BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

"A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH
TO
PAUL'S DAY OF DAMASCUS."

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

1927.
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SUMMARY
INTRODUCTION.

"The day of Damascus" marks the turning point in the life of Paul as he "saw" the exalted and risen Christ for the first time in the clear light of his understanding. In the consciousness of this man of Tarsus lay germinally hidden a world-wide revolution. In some manner this young trained theologian of the orthodox Pharisaic faith received the power to "make a new heaven and a new earth." Something happened within the consciousness of this energetic patriot which changed the appearance of all the external world. Paul sent out to persecute arrived in the city of Damascus converted to another program of living. This was the result of a unique personal experience which psychology as a descriptive science calls "conversion."

Modern students of sacred history approach this climactic event found recorded as autobiography and biography in biblical history with very diverse bias. The literalist who endeavors to save the Book and his concept of God, posits a miracle to explain this sudden and unexpected change. While other students take the tools of modern critical exegetical methods coupled with an understanding of the psychological laws to discover the inner history which led up to the vital experience in order that he may better understand the exact event itself and what it involves.

From the records of the event (Acts 9,22,26) some interpreters come to believe that this event was
an unexpected occurrence having no reference to subsequent history, no connecting link with previous events. It can be completely explained on the basis of the miraculous. But our thesis is to maintain that there was a psychological preparation for the conversion experience, therein lies the explanation of the so-called "suddenness" which in the light of the naturally operating laws of psychology resolves itself into a "seeming suddenness." The mind of Paul was subjectively conditioned, unconsciously prepared for the culminating event of conversion, whether or not the crisis of this conversion is explained as a visionary experience or simply as a character change caused by the uprush of previous thinking into the white light of consciousness, accompanied by an emotional content which is difficult for the biographer to report. The explanation of this spiritual event lies not only in its fruits but also in its roots.

Because of the inherently sacred nature of the experience about which we are seeking explanatory data, there will be a mingling of theological, religious and psychological terminology. The main purpose of this paper is to use the tools of scientific psychology as an approach to the problem involved, remembering that the conversion itself is a spiritual fact rather than a psychological process.
CHAPTER I

DEFINING TERMS

It will be necessary to define the terms or the tools with which we are to work in order that we may clear away the debris of misunderstanding.

1. Psychology.

Psychology is a word that slips easily from the tongue of the man on Main Street as part of his working vocabulary of explanation as to anything related to human activities. It is not my purpose to give a formal definition of the term but rather to hastily review the various schools of thought that bear the name "psychological" and from these deduce a method of approach to our specific historical psychological problem.

Psychology as a science has been an independent child of philosophy since Wundt established the first psychological laboratory in 1875. Historically, the "philosophy of the mind" has budded forth into a new scientific branch call psychology. As a science it has the limitations of a science, that is, it is descriptive primarily. The datum is the experiencing person and the reactions between human beings. There is the eternal cycle of "experience—science—the philosophy," and psychology is located in the second

* See the "Journal of Religion", May 1926, Vol. VI. No. 3. Article by Dr. E.S. Brightman, "What Constitutes a Scientific Interpretation of Religion."
section of explanatory methods. Psychology then is the science which explains by classification, by showing the causal connections between phenomena, by describing the causal relationships found in the datum of human experience. The "aim will be to describe mental processes."

Psychology found its beginnings in Greek minds when they attempted to analyze the "soul". The "theory of the soul" was one of the first philosophical problems presented by Aristotle. Down through the speculations of Bacon, Locke, Hume, Hartley, through the new laboratory school represented by Weber, Titchener, Wundt, James, Hall, Ward and Baldwin, we find an attempt to analyze the mind processes just as astronomers have charted the movements of the planets, as chemists and physicists, the movements of electrons, thus treating the mind as a mechanism to learn the scientific causes for mental reactions. Since the days of Hume "causation" ceases to mean the action of a mysterious metaphysical force or power and it means rather the connections between phenomena. So, we turn to psychology to show the relation in the sequence of events.

But there are various schools of psychological approach and we must select one that is best qualified

* Pratt, J.E., "The Religious Consciousness," pg. 29.
for the analysis of biographical reports of psychological states.

The first and original approach to the study of consciousness was made through the method of introspection.* This school makes a subjective study of the content of experience, a study primarily of the mind and its "faculties." The introspectionalist observes the workings of his own mind having thus a direct knowledge of his conscious processes. This method is primarily used in the psychology of religion because of the contemplative mystical states evident in prayer, worship, meditation and that reorganization of the self-hood called conversion. Thus, the analysis of your own religious consciousness is fundamental in the interpretation of the religious experiences of others.

Later we shall see that Paul gives us a retrospective story of his conversion experience. His was an unscientific introspection of this inner crisis but it is one method of securing data for our interpretation.

The modern psycho-analytic school of approach uses the methods of introspection in a scientific

manner as they direct the introspection of the patient to become aware of some "suppressed complex." This school which was established by Sigmund Freud and represented by Ranck, Jung, Adler, Hadley and others was not content with the old conceptual explanatory constructs of the traditional introspectionalist school, so they placed their emphasis upon the instincts as the prime mover of all human activity. "Civilization was forged at the cost of instinctive satisfaction."* 

This school would have much to say about the psychic health of Paul, as they would consider him a patient for mental diagnosis and treatment, perhaps, he would be considered a victim of a religious complex. Woodworth rightly maintains that "psycho-analysis gives a narrow and one sided psychology, utterly lacking in perspective."** However, this system makes a valuable and permanent contribution in the possible treatment of mental diseases. But we hold that Paul is sane and normal and not to be proved subnormal by some freak psychological method of study. Because of Paul's sanity, we believe the introspectional reports in which he tells of his vital religious experience.


** Journal of Abnormal Psychology, No.4, 1917, pg.194.
It becomes necessary to make a study of the objective behavior of Paul, in order to have more data for the psychological interpretation of his conversion. This leads to another method of approach which has resulted in the building up of a whole system of interpretation based upon a systematic study of behavior. From the words of Paul, from the reports of his behavior, from his historical activities, we glean further knowledge of what was going on within his consciousness.

John B. Watson the protagonist of a modern school of structural or analytical behaviorism holds that "the subject matter of human psychology is the behavior or activities of the human being."* In this method of study the attention is fixed upon the objective behavior of the psycho-physical man in the terms of reflex activity and stimulus-response bonds. This reduces psychology to an exact science of bodily behavior and of definite mechanical reactions to given stimuli. We have a fatalistic, deterministic, calculable, predictable, dependable system which eliminates freedom of will, of choice and of purpose. "Behavioristic psychology has as its goal to be able, given the stimulus, to predict the response... or

* Watson, J.B., "Behaviorism," pg. 3.
seeing the reaction take place to state what the
stimulus is that has caused the reaction."**

But we are attempting to study the activity of
a man, a personal active self, who is made up of
more than elements of pure neurological behavior.
He has the power of choice which makes for the
conduct (not behavior) of the self as a self-
directive unit or functioner. "Behavior is the
action of organisms under stimulus; conduct is
the action of conscious selves or persons when faced
by situations."** It is the latter which we hope to
analyze in the case of St. Paul. Of course, we simply
interpret the activity of the person acting, trying
to discover what might be his state of consciousness
during such activity.

Also, according to the Thorndikian school
the ideo-motor, the stimulus-response bonds determine
the actions of the individual. "Habit among the neural
elements is what runs the train."*** There is no
place in this type of behaviorism for conscious
purpose since the governing force is a system of
"satisfactions and annoyances," expressing purpose
only in muscular and neural activity. This school

** Strickland, F.L., "The Psychology of Religious
Experience," pg. 29.
***See, Thorndike, F.L., "The Psychology of Learning."
has a right to its point of view but it is not the only point of view since it is likely to crowd consciousness out of personality and that is fundamental in the study of the conduct of a man which involves purposes, choices, ideals, and self-directive tendencies. Paul was more than an automaton acting in response to environment for he lifted himself out of his environment and remade it according to his new ideals. Man is more than an animal, more than a bundle of reflexes, more than a function, he is a functioner, a spiritual self.

We can use the method of objective observation of behavior, if we remember that we are observing the actions of a functioner, but we will have to throw aside the modern recrudescence of materialism, a metaphysical behaviorism.*

We can use the records of reflective introspection on the part of Paul, and the study of his conduct in the face of a perplexing situation. Each school contributes a little toward the understanding of our psychological problem.

But another school of thought called "Gestalt" psychology has an element of truth in its method of approach in that it considers man as a unit, a configuration or pattern. The emphasis is placed upon

the total situation and the total complex response. Koffka and Köhler began to consider man as a whole, a unified organism, showing identity in the fact of personality. Interest in the distinction of the artificial faculties of the mind or in the bodily reflexes only disintegrated the study of personality for the psychologist of that school. From this school we learn to take a synoptic view of the personality of Paul.

The basis for our method of self-psychology or personalistic psychology is very similar in that it rests on the fact that conscious states or processes belong together in a unique manner. We prefer the concept "stream of consciousness" of William James to the "activity stream" of Watson, but we take one step further by suggesting that our datum is the whole personality as a unit striving toward self-realization. Self-psychology approaches consciousness synoptically and functionally, "Mental functions imply such things as need, want, desire, purpose and ideal." **

We are attempting in this study to make a synthetic picture of the developing self. We move from the field of consciousness to the larger conception of the total personality. Each school of psychology makes invaluable contributions as avenues of approach to the

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* For an explanation of Self-psychology see, E.S. Brightman, "An Introduction to Philosophy," pg. 189ff.

study of the personal self.

The analytical school can give us material for a synoptic study of personality, and the latter study should never be omitted. The structural schools of approach may aid in our interpretation, as do the functional schools but I tend toward the latter. Structural and analytical methods seek the elements and causal relations while the functional and synoptical methods seek ends in self-realization, the values and the meaning of the process. We can accept the contributions of all methods, as long as they preserve the sacredness of a personality, remembering that ultimate reality is the personal self which chooses, thinks, creates and is the sum total of what I am.

