life of the individual is aroused and quickened by sense stimulation. Catholicism alone holds that sense objects awaken the feeling of communion and fellowship to such an extent. The appeal to the spiritual is made through the sensual. The Baron does not hold that this is exclusively the case however. Secondly, Spirit is awakened by spirit. The adoration of the great religious saints of the ages awakens in us spiritual thoughts and longings. "Catholicism, in its traditional system, alone remains ceaselessly aware of this sacred torch-race across the ages."³⁰

Thirdly, this spiritual awakening and communion takes place within a great "social and spiritual Organism which itself possesses a certain mysterious yet very real person-like identity and influence—a whole extant from the first in those subjects and their activities, as the several parts of the whole."³¹

This is the substance of the famous organic view of the Church as held by Catholics. It is more or less peculiar to the Catholic faith. It has doubtless been a tremendous unifying influence for those of the Catholic faith the world over for many centuries.

Fourthly, man has a dual nature. He has desires,
needs, duties and satisfactions which have to do with this world, the visible world, as well as with the invisible world. Catholicism provides for an interrelation and harmony between the two realms. Fifthly, Catholicism recognizes a duality which exists between suffering and renunciation, and possession and joy. According to Hügel, Christianity has but two notes—suffering and joy; a Gethsemane and a resurrection; renunciation and victory. These are harmonized and integrated within the great spiritual Whole.

Sixthly, this unity is not a resulting or superadded quality, but it permeates the parts giving them special significance. The pope represents the unity and the priests and bishops represent the parts of this great spiritual whole, the Church.

Finally, religion "affirms real contacts with a Reality which both occasions and transcends—which exists independently of—all these contacts." 32 This sense of the Other is characteristic of the Catholic faith and more essential to the proper understanding of it than the preceding contributions.

Thus the Baron summarizes the contributions of Catholicism to religious thought and life. No one could be better fitted to perform this function than he for he lived so close to the thought and life of the Church

32. Hügel, EA, 11, 248.
that it had vital significance for him. He defended the Church against its assailants. Yet he had the prophetic spirit in him and guided the adjustment of the Church to the modern scientific temper and the liberal spirit of the age. He was neither conservative nor radical but was able and willing to appreciate the progressive elements of liberalism together with the fine qualities of the traditional faith. In this respect the Catholic Church owes much to Baron Friedrich von Hügel.
CHAPTER III
GOD AND HIS RELATION TO MAN

That von Hügel was an ardent believer in God is an accepted fact to the student of his writings. He was so certain that God existed that it was an assumed fact for him. He rarely let his mind question it. So it is not so much the speculative question as to whether God exists or not, but rather, the far more practical one, what is he like, that occupied the Baron's thought. Hence we shall consider only briefly the speculative issue involved in the belief in God, then pass on to the more important problem regarding the nature of God.

A. Grounds for Belief in God.

In the rose, in the rugged mountain beauty, in the billowy rolling of the dashing waves, in the twinkling lamps of the heavens, in the fierceness of the storm, and finally in the exquisite beauty and freshness of the new-born babe, we find the signature of God, intelligent Creator, Sustainer and Lover of all that He creates.

Thus does nature reveal God. But nature, like science and art, yields not "a God who is given but one who is glimpsed."1 Aside from the reality of the external world, von Hügel attributes a certain reality to the dimension of time which suggests and demands Eternity to complete

its meaning. But the mere concept of Eternity is meaningless unless we have the accompanying concept of something that persists through the present and maintains its identity throughout eternal duration.

Aristotle distinguished three different kinds of souls: the vegetable or nutritive soul, the animal or sensitive (also conative and locomotive) soul, and the human or rational soul, the last including and unifying the two inferior souls and their functions. Von Hügel made a very similar classification of the human functions. He mentions the vegetative, physical, psychical, mental and spiritual. The first two would correspond with those of Aristotle, and the last three are all included in what Aristotle means by the rational soul. According to Aristotle this rational soul is composed of two types of reason: the active reason and the passive reason. The latter furnishes the material of existence while the former is the form and cause of existence. But this active reason in man is not the cause of its own existence. Rather it is dependent upon the Perfect Being or the "Unmoved Mover." Whether or not von Hügel is dependent upon Aristotle for his view at this point we cannot say, at least the similarity is evident, for he finds evidence of Objective Reality in these same human functions. These functions receive stimulations from objective realities, according to Hügel,\(^2\) that are not unlike these human functions.

\(^2\) Hügel, EA, 11, 143.
functions and they operate as parts of the Whole, just as these human functions operate as a part of the whole man. However, there does not seem to be much merit in this argument. That our human functions have an objective counterpart in the plan of the universe is doubtful. The argument would be far more convincing if he would say that the elements in human personality point toward similar elements in Cosmic Personality. This would more closely approximate the line of reasoning used by Aristotle.

The Baron recognized an inner urge in the human soul toward the Other which demands spiritual communion. This inner longing is really what Schleiermacher meant by the "feeling of absolute dependence." It is also fairly certain that the Baron would be in agreement with Troeltsch in his doctrine of the religious a priori. Of the two, however, he would more closely approximate the position held by Schleiermacher. Nowhere does he specifically state that it is an inherent principle or capacity grounded in human reason itself, which is the position of Troeltsch.

Again, the idea of moral perfection implied a becoming like God. Thus, in man's capacity for moral growth he found a final ground for belief in God. In Jesus' words, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Heavenly
Father is perfect," he found verification for his belief.

B. Hügel's Conception of God.

Now we come to the more practical question as to the nature of God. "God is not an idea. He is a fact." It is this certainty that characterizes von Hügel's religious thought throughout. Religion is more than a mere subjectivism. God cannot be characterized as a figment of the imagination. God is given.

"The deepest aspirations and implications, the most comprehensive and permanently fruitful experiences of religious souls all, in the last instance, require or indicate not Comingness but Givenness—the Realised Ideal." In this reference we see his basis for grounding belief in the Given in human experience. But he does not stop with this.

"There runs here throughout everything the sense that Religion, even more than all other convictions that claim correspondence with the real, begins and proceeds and ends with the Given—with existences, realities, which environ and penetrate us, and which we have always anew to capture and to combine, to fathom and to apprehend; all this, however, neither as springing from scepticism nor as leading to it, but, on the contrary, as stimulated and sustained by a tenacious conviction that a real, if dim, "confused" knowledge of reality is with us already prior to all our attempts clearly to analyse or completely to synthesise it." In other words, we are surrounded with realities which are present even though we have no knowledge of them, or before we experience them. But still he goes one step

4. Greene, LHN, xviii.
5. Hügel, EA, 11, 199.
6. Hügel, EA, 1, xiii.
further.

"Here again, both the supernatural religious apprehension and feeling thus aroused, and the supernatural, superhuman events and existences which arouse them, are given; and the two givennesses each require the other, if there is to be, here, the possibility of an act or habit of religious faith, now of the supernatural kind."7

Thus he includes in the Given not only the external and supernatural realities which environ us, but also the experiences of these supernatural realities. Then he continues to show how these given realities and our experiences of them combine in the Givenness of the Ultimate Object or God.

