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The psychology of conversion : being a critical study in the findings of Starbuck, Coe and James

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONVERSION:

BEING A CRITICAL STUDY IN THE FINDINGS OF STARBUCK, COE AND JAMES

BY

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The present study of conversion is approached through the medium of psychology, which, like the Christian religion, is extremely interested in human beings. Christianity owes to psychology a great debt of gratitude for the light which it has thrown upon the vast recesses of the human mind and upon the possibilities in the personality which Christianity would convert.

There has been no hesitation to employ whatever information psychology may offer concerning the processes at work in conversion, together with any technique which might serve to increase its likelihood. It is not the purpose of this thesis to champion the cause of any psychological school. The approach is simply that of presenting the findings of Starbuck, Coe and James. To critically evaluate these findings and to extract from them certain values and limitations to be noted in their application.

The title of this thesis is: "The Psychology of Conversion: Being A Critical Study In The Findings Of Starbuck, Coe and James." It may be classed with the survey-philosophic type. The technic or method

of treatment used will become apparent as the type is discussed.

The first part of this thesis is an endeavor to place the studies of our three pioneers, Starbuck, Coe and James, in their historical setting. To show how they gave birth to the psychological investigation of religious conversion and how others followed and broadened out so as to encompass other phases of religious experience. The second section is a discussion of the methods employed by these pioneers as means by which they collected data concerning religious conversion. A critical treatment of the methods employed is included. The third section deals with the findings themselves and also presents a critique of these findings. The fourth and final section contains a discussion of the values and limitations resulting from this study. Though many quotations have been used throughout, they have been held to a minimum wherever possible. Many more quotations could have been made to show general agreement on the point being labored but to prevent duplication they have been omitted. Because of the relatedness of the different sections of this thesis to one another there has resulted a certain amount of duplication. In all cases this has been avoided as much as possible yet in several instances it is unavoidable for the sake of continuity.

We are quite aware of the storm of protest which has arisen and which persists over the psychological investigation of religious phenomena. Many people fear that this new "invasion" of science into the domain of religion robs religious experience of its supernatural element. Such protests can be found by the score. We give an example

found in Religion In Transition.[1] The setting for this incident is the result of a lecture delivered by Dr. Starbuck before the class in the philosophy of religion at Harvard on the psychological study of conversion. This discussion followed:

> That occassion was a sort of christening ceremony for the babe newly born into the family of academic subjects. Some quiet hot water was thrown into the baptismal font. The first douse of it came from Edward Porneamp, who rose, his face white with emotion. His first sentence, fervid with the warmth of deep conviction, was "It's all a lie!" Laughter broke out there in that dignified classroom. There was also a pouring of friendly waters into the font, and words of consecration for this new babe. Of course, the attempted damnation of the infant by the first speaker was because its swaddling clothes were only the filthy rags of earthly psychology, ill-becoming the sacredness of religion.[2]

This child, born in confliot, has continued to grow under the same environment. Discussions pro and con have continued and still continue to use up reams of paper. Some say, "Were the new psychologists simply to confine themselves to their own field, and ignore religion as not belonging to them as psychologists, a better relation would exist between the two."[3] Others say:

> Psychology approaches religion on the theory that God's relationship with His creatures is based on immutable laws, rather than upon haphazard chance. The end of our study is not to resolve the mystery or religion, but to bring enough of it into orderliness that its

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1 Vergilius Ferm, editor, Religion In Transition (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1937), 266 pp.

2 Ibid., p. 227.

3 Marion H. Dunsmore, "The Relation Of The New Psychology To Religion," Methodist Review, 106:416, May, 1923.

facts may appeal to our understanding.[1]

So goes the controversy which has never allowed this new born babe to live in peace.

Our justification for this psychological approach to a study of conversion is to be found in the fact that we believe conversion as a human experience subjects itself to psychological investigation. Since conversion is a totality-experience, involving the whole of personality[2] and since Christ commanded that we be made whole,[3] we believe that we are not only better able to under-tand the whole personality through the psychological approach, but also better able through this approach to interpret the mechanism of conversion.

Psychology we believe, should also be able to supply a pragmatic criteria for measuring the value of theological and philosophical theories concerning conversion. It is readily admitted that psychology alone does not offer sufficient criteria for final judgment. But psychology deals with life, and any theory which contradicts the best psychological findings regarding human nature bears further investigation.

We have singled out the works of Starbuck, Coe and James for critical treatment in this thesis because of the tremendous influence they have wielded in the development of the psychological approach to the conversion experience. Many other psychologists have dealt with this subject but all have stayed largely within the pattern cut out

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1 Paul H. Heisey, "The Psychological Study Of Religion," Lutheran Quarterly, 48:526, October, 1918.

2 Sverre Norborg, Varieties Of Christian Experience, p. 191.

3 John 5:6.

by these earlier investigators. Leroux says, "The great masters James, Starbuck, Coe having spoken, what we have to-day is mostly the feeble echo of their imitators and quoters."[1] By restricting ourselves to these three investigators the entire phenomena, so far as it has been studied, is covered and an adequate background is laid for further independent study and research along these same lines.

The writer of this thesis is convinced that such testimonies concerning the value of religion in the development of healthy personality as has been given by the psychologists Jung, Foster and Link, the psychiatrists Kraft-Ebbing, Kunkel and Blanton, the religionists Fosdick, Bennett and Lichman has so ignited the light of mutual aid that in future days it will deepen and more fully illumine. This study is therefore, presented with a prayer that it may not only increase the understanding of the true nature of conversion but may also help in some way to add a bit of luster to that light.

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1 Emmanuel Leroux, "The Philosophy Of Religion In French Speaking Countries," The Monist, 37:48, January, 1927.

PART ONE

THE BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Chapter 1

THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF THIS STUDY

The psychological study of conversion and ultimately the whole range of phenomena associated with the religious life, is purely the work of American psychologists and remains as America's contribution both to psychology and religion. It is true that studies have been made by German and French psychologists but the fact remains that one needs only to know English to read the great masters in this field.

With this probing eye of the scientist encompassing all branches of study it is not strange that it should ultimately come to rest on religion. To be sure religion was one of the last subjects to fall to the psychological invaders but it was simply the privilege Polyphemus gave Ulysses, that of being eaten last.[1] However, when this eye did finally come to rest on religion the result was of complementary value. The scientist found the answer to his question concerning the unity of the mental life in the realm of the religious; and the religionist like-

1 Albert R. Wren, Recent Religious Psychology, p. 2.

wise, found the answer as to how the scientist could assist in the control and manipulation of mental processes involved in religious experiences.[1]

The doorway into Evangelical Christianity has been through conversion so it was only normal that conversion became the subject for the earliest psychological investigations.[2] It is impossible to extract a particular psychologist and say that he began the psychological approach to conversion. For none can say with the Ancient Mariner:

> We were the first that ever burst
> Into that silent sea.

However, Jonathan Edwards was one of the first to make systematic empirical observations of the psychological states and processes involved in religious experience and to him goes the title of being one of the first pioneers in this field.[3] Born in 1703, educated at Yale, Edwards, the third President of Princeton at the time of his death in 1758, was a man of singular philosophic genius and remarkable ratiocinative talent combined with an uncanny sense of introspective power. One hundred and seventy years before Freud, Edwards was seized with the significance of dreams for revealing a concealed inclination repressed from consciousness during the waking life.[4]

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1 Edward S. Ames, The Psychology Of Religious Experience, p. 4.

2 James H. Leuba, "The Psychology of Religious Phenomena," American Journal Of Psychology, 7:312, April, 1896.

3 Clarence H. Faust and Thomas H. Johnson, Jonathan Edwards, (New York: The American Book Company, 1935). 454 pp.

4 Jonathan Edwards, Collected Works, "Original Extracts From Diary", 1, 69.

As a Presbyterian minister, Edwards witnessed at first hand the two great revivals of the middle eighteenth century known collectively as "The Great Awakening." His keen observations of the first revival which took place in 1734 is recorded in a work entitled "The Narrative Of Surprising Conversion." The second revival which encompassed Edward's own parish in Northampton is the basis of his second article published in 1742 and entitled "Thoughts On The Revival In New England."