But the most sacred element in a developing personality is religion. Our next problem is how we can approach religion as a vital personal experience in the life of Paul with our psychological methods.

2. Religious Experience as Datum for Psychology.

There is no different kind of psychology for religion as experience but rather, the psychological laws and patterns are applied to one hallowed field of experience. "In the case of religion the very data to be observed and classified are experiences of persons." Religious facts are not much different than

the other psychic facts with the exception that they are held sacred in content. We can analyze such an experience only by the graciousness of the possessor for we are describing evaluating experiences.

"The specific task in the psychology of religion is the scientific investigation of religious experience," according to Dr. Strickland. Dr. Pratt describes the same working basis for the psychology of religion as, "the workings of the human mind so far as these are influenced by their attitude toward the Determiner of Destiny." The object of our study is religion, the method of approach is psychological.

Our source material is given to us in the form of biographical reports. We tally these reports with our own experience and the experiences of others as reported by the questionnaire method. Hall, Starbuck, Coe, Pratt and others have used this method of investigating the religious experiences of others. If Paul could have answered a psychological questionnaire he probably would have given such reports as he did give in Acts,9,22, 26. From the many reports on religious experiences and the climactic experiences

called conversion, we learn the norm for this mystical experience and apply the standards so learned to the experience of Paul. Most of the records of a sudden and dramatic spiritual awakening can be analyzed into three psychological stages:

1. the pre-crisis period of unrest and dissatisfaction,
2. the crisis or the focal point of the climax and
3. the post-crisis period of peace and joy. Almost every religious psychologist gives these three traditional divisions, so that it has become a psychological classic and needs no further explanation.

William James and Evelyn Underhill have attempted to describe the inner lives of those claiming a great religious experience. Pratt, Hocking, Strickland (and Brightman) make a study of the inner personal experiences, as activities of purposive selves moving toward the norm of self-realization (mentioned often by Coe).

The general belief is that conversion is a reorganization of the self-hood but this religious experience is described in various ways. Selbie, the English psychologist holds that, "in the broader sense of the word, then, conversion may be described as the process by which a self, hitherto divided and unhappy, becomes unified and satisfied
under the impulse of religious ideas and motives."*

Starbuck the questionnaire pioneer defines the process in the following manner: "Conversion is suddenly forsaking the lower for the higher self. In terms of neural basis of consciousness, it is an inhabitation of the lower channels of nervous discharge through the establishment of higher connections and the identification of the ego with the new activities. In theological terminology it is Christ coming into the heart and the old life being blotted out—the human life swallowed up in the life of God."** William James adds," To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain assurance, are so many phrases which denote the processes, gradual or sudden by which a self hitherto divided and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequences of its firmer hold upon religious realities."*** The chief characteristic of a converted person is a unified selfhood with a definite direction under the guidance of a group of consistent and harmonious purposes or ideals.

The duty of a psychological analysis is to tell how this change takes place and to enumerate the processes and elements involved. It is our

** "The Psychology of Religion," pg. 64.
*** "Varieties of Religious Experience," pg. 189.
purpose to attempt to understand the mental and spiritual processes at work during this changing period in the life of Paul, and to ascertain whether or not his experience can be considered under the norm of conversion, as so defined.

After Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, he tells it in such a fashion, as to call it conversion. But the discovery is soon made that there has been something subtly at work within his mental processes previous to the crisis itself. He was not entirely conscious of the impending change and for that reason it was sudden to his mind. The psychological category of explanation for this seeming suddenness is called the subconscious, the unconscious, or subliminal areas.

The whole self of Paul was torn out of the habitual centers, as he put on the "new man." These new centers of interest did not come out of a clear sky. These new attitudes must have come in through other doors than pure consciousness. In fact, there is a "cellar" to the mind, a subconscious area in which some of the brooding may go on during the period of incubation before the cataclysmic religious awakening. Strickland calls this the "whole background of the mind."* While William

James adds, "Psychology and religion... both admit that there are forces seemingly outside of the consciousness of the individual that bring redemption to his life. Nevertheless, psychology defines these forces as 'subconscious' and speaking of their effects as due to 'incubation' or 'cerebration' implies that they do not transcend the individual's personality; and herein she diverges from Christian theology, which insists that they are direct supernatural operations of the Deity." God can use the route of the subconscious to speak to Paul under the explicable laws of psychology. This conceptual factor called the subconscious might be used to fill the so-called unexplainable gap in religious experience. This is a hypothetical construct, a logical entity, for use as a psychological explanation, just as atoms are conceptual factors in chemistry and ether waves in physics. Scientific research often works with such tools rather than with actual reality.

The lower zone or fringe of consciousness is the storehouse of memories, dreams, broken bits of conscious activity. Thus a record is kept of all experiences below the threshold of actual attention and these records at times are swiftly summed up in one focal point of attention or consciousness, welling up into the conscious areas.

* "Varieties of Religious Experience," pg. 211.
in answer to some problem that has been a cause for prolonged meditation and brooding. In this almost uncanny manner the religious problem of Paul was answered once and for all when he "saw" Christ as the epitome of salvation.

The crisis had consequences far greater than the immediate antecedents would verify, so we use the subconscious as a hypothetical factor of explanation. Paul had been prepared for this moment. The conversion as a religious experience came as a synthesis of conscious struggle mingled with unconscious preparation. It is these elements of unconscious preparation that we must trace in the life history of the man.

With only the light of exegetical study, we cannot give a bonafide psychological analysis of the mental life of Paul, so we make probable conjectures as to his mental, psychical and spiritual activities. But we hope that our solution is theoretically possible and the most probable in the light of present day psychology of religion. With these tools we proceed to a study of the man.
CHAPTER II

PAUL, THE MAN

In the momentary interval between Saul the active Judaizer and Paul the Christian lies the fact of a conversion, the mystery of a change in personal attitudes, if not, in personality. But across the gap lies an explanatory "bridge" constructed from the previous life history of this man which reveals the environmental conditions of his life, as well as, some of his mental traits. The history of the man subsequent to the character change gives one of the factual explanations of that seemingly sudden change.

1. Environmental Conditions.

Paul came from a stock of the old Israelitish tribal unit of Benjamin. His birth place was Tarsus, a Greek city of Asia Minor which was of commercial importance. The tradesmen from the East and the West met to purchase the silk cloth which was manufactured in this city. As was the custom for Jewish young men, Paul became an apprentice to a trade which he used in later life as a means of support while establishing his Christian churches. (I Thessalonians 2:6 and 9; I Corinthians 9:5-15).

The general vice and wickedness of the city left little positive influence on his developing character.
because he seemingly had contempt for "the wisdom of the world." (I Corinthians 1:20). A combination of traditional Hellenistic philosophy mingled with an oriental mysticism formed the background of the teachings which the young man incorporated in his character.

He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, (Phil.3:5), a Pharisee who scrupulously observed all the religious ritual and law, a legalist and a patriotic Jew. His zeal and enthusiasm for the law found him with the Zealots ready to uphold and even prosecute in the name of the orthodox faith of his nationality.

The young Paul began his religious education in a pious home gleaning the moral truths of life from devout religious parents. At an early age he was reading the scriptures, just a little later, copying the Old Testament as a Scribe; naturally in this fashion the miraculous stories of the prophetic calls, the providential care of the chosen people, became a very part of him. The prophets revealed the legalistic code of religious activity but at the same time he observed that they talked directly to God, sometimes in a very picturesque fashion. Miraculous methods of Jehovah's leadership were seen by the Scribe in the call of Abraham, in the call of Moses through the burning bush, in the Elijah stories, and the pillar of cloud and fire that directed the wanderings of the chosen people toward the promised land. These stories became imbedded deeply in the consciousness of the Scribe as
he copied and recopied large sections of the scriptures of that day, namely, passages of the Old Testament. He lived anew with the prophets, the judges, the psalm singers, as so often the letters to the churches indicate.

The education of the youth was completed after leaving "Tarsus synagogue" at the feet of Gamaliel in the capital city of Jerusalem. (Acts 22:3). Paul's rabbinical training marked him as a promising young man fortunately receiving instruction from a famous doctor of the law (acts 5:34) who advocated an open minded policy toward the Jesus sect and the use of mild measures in suppressing them, if suppression was necessary. (Acts 5:35). But Paul had the enthusiasm of youth and a fanatical zeal for his country and religion. He wielded a strong influence against the unorthodox group of Jews, who might be called Christians, as a man of aristocratic birth and parentage, a learned scholar, a theologian, a statesman and a man of affairs.

Probably, Paul now "a college graduate" returned to his home town, Tarsus, spending considerable time there before starting on a definite career. It is highly improbable that the young rabbi was in Jerusalem during the public ministry of Jesus, for had he been there, he would have seen the carpenter prophet over whom the authorities were excited. The energetic Paul
would not have missed seeing the remarkable miracle worker. His arguments for his Apostolic authority are always based upon the Damascus experience. II Corinthians 5:16 simply indicates Paul's previous false judgment of Jesus, as Jülicher says, "it proves nothing either way as to Paul's seeing the Jesus of history."*

But it is fairly certain that at the persecution of the first Christians, Paul was (Acts 26:10) a member of the Sanhedrin which necessitates his living in or near Jerusalem, and he may have lived with his married sister (Acts 23:16). Working here as a Rabbi he learned the methods of subtle dialectics, of ingenious and refined hermeneutics. Later we notice that the Christian enthusiast casts his thoughts and teachings in the moulds of his rabbinical training.

The Jews had been looking for a Messiah who perhaps would be a military leader of great splendor and power. Paul's mind was steeped in this general belief and teaching of a God-sent messianic leader, when to his amazement, a certain Hellenistic Jew by the name of Stephen proclaimed that the Jesus who had been crucified as a common criminal was the Messiah. (Acts 7:52). That was a new thought to the Pharisees who had been partially instrumental in securing the crucifixion of Jesus.