"And then the greater Givennesses are found in those fast Intelligible Orders, which persistently show themselves anew, wheresoever human experience is sufficiently pressed, and which so entranced the great minds of a Kant and of a Fichte. In all these cases we have an absorption of the Subject in the Object, and a response—an assuredly gradual, ever only partial, yet a very real, self-revelation—of the Object to the Subject. In the cases of these Intelligible Orders we have already something more or less religious. Indeed the sense of Givenness, of Prevenience, of a Grace, of something transcendent having in part become Immanent to our human world as a Fact within this factual world, and of this Fact as alone rendering even possible that sense of Givenness—all these experiences are already present in the apprehension and affirmation of those Intelligible Orders as truly extant."8

Thus the givenness of God has two sides, God's own reality and our awareness of it. But our awareness is not limited to intuition or a special mystical sense. Rather it comes over the normal faculties of knowledge.

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8. Ibid, 56f.
properly trained and directed, together with the assistance of the Divine Grace. In summing up this discussion of the givenness of God,

"God is given, not by the forms of perception, not by the categories of the Understanding, nor by the regulative Ideas of Reason, but given in the very texture of things-in-themselves, given in the very fact of that realm of supernature whose existence Kant was compelled to affirm but whose character he was afraid to describe; given in the imposition upon the sensible of the significance which is always spiritual; given in our perception that the immanent can satisfy us only if it be transcendent, guaranteed by an absolute character immune from the transitory and the contingent."  

Thus the givenness of God is not rudely forced upon us. Nor are we obliged to find God against our will. We can make a willful choice not to see the evidence of His Presence. We can close our eyes, our ears and our reason to His bidding for our attention. It is also true that those who seek Him find Him in different ways. He is the "immanent, transcendent source of all reality and all knowledge." In trying to understand this the mind faces difficulties. But Professor Cock has devised an imaginative and picturesque expression of this truth. So let us consider the picture that he draws for us.

"Suppose the subject to be himself located upon the inner surface of a hollow and transparent sphere and to find that the act of attention reveals to him illuminated tracts upon that sphere. Will he not presently be drawn to seek the ultimate source of that illumination? Will not the Light so shine as presently to attract him in such a way that he diverts his searchlight (of attention) from the limited and finite tracts upon the hollow transparent sphere to the circumambient and unbound Source

10. Dakin, HS, 172f.
of the diffused radiation? Will he not find indeed that the hollow sphere owes all its illumination, all its transparency, and he all his powers of receiving that illumination to a Source other than itself, a circumambient Light he cannot limit or define but in Whose light he sees light, and seeing must adore? That Light indeed is the source of life. Now indeed is the immanental illumination diffused throughout man's little sphere seen to derive from an utterly Other Source of transcendent Light."

This is only a picture by which Professor Cock wishes to make more manifest the necessary and inseparable relation of our lives to that of the Divine. Again, the figure aptly shows the process for the normal development of the religious consciousness. The figure also illustrates the process and nature of revelation. However, it is only a figure and consequently is subject to the limitations of all symbolism. It is merely suggestive and may help a little in understanding the meaning of one of von Hügel's most profound ideas.

The personality of God is more than that of another separate, finite person. If the believer would know Him he must become

"aware of Him as perfect ultimate Reality Who, as the fullness of beauty, goodness, power, truth, and being, is alone worthy of unreserved adoration; on Whom he and nature in every way depend; Who permeates all things and knows every thought so that it is fundamentally unnatural and dismal even to imagine being outside that Adorable Presence."12

In concluding this section we might say with Hügel,

God is a rich Reality commanding our fullest admiration

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and devotion. He is the Author of and is variously reflected in all nature and all supernature. God is a perfectly free Being. He is the supreme Good, the end of all our seeking. He is not altogether unlike man, though he is also other than man. Men need God much more than God needs men, and differently too. He created us and loved us long before we were conscious of any longing or love for Him.

The problem of suffering occupied the mind of von Hügel to a considerable extent. So let us briefly consider his thought upon the subject.

C. God and Suffering.

Is God a sufferer? This is a question to which von Hügel answered,

"In God there is no Suffering and no Sin; and in Jesus Christ, Who was and is in a unique closeness, in a unique kind of union with God, Joy and Sanctity shine out in a unique fashion and degree." 14

He approaches the problem by studying the history of thought regarding it. The Greek current of thought was stoutly against the conception of God as a sufferer. The Jewish current of thought conceived of Yahweh as being passionate, fierce and jealous but not suffering. The moral distinctions of the Prophets largely eradicated these anthropomorphic tendencies in conceiving of Yahweh. But, according to the Church Fathers, God is intensely personal and is an intense sufferer.

Those who demand that suffering belongs to the nature of God say that if God is really to have sympathy with us He must share our suffering. If He has a real personality then He also possesses a system of emotions and feelings. Real personality is an achievement, acquired through suffering as much as through joy. But von Hügel does not feel that there is much validity to their arguments. Rather he thinks that the objections to the presence of sufferings in the nature of God are more grave than those in favor of the position just given. He says that suffering is intrinsically evil\(^{15}\), and therefore contrary to the nature of God. But is all suffering intrinsically evil? Suppose we consider a normal, happy family. A boy grows up and is finally ready to step out for himself into an ever expanding and larger life. Frequently the loving parents suffer intensely before they can adjust themselves to the new situation. Wherein is the evil in such a case? Naturally the former family circle is now broken, but how is this an evil? Then there are certain types of vicarious suffering which are not necessarily evil. He is right within limits, but it seems that he is dangerously bordering on dogmatism.

Von Hügel admits that

"it is true that man thirsts, not only for sympathising Joy, for a Divine Sympathiser, but also for a direct Fellow-Sufferer, for one who suffers as you and I. The thirst finds full satisfaction in the life, especially in the Sufferings of Jesus."\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\) Hügel, EA, 11, 199ff.

\(^{16}\) Ibid, 195.
He feels that equivalent to this desire to think of God as being in our Likeness is the conviction of the Otherness of God which is essential to complete the meaning of religion.