Of greater importance, however, is his article entitled "A Treatise Concerning The Religious Affections" published in 1746 and remembered as the first important work on experimental religion ever published in America.[1] The qualifications which made Edwards a voice deserving to be heard was a strange but adequate combination of piercing insight, religious sensitivity and careful observation. Though Wundt's laboratory was not established until 1867, yet Edwards psychologized before him as this "Treatise Concerning The Religious Affections" evidences. In the perusal of this document it must be remembered that Edwards did his work in the first half of the eighteenth century and it is therefore clothed in the terminology of the then current principles of mental philosophy.

It was not until some one hundred thirty six years later in 1882, that Professor G. Stanley Hall of Clark University published the next article dealing empirically with this subject. This article was

1 Jonathan Edwards, Ibid., 1:234-340.

entitled "The Moral And Religious Training Of Children."[1]

As an outgrowth of the clue that conversion occourred typically during adolescence,[2] and under the influence of Dr. Hall, a number of students at Clark University began independent research along this line. This was the origin of the Clark School of Religious Psychology.[3] This school was the first to apply empirical methods thoroughly to the study of the religious consciousness.[4] Professor G. Stanley Hall may be said to have founded a new dynasty of religious psychologists. In May, 1904, Dr. Hall founded the first periodical for the exclusive study of religion called The Journal of Religious Psychology And Education.[5]

Two of Dr. Hall's students, James H. Leuba and Edwin D. Starbuck, turned their attention to the subject of conversion as it was found in adolescence. Leuba's work was first and occupied itself with the study of conversion. His article "The Psychology Of Religious Phenomena,"[6] was published in 1896. This might well be called the first important modern contribution to the Psychology of Religion.

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1. Stanley Hall, Princeton Review, New Series, 9:26-46, January, 1882; see also "The Moral and Religious Training Of Children And Adolescents," Pedagogical Seminary, 1:196-210, February, 1891.

2 Edward S. Brightman, A Philosophy Of Religion, p. 35.

3 James B. Pratt, "The Psychology Of Religion," Harvard Theological Review, 1:456, October, 1908.

4 Ibid., p. 440.

5 This publication continued under this name until July, 1911. It was published from July, 1912 until its last issue in December, 1915 under the title Journal Of Religious Psychology.

6 James H. Leuba, "The Psychology Of Religious Phenomena", American Journal Of Psychology, 7:309-385, April, 1896.

The source material used came from the published accounts of conversion and from questionnaires prepared by Leuba. The data collected was broken down into the ante-conversion complex, the crisis itself, and the post-conversion feelings. Leuba expounded three facts which Starbuck later enlarged, namely, the necessity of self-surrender as a precondition of conversion, the sudden nature of the transition and the passivity of the subject immediately before the crisis. Leuba ruled the supernatural factor completely out in his findings and as a dispassionate scientist he more than any other investigator represents the naturalistic point of view.[1]

Edwin Starbuck's study[2] followed that of Leuba's by ten months. A second article[3] appeared later the same year. The data for these studies was derived exclusively from the questionnaire method. This was the year that Dwight L. Moody died, and, in a sense, marks the transition point from the period of revivalism to a more psychological interpretation of religion.

As a result of a study begun in 1890, Dr. Starbuck published in 1899 the first book based on the scientific method applied to religious conversion. It was entitled The Psychology Of Religion.[4] This book remains today as one of the two or three great contributions to the

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1 James B. Pratt, op. cit., p. 438.

2 Edwin P. Starbuck, "A Study Of Conversion," American Journal Of Psychology, 7:268-80, January, 1897.

3 Edwin P. Starbuck, "Some Aspects Of Religious Growth," op. cit., 9:70-124, October, 1897.

4 London: Walter Scott, Ltd., 1899. 423 pp.

science of the psychology of religion. To him goes the honor of publishing the book that marked an epoch in the history of American religious psychology.

The next year, 1900, Professor Coe published his findings on conversion and temperament under the title The Spiritual Life.[1] These findings closely paralleled those of Starbuck though they were arrived at from different material.

Starbuck's book, begun while a student under Professor William James, no doubt influenced James in the selection of his subject, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," for the Gifford Lectures delivered at Edinburgh University in 1901 - 1902. In 1903 Professor James published these lectures in a book bearing the same title.[2] To Professor James more than to any other worker in this field is to be ascribed the wide present-day interest in the psychological study of religion. Though Starbuck and Coe published their work before James, yet it was only with the appearance of James' book that a clearly defined and widespread movement was started. The object of this movement was to collect, analyze and describe the data of religion, and to attempt to interpret and evaluate this data in relation to the rest of human life.

It is the work of these three men, Starbuck, Coe and James, as it centered about the study of Conversion with which we deal in this thesis. It was clearly these pioneers who started the Psychology Of Religion. The nature of this new branch of science and the role it

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1 New York: Eaton and Mains, 1900. 270 pp.
2 New York: Longmans Green And Company, 1922. 534 pp.

has taken in later years is shown in the brief historical sketch that follows.

In 1905, Professor Frank M. Davenport, a sociologist, published a study on the psychology of religious revivals, entitled Primitive Traits In Religious Revivals.[1] This was of the nature of a special contribution to crowd psychology.

Professor James B. Pratt published in 1907 a book entitled The Psychology Of Religious Belief.[2] He dealt with a field hardly touched up to this point. He discussed the nature of belief, its expression among primitive peoples in India, in Israel and in Christian communities. He also dealt with the development of belief in the periods of childhood, youth and maturity. This work was a strong case for religious mysticism.

In 1908, George B. Cutten published a book entitled The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity.[3] It is a summary of the conclusions made in the other detailed studies. He took the whole range of phenomena - abnormal and normal - and presented chapters on a wide variety of subjects such as Mysticism, Ecstasy, Glossolalia, Visions, Dreams, Stigmatization, Witchcraft, and many others. The chief defect of this study is that it lacks a scientific approach, and should perhaps be termed a book for the popular mind.

With the appearance of Cutten's book we see the close of the first decade of the psychological investigation of religion. The main

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1 1 New York: The Macmillan Company. 323 pp.
2 New York: The Macmillan Company. 327 pp.
3 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 497 pp.

problem dealt with up to this time had been the psychology of conversion and the outstanding book was James' Varieties Of Religious Experience. Individual contributions may be summarized as follows: Starbuck contributed an empirical investigation of conversion and of religious development without crisis; Coe contributed an examination of the relation to the mode in which a religious conversion expresses itself; James contributed a psychological and philosophical interpretation of conversion and religious mysticism; Davenport contributed a psychological study of religious revivals as compared to crowd psychology; Pratt contributed a treatise on the nature, function and varieties of religious belief; Cutten contributed a survey of the whole range of religious phenomena.

It can be seen that these pioneers attacked problems both numerous and vital, theoretical and practical, scientific and speculative. Their findings have either stood the test of further research or they have been replaced by a more exact analyses. Still others have simply been modified in view of new knowledge and wider experiences. In general, however, these pioneers have laid the foundation upon which others have built.[1]

In 1910 Professor Edward S. Ames of the University of Chicago, from the approach of the functional psychologist, published a book entitled The Psychology Of Religious Experience.[2]

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1 Karl R. Stolz, The Psychology Of Religious Living, p. 155.
2 Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 428 pp.

By this time the Psychology of Religion was beginning to appear as a separate subject in colleges and universities. This book was an attempt to systematize the findings and to present a textbook for this field of study. Its approach was a sociological interpretation of the origin, nature and function of religion and remains a most important contribution tothis field of study.

Professor George M. Stratton's book The Psychology Of The Religious Life,[1] published in 1911, presented a different approach. It was a critical psychological study of the sacred writing of various religions. It attempted to catch people off their guard as in the case of the prayer, the hymn, the myth and the sacred prophecy. It showed how emotional conflicts support religious experience. This work was catholic both in its range and in its application.

James H. Leuba's systematic work A Psychological Study Of Religion; Its Origin, Function and Future,[2] published in 1912, constituted a search for the origins of religion and for an adequate definition of it. This writer, a pioneer in the field, and, on the whole, the most scientific and logical thinker who has made psychological studies of religion, began as a functionalist, but gradually became more positivistic. The chief contribution of this study is the distinction made in it between religion and magic.

A second book by Professor Coe, then a professor at Union Theo-

1 London: The Macmillan Company. 370 pp.
2 New York: The Macmillan Company. 367 pp.

logical Seminary, entitled The Psychology Of Religion,[1] was published in 1916. It is considered by many to be the most useful textbook on the subject in America. Its value is found primarily in that it attempts to coordinate the findings of the previous investigators on the whole range of the religious experience.