* "An Introduction to the New Testament", pg. 35.
It was Stephen who blasphemed against Moses and God, (Acts 6:11) by saying that Jesus would destroy the temple and that the laws of Moses were not essential to salvation. (Acts 6:13-14). He attempted to save Christianity from the narrow confines of legalism, as he laid bare the materialistic principle of the Pharisaic party, and piety. The radical condemnation of Judaism by Stephen and other members of the newly founded sect of the Nazarene was such as the Pharisees had not heard since the time of Jesus himself. Acts 6 and 7 show the depth and the force of this Christian leader, as he displays the inadequacy of the obsolete ritualistic, systematic, externalistic workings of the law in comparison with the new Christian position of spiritual freedom.

The crisis for Judaism had arrived, either Stephen and the loyal followers of Jesus must be overcome or the temple of Pharisaism would ultimately perish. This situation called for vigorous action on the part of the Judaizers. The zealous young Pharisee took the lead in resisting the growth of Christianity, or rather in rooting out the seed of Christian thought. He set out to destroy the obnoxious faith which accepted the historical Jesus as the spiritual Messiah. No doubt Paul faced Stephen in dispute; as Luke reports in Acts 6:9 that the members of the Cilician synagogue were involved in the
controversy and Saul (for that was his Hebrew name while "Paul" was part of his Roman name) belonged to those organized Jews. One day Stephen met his death through mob violence as he acclaimed the universal character of Christianity which overshadowed the Pharisaic hopes for a world-wide Judaistic religion. The leader of the persecution consented to the stoning of Stephen and participated in the affair by holding the garments of the executors while they hurled the stones at the martyr in their enthusiasm to reject the Messianic acceptance of Jesus and to stifle the antagonist of traditional legalism. (Acts 22:20ff)

From that eventful day onward, the loyal patriot disregarding Gamaliel's teaching of tolerance plunged into his ministry of persecution with a whole heart full of burning hatred and antagonism. (Acts 26:9). He set out as a representative of the Sanhedrin (Acts 9:2; 22:5; 26:10) to exterminate the followers of Jesus. His bloody onslaught started by throwing into prison, scourging and tormenting men and women who refused to blaspheme the name of Jesus and to renounce their loyalty to His program of living. (Acts 26:10). The territory covered by the Christian antagonist was mainly Judea (Gal. 1:22, 23.) though he did not rest until

* See "Paul, Campaigner for Christ," by William J. Lowstuter, for the changed name discussion, pg. 76.
he had extended his field of activity beyond these narrow confines. Even Ananias of Damascus had learned of the severe methods of the infuriated Rabbi. (Acts 9:13, 21).

The persecution of the Jewish Saul ravaged the Church (Acts 8:3) so that the faithful followers of Jesus were scattered abroad (Acts 8:1) to such an extent that the only Christians remaining in Jerusalem were the Apostles. Paul says that he made havoc of their faith and beyond measure applied his methods of persecution. (Gal. 1:23; I Cor. 15:9; Phil. 3:6). Not content with his destruction in Jerusalem, he set out for Damascus but something happened --- on the road to Damascus. After this marked event or trip to Damascus he became a successful herald for the gospel and an active campaigner for Christ.

Thus, we have hastily surveyed the development of our hero as to the environmental conditionings antecedent to the Damascus road event. But what was going on in his mind at this time as to plans, purposes, conscious and unconscious preparation for the radical change of character? What was the mental pre-crisis preparation?

2. Mental Traits

The material for constructing a psychograph of Paul is not very abundant but with the tools of psychology we will attempt to deduce the possible mental traits
and processes as gathered from a synoptic view of his entire life history. A psychological study cannot give a positive mathematical exactness as to his mental characteristics from the given data, but the uniform working of the psychological laws in the sequence of the mental processes prior to the crisis of the conversion may be designated.

Analysis of a personality is difficult even when the "object of study" is an intimate personal acquaintance, but in this case the difficulties are enormously increased because of the distance in time and the inadequacies of the recorded reports. However, we attempt to take a look at the behavior of Paul which gives us a glimpse of his mental processes.

An alert and logical mind must have been his, we deduce from a reading of the close reasoning and logical thinking portrayed in his doctrinal messages, especially his letter to the Romans, his epistle to the Galatians, and the argumentative passages concerning the resurrection found in I Corinthians 15. His intellectual integrity coupled with his oratorical ability is evident in his logical, yet, fiery speeches, when replying to Agrippa, when appealing to Caesar and when addressing the group on Mars Hill. Perhaps, his rabbinical training had developed a creative mind exemplified in his regular systematic theological presentation of the Christian faith which is presented so rigorously and
dogmatically in his various documents. His arguments are used today by many theologians as basic. Stephen might have given to the world a systematic presentation of the new expansive faith as a pioneer in this realm of religious dogmatism but his life was cut short in the presence of the very person who was to pick up the torch of his teachings and offer to all the world the rights of membership in this new spiritual Kingdom. The Christian goal of Salvation was attainable to any or all who believed in the Christ as presented by Paul.

Paul must have heard the arguments of Stephen or at least, he was acquainted with his teachings because many of their Christian doctrines are similar. They both taught that God does not dwell in a temple made with hands, He is rather the creator of the world and all that dwells therein, (Stephen-Acts 7:48-50; Paul-Acts 17:24-25); the law was ordained by angels but it had not been observed according to the fullness of its meaning, (Stephen-Acts 7:53; Paul-Gal.3:19); and that there is evidence of hardened hearts because of the lack of true righteousness, (Stephen-Acts 7:51; Paul-Romans 9:17-29.)

Paul not only had a strong intellect but an emotional make-up which often revealed itself with intensity. He would reason so far and then act in a whirlwind of passionate enthusiasm. When he had the
assurance that anything was right, he was for it, mind, soul and body, if it was wrong, we find the same antithetical violence manifest. His moving impulse was emotion; his guiding principle found in reason. There was a continual battle within the "wretched man" (Romans 7:24) because of his impulsive action.* The fires of strong emotion warmed his logical mind, thus avoiding a harshness, a sternness of unsympathetic intellectuality. We will have to grant that his mental ability must have been above the average, as he was a leader, a Christian promoter, a task which demanded energetic argument. His emotional life was rich, warm, normal but positive in movement revealing the deep emotional life of a great mind. There is no evidence of shallowness, he argued against being moved by the light "winds of doctrine," nor is there a display of pure animalistic passion, although he constantly combated basic tendencies of human nature, he fought against the "flesh." He was rather obstinate toward the new Christian movement until his emotions broke forth in new channels which had been dredged by intellectual argument. This debate might have taken place in the subconscious where the secret unrest and disquietude germinated into a

positive decision. After the principles of conduct were determined, emotion ruled. There was always a safe satisfying reason for every enthusiastic act. He was passionately anti-Christian, then suddenly a Christian protagonist; there must have been some intellectual reasoning, wavering, conflict, doubt and discord going on within his mental processes.

3. His Psychic Health.

His active imagination and the mentioned visionary experiences * have led some interpreters to hold that he was abnormal, sensuous, epileptic or a neurotic and therefore such a visionary conversion was the result of his physical condition and psychical temperament. Nietzsche was an exponent of the epileptic theory suggesting that "a thought flashed through his mind accompanied by a vision, as was inevitable in the case of an epileptic subject such as Paul." **

But many others save the character of Paul allowing him to have visionary experiences but these are not interpreted as the objects of an unhealthy cerebral activity. Foakes-Jackson in his recent book suggests, "His sudden and so to speak miraculous conversion has in modern times been employed to discredit the mental balance of Paul. The fall to the earth

* Acts:16:9;18:9 ; I Cor. 14:8 ; II Cor. 12:2 or 12:1-9. Also the conversion reports Acts 9, 22, 26.

** As reported by Weinel, "St. Paul, the Man and His Works," pg.88.
the bright light, the heavenly voice, the subsequent blindness, the abrupt change which followed, are used as proofs that the Apostle cannot be regarded as a normal human being, and consequently his words and actions must be considered with some mistrust. But normal men have never yet modified seriously the course of history, nor directed the thought of mankind for many generations. The world is not changed by common place men with supremely average experiences. Paul was abnormal in many ways. His health was evidently feeble, yet he lived to the verge of an old age, and endured hardships which would have killed most men with a perfect constitution. His visions, trances, periods of exaltation and depression, are such as are frequently experienced by exceptional individuals. It is folly to deny greatness or to minimize the power of the man's influence because he was not exactly what a modern physician would wish his patient to be."

"But ........ the most abnormal fact about St. Paul was, not that he was alleged, an epileptic enthusiast, but that he possessed clearness of mind and power of guiding men and in addition an exceptional sanity of outlook, and that rare quality which we call common sense."

Likewise, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson argues for Paul's sanity. "There are reasons why one might be inclined to suspect the healthiness of Paul's brain. He was a man of visions, and we are naturally skeptical of men who see things. He heard voices, and we are distrustful of people who hear things that we do not hear. He passed into ecstatic raptures, being once, on his own testimony carried into the third heaven, and at another time into the seventh, and people who soar so high create in us a sense of uneasiness. He spoke with tongues, and people who speak with tongues often end in the mad house... He had a thorn in the flesh many attributed to epileptic fits, it is easier; at least for some persons, to account for the things which he saw and the voices which he heard."