He believes that religion requires the transcendence of God in a form and degree which excludes suffering from His nature. But in so stating his case it seems that he neglects the immanent aspect of God's nature which makes Him a sharer and partaker with us in our spiritual experiences as well as a physical experience. Jesus, in the parable of the "Lost Sons," portrays God as a loving Father who rejoices upon the return of the Prodigal. If He had the capacity of rejoicing, surely he must have been able to grieve and suffer when the son was lost. Again, Jesus pointed out that there would be rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner that repented. If there is the possibility of the one emotion, then could there not be a like possibility of its opposite emotion, or state of consciousness. Jesus' whole ministry, life and death is an undeniable testimony of the fact that the Cross is at the center of the love of God.

"The problem of whether God suffers or not the Baron considered highly important. Significant theoretically in leading to either a finite or an infinite deity, it is also closely connected with conceptions of divine personality, liberty, transcendence, and immanence. If it is true that we want in God a companion and friend not too unlike ourselves to share our daily life, it is also
certain that we need in Him a parent possessing an authority and character essentially superior to our childish whims and capable of communicating to us a higher type of reality than can be transmitted by any companion who is merely an aggrandisement of one of our own finite parents a sympathy as soothing as that of their playmates and also—that which their playmates have not yet acquired—a freedom from childish woes, in the presence of which those trials evaporate, so, von Hügel felt, we need in God not only a suffering companion but even more a serene, sympathetic parent. To be ultimately satisfactory, the parent must be, unlike a human one, absolutely perfect, supremely real, God Himself.\textsuperscript{17}

J. K. Mozley in his admirable book\textsuperscript{18} surveys for us the development of the conception of the "impassibility of God." He points out that the older theologians were generally agreed in denying the passibility of God because they wanted to avoid anthropomorphism, hence they emphasized the divine transcendence. They felt that suffering implied weakness and mutability, both of which are anthropomorphic characteristics and could not be present in a Perfect and Absolute Being. Von Hügel would have to be classed with these older theologians for his view which we have been expounding is very similar to theirs. But Mozley goes on to show that God must have something akin to the emotional life of man to make possible love and sympathy. Probably the quality of self-sacrifice is valued more highly than any other in the New Testament. Paul makes burden-bearing one of the chief Christian virtues. Thus Mozley concludes that capacity for sacrificial suffering must be ascribed to God.

\textsuperscript{17} Dakin, HS, 207f.

So much has been said regarding the relation of suffering to God, we might well ask, how is man to relate himself to suffering? How is he to regard it, meet it, prevent it or transcend it? "Von Hügel's prescription for meeting suffering is that of calmly, consciously accepting it—just as one best greets any thing—and utilizing it for the purification and strengthening of the soul." Thus it is to be regarded as chiefly disciplinary, spiritually refreshing and vitalizing.

D. Pathways to Religious Certainty.

Other than the certainty of reason and that of traditional and institutional religion, there are three sources which might be mentioned as methods of becoming acquainted with God and an ever-renewing fellowship with Him.

1. Revelation.

The Baron's theory of the givenness of God is closely connected with his view of revelation. This is born out in the following statement.

"As to Revelation, it is remarkable that men's latter-day pre-occupation with the apparent imperfections in the content of the various religions has frequently blinded them to the excellence of the form, the vehicle of all Religion. For the characteristic form of all Religion is Revelation; and the various activities and achievements of human life, wheresoever these are sufficiently deep to awaken and to hold the entire man and to lead him to some certitude, all possess, in various degrees and ways, something revelational about them." 20


20. Hügel, EA, 1, 55f.
Here he suggests that all human experiences have something "revelational about them," but he continues to say that "it is only the specifically religious experience which gives us Revelation at its fullest, not only as to Revelation's content but also as to Revelation's form. For Religion alone brings the vivid revelation of Spirit other than the human." 21

Von Hügel says that the third point of agreement between Catholics and Protestants "is the keen sense of the Historical, concrete, contingent, unique Character of the Jewish-Christian Revelation." 22 This shows the importance that he attributed to the revelational character of religion, both past and present.

The Baron thought of revelation as a method or a process by which he became acquainted with God's character and will. By revelation he saw God's Goodness and Love disclosed in nature and in the fineness of man's moral and spiritual capacity and development. The Baron also believed in divinely inspired ideas. But above all else he held that Christ "is Himself the full revelation." 23

2. Prayer.

A vital prayer life is based on a real, meaningful conception of God. God must be a Reality in one's thinking else prayer is vacuous. One does not pray to

22. Ibid, 247.
a vague abstraction and expect anything to come of the prayer. Such would be merely empty words. The conception of a personal, loving Father-God, which Jesus taught, vitalizes the whole process of prayer and renders it necessary to spiritual growth.

Decisive preparation for prayer lies not in the prayer itself, its studied expressions, but in the life prior to the prayer. The attitude of mind and the acts of the will may seriously impede or facilitate the effectiveness of the prayer life, depending upon their moral and spiritual quality. One must recognize that there is a ceaseless and undeniable interaction between the body and the soul.

Von Hügel points out that there is an undeniable difference between the spiritual range and depth of what the soul chooses and what God would have it become. We are finite and make many blunders in apprehending His Will for us. He also suggests that a right attitude toward the sex instinct, and as to what is, for the Christian, the sin of sins is necessary. He recognizes that the sex instinct is native and must be accepted but controlled. But the central sin for the Christian is pride and an attitude of self-sufficiency. These are extremely detrimental and destructive to the spiritual life. However, purity and humility are both essential
and should be the object of earnest prayer to build them into the very fibre of the moral and spiritual being.

Another essential to the prayer life is a right attitude toward temptation and sin. Temptation is a necessary resultant of our imperfect moral and spiritual nature, but not sin. We are given a reason and a will to employ in directing our lives down the gauntlet of temptation. With this distinction well in mind many of the hazards to an effective prayer life may be avoided.

3. The mystical experience.

The Baron considered this as one of the most vital ways to religious certainty. He was essentially a mystic by nature and was tremendously interested in this field or religious perception. We shall barely mention it in this chapter as one of the ways of approaching God and acquiring a certainty of His Presence. Our next chapter will be solely concerned with this type of religious life. So this will serve as a transition to the next chapter.

To understand what the Baron means by a mystical experience let us look at his procedure in taking the sacrament.

"I go up as though I was all bent down, drawn down; I am drawn down as though I was about to enter a tunnel; I am all crouched down to receive the blessed sacrament; and afterwards I feel expanded—I breathe deeply in a great deliverance." 24

The sense of awe and adoration so overcome him that a contrasting apprehension of his own humility and unworthiness compels him to kneel in reverence. Then he partakes of the sacrament. Immediately he feels as if he were caught up into the bosom of the Eternal. The sense of his unworthiness leaves him and he exalts in his new-found strength and vision. Hence he receives the feeling of "a great deliverance." It is truly a mystical experience of a typical character.