Professor Pratt's second book entitled The Religious Consciousness[2] was published in 1920. The author assigned the problem of ethnic religious origins to the anthropologists, defined religion in such a way as to limit his inquiry to phenomena associated with spiritism and proceeded to study the materials common to the great culture religions. His work covers the problems of conversion, mysticism and worship in an original and illuminating way. It is strongly apologetic in insisting on theism as an essential of all religions. This is good philosophy but has no place in psychology. Otherwise, this book is a one volume classic in balance and approach to the subject.

With this book we come to the end of the second decade of investigation into the Psychology of Religion. During this decade the emphasis has been on the function of religion in the life of the race especially as it affected social morality. The outstanding book was Ames' Psychology Of Religious Experience. Individual contributions may be summarized as follows: Ames contributed an anthropological

1 New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920. 488 pp.
2 Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 365 pp.

and sociological theory of the beginning, growth and significance of religious behavior; Stratton contributed a description of conflicting forces in the religious consciousness; Leuba contributed a comparison of the origin, quality, purpose and technique of both magic and religion; Coe contributed a textbook which consolidated the previous finding of psychological investigation; Pratt contributed an investigation of conversion, mysticism and worship.

During this period we have seen that out of the psychological study of conversion has come the birth of the new child of science called the Psychology of Religion. Now toddling on its own two feet it has begun to make its own way. After this we see the contributions to this field coming forth in ever increasing numbers.

The decade 1920 to 1930 brought many books written as psychology of religion emphasizing either the practical uses to be made of the information gained through psychological study of religion, or expressing concern regarding the competency of psychology to assess and treat the problems of religion. We may group these books together because they represent a departure from the strictly scientific approach. Among those who from their writings appear to be both apologetic and interested in applications of psychology to religious living might be mentioned Oscar Hardman,[1] Frank Barry,[2] William Bruce,[3]

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1 Oscar Hardman, editor, Psychology And The Church, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), 168 pp.

2 Frank R. Barry, Christianity And Psychology, (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1928). 195 pp.

3 William S. Bruce, The Psychology Of Christian Life And Behavior, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1925, Second Edition). 355 pp.

Harold Dresser,[1] George Jordan,[2] Frank Strickland.[3] Those who were chiefly apologetic are represented by such writers as William Selbie, Alfred Underwood,[5] Santis De Sanctis[6] and Elmer Clark.[7] Those who indicate ways of applying psychology in religious living are exemplified in such writers as James Pyle,[8] Harry Brooks,[9] and Karl Stolz.[10] Charles Josey[11] deserves special mention as one who was interested in so writing psychology of religion that it would be an aid to faith and at the same time enable the student to grasp the problems and methods of the science.[12]

During this decade we see that the chief problem of the psychology of religion has been religion and ultimate reality. The most outstanding book was Pratt's Religious Consciousness.

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1 Harold W. Dresser, Outline Of The Psychology Of Religion, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1929). 461 pp.

2 George T. Jordan, A Short Psychology Of Religion, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927). 180 pp.

3 Frank L. Strickland, Psychology Of Religious Experience, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1924). 320 pp.

4 William B. Selbie, The Psychology Of Religion, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924). 310 pp.

5 Alfred C. Underwood, Conversion: Christian And Non-Christian, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925). 266 pp.

6 Santis De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927). 324 pp.

7 Elmer T. Clark, The Psychology Of Religious Awakening, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929). 170 pp.

8 James W. Pyle, More Psychology And The Christian Life, (New York: George H. Doran and Company, 1923). 178 pp.

9 Harry C. Brooks, Christianity And Auto Suggestion, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc., 1925). 188 pp.

10 Karl R. Stolz, The Psychology of Prayer, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1923). 247 pp.

11 Charles C. Josey, The Psychology Of Religion, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927). 362 pp.

12 David M. Trout, Religious Behavior, P. 43.

The decade 1930 to 1940 saw a still further swing of psychology as applied to religion away from the scientific approach. During this decade we see a trend back towards the study of the religious life from the standpoint of conversion but also we see a decided expansion in this field as psychology is applied to religious and character education, to religious workers, to the work of the pastor as counselor, and to problems of health, social leadership and like matters.

Contributions to the psychology of conversion were made by Clifford Barbour,[1] Thomas Hughes,[2] William Thomas,[3] Sverre Norborg,[4] W. Lawson Jones[5] and William Peterson.[6] Contributions to religious and character education included Walter Horton,[7] David Trout,[8] Albert Emmison[9] and John McKenzie.[10] Those outstanding who applied psychology to religious workers and to the pastor as counselor were the following:

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1 Clifford Barbour, Sin And The New Psychology, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1930). 269 pp.

2 Thomas H. Hughes, The New Psychology And Religious Experience, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1935). 337 pp.

3 William B. Thomas, The Psychology Of Conversion, (London: Allenson, 1935). 191 pp.

4 Sverre Norborg, The Variation Of Christian Experience, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937). 289 pp.

5 W. Lawson Jones, A Psychological Study Of Religious Conversion, (London: Epworth Press, 1937). 337 pp.

6 William P. Peterson, Conversion, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940). 209 pp.

7 Walter M. Horton, A Psychological Approach To Theology, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931). 276 pp.

8 David M. Trout, Religious Behaviour, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931). 528 pp.

9 Albert C. Emmison, Validity of Religious Experience, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1937). 237 pp.

10 John G. McKenzie, Personal Problems Of Conduct And Religion, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932). 144 pp.

Leslie Weatherhead,[1] Karl Stolz,[2] John Bonnell,[3] and Henry Wieman & Regina Wieman.[4] Problems of health, social relations and like matters were exemplified by Anton Boisen,[5] Ernest Ligon,[6] Henry Link[7] and Leslie Weatherhead.[8]

During the period 1940 to the present we find this branch of science centering primarily around the work of the pastor as counselor with the exception of Johnson's book The Psychology Of Religion[9] which endeavored to bring up to date the subjects previously covered in volumes bearing this title. Outstanding contributions of psychology as applied to the pastor as counselor were made by Rollo May,[10] Carrol Wise,[11] Russel Dicks,[12] and Joshua Liebman.[13]

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1 Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology In The Service Of The Soul, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930). 219 pp.

2 Karl R. Stolz, Pastoral Psychology, (Nashville: The Cokesbury Press, 1932). 259 pp.

3 John S. Bonnell, Pastoral Psychiatry, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937). 257 pp.

4 Henry N. Wieman and Regina W. Wieman, Normative Psychology Of Religion, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1935). 564 pp.

5 Anton T. Boisen, Exploration Of The Inner World, (New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1936). 322 pp.

6 Ernest Ligon, Psychology Of Christian Personality, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928). 257 pp.

7 Henry C. Link, The Return To Religion, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936). 161 pp.

8 Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology And Life, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1935). 280 pp.

9 Paul E. Johnson, (New York: The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945). 288 pp.

10 Rollo May, Springs Of Creative Living, (New York: Nashville, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1940). 276 pp.

11 Carrol A. Wise, Religion In Illness And Health, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942). 279 pp.

12 Russel L. Dicks, Pastoral Work And Personal Counseling, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944). 230 pp.

13 Joshua L. Liebman, Peace Of Mind, (New York: Simon And Schuster, 1946). 208 pp.

It is clear that from its beginnings in the study of conversion, the psychology of religion has run the whole gamut of religious experience and has become a branch of investigation in its own right. It has enjoyed a vigorous growth. The scope of its problems has steadily widened. In viewpoint and method it has manifested rich diversification, reflecting both the interests of individual scholars and great originality of thought. Its contributions alike to scientific knowledge and to the promotion of religion pure and undefiled have been substantial.

However, the half century of its existence still finds it described in the words of William James when he said,

> At present psychology is in the condition of physics before Galileo. It is indeed strange to hear people talk triumphantly of the 'New Psychology,' and write 'Histories of Psychology,' when into the real elements and forces which the word covers not the first glimpse of clear insight exists.[1]

We might add that it has just been born and its greatest achievements still remain for the future to reveal.

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1 William James, Psychology, p. 468.