"But unfortunately for this theory, Paul persists in thinking and acting, and writing as though he were sane. He seems to be the very incarnation of common sense. He is obliged to grapple with complicated problems. In such a realm a diseased or distracted mind would have gone astray. Men do not write such maxims (as he did) in short intervals between epileptic fits... There are fourteen witnesses to Paul's sanity—his letters and the history by Luke. Luke was a physician—to him Paul was not a victim of delusions but a sane minded and great hearted hero whom he reverenced with all his soul."*

* "The Character of Paul," pg. 75ff.
The psychic health of Paul has been a subject of debate and each school uses a method of interpretation which rests back upon their construction of the so-called secondary visions and the Damascus road event. Paul was a man of visions according to his own reports, once at Troas (Acts 16:9), and at Corinth (Acts 18:9), and again Paul reckoned on being "caught up into heaven" (II Cor. 12:2) as one of the supreme experiences of his personal life. His references to charismatic tongues (I Cor. 14:18, Gal. 2:2) suggests his psychic temperament. The nucleus of this evidence is found recorded in II Cor. 12 where he makes mention of all his visions and revelations. It can be readily seen that this section is linked very definitely with the mode of interpreting the conversion experience. The authorities who hold the visionary-hypothesis will suggest that the Damascus road experience was simply the first of the visionary series while the literalist school, and the non-visionary theorists will hold that this vital character change is a unique experience standing in its own right. But, at least, this first experience is the subject for our direct study and we will discover as this paper progresses our interpretation of the same. His early training, the environment in which he lived, his mental characteristics and his psychic healthfulness and sanity are categories of preparation for the one climactic event.
CHAPTER III.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION FOR THE CRISIS OR
THE PRE-CRISIS PERIOD.

Whether or not this outstanding experience corresponds in nature to the other visionary events which are of secondary importance, the fact remains, as expressed by many of the liberal interpreters, that there were some psychological preconditionings and antecedents of the crisis experience. His state of mind while persecuting the Christians aids in a possible understanding of our hero's realization of the exalted Christ. His letters do not echo the events of the historical Jesus as do the records of Mark, Matthew and Luke but he has an undeniable assurance and knowledge of the spiritual (pneumatic) risen Christ, as the result of a gradual preparation through all these years. (II Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:12; II Cor. 5:14; II Cor. 12:1).

Paul was prepared for this realization at the very time he was raging against the Christians; it appears that in the mind of this deeply religious man there was a problem which had two poles, one the negative aspect of the Jewish law as it failed to give to him a satisfactory religious experience, and the other, the positive influence of the Christian faith which seemingly was satisfactory to the Christians with whom he came in contact.
1. Negative Preparation.

His mind was crammed with rabbinical training which taught that the only nexus between man and Jehovah was the Jewish Law and the Jewish modes of worship which had become the way of expressing the Law. The rigid Pharisaic loyalty would tolerate no other thought. But Paul had tried in vain to reach a satisfactory religious experience and life as a whole for him lacked that vital contact with a living personal God. A vital religious experience, a peace of mind was evidenced in those whom the persecutor recorded as disloyal to the traditional faith.

Paul belonged to the chosen people, as a son of Abraham, but was a victim of the technical forms of doctrine and dogma, consequently, he had not reached via an inner mystical quest a life sanctioned by a peace of heart and mind. He had an indisputable zeal for the Law (Gal. 4:4) and used it as a possible method of seeking an adequate philosophy of life and living. But the spirit of the predominantly religious man still yearned for something more than the rigid formulas of the inadequate Law. Perhaps, I should say that the yearning was for "Somebody", a personal God, a personal Messiah whom the law failed to completely reveal. His soul was in ferment because of the workings
of the leaven of dissatisfaction with the very law that he so diligently supported and would have died to maintain. The very righteousness it advocated, was an ideal, impossible of attainment, convicting the follower of its precepts of sin, but not awakening in him the companion feeling of salvation. Religion was a contract rather than a contact with God. Salvation was bought by mechanical observances of the minute injunctions of the Law. The legal requirement produced no moral awakening, no religious quickening, no spiritual inspiration toward the high ideal of closeness to God. In seeking to obtain this communion through the legal code, the heavy yoke of law observance, the offering of prayer, the acts of devotion, even the activity of persecution did not answer that longing of an assurance of confidence in God’s love. The great God and Judge would not grant a pardon and he was doomed to disappointment. Salvation had not been reached but rather the external facts and external acts had brought only restless conviction to the soul of the tormented man which might be called sin. (Romans 7:11-13)." 

Dr. George Stevens stresses this negative preparation as the inner conflict of the Pharisee  

* "The Pauline Theology" Chapter I, pg.13ff.
became self-centered and sin-centered in a hopeless despair caused by reflecting upon his own mental torment and spiritual unrest. (Romans 7:7-25). According to this authority there was an inner conflict with a resulting sense of failure and sin, which was in an important sense a preparation for his conversion. The anxiety and unrest which sprang from his unavailing efforts to find a sense of security and peace through deeds of legal obedience only deepened the yearning of his spiritual nature, intensified the sense of his own ill desert before God, and thus, negatively, at least, prepared his mind to welcome, if not to seek some new ground of hope.

Jülicher suggests a similar preparation of the mental and spiritual life of Paul in his interpretation of Phil. 7:6. Instead of a proud self satisfied Jew, "Paul had already known moments when he had felt all the bitter pain of one sold into sin and condemnation to a helpless doing of evil in spite of all his love for good."*

The peace seeking Paul was alive to the conclusions of his fate, but because of his Pharisaic obstinacy he determined to continually seek salvation through the

Law, through his own merits. He remained antagonistic to the religious innovations. But there could be only one ending to the struggle between religious experience and Jewish tradition, and that was the full realization that Jesus was the Messiah.

Certain liberal elements in Paul's culture, as the contact with the Greek influence and with the broad mind and tolerant spirit of Gamaliel (Acts 5:38-39) added to the already existing negative preparation. He had a liberal mind, a healthy mind, but in addition a perplexing problem, a wholesome doubt as to the Jewish means of faith. Thus, with a liberal training and a dissatisfied mind as to his religious life, Paul was inadvertently prepared for a break with his orthodox faith.

2. Positive Preparation.

In his wavering and dissatisfied mind, around the positive pole of thinking, were certain elements of truth gleaned from his contacts with the Christians. Jerusalem, the city in which Paul received his training was the center of the new movement; and no doubt as he listened to the discussions of the members of the Sanhedrin, and the conversations of the people on the
streets, he learned about the new prophet, their accepted Messiah, the miracle worker of Nazareth. The impression of the historical Jesus was given to him in a second hand manner by those who had seen Jesus. Whether or not Paul came in contact with Jesus, as some maintain, he could not help gaining a clear conception of Him and His teachings through the Jerusalem Jews.

As he hunted down the unorthodox Jews and sought to make them recant, he learned the Christian defense of their faith and their complete arguments. To cause people to be imprisoned, to scourge them in such a fashion as did this persecutor, would presuppose a knowledge of the accusations against them. This enthusiastic youth would not have been a leader against the hated "Jesus Sect" without a full understanding of the reasons for such antagonism. In his efforts to crush the movement he would have to listen to their arguments and teachings. Just as Agrippa, after listening to the new convert Paul make his Christian defense, said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul was persuaded against his own habitual modes of thinking, as he debated and argued with the disloyal Judaizers. The very violence of his passion indicated
that there was a mental anguish and a conflict within.

The adversary saw how the new faith worked; the followers of the Nazarene would suffer all manner of torture and still remain loyal to Christ. The death of the faithful or the unfaithful from the viewpoint of Paul challenged the young man's attention.

Jülicher suggests, "The heroism of the disciples of Jesus under persecution, must have shaken his conviction, ready as he was to judge men by their fruits; certain scriptures to which he was referred because they prophesied the sufferings and death of the Messiah, perplexed him. If these doubts were but of momentary duration, they became a thorn in the flesh from which he could not escape. In hours of solitude he was tormented by the question, suppose he was the Messiah? Certain proud words of the crucified resounded in his ears; if the speaker of them had been the Messiah, were not these words worthy to be called the words of God? He prayed to God to free him from his doubts."*

Paul's zealous persecutions were possibly undertaken in the hope that in stamping out what seemed a blasphemous heresy, he might win the favor of the God

* Reported by Johannes Weiss, "Paul and Jesus," pg. 35. Translated from Jülicher.
of their Fathers who would give to him, "the peace that passeth all understanding." His mind wavered, the inward struggle increased while he learned about Jesus causally in conversation, also, from the arguments of the persecuted Christians and especially the living arguments of these people, that is, their courage, peace and sense of triumph in the face of death and violent punishment. Hence, the mind of Paul was in a debate while his hands were stained with blood.

"The question was forced upon him, whether a faith that led men to face martyrdom with such heroism could be based on a mere delusion or impious deceit." *

Paul might have stood out against the verbal arguments of the Christians but their defense of active faith and certitude could not but help to touch a responsive chord in the heart of the zealous Pharisee. The suffering of Christ as related to their suffering even in a vicarious manner gave the new sect a constant power. They had a source of power that set him wondering, as he compared his religious experience with the external manifestations of theirs.

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All the passion of youth entered into a conflict against the unholy band. He was a knight going forth on a sacred crusade ready to murder and persecute. The power of the Christian characters reacted upon him as they radiated brotherly love, gentleness and their unerring devotion to their new ideals found in this one Man. The soldier of the sword became a soldier of the Cross.

The Christian sect was as active as their fellow countrymen in giving expression to their piety. They were in the temple daily for prayers (Acts 2:46) but for prayers direct to God; they observed the festivals with a new import (Acts 2:1); and they prayed at the appointed hours (Acts 3:1); but they preached Jesus continually (Acts 22:12). In short they were like Ananias of Damascus who counseled Paul after his conversion, "a devout man according to the Law, well reported by all the Jews that dwelt there." (Acts 22:12).

In the language of the Hebrew scriptures Paul's soul was, "thirst for God." He was on a hopeless quest unless the Christians held an underlying secret which had been manifest in their peace, power, faith, and assurance of forgiveness. Moreover, this was the same
peace of mind that he had been seeking through the rigid laws of ritual and devotion to religious works. He, no doubt, had a longing for some of this compelling power that was evident in the disciples of the crucified One.

Those of the Tubingen school, Baur, Strauss, Holsten, and, later, Pfleiderer allow for a psychological preparation for the Damascus experience. According to the last named authority, the turning point was the result of increasing dissatisfaction with himself and the deepening impression concerning the truth of Christianity. But the processes center around these problems:

(1) the Pharisaic expectation of a Messiah, (2) the law as powerless to secure a righteous people, (3) and the confident assertion of the Christians in regard to the objective resurrection of Jesus.