With this we complete our discussion of God and His relation to man. Let us now turn to a discussion of von Hügel’s conception of mysticism.
CHAPTER IV
MYSTICISM

"Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love."¹

If we define mysticism broadly enough then it may be said that all men possess mystical elements in a greater or lesser degree. But in so defining the term, it would be made meaningless and vague. There are numerous types and degrees of mysticism as well as pathological states that resemble mysticism. So out of all these varying types confusion inevitably arises as to what one means by the term, mysticism. Let us then see how the Baron would define the term and express its nature.

A. The Nature of Mysticism.

Von Hügel was not concerned with the varying types of mysticism that were not essentially Christian in method and content. For him mysticism was an "experience (more or less clear and vivid) of God as distinct, self-conscious, personal Spirit."² The mystic is frequently characterized by unusual exhibitions of psycho-physical characteristics, such as visions, locutions, raptures, and trances. This distinguishes him from the normal

¹ Wordsworth, "The Excursion," I.
² Hügel, MER, i, xii.
religious genius, such as St. Augustine and Gregory the Great, who through deep absorption of the mind in prayer lost their consciousness of the external world and even of the mind's own operations.

However, we must not identify von Hügel with the extreme mystics. He wishes to sustain the subject-Object relation in religion. But the mystic seeks to obliterate any distinction between the subject and Object, and to be completely absorbed and rapt in the Eternal. He brings out the chief difference between himself and the extreme mystic in the following statement.

"At bottom, the difference, between the Mystic as such and the religionist of a more historical or sacramental type, lies as much in the interesting non-recognition of the meditations always actually at work also in the Mystic, yet always thus ignored or minimised by him, as in the actual preponderance, in this same Mystic, of any directly intuitive element.

"Again it is very certain that Pure Mysticism and Pantheism are one; and that they both, by their similar excesses, and by levelling all things down, not up. If any moment, any state, any thing is as good as another, is all engulfed in, is the complete vehicle of, Eternity—then good and evil, true and false, God and World, God and Man, spirit and sense, coalesce." 3

Von Hügel's mystical experience might be classed as of the illuminative type. By this we mean that the subject-Object relationship is sustained, and the subject is enlightened, inspired and uplifted by fellowship with the Object. He warmed his mind and heart at the mystical

3. Hügel, EA, 1, 131f.
fires of the Eternal rather than being absorbed into
the fires in a period of ecstatic bliss. This latter

case would belong to the unitive type. In this the

subject-Object relation is obliterated and the two be­
come as one. This is the extreme form which the Baron
classed as pure Pantheism.

This Christian mysticism of von Hügel's must not be
identified with the mysticism expressed by Professor
Cock as he distinguished it from religion. He says:

"Religion is the act of attention directed towards
God, but mysticism is the act bursting the bounds
of act and becomes absorption, attention ceasing to
be self-directed and particularized and become at­
traction towards that Ultimate Object Who is also
Ultimate Subject of all Experience." 4

In sharp contrast to this the Baron claims that the

'active reason' of Aristotle is

"the most satisfactory and scientific, description
and explanation of that great stream of experience
and conception which runs throughout all the fuller
and saner Christian Mysticism—the experience and
conception of 'Action'—the full Functioning of the
Spirit and Personality, in which all its Potentiality
is actualised, and where the very fullness, richness,
and harmony of the Action produces an overflowing
joy and peace, an equilibrium of the profoundest,
purest Energising." 5

Thus in Christian Mysticism the conscious identity of
the subject is not lost as in the extreme mysticism but
is rather confirmed and strengthened. The spirit is il­
lumined and brought into a full realization and function­
ing of its capacities and powers.

Now let us turn to a brief survey of the study which the Baron made of mysticism as represented in St. Catherine of Genoa.

B. The Mysticism of St. Catherine.

Von Hügel made three basic assumptions for his study. He was willing to accept facts that he could not explain if the evidence seemed to him to be sufficient, but he refused to believe that God was the direct cause of these facts just because he was unable to explain them. Also he assumed that the body and mind influence each other and that extraordinary psychophysical states are to be expected of unusual people. Finally, he believed that "consciousness involves irrepressible metaphysical affirmations of trans-subjective realities." 6

He used what we might call the genetic method in dealing with mystical experiences. He believed the earliest origins of an experience were more explanatory than the final development because of their relative simplicity. Thus a historical study would reveal the nature of the process much better, but he did not neglect the validity of the final causes.

St. Catherine was born in Genoa in 1447. The Baron describes her as follows:

"The beautiful, tall figure; the noble, oval face with its lofty brow, finely-formed nose, and powerful, indeed obstinate chin; the winning countenance

6. Dakin, HS, 126.
with its delicate complexion and curling, sensitive, spiritual mouth-line; deep grey-blue spiritual eyes; the long, tapering fingers; the massive dark brown or black hair; still more the quickly and intensely impressionable, nervous and extremely tense and active physical and psychical organization; and then the very affectionate, ardent, aspiring, impatient and absolute qualities and habits of her mind and heart and will."

She planned to enter a convent as had one of her sisters, but her hopes were frustrated by an unfortunate, political marriage with the rich young Giuliano Adorno who was ill-controlled and unworthy of his fresh, young wife. She struggled through five years of marital misery. Then one day in 1473 her melancholy was dispersed. She was in deep prayer when

"her heart was pierced by so sudden and immense a love of God, accompanied by so penetrating a sight of her miseries and sins and of His goodness, that she was near falling to the ground. And in a transport of pure and all-purifying love, she was drawn away from the miseries of the world; and, as it were beside herself, she kept crying out within herself: 'No more world; no more sins!' And at that moment she felt that, had she had in her possession a thousand worlds, she would have cast them all away."

She determined to renounce herself and devote herself to God and to loving Him and serving Him through others, feeling that this was the only way she could find happiness.

Soon after her conversion, still under the influence of the ecstatic experience,

"Our Lord, desiring to enkindle still more profoundly His love in this soul, appeared to her in spirit with His Cross upon His shoulder dripping

7. Hügel, MER, 1, 97f.
8. Ibid, 105.
with blood, so that the whole house seemed to be all full of rivulets of that Blood, which she saw to have been all shed because of love alone. And filled with disgust at herself, she exclaimed: 'O Love, if it be necessary, I am ready to confess my sins in public.' 9

According to von Hügel, this was really her only spiritual vision. Those of a later period were products of delirium which any extremely ill person might experience under similar circumstances.

"And again, this is the one only picture of any, even of a voluntary, meditational kind, concerning the Passion, to be found throughout her life; all her other contemplations and impressions of whatever kind are of other subjects." 10

Four years after her conversion she and her husband moved into the neighborhood of a hospital in Genoa, where, sworn to perpetual continence, they spent much time in ministering to the sick. During Lent she subjected herself to a fast in which she partook of practically no food. During this period she had many ecstatic experiences.