PART TWO

METHODS AND CRITIQUE

Chapter 2

QUESTIONNAIRE METHOD AND CRITIQUE

When Starbuck approached his teacher, William James, about his desire to circulate certain questionnaires in order to ascertain the religious experiences of different individuals, his teacher was not very impressed and stated his reasons in the preface to Starbuck's book. Even though Starbuck was not discouraged and went on to prove that much of what James feared did not actually happen, yet the remarks of James are of particular import to introduce us to some of the shortcomings of the questionnaire method.

> The question-circular method of collecting information had already, in America, reached the proportions of an incipient nuisance in psychological and pedagogical matters. Dr. Starbuck's questions were of a peculiarly searching and intimate nature, to which it seemed possible that an undue number of answers from egotists lacking in sincerity might come. Moreover, so few minds have the least spark of originality that answers to questions scattered broadcast would be likely to show a purely conventional content. The writers' ideas, as well as their phraseology would be the stock-in-trade of the Protestant Volksgeist, historically and not psychologically based; and, being in it oneself, one might as well cipher it all out a priori as seek to collect it in this burdensome, inductive fashion. I think I said

> to Dr. Starbuck that I expected the chief result of his circulars would be a certain number of individual answers relating peculiar experiences and ideas in a way that might be held as typical. The sorting and extracting of percentages and reducing to averages, I thought, would give results of comparatively little significance.[1]

However, Professor Starbuck did decide to use the questionnaire method for his investigation into individual psychology. His goal was to perform a purely empirical study with the end in view to make a faithful inductive generalisation. The material for his study consisted of autobiographies submitted in response to two rather extensive questionnaires - one on conversion and one on religious growth. In his questionnaires, Starbuck included questions that would give him information in such general areas as the age of conversion, the motives and forces leading to conversion, the experiences preceding conversion, the mental and bodily affections accompanying conversion, the feelings following conversion, the character of the new life, as well as questions to discover the nature of those who had an experience of growth rather than conversion.

He tried to word his questionnaires so as not to bias the respondent. It is interesting to note that he was so successful that rarely was there a categorical answer. He was careful to see that actual facts of experience and not opinions were given. His premise was that actual experience would be a far more accurate and revealing study than the study of massed opinion. As regards sex, age, church connection and vocation, the material was so devised as to be repre-

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1 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, (Preface) p. VI.

sentative.

After collecting the raw material (one hundred and ninety-two respondents whose replies seemed complete enough for use), Starbuck with tireless patience set about analyzing it. Each answer was studied individually until each part in all its implications was mastered. When a respondent was too obscure in his meanings or his account too imperfect, he was prodded with further questions.

The plan devised for seeing the total picture was one of tabulating the responses on large specially ruled charts. Without any preconceived theses to prove, Starbuck began marking responses on these charts until he saw some gradually grouping themselves while others remained alone in their respective column. As more information listed differed from that already on the chart, new columns were added. The picture constantly fluctuated by one column breaking into two or more or new columns being added. Finally, on each chart there were about fifty columns each supplementing the other. The columns allowed each case to retain its separate identity and yet allowed the total to speak collectively.

Then came the opportunity for Starbuck to make his generalizations. By means of graphs, diagrams, charts and discussions he was able to show the distinctive features of the charts.

Finally, the principles extracted were placed in their relationship with other sciences, c. g., sociology, biology, physiology and psychology. Starbuck's approach was psycho-physiological.

Thus, we see that Starbuck's method, know as the questionnaire

method, was a systematic way of guiding confessions and accumulating a quantity of comparative data upon specific topics. It will be readily admitted that this method has merit. In this subjective analysis is found the advantage of going directly to the subject of religious experience. It questions the living, and this, it has been argued, is better than reading about the dead. However, of all the methods used by those who have psychologically investigated religion there is perhaps none with more defects.

We shall discuss the obvious defects of this method. They are: Inaccurate observation connected with introspection; the unintentional selective nature of the questionnaire; the need for religious experience by the inquirer as an aide in interpreting returns; the limitations of vocabulary and the inaccuracies of the questions themselves.

The method of looking in upon one's own religious life for data is called introspection. To be sure this is the process through which the psychologist must work. James goes so far as to say "introspection is, strictly speaking the one method of psychology."[1] However, even though this method does offer the opportunity to examine critically one's own religious experience, yet from a psychological approach it poses many problems.

We do not relish facing our own religious states of mind in a spirit of critical scrutiny. We are prone to hide a sensitive religious experience even from our own eyes or, if we should choose to

1 William James, Principles of Psychology, Vol. 1, p. 185.

discuss it, we are tempted to "read into" our religious experience mental traits which we would like to think are there and to read out of them some things which we would like to think do not exist. It is easy to see that one of the defects of introspection is the tendency to distort or to disintegrate the state of consciousness we would examine. This fact has led most modern psychologist to maintain that a pure act of introspection is an impossibility.[1] To be sure, there is of necessity a period of time between the actual experience and an introspective description of the experience. When the description of the original experience is made it is reconstructed in the memory.[2] This means that we read back into the original experience the results of our observations of its duplicate. That the memory is highly inaccurate for scientific purposes is a well established scientific fact. The more distance between the experience and the report of it, the more margin of error becomes available. Immediate retrospection (actually introspection) decreases the margin of error, but even this is only a post-mortem inquest on mental states that have ceased to live.[3]

Professor William James put it this way: "Introspection is difficult and fallible; and the difficulty is simply that of all observation of whatever kind. The only safeguard is the final consensus of our farther knowledge about the thing in question, later views

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1 Albert H. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology, p. 11.
2 Harald Hoffding, Outlines Of Psychology, p. 17.
3 William James, Principles Of Psychology, Vol. 1, p. 188.

correcting earlier ones."[1]

Professor Stout says that when introspection is consciously used to throw light on questions of theoretic importance for psychology, it becomes a scientific method. But to be effective it needs to be administered by the trained mind. "Introspection, to be effective for the advancement of science, must, like other modes of observation, be carried on by a number of experts in co-operation."[2]

It would appear then that for scientific introspection on the subject of conversion we would have to have it done by a psychologist who became converted. Professor Lutoslawski said much the same when he stated: "A convert, who becomes an apostle, is no impartial witness of his own experience. His chief interest is not psychology, but converting others to his faith. If we wish to learn what conversion really is, we must seek the very rare cases when a psychologist and a logician has undergone a conversion, without ceasing to be a psychologist and a logician, and without losing the interest in the theoretical aspect of his own experience."[3] This is precisely what happened to Professor Lutoslawski, for as a psychologist and logician he was converted. Without ceasing to be a psychologist and logician he wrote an introspective account of his conversion. However, it is a most disappointing narrative because he gives two or three variant reports of

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1 Ibid., p. 192.
2 George F. Stout, Manual Of Psychology, p. 45.
3 Wincenty Lutoslawski, "The Conversion Of A Psychologist," Hibbert Journal, 21:607, July, 1923.

what happened in the psychological moment of conversion.[1] Thus, we see even in the hands of a trained psychologist, introspection is a poor method of scientific investigation. There is little wonder that the introspective method adopted by Starbuck has come in for such violent criticism.

A second noticeable defect of the questionnaire method of psychological investigation into matters concerning religious experiences is the natural selective process it invokes. By its nature it requires the subject to fill out a questionnaire which no doubt reminds him of an inventory sheet or an income tax blank and thus establishes a rather unnatural situation. In many this attitude immediately results in the questionnaire finding itself in the wastebasket. In others it results in short answers too superficial for any scientific value. Still others who are sincere are simply not capable of giving an exact or even significant psychological description. Each of these limitating factors help prevent the data collected from being representative of the community.

The data collected usually represents only a very small proportion of the number questionnaires sent out.[2] Of equal importance for correctly determining the religious pulse beat of the community are the questionnaires not returned. Without them a one sided picture is found. Many who fail to return their questionnaire do so because they

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1 Ibid., p. 709.

2 James B. Pratt, "The Psychology Of Religious Belief, p. 254. ("I sent out 550 copies and received 83 answers.")

feel they do not have a sufficiently significant conversional experience to relate. Many who do return their questionnaire with descriptions written up in great detail do so because their experience was so extreme as to result in religious egotism or religious mania. Or it may simply represent the mood that happened to be uppermost at the hour of writing, or the result of the chance presence in the mind of certain ideas at the time of writing.