The Messiah of Israel was to come in a glorious fashion bringing prosperity to the chosen people. Yet, it is possible that Paul brooding over the question as to the qualifications of the chosen people could not but conclude, even though a zealous patriot, that the righteousness of Israel could not fill the requirements of a God-chosen people. Israel needed purification from her many sins. Thinking upon this fact coupled
with the Christians' claim of their Jesus Messiah would at least thrust an entering wedge of doubt, a "goad", a "prick" into the mind of Paul.

But above all the arguments pro and con, the Christian faith, the fact of what it did for its believers pressed that wedge more deeply into Paul's mind and split widely the sense of traditional narrowness of the Pharisee. Longing for peace himself, he saw these tormented souls possessed of such fortitude as to make an impression upon the mind of an honest man, be he their worst enemy. At any rate the way in which Stephen died could not but raise a question in the mind of Paul, as to whether the crucified Jesus could be after all, in the light of what it enabled his followers to do, the exalted Messiah; could it be possible that a loyal son of the Law was mistaken and that right was on the side of the Christians?

Stephen typified the Christian movement and being a leader of the same his martyrdom made a special imprint upon the mind of the questioning Paul. There is little evidence to indicate that Paul witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus who had the words of forgiveness upon his lips; but he did see the stoning of Stephen and witnessed the martyr's forgiveness of the infuriated mob. (Acts 7:2ff). No doubt a leader of the
anti-Christian movement would be conspicuous at the death scene of this martyr, in fact, Luke reports that the persecutor consented to Stephen's death while the executioners laid down their clothes at the feet of the chief witness. (Acts 7:54-8:1).

What was the mental attitude of Paul during these persecutions, especially during the stoning of Stephen, the Christian leader who faced death so calmly? Clarence D. Royse suggests that it was not the remorse for the death of Stephen which played a great part in motivating the crisis; Paul did not brood over the sin of putting a man to death but rather he was infuriated like a tiger smelling fresh blood. His emotional life took the helm, he searches out all the Christians to be found in Jerusalem, his fury gather momentum, he moves on to foreign cities to exterminate the members of the hated cult. There is no conscious weakening until the crisis.

This interpretation does not prohibit the probability of a subconscious, subliminal preparation or unconscious incubation as all these problems mentioned above bombarded his consciousness, and then these experiences as memories sink into the lower levels of conscious activity only to be aroused at one "lightning flash moment" when the uprush of the

subconscious comes again into the clear light of consciousness. "It is easier for hate to metamorphose itself than for a vacillating inclination to come to a final resolve."* Suddenly, Paul, not being aware of a transition stage, while still a persecutor traveling on the road toward Damascus his next objective, knew that something happened within, as the deeper reasonings strained by his emotional impulsiveness broke into the white light of his consciousness. Paul never arrived in Damascus as a persecutor of the followers of the Christ Messiah. Unconsciously he had been prepared for this moment by a long process of psychological preconditioning.

Thus, there was a logical preparation in the life of the Christian antagonist for this one culminating event or crisis. This state of mind and the psychological antecedents give evidence of this experience belonging to the classical threefold psychological pattern of conversion which has the following divisions:-

1) the pre-crisis period of unrest, self-examination, perplexity, uneasiness, anxiety, uncertainty, questionings which lead to a final conviction; all these are descriptive of Paul's deepest emotional life of dissatisfaction

which was often mingled with conscious debates within himself as to his religious attitudes, his fury giving evidence in an emotional way to the conflict within; (2) the climactic crisis or sudden change in character; (3) and finally the post-crisis feeling of assurance, peace and joy. *

5. Summary of Pre-crisis Period.

We have been studying the pre-crisis period of Paul from the psychological point of view. We have seen him negatively prepared. Steven's suggests a "fruitless struggle" was going on within the soul of Paul. He was negatively prepared for his new ground of hope. The inner conflict was mainly self-centered and led to a final conviction and impossible dissatisfaction. As a Pharisee of the Pharisees, he was a strict observer of the traditional Law. The mechanical observances only led him further and further away from God. Paul became a "sick soul" in the psychological parlance of James **, an unhappy, divided self, or as Höfding would say "a discordant self." ***


** "Varieties of Religious Experience," pg. 127ff and pg. 166.

Paul never could be happy as a divided self and the Law failed to offer the desired satisfaction. "To so ardent a spirit as his (Paul's) Jesus was absolutely right or absolutely wrong, and there was no middle way. Either the believers must be rooted out, or he must join their ranks."* This was characteristic of the emotional Paul who could find only dissatisfaction in the old forms.

At the same time a positive preparation was going on in the mind of Paul. Pfleiderer defends vigorously and with the usual one-sidedness Paul's positive familiarity with the Christian beliefs about Jesus. He learned about Jesus through the conversations with his followers, as he persecuted the hated Jesus sect, he noted their arguments and their unswerving faith and loyalty to their new found Master. The comparison of their religious peace and satisfaction with his own caused him to doubt the advantages of his faith. At times, he debated, the debate of a wavering and uncertain mind. He listened to the claims for Christ. He came in contact again and again with the fine points of the new religion and their fortitude in the face of persecution. Their new faith worked. They seemed willing to be persecuted...

to be thrown into prison, to be stigmatized, to suffer in defence of their new Messiah.

The problem became more acute in the mind of the youth as he witnessed the death of Stephen, a man who prayed for those casting the stones. The persecutor had come to scoff— but something subtle was happening, as memory after memory like this was laid away in the vast store box called the subconscious. The Christians had set the leaven to work in Paul's active subliminal mind, and it was soon to rise into conscious areas.

Here was a man of fine religious sensibilities, a religious soul without a vital religious experience. Thus, a victim of technical forms of doctrine and dogma failed in his quest after a life sanctioned by an inner peace manifest in the lives of those who accepted Jesus as their Messiah. He as a Pharisee had expected a Messiah, but it was not clear to him that the Jesus of history and the spiritual Messiah were one and the same Person(s) as the Christians believed. (Romans 10:5ff).

"Everything, life, death, salvation, or ruin, depended on the one question, whether the crucified Lord had been in reality exalted by God to the celestial Messiah."

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* Pfleiderer, "The Influence of the Apostle Paul," pg. 34.
Finally, after all this preparation, the crisis came, the decisive moment arrived. Paul "saw" the risen Christ in such a way as to assure him that He was the Messiah. The day of Damascus marks the turning point in the life of Paul. Something happened at this time, this crucial moment which caused the energetic persecutor to about face in his beliefs and proclaim the gospel of those he had previously tormented and tortured. In some manner this young theologian of the orthodox Pharisaic faith received the power to "make a new heaven and a new earth."

In order to understand fully the whole experience, the preparation in the relationship to the turning point, it is necessary to make a study of the sources and the recorded stories as to this "seeing" of Christ.
CHAPTER IV.

THE SOURCE MATERIAL AND RECORDS OF THE CONVERSION.

The facts bearing upon the immediate Damascus road event are recorded three times in the book of Acts. Luke the biographer reports it from his point of view in Acts 9:1-16 which according to Baur stresses the externalities of the event, while it is reported from two of Paul's speeches stressing the subjective material. In Acts 22:4-16 is found the recorded speech before the people of Jerusalem; in Acts 26:9-18 is the record of his speech before Herod Agrippa II and Festus at Caesarea. Besides there are various aspects of the experience indirectly suggested in some of Paul's letters to the churches which he established and visited. These are not given as detailed reports but rather as glimpses of the unique experience and are often construed so as to fit the mode of the author's interpretation.

This is a personal experience and there can be only one source, and that is Paul himself. In the Acts story or stories, the telling of the tale is the main object while in the letters, later, Paul tells the story always in relation to some
main subject.

Galatians I gives a very important and instructive statement of the event; It took place near Damascus (17), and was preceded by an active persecution of the Church (13-15). The change was marked by a revelation of Christ to Paul (15-16). Paul left for Arabia (16,17), thence to Syria and Cilicia (20,21). The central fact of the event according to this report was the revelation of the risen Lord. There is no suggestion of factual miraculous phenomena.

I Corinthians 9:1 seemingly refers to the same story of "seeing the Lord", which is used constantly as his argument for Apostolic membership.

I Corinthians 15:8 and 9, "And last of all he was seen of me, also," thus, he argues to prove the fact of the resurrection, confirming the scriptural teachings.

These three references are all interrelated in that their one thesis is that, because Paul saw Jesus, He was risen from the grave, as a spiritual reality. But incidentally, some of the conversion details are given.

II Corinthians 4:6, "For God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," which is still another version of the story. The experience was one of light and glory.
Philippians 3:4-7, I Timothy 1:12-13 point out the mercy of Christ which saved him in spite of his periods of persecution previous to his enlightenment. It was primarily a spiritual experience as these references indicate, in fact, all the direct and indirect references in the epistles tend to indicate that the experience was subjective.

Just because the Acts accounts give the physical concomitants accompanying the conversion does not lessen their historical value. However, a reading of these three reports reveals some minute verbal contradictions. Luke alone mentions the three day blindness (Acts 9:7), the scales falling from his eyes (9:18), the vision of Ananias (9:10), the vision of Paul concerning Ananias (9:12), Ananias laying hands on Paul and filling him with the Holy Spirit (9:17 & 19).

Paul in his various speeches concerning the affair states that it was noon time (Acts 22:6 ;26:13), there was a great light (22:6 and 13) the light fell about all of them (26:13), "I am Jesus Christ of Nazareth "were audible words (22:8), and all fell to the ground (26:14).

In some points Luke and Paul do not agree :-

Luke, "all stood"(9:11) ; Paul , "All fell"(26:14); all heard the voice (9:7); "They heard it not" (22:9).

Even Paul's own accounts vary, according to 26:16, the
commission was received at the time of the conversion while 22:14 maintains that the commission came later at the hands of Ananias. The audible voice carries a differently worded message in each of the records. But it must be remembered that the story deals only with the general manner of the conversion and not the undeniable fact.