"If on one of the many occasions when she had hidden herself away in some secret spot, she was ever discovered by anyone, they would find her walking up and down, and seeming as though she would wish to do so without end; or they would come upon her with her face in her hands, prostrate on the ground, entranced, and with feelings beyond description or conception. 'These ecstasies would almost always last three or four hours; and if, on coming to herself, she spoke of the wonders she had seen, there was no one to understand her, and so she kept silence.' 'And if called during one of these trances, she would not hear, even though they did so loudly.' ....And 'on thus arising from those trances, she seemed to

feel stronger both in body and in soul; as in the case of the fasting.

"Even in the midst of her work absorptions would occur like unto these in all but their length of duration: 'At times her hands would sink, unable to go on, and weeping she would say, 'O my Love, I can no more'; and would thus sit for a while with her senses alienated, as though she had been dead.'" 11

In 1479 Catherine and her husband moved into the hospital where she spent the rest of her life, serving and caring devotedly for the sick and dying. She was made matron of the institution from 1490-5. She was both nurse and matron during this period when a severe pestilence broke out in the city. She caught it herself and nearly died from it. So broken in health she was forced to resign her matronship in 1495. Two years later her husband died. During her ensuing illness and poor health she had more time to discourse on religious matters, particularly the love of God. She died in 1510.

The mystical experience, according to von Hügel, is not to be judged by the psycho-physical character primarily, but the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual value of the experience to the mystic himself or herself at the time and continuing throughout his or her life, as well as its value to civilization. 12

"The application of this test will doubtless brand some mystics as fantastic or insane, and others as immoral in the sense that they wasted their lives to no personal or social good. Nevertheless the Baron warns those who are naturally disposed to condemn people whom they cannot understand, that the pertinent question about any life

11. Hügel, MER, i, 139f.
12. Hügel, MER, ii, 161f.
is not whether it is physically healthy or of immediate political, economic, utilitarian value, but whether it is worth its cost, if it must be paid for by such strange and untimely 'general incapacitation' as appears, for example, in the careers of Sister Lukardis and Father Hecker."13

To the question whether or not more value would have been gained if they had expended the same energies used up in these psycho-physical states in other paths of service and consecration, von Hügel replies,

"Does not this type of apprehension... stand out—in their central, creative periods—as the one thoroughly appropriate means and form of their true self-development and self-expression, and of such an apprehension and showing forth of spiritual truth as to them—to them and not to you and me—was possible?"14

Usually, mystics obtain joy and vigour from their intense preoccupation with religious realities, and their accompanying ecstatic states are ordinarily both physically and spiritually strengthening.

"And if, after... their productive period, some of these persons end by losing their psycho-physical health, it is far from unreasonable to suppose that the actual alternative to these ecstacies and their breakup, would, for them, have been a lifelong dreary languor and melancholy self-absorption, somewhat after the pattern of Catherine's last ten preconversion years. Thus for her, and doubtless for most of the spiritually considerable ecstacies, life was, taken all in all, indefinitely happier, richer, and more fruitful in religious truth and holiness, with the help of those ecstatic states, than it would have been if these states had been absent or could have been suppressed."15

The Baron is wise here in recognizing that we cannot generalize too much. The personal factor varies with individuals.

15. Ibid, 59.
and therefore, what may hold true as the best expression of one person's life may not for another. The average man could not possibly be a Father Hecker because he is constituted differently.

The Baron recognized that

"Without the check of a concrete, historical, institutional religion, mysticism, thirsting for unity and desirous of escaping from itself into the snowy serenity of the impersonal, is only too likely to lose itself in pantheism or undifferentiated monism."16

This pantheistic tendency in mysticism must be avoided if possible in Christian mysticism. It would leave no room for humility, contrition, or adoration which he considered essential to religion. To avoid the pantheistic interpretation the Baron would regard the mystic absorption as an enthusiastic awareness of the presence of God. However, he felt that such experience as looked solely to the greatest possible abstraction to the neglect of the temporal necessities and living, was valueless and even dangerous.17

The Baron concludes from his study of mysticism that the value of mysticism is manifested in its fruits. If the experience can render the life of the subject richer and more abundant as well as bringing it into contact with life's greatest spiritual realities, then

17. Hügel, MER, 11, 170.
it is valuable and desirable. The most valuable mysticism does not lock up the power, beauty and value of the ecstatic experiences within the soul, but allows it to express itself in permeating the personal and social life.

C. Some Relations of Mysticism.

Von Hügel suggests that mysticism is not an isolated experience but has relations to other experiences.

1. Asceticism.

Mystics of all ages have practiced asceticism as an aid to contemplation, peace and harmony with the Absolute. Non-mystics practice asceticism with the purpose of withdrawing from the world and acquiring an aloofness from sin. Asceticism is a means of self-inflicted suffering. The mystics use it in this sense as a means of constantly reminding themselves of their own sinfulness, and thereby they do penance for their unworthiness. Hence it is a sort of spiritual discipline.

2. Social Religion.

It is characteristic of the pantheistic types of mysticism that all attention is given to absorption with the Absolute. Little time nor attention is given to the demands of the external world or our fellowmen. The Baron is opposed to this type of mysticism. Mysticism, according to him, must enhance the true relation of the soul of the mystic to his fellows. "God is placed, not
alongside of creatures but behind them, as the light which shines through a crystal and lends it whatever lustre it may have. He is loved here, not apart from, but through and in them.\textsuperscript{18} Social Christianity demands this double expression. Not only must the mystic attend to God, but he is under a Christian obligation to love and serve his fellows. While this is extremely true, yet, as he points out,

"it is clear that the strong point of the mystics, as such, does not lie in the direction of the great social spirituality which finds God in our neighbor and in the great human organizations, through and in which, after all, man in great part becomes and is truly man. They are, as such, Individualistic; the relation between God and the individual soul here ever tends to appear as constituted by these two forces alone. A fresh proof, if one were still wanting, that Mysticism is but one of the elements of Religion,—for Religion requires both the Social and the Individual, the Corporate and the Lonely movement and life."\textsuperscript{19}

3. The Scientific Habit.

Von Hügel sees the difficulty, yet the absolute necessity of finding the true place and function of science in the spiritual life. Science and religion are each autonomous in its own sphere, and each has something to contribute to the other. Religion is able to interpret, criticize, and give meaning and purpose to the world constructed by science. On the other hand, he recognizes the need in religion for the Thing-element which can be supplied by science. Thus there is an inevitable interrelatedness between these two great spheres.

\textsuperscript{18} Hügel, MER, 11, 353.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 365f.
CHAPTER V
ETERNAL LIFE

Von Hügel concerned himself with immortality only "in the sense of a heightened, or at least an equal, consciousness after death, as compared to that which existed before death." The objection to immortality that belief in it is not universal and is of relatively late origin aroused the Baron to make a fairly exhaustive study of history to disprove this claim. Let us briefly regard his findings.