A further weakness of this type is pointed out by Professor Stratton when he says: "The persons most easily reached by such means are, for the most part, adherents of one and the same religion; they are of the Occident, and naturally show a preponderance of that special type of character that is ready to grant to a stranger an access to the secret places of personality."[1] This is true in the study of Professor Starbuck for though the questionnaires sent out were representative, yet the returns show a predominance of the Method-ist denomination responding. It can be easily seen that a study based on a predominance of one faith, while it can properly be a psychology of that particular denomination yet it cannot be called a psychology of conversion.

Professor Pratt points out that even the person who is most sympathetic with the psychologist's purpose and who is most sincere in his answer is put into an attitude of deliberation by it.[2] As we have seen in the discussion of introspection, this conscious attitude is likely to

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1 George M. Stratton, Psychology Of The Religious Life, Preface, p. v.

2 James B. Pratt, op. cit., p. 235.

result in the respondent's reading into his experience something that was not there or leaving out of his experience something that was there as a result of his trying to anticipate what the psychologist wanted.

All these factors serve to limit the responses and to distort the composite picture drawn. This picture, because of these unintentional selective factors, is likely to result in a study based on the shallow, or the freakish, or the pathological.

At the International Congress of Psychology[1] held in Geneva in 1908, the question was raised as to the necessity of the inquirer into religious experience possessing such an experience himself. Though an answer was not agreed upon, yet it seems essentil that the inquirer know from personal experience the phenomena he investigates. This indeed was not the case with Starbuck. Crooks says,

> There can be but one way to get valuable results by this method, and that is for the student of these replies to have in himself a right standard of what a religious experience ought to be and for him to apply this, his personal standard, to the cases he is studying.[2]

There must be some standard of judging before the bar of the investigator's own conscience whether he knows it or not. If a norm or standard is not present, then the result cannot possibly be an organized, intelligible conclusion.

Furthermore, if the psychologist is to borrow terminology from

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1 James B. Pratt, "Psychology Of Religion," American Journal Of Religious Psychology, 5:335, October, 1912.

2 Ezra B. Crooks, "Professor James And The Psychology Of Religion," The Monist, 25:133, January, 1915.

the field of theology it is necessary that he be thoroughly grounded in its definitions. Starbuck, the psychologist, used a good number of theological words and phrases which were indeed foreign to his own field in which he had studied. Such are a few examples: "A vital experience of spiritual truth," "the attainment of spiritual life," "the person has acquired a spiritual grasp, a new insight," "the higher life of intelligence and insight," "a personal hold on virtue," "a first hand perception of right and wrong." As Professor Leuba said, "phrases like these make one balk when met in the writings of a professional psychologist."[1]

Due to the limitations of vocabulary, the words chosen to describe a particular experience may result in a very commonplace experience being clothed in the garment of elation, while a very unique experience may be clothed in a drab garment of dull words and unfamiliar phraseology. Such is the inevitable result of words in the hands of different people. Certainly this fact has a tremendous influence on the way in which a particular experience is interpreted. The finer shades of meaning so essential if scientific accuracy is to be applied is impossible if the respondent and inquirer are not agreed upon the definition and distinctions between such words as "depression, sadness, pensiveness" and "restlessness, anxiety, uncertainty" or again "joy, peace, happiness and relief," which Starbuck used.[2]

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1 James H. Leuba, Psychological Review, 9:509, September, 1902

2 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology of Religion, Chapter IX.

No discussion of the Questionnaire Method could be complete without a word of caution about the inaccuracies of the questions themselves. Many of the questions submitted by Starbuck were so put or phrased as to be too deep and complicated for reliable answers. Such are a few: "In what ways were you brought to a condition to need an awakening: - faulty teachings, bad associations, appetities, passions, etc.?" "What forces and motives led you to seek a higher life?" "State a few bottom truths embodying your own deepest feelings." "What would you now be and do if you realized all your own ideals of the higher life?" "If you have passed through a series of beliefs and attitudes, mark out the stages of growth and what you now feel to be the trend of your life." "What motives have been most prominent at different times: - fears, remorse, wish for approval of others, etc.?"[1] These and similar questions certainly seem to lie beyond the respondent's ability to interpret accurately. When we are reminded that it is possible not only that the respondent fails to understand the question, but also that the inquirer must attempt to correctly understand the respondent, we begin to see the difficulty. By the time the inquirer has constructed a whole religious complex from the fragments submitted to such questions, it is clear to see that the margin of possible error is indeed great.

For these and similar reasons the Questionnaire Method of Professor Starbuck has been the subject of much criticism. While indeed

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1 Ibid., p. 23,24,25.

revealing a great deal of meaningful material, yet alone it can never reveal information of the subjective life with scientific exactness. In the years since Starbuck, many of those inaccuracies have been eliminated by giving better directions, eliminating ambiguities, clarifying issues, comparing answers, personal interviews and the like. However, there are many who still insist that the questionnaire affords the basis for little more than statistics and a certain limited description, and that causal and other relationships lie quite beyond its power to illumine.[1] It is interesting to note also that no religious psychologist since Starbuck has used it without safeguards, or supplements, in the shape of auxiliary methods.

1 Edward L. Schaub, "The Psychology Of Religion In America," Symposion, Band 1, Heft 3, p. 305.

Chapter 3

THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD AND CRITIQUE

Coe's method of obtaining data was basically that of his predecessor Starbuck, namely, the questionnaire. However, he augmented the questionnaire with a good many checks and safeguards. Through personal interviews, doubtful points were cleared up; through scrutiny of the respondents and conferences with their friends and associates, objective evidence was obtained as to the item of temperament; through submitting certain of the respondents to hypnosis certain facts of suggestibility were determined.[1]

The data collected represented seventy-seven cases consisting of fifty-two males and twenty-five females. The subjects, mostly college students, averaged 24.6 years for men and 22 years for women, excluding one woman aged sixty-five. For the purpose of study he divided the first twenty-four years of life into two equal periods of twelve years each, labelling them childhood and adolescence, and then proceeded to make his conclusions. Later he abandoned this division to regroup his seventy-seven cases into two groups for the purpose of studying temper-

1 George A. Coe, The Spiritual Life, p. 110.

ament. It was at this point that certain individuals were subjected to hypnotism. Thus the experimental method was introduced.

Coe certainly gives us a clear picture of Stout's definition that "Experiment is simply observation under test conditions which we have arranged for ourselves."[1] Coe felt that field use could be made of the experimental method and that general conditions could be ascertained by isolating and manipulating certain factors.[2] The results he felt could be observed, classified, analysed and certain general tendencies inferred therefrom. In regards to hypnotic experiments specifically he felt that peculiarities of temperament and degree of suggestibility could be determined.[3] His ultimate goal in using hypnosis was not so much to discover new material as it was to test certain data which had been collected and to settle certain questions which old data had raised.

In his later book[4] Coe said that the laboratory species of the experimental method proves unsatisfactory in practice.[5] The religious emotion is not subject to the manipulations of the psychologist. A subject may read certain religious sentiments under laboratory conditions and a psychologist may observe his reactions, but the end result is not the scientific observation of religious reactions but rather the reaction produced by the psychology of language.[6] Religious

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1 George F. Stout, Manual Of Psychology, Vol. 1, p. 194.
2 George A. Coe, Psychology Of Religion, p. 56.
3 George A. Coe, The Spiritual Life, p. 110.
4 George A. Coe, The Psychology Of Religion.
5 Ibid., p. 54.
6 Loc. cit.

behavior does not readily yield to laboratory techniques and the psychical processes of the religious mind eludes "these prism, pendulum, and chronograph-philosophers."[1]

We shall not add a critique of Coe's use of the questionnaire method which was supplemented by this experimental method. A discussion of the questionnaires' weaknesses has been given in the preceding chapter. However, we will add a few lines given by Coe to show that he acknowledged the limitations of the questionnaire and proceeded accordingly. He said:

> The average person of intelligence is qualified, of course, to testify regarding the more external facts of his religious experience, such as dates, persons, and circumstances, but in the absence of specific training in self-observation few persons are qualified to give even approximately correct information regarding the subjective processes that constitute their religious experience.[2]

His explanation as to why this is true is pointed:

> It must suffice to say that in one's own mind, just as in nature, the finer differences, so important when accuracy is in question, escape attention unless the observer has been trained to look for them; that various processes of self-laudation, of self-excusing, of self-condemning, or explanation, of accommodation to the opinions of other or of revolt from such opinions - all these so mingle with the facts as to blur, suppress, magnify, and distort what is actually going on within; that, finally, memory has many peculiar and very effective ways of falsely representing the past. Of all these accounts it is necessary, when the inner history is in question, to secure some corrective for the self-deceptions that may easily creep into the narrative of

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1 William James, Principles of Psychology, Vol. 1, p. 188.
2 George A. Coe, The Spiritual Life, p. 14.

the most honest and, in other matters, most competent witness.[1]

Of course, it was for these and other reasons that Coe used the experimental method of investigation as a supplement to the questionnaire method.