The kernel of the report resolves into these fundamental facts:—There was an overwhelming blinding light, Paul saw Jesus, He talked with him, persecutor was moving toward Damascus, he talked with Ananias at Damascus, he was baptized and received a divine commission. It is not clear what happened to his companions and this is inconsequential. But something did happen to Paul.

The differences in the minute details of the reports are accounted for in various manners. Members of the Germanic Historical school trace the difference to the variety of sources. Baur indicates that Luke gives the legendary reports which emphasize the external details of the event while Paul true to his experience gives a picture of the event as a vital subjective experience. M. Zeller just calls it plain literary caprice. There is no denial of the fact that Paul is the original source, He might tell and retell this experience so often emphasizing the main facts, that the secondary details became uncertain and carelessly
retold, Sabatier mentions that "they are discrepancies of precisely the sort that one finds existing in the most faithful repetition of the same narrative."* This is no doubt the most plausible explanation, since Paul relates the experience many times and it never assumes a stereotyped form. Moreover considerable time has elapsed since the event took place.

Weiszäcker echoes this truth, suggesting that the incidents are presented after a series of years, memory retains that which is striking and essential while subordinate details become fainter in time, especially if this true in respect to decisive moments; engrossed in the present, the past was lost.**

The story is told and retold in such a manner as to convey a certain impression, rather than to express the same didactic statements. In the picture language of the Oriental indicative of his fertile imagination, he tells of the crisis. It was as if, as though, the person of the Christ stood before him. Paul even projects his feelings of overwhelmingness into the experience of his companions.

Having considered Paul's preparation for the event, his reports of the same, we move on to an actual interpretation of the crisis.


** See Weiszäcker, "The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church," pg. 84.
CHAPTER V.

THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CRISIS.

1. The Literal Interpretation.

If one would insist upon the literal interpretation of the experience, he would dig for himself a pit out of which he could only be drawn by the rope of more liberal thought. Although, this position is not without defendants.

All the physical phenomena according to the literalist actually took place. Jesus appeared in a tangible form before the physical eye; he spoke with an audible voice; there was a great light, perhaps lightning (David Smith) and actual physical blindness of the one converted.

Paul the persecutor in his haste and passion chose the shortest route to the city of Damascus where he was expected to make felt his arm of religious oppression. The most frequented route ran straight to Shechem, then to the East by the shore of Galilee toward the old historical city where the East and West met. Probably, he was entering the city from the South, having noted the spread of the hated faith in the Samaritan villages. Paul and his companions, those who took care of the camping equipment were tired, weary, and suffering
with the heat of the day. They may have been on horses or asses (Felton) or walking (Racham). Suddenly a light brighter than the noon day sun shone round about Paul, (Acts 26); some put a thunder storm into the scene with lightning; others have the eastern sun at its highest and brightest which because of the heat causes all the company or just Paul to fall to the ground. Jesus stood before them in a brightness beyond all natural light. Paul heard the voice, the others heard but did not understand. Paul answered, "Lord" because of the reverent and awe struck feeling which pervaded his whole being.

His eyes closed mechanically as he fell, overwhelmed by the dazzling brightness of the light, and the physical risen Christ which stood before him. Felton suggests that the blindness was the clearest proof that the appearance vouchsafed to him had been a reality. This blindness was caused by an actual scaly substance over the eyes, caused by the great brightness, suggests Blass.

We wonder when such a tale is repeated as actual that the remainder of the company was not blinded. Why did they not understand the voice or see the Christ? Why did not the physical phenomena have a psychical effect upon them? Only Paul was converted.
Do such materialistic happenings have such a striking psychical effect? Inner religious experiences generally happen in other ways.

These minute details are not to be taken too literally in order to prove the truth of the story. Indeed, if we must needs take Paul literally everywhere we shall soon find ourselves in such an overwhelming welter of paradoxes that we shall need a literal suit of armor (Ephesians 6:10-18) in order to protect ourselves from the shower of ammunition we have brought down on our own heads.

2. The Visionary Hypothesis.

But Paul "saw" Jesus during the crisis experience on the road to Damascus. And since this was not due to light waves or sound waves acting upon the corresponding nervous end organs, many have concluded that this was a vision of the type classified as a subjective hallucination. No exposure of the camera could have taken the picture, no microphone could have picked up the voice.

Weinel describes Paul's seeing as "visionary sight." Men see in two ways, the one rests on a retina picture transmitted physically from without, the latter on retina pictures communicated from within during states of extreme psychical emotion.
Zahn adds (as reported by J. Weiss *), "What Paul saw was not the effect of an impression produced by an object external to his observation, the picture formed upon his retina was evoked by mental excitement, and the several features of the picture were the expressions of ideas which had long been harbored by the observer, the consequences of a great mental upheaval was to bring these ideas into a new combination, so that they formed plastic and realistic material for a convincing picture."

Likewise, Dr. W. Wrede upholds the visionary hypothesis, "visions are events that take place within the human soul, and are products of the human soul, even though the visionary may have no other thought but that his eye received pictures and his ear tones from without."** Thus, the subjective visions appear real to the subject.

Pfleiderer describes the crisis event as a visionary perception, basing his argument upon II Corinthians 4:6, "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The author emphasizes

* "Paul and Jesus," pg. 29.
** "Paul," pg. 8.
the great light and glory, " He saw only an
indefinite splendour which he took to be the
appearance of Christ .... And , as often happens
in psychical conditions of this kind , an impression
upon the auditory nerves is combined with the visual.
Paul may well have heard at the same moment in which
he saw the appearance of light , a voice which was in
essence nothing else than the accusing voice of his
own conscience which he involuntarily objectified as
the voice of Christ, calling to him from without ,
from above."*

again, the same author states , " It seems to
me that we are in a position to perceive fully the
mental condition and circumstances from which the
vision of Paul can be psychologically explained;
an excitable, nervous, temperament, a soul which had
been violently agitated and torn by the most terrible
doubt; a most vivid phantasy occupied with the awful
scenes of persecution on the one hand and on the other
by the ideal image of the celestial Christ; in addition,
the nearness of Damascus with the urgency of a decision,
the lonely stillness, the scorching blinding heat of
the desert... In fact every thing combined to produce
one of those ecstatic states in which the soul believes

that it sees those images and conceptions which profoundly agitate it, as if they were phenomena proceeding from the outward world."

Those who uphold this theory believe that the mental characteristics of Paul were conducive to such subjective visions. There is the prerequisite of a highly emotional character manifest in his active, energetic and passionate persecution. He was devoted entirely to the cause which he championed. Such experiences are not the marks of a weak or meager intellectuality because history records visions on the part of Savonarola, Socrates, Luther, Augustine, St. Francis and many others. "A strong intellect helps rather than hinders the hallucination, if the emotional life or nature be present because of the power to concentrate thought or to exclude irrelevant matter."**

The positive intellect of Paul was focused upon one problem, until this vision became a certainty. In the strict psychological sense this hallucination means simply a mental impression without an objective stimulus. The psychological laws operated as the result of natural sequences.


Advocates of this theory endeavor to show that Paul's mentality was such as to permit an hallucination because there are other recorded visionary experiences, at Jerusalem, Troas and Corinth. (II Cor. 12:1; Acts 18:9; 16:9; 27:23 and Gal. 11:2). These are evidences of his natural trend toward ecstasy and the speaking with tongues, the charismata, indicates a temperament easily subjected to highly emotional disturbances. (I Cor. 14:18; Gal 2:2; II Cor. 12:1-9.)

The experiences are on par with the Damascus road event according to Weinel, "We should recognize the fact that Paul 'reckoned being caught up in the heavens' (II Cor. 12:2) as one of the supreme experiences, that he uses the identical expressions about it and treats it with the same entire faith in its objective reality as he uses with regard to the Damascus scene."

All his experiences become then interpreted plainly as visionary ecstatic mystical experiences, which are thoroughly convincing to Paul, in fact, his actions are governed by them in the supreme crisis of his life.

Moreover, this school argues (Jülicher pg. 36ff) that there was a psychological preparation for this subjective illusion. The psychological "stuff" for the picture image was present, as suggested by the pre-crisis preparation. As a student he had studied the Old Testament which reveals the miraculous acts

* St. Paul, the Man and His Work," pg. 79.
of God, as he spoke to Abraham, to Moses through the flaming bush and the chosen people were led by a pillar of fire and cloud. Stephen's arguments were rather picturesque (Acts 7) and his "angel face" left an impression upon Paul. The material that visions and dreams are made of were active in the subliminal, lying in the area of forgotten facts. No experience is ever lost. In the vast store box of memory were found the elements of the hallucination, the acceptance of the miraculous callings, and the glory and the face of the dying Stephen who "being full of the Holy Spirit looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:5,6). The background of the vision and call was made up of impressions that had been lying dormant for some time as indefinite half-thoughts, while the immediate event of Stephen's vision and death afforded the other necessary material for an hallucination of glory, light and the close relationship of Jesus to God.

During the solitude of the journey, the quietude of the noon hour, a sudden shock of disturbance, of reverie, of wandering thought completed the link in the chain of causes and acted as the immediate means of precipitating this mental delusion. The inbred antagonism toward Christ caused a blindness of counter passion.
The protagonists of this school believe that a vision was possible under the regular operating laws of psychology and we have shown their three arguments are, (1) the mental make-up of Paul, (2) the normality of his other visionary experiences of which this is the first, (3) and the immediate psychological elements for a picture image were present.

3. The Arguments Against the Visionary Theory.

It is a common belief among the most recent scholars that the pre-crisis period of this conversion experience was marked by a psychological preparation but the difference in their interpretations lie in an adequate explanation of the crisis, the focal-point of the experience which may not have been a self-generated vision. The three suggested arguments of the visionary hypothesis school may be answered by arguments from another group of authorities Weizsäcker, J. Weiss, Stevens, Sabatier and others with the following suggestions: (1) the intellectual integrity of Paul forbids an hallucination, (2) his visionary experiences are not on the same basis as this vital character change, (3) the elements for a visionary image picture are not present—these are coupled with other positive arguments.