A. Historical Considerations.

He divides the evidence which he finds into three groups: Oriental religions, Graeco-Roman, and Jewish-Christian.

Among some of the Oriental religions there is a more or less definite tendency to affirm eternal life. Others do not. The Buddhistic conception of Nirvana regards life as sheer flux, though strictly interconnected. Hinduism and Zoroastrianism contain somewhat vague intimations of immortality. But among the Egyptians we find a definite faith in immortality. The skill which they developed in embalming the human body after death to preserve it in perfect condition for the after life is an undeniable testimony of this faith. Some present-day

1. Hügel, MER, ii, 182.
scholars maintain that the Hebrews derived their belief in immortality from this source. Together with these sources already mentioned, we find that certain of the Oriental Mystery Religions developed a fairly strong faith in immortality.

In the Greek Period Plato and Aristotle stand out. Plato with his doctrine of immortal ideas also speaks of the immortality of the soul, especially in connection with his stress on the soul's power of self-determination and on its intrinsic worth. In regard to Aristotle, we have already mentioned in a previous connection his distinction of the three types of souls, the vegetative, the animal, and finally, the human or rational. The rational soul included and unified the two inferior souls, together with their functions. Upon death the two inferior souls were lost. Also the rational soul was so closely bound up with the body that it could have no separate existence and thus perished with the body. While this prevented belief in personal immortality, yet Aristotle distinguished an active and a passive reason within the rational soul. He denies immortality to the latter but explicitly ascribes it to the former. He says,

"With regard to reason and the faculty of thought, we have as yet no conclusive evidence. But reason would seem to be a different type of soul from all others, and it alone can exist in a state of separation from the body, as the eternal from the perishable. This creative reason is not intermittent in its thinking; but it is only when separated from the body that it becomes its true self; and this it is that alone is immortal and eternal."

2. Aristotle, De Anima, 413b; 430a.
Therefore, Aristotle's conception of immortality was impersonal.

In the Israelitish religion there is no conception of immortality among the earlier prophets, other than a possible national immortality. The idea of eternal life for the individual came comparatively late in the prophetic movement. Ezekiel suggests immortality in his vision of the "valley of dry bones." Job is on the verge of asserting personal immortality, but refrains. So Daniel and the Apocalypse in Isaiah (24-27) are the only chief assertions of it in the Old Testament. Then, in the Christian era, the teaching of Jesus and Paul regarding immortality was very definitely in favor, and received doctrinal formulation by the early Church Fathers. Thus it is throughout the history of the Christian Church that we have endless testimony of belief in immortality.

B. Difficulties and Objections.

Aside from the objection regarding the non-universality and the historical tardiness of the belief, there are other objections. From our foregoing discussion we learned that interest in the idea of personal immortality took root in the minds of the world's thinkers during the period following the fifth century B.C. The Baron pointed out that because a belief was not universally held its veracity was not in the least impaired. Only a minority held the belief in the illicitness of slavery
but that did not indicate that the belief was wrong and slavery was right. 3

A second objection to the belief in immortality is the unsatisfactory character of some of the earlier manifestations of the belief. Numerous fancies, childish in character, were created regarding the nature of the eternal life. This belief has often been used as a rationalization for inactivity and thoughtless living in this life. The "golden age" will come, they say, so why worry here. Such unworthy and childish thoughts and excesses of the early experiences were readily forgiven by von Hügel for he found lurking in them:

"what, even now, are our most solid reasons for belief in Immortality: for if man's mind and soul can thus keenly suffer from the sense of the contingency and mutability of all things directly observed by it without and within, it must itself be, at least in part or potentially, outside of this flux which it so vividly apprehends as not Permanence, not Rest, not true Life." 4

The Baron mentions two philosophical difficulties which arise in connection with belief in eternal life. First, the rational element, or the soul, is so dependent upon the physical senses for its awakening and impressions in the present existence that it is hard to conceive of a separation between these psycho-physical elements in a future life. The Baron answers that,

"The soul's life after bodily death is not a matter of experience or of logical demonstration, but a postulate of faith and a consequence from our realization of the human spirit's worth; and hence is as little capable of being satisfactorily pictured, as are all the other great spiritual realities which

can nevertheless be shown to be presupposed and implicitly affirmed by every act of faith in the final truth and abiding importance of anything whatsoever."5

Second, man's littleness contrasted with the immensity of the universe makes it difficult to think of man's soul possessing immortality, unless it is in connection with the Whole. But this is the product of an uninstructed imagination. Mind and Matter are distinct from each other and cannot be so freely contrasted. Mind is superior to, and exercises control over, Matter.

Finally, there is a practical difficulty pertaining to man's arrogance. The objection holds that belief in immortality is a cowardly way to face the fact of life. It is claimed that it takes a rugged individual to deny eternal life and live happily, undaunted by the fact of death. But

"only in so far as Immortality were not a postulate intrinsically connected with belief in objective and obligatory Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, — in God as our origin and end, — could its persistent and deliberate denial not be injurious to these fundamental convictions and to the ultimate health of the soul's life."6

C. Conclusions.

The Baron sees a certain amount of support for belief in immortality from science. The Darwinian theory of evolution is a description of a universal movement toward perfection. Such a process demands eternity for its completion. Hence we have ground for believing in

5. Hügel, MER, 11, 195.
6. Ibid, 199.
the continuity of man's spiritual life.

Institutional religion would lose its meaning and purpose without faith in immortality. In connection with such a faith, it is to be considered as a home and training ground for eternal life.

The value of a dauntless faith in the hereafter is demonstrated in the history of that faith. The inspiration, the joy, the peace, the reinforcement in suffering, the will to hope and work that such a faith has given to the believers of many generations cannot be comprehended. If one doubts this let him study it, then test it out in his own life. This is the final conclusion. Faith is its own verification.
CHAPTER VI
VON HÜGEL AS A PHILOSOPHER OF RELIGION

This thesis would not be complete without some attempt to summarize the merits and defects of von Hügel as a philosopher of religion. Consequently the purpose of the present chapter is to evaluate the main contributions of von Hügel to religious thought. However, such an evaluation would be lacking in completeness unless some mention was made of his personal characteristics and abilities.

A. An Appreciation of von Hügel's Capacities.

When we stand off to survey the work and life of the Baron perhaps we are constrained in admiration most of all by the astonishing mental capacity and intellectual acumen of his mind.