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1 *Loc. cit.*

Chapter 4

THE BIOGRAPHICAL METHOD AND CRITIQUE

James, though he used Starbuck's manuscript as a source material for his Gifford Lectures, did not believe the questionnaire method was the best method available for the collection and study of data concerning the religious experience. He believed the essence of the religious spirit could best be discovered in the person of religious dissenters and innovators, of prophets and reformers, of mystics and enthusiasts. The writings of such people, he believed, produced the most authentic results. He described hismethod of approach as follows:

> If the enquiry be psychological, not religious institutions, but rather religious feelings and religious impulses must be its subject, and I must confine myself to those more developed subjective phenomenon recorded in literature produced by articulate and fully self-conscious men in works of piety and autobiography. Interesting as the argument and early stages of a subject always are, yet one seeks earnestly for its full significance one must always look to its more completely evolved and perfect forms. It follows from this that the documents that will most concern us will be those of the men who were most accomplished in the religious life and best able to give an intelligible account of their ideas and motives. These men, of course, are either comparatively modern writers, or else such earlier ones as have

> become religious classics. The human document which we shall find most instructive need not then be sought for in the haunts of special erudition - they lie along the beaten highway; and this circumstance, which flows so naturally from the character of our problem, suits admirably also your lecturer's lack of special theological training. I may take my citations, my sentences and paragraphs of personal confessions from books that most of you will at sometime have had already in your hands, and yet this will be no detriment to the value of my conclusions.[1]

To be sure this biographical method opens a rich source of information about the religious life. The confessions and journals of Augustine, St. Teresa, Wesley, Fox, Woolman and other religious leaders, and the devotional writings of Thomas à Kempis, Richard Baxter, Jeremy Taylor and others provide primary sources of great value in knowing the inner life. These writings permeate a vivid sense of reality; they hold perennial interest, bearing witness to the life that is in them. Indeed they are like the case studies so valuable in medical, legal andsocial records; they are histories of what happens to the principal actors on the scene written by the actors themselves. What James does is to select a number of positive cases of religious experience and then tries to analyse and to understand their significance. He approaches a case from different points of interest, until "one feels he has gotten all out of that experience that one man can get out of another's report of his interior experience."[2]

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1 William James, Varieties Of Religious Experience, p. 8.

2 Ezra B. Crooks, "Professor James And The Psychology Of Religion," The Monist, 23:124, January, 1913.

That this method is justifiable and profitable none can deny. The material used in this method was triply selected. First, the individuals portrayed were selected by biographers and autobiographers upon principles that, even where they could be ascertained, had little relation to the psychologist's interest. Secondly, the material that is recorded in each case was also selected from a larger mass, and again from motives that produce no psychological classification. Thirdly, the psychologist selected the writings that he would analyse.[1] But even this had the defects of its qualities.

Self-portrayal through whatever means of conveyance chosen is still the report of introspection and carrys with it the advantages and disadvantages of all introspection plus the added disadvantage that one is not capable of reporting his religious experience to another as clearly as it appears to himself. He feels a certain natural reserve and a disposition to shield what reflects unfavorably upon himself in even greater degree than if he were trying psychologically to construct his own experience. When the conveyance chosen for revealing one's religious feelings is writing, it must be realized that one cannot fully convey to the mind of another what he feels within his own religious experience, even if he can shape it satisfactorily in his own mind.[2]

This method of selecting data for the purpose of study is limited also by the fact that writers of their own biographies often mix

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1 George A. Coe, Psychology Of Religion, p. 50.
2 Frank S. Hickman, Introduction to The Psychology Of Religion, p. 26.

fiction with fact, especially, as James says,[1] where the marvellous is concerned. This is not to say that such fiction is intentional. Rather it is the result of egotism which unfortunately is present even with sanctity in many saints. The blending of the two colored the auto-biographies produced. James says, "Every one must have known some specimen of our mortal dust so intoxicated with the thought of his own person and the sound of his own voice as never to be able even to think when his autobiography was in question."[2] While this might be putting it a bit strongly, yet it justifiably warns us that when a religious biography or autobiography is used uncritically it is likely to portray its subject a bit out of perspective. It is difficult to separate fact from fiction in all experiences but it must be remembered that experience is the place to begin an investigation and that empirical sciences must begin with experience and work therefrom.[3]

Finally, we must mention in any treatment of the biographical method the fact that while sacred literature may be assumed to be religiously motivated yet that motivation itself may be a limitating factor. When men set their thoughts to words , it is often because they have become reflective and thus selectors. For example, myth and theology is largely the result of man's endeavor to explain, reconcile, or systematize his thoughts. Records are often the result

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1 William James, Principles Of Psychology, Vol. 1, p. 574.
2 Loc. cit.
3 Paul E. Johnson, Psychology Of Religion, p. 24.

of a prejudice or grudge which seeks to justify a cause or idea at the expense of over-exaggerating the aspects of another's religion while covering up the shady spots of one's own. Prayers and hymns, while edifying, yet are often the result of a particular historical condition not mentioned and as such is limited by this fact. In view of these limitating factors which spring from reflective thinking the psychological data extracted by reading such pieces of sacred literature must be carefully checked.

In the biographical method one thing we can be sure is that the psychologist's perusal of the spontaneous outpourings of the religious soul, the great confessions of religious history, the letters of men and women eminent in the religious life, and the books and biographies of the saints, finds him in contact with the great experts in experimental religion.[1]

1 Albert S. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology, p. 16-17.

PART THREE

FINDINGS AND CRITIQUE

Chapter 5

STARBUCK'S FINDINGS

Edwin D. Starbuck,[1] a brilliant and thorough student of William James at Harvard University about the end of the last century, decided to use his philosophical and empirical psychological knowledge in pursuit of religious problems. Stirred by Max Muller's Introduction To The Science Of Religion,[2] he prepared and circulated two questionnaires, one on conversional experiences and one on gradual growth in religion, and psychologized the mass of data which he collected. This empirical study began a new era in the study of religious experience. It is the most elaborate and definite analysis every made of the whole range of religious emotions in conversion.[3]

He proceeded on the assumption that "this is a lawful universe and every tiny part of it is determined and conditioned by orderly se-

1 See "Religions Use Of Me," Religion In Transition, Vergilius Ferm, editor, p. 201-260 for autobiography of his thinking.
2 London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1873. 403 pp.
3 Elmer T. Clark, The Psychology Of Religious Awakening, p. 127.

quence."[1] Furthermore, he continues, "There is no event in the spiritual life which does not occur in accordance with immutable laws."[2] Because this is true he believed it was possible to study the religious instincts of the individual from the beginning to the end in accordance with natural law.

In 1890 Mr. Starbuck read a paper before the Indianna College Association in which he promulgated the hypothesis that religion could be studied by the scientist with profit to both science and religion. This was illustrated in an empirical study presented in two lectures before the Harvard Religious Union in 1894 and 1895. These were later printed in the American Journal Of Psychology, the first in January 1897, entitled "A Study Of Conversion" and the other in October 1897, entitled "Some Aspects of Religious Growth." The findings contained therein were enlarged and later published in 1899 in The Psychology Of Religion.[3]

Starbuck found that "conversion is a distinctively adolescent phenomenon"[4] belonging almost exclusively to the age range between ten and twenty-five. "There is a normal period," he says, "somewhere between the innocence of childhood and the fixed habits of maturity, while the person is yet impressionable and has already capacity for spiritual insight, when conversions most frequently occur."[5]

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1 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 5.
2 Loc. cit.
3 London: Walter Scott, 1899. 433 pp.
4 Ibid., p. 28.
5 Ibid., p. 56.