The logical reasoning of Paul in the formations
of his intricate theological doctrines indicates a man of intellectual integrity while at the same time he is highly emotional and nervous. But nervousness is not a disease unless wrongly used. His enthusiasm was directed by sane thinking and reasoning.

It is not probable that a man though a rational mystic would base the whole proof of his apostolic authority and his systematic theology upon a subjective abnormality, the work of unhealthy cerebral activity, "auto-suggestion" or "psycho-sensorial" hallucinations. The basis was not epilepsy or a sun stroke. Certainly, we are not dealing with an unbalanced mind. The dignity of the event in the life of the "university" trained man precludes any abnormality. He, as a normal and sane man, tells of his experience in picture language because of the inadequate vocabulary to express the meaning of the overwhelming decision.

The later visions might have been builted from psychological elements, imaginative picturings, as these emotional disturbances of a mystical man took place five or six years after the conversion. The visions (II Cor. 12:1-9) are never previously revealed or related; the veil over the mysteries of his spiritual life is lifted but for a moment. These ecstatic visions of his emotional and religious life do not belong to
his ministry of public affairs but rather belong to his private devotional life. (II Cor. 5:13). But he uses again and again the evidence of his conversion as the basis for his arguments to prove his apostolic relationships. It becomes a substantial and continual theme of his preaching and teaching.

There was just one vital personal change in which the glory of the risen Lord was understood for the first time. His great experience was a matter of knowing Christ on this earth while the later visions are more or less "heavenly." Thus, the exegetical arguments which make the conversion the first in a series of ecstatic visions are rather disturbed.

Johannes Weiss bases his refutation of the visionary argument upon the thesis that Paul could not have had the psychological elements out of which to build a mental composite picture of Christ. He argues that there must have been in the mind of Paul more than an outline of the figure of Christ. Colour and features would be necessary to complete an hallucination. But Paul only had ideas about the personality of Christ and not the physical Christ. It was the pneumatic spiritual Jesus with whom Paul became acquainted; he identified Him with the Spirit. (II Cor. 3:17).
The men of the early church who according to reports experienced visions lived in an environment which furnished the materials for a realistic presentation to the mind in outline, form and colour, as they came in contact continually with the ecclesiastical art and literature. It was only necessary for extreme emotional excitement to formulate these elements into picture language descriptive of a mystical moment rather than relating the exact details of a vision.

Is it possible that the description given of Christ could have been vivid enough to produce mental images, a picture of Jesus of such vivid reality and convincing power as to break down the passionate fanatacism of Paul and make for a positive Christian career? "Could a vision caused by indirect transmission of the concept of Jesus cause such an upheaval?"

We note that Paul traveled on to Damascus to find the sympathetic Christian Ananias who understood the disturbance going on within the soul of this man. Paul spent some time in meditation and solitude which indicates that after the decisive moment the full import of his mission came as the result of further reflection. (Acts 9:30; Gal.1:17-21).

J. Weiss suggests a unique interpretation, that there was no form of Christ present but only the voice spoke clearly to Paul. This voice calling, "I am Jesus who thou persecutest" given as common material in the three accounts of Acts 9:5; 21:7; 26:14. "Paul saw no figure but only heard the voice." This evades the question and replaces the visionary hallucination with an auditory experience without the necessary external stimuli. There must be some explanation of this conversion experience that will not call in abnormal and doubtful psychological catagories of explanation, as this theory attempts to do. The visionary hypothesis is possible, as we have pointed out, but hardly probable.


It is entirely possible that the conversion crisis might be placed on a higher plane in the realm of psychological interpretation, one that is more readily acceptable to the scientific twentieth-century. It is not a new interpretation but rather more completely understood in the light of the modern psychological study of the unconscious or the subconscious which can be used as conceptual factors of explanation in the interpretation of this episode. This is a hypothetical

* Weiss J., "Paul and Jesus," pg. 41.
construct, a logical entity for use in psychological explanation, just as the atom is a conceptual factor in chemistry and either waves in physics.

Most of the modern psychological authorities now make room for the subconscious activities in relation to conversion. Starbuck says, "There are evidences of the presence of both conscious self-direction and automism in conversion." As I have intimated, Paul... was both consciously and unconsciously prepared, though in his case the conscious elements were immediately submerged into the subconscious. "In conversion the conscious and the unconscious forces rarely exist separately but usually together and interact on each other." Without exception, the cases studied (by Starbuck) no matter how suddenly the new life bursts forth, have antecedents in thought and action that appear to lead up directly to the phenomena of conversion.

The antecedents of the crisis are below the threshold of consciousness. The spontaneous awakening being the fructification of that which has been ripened in the subliminal consciousness. To the mind of James the crisis type of conversion is

** Ibid, pg. 105.
*** Ibid, pg. 105.
"remarkably illustrative of subconscious maturing processes eventuating in the results of which we suddenly grow conscious." Selbie gives his statement, "When it appears to be sudden and shows itself as an unexpected decision to follow a certain line of conduct, or abandon certain practices which are habitual, what really happens is that this comes about as the result of a process of incubation in which certain psychic forces which suddenly manifest themselves have long been maturing and gathering strength." **

Others would picture the phenomenon as a movement of some new psychical forces or energies toward the new center of personality, the new habitual center, previously peripheral in the fringe of consciousness, and the counter movement of the old mode of thinking toward the margin. This is another symbolic way of picturing the same mental and emotional reorganizations.

The new light, the decisive moment, the sudden revelation of the truth, the vanish of old prejudices, the loss of fear, the new attitude of life was the culmination of a long process of mental incubation on the part of Paul. The mind had carried on its work

* "Varieties of Religious Experience," pg.207.
below the threshold of consciousness. As he persecuted the Christians in furious hyperbolical hostility, there was a warfare of thought within his mind. On this basis we can understand the fury of his attacks as he argued with himself in an indecisive mood. "He must have been half-persuaded and have plunged into the task of persecution with forced zeal and an uneasy conscience."*

There was a psychological preconditioning, a form of consciousness, a mental struggle, issuing from doubt to clearness, from indecision and uncertainty to a definite resolution."**

"The figure of Jesus was so convincingly apparent through the lives and characters of his adherents that Paul's power of resistance eventually grew wearied and mentally he was more prepared for an ultimate change than he himself realized."***

The pre-crisis antecedents that have been fully described, his own religious dissatisfaction, his knowledge of Jesus through the arguments of the Christians, their faith and satisfaction, their willingness for martyrdom, the unrighteousness of "chosen people", his longing for a Messiah had

*Weiss, Johannes, "Paul and Jesus," pg.35.
** Pfleiderer, "Primitive Christianity," pg.87.
*** Weiss, J., "Paul and Jesus," pg. 37.
prepared him unconsciously for the one decisive moment. This period of uncertainty, depression, doubt and mental indecision could but lead to the conclusion that every step taken in the old religious pathway led him still further and further away from God, rather than toward the desired goal of peace and harmony.

A change was gradually brought about as he reflected upon the arguments of the Christians who upheld Jesus as the Messiah and as he absorbed the moral impression of Stephen's language and death. But the consummation of this long period of preparation came in a sudden fashion. The answer flashed into his consciousness fully made after he had spent all this time searching for a solution to his religious riddle. The answer to his problem had become "jammed", as James calls it, "and pressure in that direction only kept it from rising." Eventually, it came sauntering into his mind as carelessly as if it had never been invited. There was no conscious effort on the part of Paul but with a certain suddenness the beliefs of the new faith overwhelmed him. What he saw and what he heard was simply the expression of a new certainty in the new and startling truths which rushed into his consciousness in such a way as to reorganize
his whole attitude toward life.

One fact presented itself to his mind, as he thought upon the crucified One and as he fought the new interpretation of this Man, that the historical Jesus and the pneumatic Christ were one and the same Person. He did not see the historical Jesus at the time of his conversion, what he did see we cannot discover and certainly cannot describe.

The Baur, Strauss and Pfleiderer school give rather a detailed account of the processes of the slowly maturing intellectual conviction that the Christian way of attaining salvation was after all the right method. There was a gradual inward transformation of opinion and feeling with a sudden consummation.

"It was a profound crisis of the soul," suggests Sabatier," the old ego has been done away with and the new ego emerged, whose vital principle is Christ himself."* It was the birth of Christ in his soul which meant a radical but logical reversal of his views. He reached an intellectual assurance that he was right, his emotions then took the form of a new enthusiasm for a universal Christianity.

Paul emerged with a new philosophy of life, new goals, new aims, new purposes, a unified self, as all the previous half-thoughts, arguments, dreams

of the subconscious realm pushed themselves en masse into the white light of his consciousness. Psychoanalysis might call the climax the result of a "Christian complex" which clogged the channels of clear thinking until the dam of uncertainty broke, allowing Paul to express himself in the new found forms of Christian freedom.

On the quiet way toward Damascus with a few men, Paul had time to think over the problem of a philosophy of life and to weigh the evidence; suddenly the whole thing comes clear to him as he pieces the pattern of life and living into one whole. Through the quiet processes of his own mind, the new light comes to him. The decision is immediately made. There is only one thing to do and that is to follow the commandments of his new Master.

On the road to Damascus the genesis of his Christian life became a certainty, as he turned the problem over and over in his mind. His mind demanded satisfactory truth. His heart and head throbbed with the problem; which way is the truth? During the uncertainty at one climactic moment the answer rushed into his mind—the Christians were right, Jesus was and is the Messiah. The realization came as an illuminating decision.
Paul may not have been conscious of any exertion of his own judgment, or of an independent examination of the faith. He knew of no transition stage in which his mind hesitated or questioned purposefully. The period of persecution was followed by one of seeking further light upon his Apostleship to Christ. According to Galatians 1:14 there was no via media but rather an abrupt change from one assurance to another. That which was dark became light. Paul was enlightened with the realization that the Divine glory of the Son of God shown upon the brow of the victim of Calvary. (II Cor. 4:6).