1. Thinker.

The Baron had a remarkable mind. In spite of his lack of any academic training and the comparatively brief period that he was under the influence of a tutor he achieved a finely disciplined intellect. Holland, a very close friend of the Baron, speaking of his mental characteristics, says,

"The Baron's mind was laborious, many-side-regarding, fully weighing, slow-moving, deep ploughing. He thought and wrote slowly and with difficulty, writing and rewriting, and again rewriting, and qualifying, because so anxious not to overstate or understate his case, and to see what could be said both
for and against every position, with the aim of arriving at the most exact possible truth. "A Frenchman," says Madam de Staël, "can still speak when he has no ideas; a German has always in his head rather more than he can express." This very Germanic mental attitude makes impossible an easy, flowing or rhetorical style, and it is not possible fully and rightly to understand anything that he wrote without giving close attention."

The Complexity and studied accuracy of his thinking makes his books very difficult for the average reader to understand. Yet, in contrast to this, his writings are permeated with flashes of brilliant insights which are rewarding to the careful reader.

Again, the greatness of his mind is revealed from a different vantage point by another friend, Alfred Fawkes.

"Involved in controversy as he often was, the controversial temper was foreign to him; whatever he touched he raised from the level of controversy to that of principle and ideas. His knowledge was encyclopaedic; and his exceptionally retentive memory enabled him to produce it at call. It did not overweight him; he had a singular power of exposition: he was never verbose or didactic, but he made you see. He was a polygot; and his cosmopolitan connections and training gave him a European outlook which contrasted sharply with that of our English provincialism: to be brought into contact with him was to obtain citizenship in a larger world." 2

With this appreciation of him as a thinker let us now turn to a study of him as a writer.

2. Writer.

It is logical and natural that the characteristics of his mind should find expression in his writings. Consequently our discussion at this point must invariably reaffirm what has already been said. Recognizing this

2. Fawkes, A. The Modern Churchman, Mar. '25, 14:663.
fact let us continue and see what some of his contemporaries have said of his writings.

Charles Gardner, writing on "The Late Baron von Hügel," comments,

"Von Hügel's style was peculiar to himself. It reveals the conscientious, truth-loving nature of the wide-discerning brain anxious to overlook no detail however small that might affect the issues. Thus it happens that while the style is complex and stretches the brain of the reader, yet it is singularly charged with the simplicity, ingenuousness and humility of the author." 3

A.E. Taylor expresses a somewhat similar opinion of the Baron's writings in a "Review of EA, i".

"Like other books by the same author, it has subtly intimate and self-revealing character, and the personality revealed has a quiet charm, a fragrance redolent at once of deep thought, intense earnestness, simple humility, high courtesy, and genuine humour before which "criticism" seems indecently out of place. For my own part, I find the author's significant sayings about the Christian life pregnant with matter most provocative of long and grave meditation, but, as for criticism, I had almost as lief undertake to criticize the Imitatio." 4

In contrast to this view C.C.J. Webb, in a review of the Mystical Element Of Religion, points out that the Baron illustrates his religious and philosophical reflection by biography. He writes,

"One has a sense of being suddenly switched off, so to speak, from the line of theological speculation on to that of minute historical investigation and back again, and the shock of the change from the one to the other takes one's breath away; nor can one all at once adjust oneself successively to such different kinds of motion." 5

In addition to what has already been said regarding von Hügel's writings we might make this criticism. His style is not grammatically the best. The sentence structure is awkward. The sentences are extremely long with many interjected phrases and subordinate clauses. It makes it extremely difficult to follow the line of thought. The reading of his works becomes a task, but if the reader is patient enough to apply the necessary effort he will be introduced to a literary treasure-house packed full of gems of thought.

3. Master of Life.

If we had no other criteria of greatness than that of personality we would still be compelled to call the Baron a great man. The firmness of his being was well-tempered with a fervent love for truth, beauty, and for his fellow men. The Baron was a great seeker of truth. He was never afraid of truth wherever he found it and was always ready to give it full and unhesitating expression. The convictions of the man demand no other expression than the life he lived to denote the sincerity back of them. They are best conveyed by the man's being and personality. The greater the man the more true this is. Claude Montefiore, a Jewish scholar of considerable repute, writing in the Jewish Chronicle after Baron von Hügel's death spoke of him as

"the great scholar-saint....much more than any book, and a much greater evidence than any written
words, of the God in Whom he so passionately be­lieved."6

Von Hügel was truly a master of life. His life was the laboratory from which he derived the moral and religious truths which he expressed both in writing and conversation. He would not ask others to do or believe what he had not already done or accepted. He subjected his ideas to the tests of critical study and personal living before he passed them on to others. In this respect he closely approximates our Galilean Master.

B. An Appraisal of von Hügel as a Philosopher of Religion.

Before we attempt an appraisal of von Hügel's contributions to religious knowledge we must recognize that he fails to give us any systematic, logically coherent presentation of his theological views. Although he is admirably critical in his positions he is not a consistent organizer. This may be considered a marked defect by some who want their reading and knowledge all organized for them and requiring little or no effort on their part. Because von Hügel did not leave us an organized system of theology, such as those of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Troeltsch and many others, some would not call him a great theological thinker. He does not need to be known by a great system. If he had attempted to organize his religious views into a system many of his spontaneous

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expressions and flashing insights would have been lost. A systematic presentation would deprive his style of its present fluidity. So far as his writings are concerned, their chief contribution is their inspirational power. They may not be consistently logical, nevertheless they are marvelously inspirational.

Aside from his writings, we have pointed out in a previous section what we might term a second merit. That is the fact that his chief contributions were made through his own personality and life. No one can estimate the value that he wrought on the lives of others. Whether it was by correspondence or conversational fellowship he was always the grand old man, a genuine saint, ever radiating spiritual sustenance and vision.

One of his closest friends and critics was George Tyrrell. He indicates a third merit.

"A sympathy at once with the spirit of science and the spirit of mysticism is rare. Both in practice and in theory Baron von Hügel shows that it is not paradoxical—that they need and supplement one another. Science, the supposed enemy of religion, is really its best friend and benefactor; not merely as the obvious foe of superstition and pseudo-mysticism, but as importing a constituent element of a healthy and full-bodied religious sentiment. But the scientific outlook will not profit us morally and spiritually except in conjunction with the mystical outlook." 7

This is an important contribution and one that was much needed, particularly in the Catholic circles where its expression was most strongly felt.

A fourth merit of von Hügel as a philosopher of religion is that he did not become so absorbed with his religious speculation that he failed to take a keen interest in, and exert a broad influence on, the religious movements of his day. This is particularly apparent in the case of the Modernist Movement. The Baron was closely associated and in sympathy with the Modernist Movement in England until the Modernists developed a definitely immanentist theology, exaggerated in some to an extreme subjectivism. He could not go with them at this point. He believed that all religious faith worthy of the name must have a transcendent Object. He was really the father of the Modernist Movement in the Catholic Church. Yet he helped to restrain it from going too far and ending in subjectivism. He was a member of the Papal Commission on the Pentateuch.