The cases of conversions plotted on a graph show the number of occurrences reaching their height around the 15th, 16th and 17th years. This fact led Starbuck to conclude that "if conversion has not occurred before twenty, the chances are small that it will be experienced."[1] The average age for conversion, his statistics reveal, is 16.4 years. The graph of conversion ages shows that "among the females there are two tidal waves of religious awakening at about 15 and 16, followed by a less significant period at 18; while among the males the great wave is at about 15, preceded by a wavelet at 12, and followed by a surging up at 18 or 19."[2] Thus, conversion comes earlier in general among females than among males.

Starbuck found that the "conversional years" represented well-marked stages in the physical and mental development of adolescence which were factors in the individual's conversional experience. At twelve, with the beginnings of puberty, there is great impressionability and responsiveness to social suggestion. At sixteen, the physical and psychical ferment of adolescence is at its height; and at nineteen, mental maturity and more reasoned decisions are characteristic. Thus, he establishes his findings as revealing a very definite connection between spiritual events and physiological change.

Starbuck lists eight distinct classifications of motives and forces instrumental in leading to conversion. These are: Social

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1 Ibid., p. 28.

2 Edwin D. Starbuck, "A Study Of Conversion," American Journal Of Psychology, 8:272, January, 1897.

pressure or urging, 10 per cent; following out a moral ideal, 17 per cent; remorse, conviction for sin, etc., 16 per cent; fear of death or hell, 14 percent; example imitation, 13 per cent; response to teaching, 10 per cent; other self-regarding motives, 6 per cent; altruistic motives, 5 per cent. Imitation and social pressure are greater in the revival case, while response to teaching and following out a moral ideal are greater among the non-revival. The least prominent of all is response to teaching and altruistic motives, while fear of death and hell, conviction for sin, imitation and social pressure are the most frequent. Thus, we see that rational consideration plays only a small part in conversion in comparison with instinctive.

Contrary to popular belief, Starbuck found that the revival does not seem to awaken highly emotional states but rather it appeals to the instincts already at work in consciousness and appeals up the individual's response. He concludes that at a revival a person is converted by the same appeal that would have shown itself a year or two later. It appears that males are controlled more from forces from within, while females respond more to forces from without.

Different motives seem to exert themselves at different ages in the individual. At the age of twelve, the greater number are influenced by example and social pressure; that is, imitation is most conspicuous. At about fifteen or sixteen, for both sexes, conviction of sin with fear is dominant; while at about eighteen the desire to follow out the moral ideal of completeness of character prevails. Thus, conversion in later adolescence is quite different from con-

version in early adolescence.

Starbuck found that conversion is a process of struggling away from sin rather than of striving toward righteousness.[1] It affects the whole nature and frequently disturbs the equilibrium of the physical organism. Most frequently affected are sleep, appetite and the touch organisms. It may be concluded, therefore, that conversion is a process in which the deeper instinctive life most strongly functions.

Feelings, viz., depression and sadness, restlessness and anxiety, earnestness and seriousness, are types of experience most common to females while doubts and questionings in which the intellect plays a large part are more common among the males. Likewise, helplessness and humility characterize the female while prayer and tendency to resist convictions preponderate with the males. From this Starbuck concludes that feelings play a large part in the religious life of females, while males are controlled more by intellections and volition.

Six times as many females as males experienced conversion in the regular church service or prayer meeting, while twice as many males as females were converted at home, and generally alone. Thus, females are more impressionable, more ready to accept outside institutional help and respond more quickly and instinctively to feelings aroused than males, who are more self dependent, who work their own way by their own insight, and who rebel when the outside social or moral order conflicts with their own will.

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1 Ibid., Cf. Table IX, p. 68.

The male who experiences a non-revival conversion insists upon seeing his way toward the new life while at the revival he is more willful and his revival conversion is a far more intense experience. On the other hand, Starbuck says, the female is almost the opposite. For the females the revival conversion is far less intense than the non-revival and they are more reserved and lack an active temperament to carry them through the stress and strain of conviction.

In commenting on the nature of the sense of sin, Starbuck says that although the sense of sin follows naturally in the wake of evil it is not occasioned wholly by it, for the sense of sin is an independent conduct. Thus, he concludes, this sense of sin is an experience determined by temperamental and physiological conditions.

In the crisis of conversion the feelings are the same as those before the turning point, except that they are more deepened and more intensified. At conversion there are two types of feelings experienced in succession. First, those of the depths of dejection; secondly, those of relief and exultation. Somewhere between these exactly opposite experiences there is a turning point where the old life ceases and the new life begins. What happens at this point is one of the most interesting problems in the study of conversion, as well as one of the most difficult. Starbuck says that "the typical experience has three distinct features, viz., dejection and sadness, a point of transition and, lastly, joy and peace."[1]

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1 Ibid., p. 83.

There are two types of conversion. First, the escape from sin and, secondly, spiritual illumination. In the first type there is a conflict between a life that has been and a life of righteousness. In the second type there is a conflict between an incomplete life and a life that is striving to be born. The nature of this conflict shows itself in the first type through the stages of helplessness, of the burden lifted, followed by a sense of freedom and joy. In the second type there is dissatisfaction, a struggle for a larger life, then the light dawns and a sense of joy and peace follow.

Just what happens at the supreme moment of conversion Starbuck was not able to discern. It appears that the greater part of what takes place does so in the realm of the subconscious and thus escapes the notice of the convert.[1]

The experiences at the moment of conversion are classified into seven groups. There is spontaneous awakening, forgiveness, public confession, sense of oneness, self-surrender, determination and divine aid. Spontaneous awakening is by far the most common, while the conscious exercise of the will and self-surrender are at the bottom of the list. Starbuck concludes that there are two essential aspects of conversion; one inwhich there is self-surrender and another in which the new life bursts forth spontaneously.

Next, Starbuck assigns himself to the question concerning, how much of the conversion process rises into the consciousness and how

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1 Wincenty Lutoslawski, "The Conversion Of A Psychologist," Hibbert Journal, 21:709, July, 1923.

much of the process is worked out automatically by the nervous system. To be sure, evidences of both are found. Those of the former are to be found in the apparent smallness of the intellectual factor among the conscious motives to conversion and also in the volitional element at the time of the change. Evidences of the latter are found in the fact that it is often mentioned as a recognised factor and also in that public confession is often made in spite of adverse surroundings. These forces, however, rarely exist separately. Conscious and unconscious forces in conversion usually act together and interact on each other.

The conviction period is a mental conflict caused by an incipient idea in the mind. How it works itself out into spiritual conversion Starbuck, the agnostic, explains as taking place below the threshold of consciousness and, therefore, evades analysis. Spontaneous awakenings then are the fructification of that which has been ripening within the sub-liminal consciousness. Starbuck says, "Religious awakening is by no means then a unique experience. It is of the same nature as the solving of a problem, the reading of a scientific conclusion or the making of an invention."[1]

The function of the will in conversion is to set in motion "the sub-conscious processes of growth, which in turn work out and give back to clear consciousness the revelation striven after."[2] It is

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1 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 110.
2 Edwin D. Starbuck, "The Psychology Of Conversion," The Expository Times, 25:222, February, 1914.

much the same as the familiar process of going to bed at night with a problem on your mind only to find upon awakening in the morning that the sub-conscious has arrived at the answer during sleep.

Once the conscious will has set this process in motion there is nothing for the individual to do but to sit back and wait for it to be worked out. Thus, self-surrender is necessary. For the individual to interfere means that God and sinful man are striving against one another. "It is only at the point of self-surrender that the deadlock is broken and the man comes forth into a new world."[1] The underground sub-conscious factory must be let alone and then it submits the finished product characterized by newness and accompanied by joy and peace.

Immediately following conversion there is a period lasting from a few hours to possibly a few years which expresses a character that is the antithesis of the pre-conversion period. It is characterized by peace and joy and there functions a new and exalted personality.

In assigning himself to the question concerning the distinctive features of the new life, Starbuck finds the answer to be twofold; first, the lifting upof the new personality into great significance, and secondly, the sense of newness with which the world of objects and even the personality itself is viewed. "Conversion," says Starbuck, "seems to call the person out from himself into active sympathy with the world outside."[2] This takes place by the formation of a new point

1 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 116.
2 Ibid., p. 126.

of reference which is the result of the awakening of self-consciousness and a process of unselfing.