The author of Corinthians tells of his knowledge of the light of Christ in his life. Christ spoke to him through his conscience-stricken soul.

His whole system of religious thought is reorganized, his purpose of life is altered completely as he says, "about face" in his habits, customs, and program of living. The relating of the experience defied the pen and pencil, as well as his vocabulary. Phrases and exacting terminology could not give a fair account of the great inner struggle which took place in the mind and soul of Paul. He cannot describe the experience which is his alone and in attempting

* See Weizsäcker, "The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church," pg. 82ff.
so to do, he uses picturings and phrases which must be understood as such. Paul did not mean to tell of an optical light, and audible voice, a tangible speaking person but in the telling of his personal experience he uses the picture language of the Oriental. Every phase of the report can be interpreted as the thoughts of Paul when he was converted. His divided self became a unified self. He alone told of this experience while others have retold the stories with additional embellishments. The emotional experience was so overwhelming that he lacked not only the words to express it at the time of the event, but later he retained a memory of the emotional content rather than the details.

There may have been certain physical concomitants, this is entirely possible. Of course, the thorough going behaviorist would see in the physical or the psycho-physical the sum total of all the conscious activity at this time. There may have been psycho-genic blindness which was due to his unwillingness to accept what was incompatible with his habitual beliefs.

It is only necessary to hold that for three days, the world of Paul was turned upside down,
and his mind staggered beneath the load of a new decision affecting his whole life program, as he remained with Ananias in Damascus. The titanic discovery and certainty that Jesus was the son of God almost overwhelmed his sensibilities. Ananias understood the profound revolution that was going on under the persecuter's breast, so he added a word of assurance, gave him the right hand of fellowship and sent him on about his new tasks. Thus, the threads of this theory weave a complete network of unity and form a psychological probability.

The ideas gleaned from his contacts with the Christians had been sinking into the subconscious mind to reappear all at once after the process of assimilation had reached a certain stage. The word-picture, the "seeing" is not to be interpreted then as an hallucination but rather as a thing of feeling, that which belongs to the realm of music, poetry, something that cannot be analyzed by reanalyzing the mechanism. This might be the wholeness, rather than another part of the conversion; "For there is something more to conversion and other religious experience than the sum of the part processes that have mostly occupied the attention of the psychologists."* Dr. Coe belongs

to the functionalists in the field of religious psychology, so he does not omit the evaluation of the event and in this endeavor almost passes over to the realm of ethics. This synoptic view enables one to comprehend the meaning of this revolution in the religious life of Paul.

We have analyzed the literalist's interpretation and have seen the difficulties involved. We have made a study of the two methods of psychological interpretation of the Damascus road event, as either a vision or a gradual maturing process. The last two schools agree in that they allow for a psychological preparation for the crisis, however, it has been readily seen that they differ as to the interpretation of the event itself. Our thesis has shown that there was a psychological preparation for that eventful day and that the crisis was probably a wholesome decision on the part of Paul, as he suddenly discovered a new life program which had a great practical value for the beginnings of Christianity and for Paul himself.
CHAPTER VI.

THE POST-CRISIS RESULTS.

In the maze of theoretical explanations of the conversion we must not lose sight of the end of the process, the post-crisis freedom and joy, the new consciousness of the Divine. Richard Cabot describes the resultant feeling of his experience, "the solution to my riddle of the universe had been revealed to me; for I was living in a new world, of beauty and gladness such as I had never conceived." Paul might have said the same although he might have used religious terms and stated that he had found the true Messiah.

What ever happened on the road to Damascus, two immediate results stood out in his mind, he had seen the Lord and he had received a commission; in the breast of this man lay germinally hidden a world-wide revolution. This might be called the second birth of Christianity, the first being the birth of Christ and strange to say both of these events are shrouded in mysteries and traditional entanglements, which have at times completely overshadowed the importance of the results of these epoch making events in the history of civilization.

* "Except Ye Be Born Again," pg.20.
The fact of the conversion remains unchallenged even though a long psychological preconditioning is necessary in the explanation of the method or process of the conversion; the crisis can either be a vision or a decision. God worked through the natural laws, Paul may have bumbled in telling about the experience, but his life stands as a testimony to the fact that he, confronted by a religious problem, chose the pathway of service for Christ Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul had reached the end of his quest, through the natural sequence of events. God has not been left out of the process. He still remains the metaphysical First Cause, and operates through the regular psychological laws, which are really man's discovery of His means of operation, rather than working through some miraculous means which necessitates the setting aside of the natural laws. Psychological science in its analysis describes the workings of the various laws. The crisis according to these laws may be either an immediate hallucination which smacks very much of the subnormal, or simply a climactic decision, the result of a psychological preparation. There was plenty left in
the mind of Paul to effect his later life. Was it not worthy of God to work through natural laws to accomplish this end? God may speak to man through the subconscious which is a sane, normal and psychologically sound mystical route. Paul had found the truth, the Christ-God through this method.

Something happened near Damascus, God worked through very natural laws, which we have attempted to describe. The method may be rather uncertain but the result remains the same. Paul had come to the cross-roads in his experience, and he chose the pathway of service for his new "Lord."

Paul found that the true religious emphasis provided the peace and satisfaction which he sought. He had found the truth, so he starts his battle anew on the side of truth. The Saul of Tarsus, became Paul the Christian, with the same personal qualities, racial qualities but a new religious man who transferred his zealous activities to the Christian cause. The fight proceeds on the other side of the line. He knew the arguments on both sides and could put the matter up clearly before the orthodox Jews. He was a well trained theologian, now he had found a living spirit for his decadent theology.
Perhaps, he had to go to Arabia and there in the silences of his soul await his marching orders but soon he started out on a vigorous crusade for righteousness as a rule for men, a universal rule for all those who had the Faith to receive the Grace of God. Justification would come through faith.

If Paul had not invented Heathen Christianity the idea would never have occurred to the later ages that Jewish Christianity was anything else than a religion of Law, peculiar to the Jewish nation, containing intensified Messianic expectations and definitely referring those expectations to the person of a prophet who was not acknowledged while he lived and met with a violent death. But Paul did discover a new conception of God, of religion, of worship, of the world and of life. Salvation bought and paid for by the deeds of the Law passed forever from Christian religion as Paul established a mystical fellowship with Jesus Christ and this was the real secret of his apostolic service and success. (Gal.1:20). Fortunately, he was a world-citizen and equipped to establish a world religion.
Paul's emotion and passion remained a power to make "a new heaven and a new earth." He had found a freedom through a spiritual religion which was the gift of God and made manifest through His Son. Paul was born in the first century became a Jewish Rabbi, but he was "born again" on the road to Damascus and became "The Campaigner for Christ."* "Paul grew the stronger and confounded the Jews ..., proving that this is the Christ," (Acts 9:22) because he had seen that FACE:

"Which far from vanish, rather grows, 
And decomposes but to recompose, 
Becomes my universe and feels and knows."

Huton, "If God Be For Us."

* The title of a short study course of the life of Paul by Dr. William J. Lowstuter.
SUMMARY.

This thesis presupposes a reading of the biblical records dealing with the day of Damascus in the life of Paul (Acts 9,22,26). Upon this reading the problem is evident. It is one of psychological and exegetical interpretation of sacred history.

The common explanation has been to pass off this event as a miracle allowing the physical Christ to literally appear before God. But the scientific modern age demands an interpretation more in keeping with the general trend of research.

The tools with which we are to work are found in psychology as a science. The schools of psychological methods are hastily reviewed and the necessary study tools selected. In this psycho-religious problem introspection is necessary, as in all study of mystical states of religion. The psycho-analytic school deals too much with abnormalities and diseased minds while we hold that Paul is sane. The metaphysical behavioristic approach is discarded but we reserve the right to observe the objective behavior or conduct of Paul as a clue to what might be going on within his consciousness. The "Gestalt" school points the way toward considering man as a unit which is one of the tenets of our self-psychology method. Paul is considered a free,
purposive, self-directive personality which is the subject for our study synoptically and functionally.

Conversion as a distinct religious experience can readily be a datum for psychology as a descriptive science. This science of religion has analyzed the conversion experience into three periods: (1) the pre-crisis period of unrest, worry, doubt, (2) the crisis or climactic moment of character change and (3) the post-crisis period of joy and peace.

Then turning to the history of Paul, we endeavor to find elements of psychological preparation for this crisis. We learn that he was dissatisfied with his own religious experience or lack of a real vital experience through the legalistic observances of the Jewish law. But he did notice that the Christians with whom he came in contact had a peace of mind, a fortitude of spirit and a loyalty to their new Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

So this dissatisfaction, his doubts, half-thoughts and bits of argument were maturing in the subconscious areas of Paul's consciousness. His attention was focused upon the Christians as he persecuted the hated sect and listened to their arguments. Paul saw Stephen stoned to death and heard his proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah. Suddenly the arguments of the Christians pieced themselves together while Paul was going to Damascus and into his consciousness came the
the overwhelming realization that the historical Jesus and the spiritual Christ were One. His subconscious problem was solved.

The records in Acts are interpreted as Oriental picture language. There had been such an overwhelmingness at the time of the crisis when new aims, new purposes, new ideals took possession of the life of Paul, that he lacked an adequate vocabulary to express the ecstasy of this supreme moment.

Thus, Paul had been psychologically prepared for this climactic event through the subconscious maturing process. He was not consciously prepared and for that reason, the climax came suddenly to him. The crisis can either be interpreted as a vision or as a decision. But since an hallucination always smacks of abnormality in the minds of the most conservative thinkers, we conclude that the subconscious maturing processes can be used as explanatory data for Paul's day or Damascus.

God then worked through the operating laws of psychology to change the life of this man and thus, change the trend of history. The fact of the conversion and its results are accepted certainties. Paul became a campaigner for Christ.
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