As a fifth merit we might mention his defense of institutional religion. At this point he contributed a great service to both Catholics and Protestants alike. It clarified the Catholic position and, at the same time, showed up one of the Protestants' greatest needs.

A sixth merit is his emphasis on Christian mysticism. The subject of mysticism has been in the past in a state of foggy misapprehensions and vague notions. The Baron expressed his views clearly on this point as we have already seen. He clarified the position of Catholic piety.
and warned against pantheistic tendencies and unhealthy emotional excesses.

The Baron made no unique contribution in the field of theological doctrine. He continually stressed the necessity of a vital fellowship with God. Again, he pointed out the inseparable connection between religion and life. He had no use for a religion that did not affect one's conduct and cause him to live on a higher level. Thus the final merit would be that his religion was both practicable and practiced.

We have already mentioned two defects of von Hügel as a philosopher of religion: first, his style is laborious, tedious and lacking in the best grammatical construction; secondly, the absence of systematic and coherent expression of his theological thought makes it frequently wanting in clarity. Aside from these two defects one might add the point that he is too much a realist in his philosophical thinking. To those who favor this position this would not be a defect, but to one who leans toward Personalistic Idealism the position is not tenable. Such a philosophy, while it is admittedly consistent with the Catholic point of view, yet it causes him to assert the objective reality of experiences and facts which are concerned solely with spiritual realities and values.
C. The Influence of von Hügel as a Philosopher of Religion.

In discussing the spread of von Hügel's influence

Webb comments:

"Little known beyond a small circle until the last years of his life, Friedrich von Hügel came in the end to exert a remarkable influence on the thoughtful and religious minds in Great Britain, though perhaps a greater outside his own communion than within it.... He was in a true sense a religious genius who combined with the passionate earnestness of one whose life may without exaggeration be said to have been, in the Scriptural phrase, 'hid with Christ in God' a wide erudition and a rich and many-sided culture, which the circumstances of his descent and upbringing had rendered peculiarly cosmopolitan. He also united in a rare degree a deep appreciation of, and a constant habit of participation in the traditional practices of Christian and Catholic piety with an independent criticism of traditional doctrines and views of history which led him to embrace opinions often very far removed from those which had generally prevailed among the orthodox." 8

An anonymous article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica which would naturally tend to be fair, yet impartial and free from prejudice yields the following statement regarding the Baron's influence.

"Von Hügel later became one of the most sympathetic, resourceful and persuasive religious teachers of his age. But while he possessed a generous sympathy for all seekers after truth, he held the Catholic Church to possess the fullest, richest and deepest realization of religion." 9

Due to the nature of the source we can credit this remark as making a specific contribution to our estimate of the Baron's influence. Will von Hügel soon be forgotten and supplanted is an inevitable question at this point.

We cannot predict with any certainty what the nature of

8. Webb, SRTE, 137f.
9. EB, xi, 863.
his influence will be like fifty years hence, but we can venture to say that his works will still be read and he will be more widely appreciated by the Catholic Church than at present. R.E. Stedman ventures to say that "von Hügel's influence upon the religious life and thought of our generation continues to grow as his massive, but vivid, personal and persuasive writings are ever more widely studied." There have been and there will be greater men than von Hügel, but there are few, if any, men of his age who tower above him as a religious beacon to the thought and life of future generations.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

To understand a man's ideas and views one must first study his life. Friedrich von Hügel was born in Florence in the year, 1852. He never received academic training as we know it today. His education was derived from his mother, private tutors and several friends who took an interest in his development. He was helped through his religious crisis into a feeling of certainty by a friar and a priest. He married at the age of twenty-one and had three daughters while living at Hamstead, England. He formed wide and varying acquaintances by means of correspondence and friendly contacts. The intelligensia of Europe were his friends. From them he received much inspiration and aid for the writings that he produced. Von Hügel was kindly, loving and lovable, with astonishing intellectual acumen. Above all, one must admire him for his spiritual vigor and earnestness.

Religion, according to the Baron, occupies as unique and undeniable a place in human experience as any other sphere of human thought and activity. Religion is the supernatural permeating this life. It is the outward and upward reach of a soul toward God. Religion demands that men should be heroic, humble, pure and loving. Religion and morality are interrelated and demand each to complete
the other. Institutional religion furnishes the "power houses of spirituality." Objective forms of religion and worship possess undeniable values. Institutional religion emphasizes the importance of sharing and cooperative religious experience. All the attempted substitutions for the Church are inadequate and cannot replace it. Both history and experience prove the value of institutional religion. In view of this, Roman Catholicism has contributed much to the efficacy and permanence of religious experience.

According to von Hügel, the physical universe, the reality of Time, man's spiritual nature, as well as the capacity of moral growth toward perfection in human beings, all give evidence of an Intelligent Creator, a loving and sustaining Father back of the Universe. God is a given fact. God's Personality may resemble that of man, but it is distinctly Other, and not finite. God is a rich Reality and commands our fullest adoration. Von Hügel believes that religion requires the transcendence of God in a degree and form which excludes suffering from His Nature. Revelation, prayer and the mystical experience have value in producing religious certainty in the individual believer.

Mysticism is an "experience of God as distinct, self-conscious, personal Spirit."¹ It involves a subject-Object relationship. From St. Catherine of Genoa we learn

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¹ Hügel, MER, i, xii. (quoted on page 54).
the essential character of the mystical experience. The experience of the mystic must be tested and judged by the physical, mental, moral and spiritual value which it produces in the individual. For most mystics, life is made happier and richer by their experiences than it would otherwise be. The mystic must beware of the danger of pantheism. The mystic must not be so completely given to absorption that his fellows are hurt and suffer thereby. Thus mysticism is not necessarily antithetical to social religion.

For centuries men have longed for, and cherished the hope of, eternal life. Its lack of universality does not impair the validity of the belief. Although immortality has been imperfectly conceived in the past, yet there are undisputable truths in the belief. No difficulty met in holding belief in eternal life is serious enough to destroy that faith. Both science and institutional religion support this faith in immortality. Finally, the practical value of such a hope and faith in the experience of men through the ages is sufficient to justify it. Faith in immortality possesses its own self-evidencing power and merits a trial by all men.

Finally, in an appreciation of von Hügel we are forced to admit that he was a profound thinker, an inspirational, though rather difficult, writer, and a
well-rounded man with a thorough acquaintance with and well-advanced in the art of living. As a philosopher of religion we found that his chief merits were the practicality and inspirational value of his religious thought. He was a man of religious conviction who lived what he believed and professed. His influence at present is steadily increasing and will probably continue to increase for many years to come. His was a noble religious personality standing out in unassuming greatness among all the others of his generation.
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