The conversion process is also given a sociological and physiological explanation by Starbuck. The individual seems to be occupied by his own ego until such time as he becomes aware of a larger world about him. The revelation may come gradually or it may come suddenly. When it comes, there is likely to result a conflict between the individual's desire and the spiritual order of which he is a part. The conflict, however, resolves itself to the stronger force which is the surrender of the personal will to the larger forces of which it is a part. Thus, the individual learns to transfer himself from the center of self-activity to a life of oneness with the larger forces outside his life. Adolescence is the natural time for the recognition of this larger life. From a physiological viewpoint it is the announcement that the individual through the birth of the reproductive life is qualified to take his place in society through the awareness of the family.

The religious ceremonies, the awareness of moral requirements, the consciousness of the new life of manhood, are characteristic of this period. All add together to assist the individual in putting away "childish things" both in his social as well as spiritual development. This sociological and psychological ripeness provides a hostel for religious impulses.

Starbuck finds at adolescence there is a great psychic awakening which takes place in the anatomy of the nervous system especially

in the cerebral cortex. This gives the mind the power for seeing in general terms, for intellectual grasp and for spiritual insight, as a result of the rapid growth of the higher center of the brain. However, the individual has to pay for this increase in brain power by the aches and pains of the incompleteness of convictions. Finally, through wholesome suggestions, normal development, helped on perhaps by some emotional shock or stress, harmony is struck, life becomes a unity and the individual is borne into a larger world of the spirit. Thus, there is a very definite relationship between physiological adolescence and conversion.

The physiological background, however, is not capable of giving the total explanation for conversion. We have to account for the reason why life gets to such a confused state that conversion is necessary before the wound heals. The answer Starbuck finds in three things. First, in the growth of ideals. There is the contrast of the self that now is and the self which might be and finally the bridging of the chasm. The second is in native inertia. In this uphill struggle toward the ideal the individual becomes conscious that to relax is to invite danger of being dragged down. The third thing is in the complexity of impulses to action which tend to dissuade one in this way or that. These forces fracture the unity and symmetry of consciousness.

Now this fracture in consciousness sets off a contrast between the self that is and the ideal self that might be, which results in a struggle beneath the threshold of consciousness. Sometimes the sub-

ject is conscious of this conflict as shown by Paul's experience of two members warring against themselves in his own body.

Nature's method of healing the breach is to heighten the conflict. This struggle takes place until complete exhaustion results when the individual surrenders himself to the higher forces which seek to rule him. He embarks upon a new life. The conflict ceases, harmony is restored and there is peace.

This unity is achieved in two ways. First, by personal effort and choice and, secondly, by an external agent. When conscious self-direction is exercised it indicates the individual is a participant in the experience, while in the case of forgiveness of sin and divine intervention the individual has been one who is a receiver of the new life.

In commenting on the normal and abnormal aspects of religion, Starbuck says no two persons will agree on the point at which normal religious experience passes over into the pathological. However, in trying to come to an intelligent decision he reminds us we must guard against the psychiatrist who casts his pathological net to claim for his own anything which is sufficiently exaggerated above commonplaceness, and of the religionists who color whatever happens in conversion with the nominally religion as a divine manifestation.

Starbuck uses as his yardstick of normality and abnormality "the records regarded by the subject as normal"[1] and the "experiences which are looked upon by the respondents as abnormal,"[2] thus leaving

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1 Ibid., p. 164.
2 Loc. cit.

the respondent to determine normality and abnormality.

He believes there is great danger in the emotionalism and excitement of revivals which drive people to irrational conduct. The principle of the mob-mind operates in the revival and is more dangerous here than in almost any other sphere. The method of the revivalist is the method of the hypnotist - affirmation, repetition and contagion. There is the idea also that the evangelist approaches the revival in the same attitude the hunter approaches the hunt, i. e., the opportunity to collect more scalps to adorn the victory belt.

Starbuck is quick to point out, however, that religious hypnosis is not an evil in itself. The abuse of the revival is that it tries to force a social standard upon all persons alike, consequently, the normal means of regeneration is the same for the most vicarious as well as the most virtuous, for the spiritually immature and for those temperamentally unfit. He concludes that it is when the revivalist requires something "out of the range of the capacity and natural drift of the subject's consciousness"[1] that it becomes an evil.

CRITIQUE OF STARBUCK'S FINDINGS

An important factor which must be emphasized at the outset of this critique of Starbuck's valuable work is that he was breaking ground in a new field of study and as a pathfinder fell victim to the many mistakes necessarily present in any pathfinding work. The only

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1 Ibid., p. 173.

article which nearly approaches his work was a short one by James H. Leuba to be found in the American Journal Of Psychology.[1]

That his method was both profitable and limited has been seen in the discussion in a previous chapter. This will not be repeated save to say that it was the best method available to get at the facts of religious experience in order to bring them out into the open for the purpose of study and analytical exploration with the object in view of making certain general conclusions. The value of these conclusions, however, must constantly be weighed against the fact that the largest number of respondents were Protestants of the Methodist faith.[2] Thus they cannot be held valid for humanity in general. If the subject of Starbuck's book is to be justified there should have been included either in the body or in the supplement a further study based on replies from Catholics, Jews, Mohammedans and the countless other varieties of religious persons in the world.

However, within the framework of this limitation he has done a remarkably good job. From the time of tertullian until now, Christianity, for apologetic purposes, has insisted upon the anima naturaliter christiana, but this study of Starbuck's has established clearly that the religious impulse of personality is clearly tied up with physical and mental factors even at the point where sudden cataclysmal outburts would imply otherwise. Through a system of graphs and charts

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1 James H. Leuba, "The Psychology Of Religious Phenomena," 7:309-385, April, 1896.

2 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 25.

he shows this fact with illuminating clarity. Professor Coe adds weight to this conclusion when he says "Of the general soundness of his (Starbuck's) conclusions there is no reason to doubt. Soon after the two articles[1] (on conversion) were published I undertook to test Starbuck's work by gathering new data and submitting them to fresh analysis. In only a few minor points did my results contradict his."[2]

However, everyone would not agree with Starbuck and Coe. Uren, for example, says that this system of compiling, shifting and counting returns which is much the same as the task of the stock-market statician while "completely legitimate for compiling church statistics and for the purpose of practical ecclesiasticism, (but it) is certainly inadequate when we have to do with fluid realities and the most complex subjective experiences of the religious life."[3]

Professor James is much of the same mind for he says that although Starbuck's statistical treatment of his data is suggestive and valuable in indicating general tendencies, it is felt that the nature of the material scarcely justified such definite conclusions as he attempted to draw from them.[4]

Coe comments that upon the study of Starbuck's work one cannot

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1 George A. Coe, American Journal Of Psychology, 8:268-308, January, 1897 and 9:70-124, October, 1897.
2 George A. Coe, American Journal Of Religious Psychology And Education, 1:219-, February, 1905.
3 Albert R. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology, p. 46.
4 Elmer T. Clark, The Psychology Of Religious Experience, p. 129.

help but feel that he has a passion for documents and a love for diagrams but they leave the impression of artificiality and over-elaboration.[1] A careful examination of the nineteen elaborate statistical tables, five carefully constructed diagrams and four systematic graphs clearly reveals this fact. The fallacy of the statistical argument for conclusive material is known to all. An application of its variance is seen in the contrast of the statistics compiled by Starbuck, Leuba and Clark to determine the average age of conversion. For Starbuck it was seventeen,[2] for Leuba twenty-five[3] and for Clark thirteen.[4] Possible explanations may be found in that Leuba measured a more profound religious experience of manhood, Starbuck centered on the shallow experiences of childhood and adolescence while Clark made his study a generation later and probably revealed the tremendous added influence of the rising standard of education. Any further discussion of the fact that statistics are capable of proving most anything will not be treated here.

It seems to me that a justifiable criticism may be made against Starbuck's definition of conversion. It appears too loose and all inclusive. He says, "No special aspect of conversion was sought for. The more quiet and unemotional experiences were taken along with the sudden and violent."[5] By this method we have a mature person who has

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1 George A. Coe, The Psychology Of Religion, footnote, p. 47.
2 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 28.
3 James H. Leuba, "A Study In The Psychology Of Religious Phenomena," American Journal Of Psychology, 7:381, April, 1896.
4 Elmer T. Clark, The Psychology Of Religious Experience, p. 62.
5 Edwin D. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 29.

fought a life long struggle which has reached down to the very rock bottom of his soul and resulted in a new man considered equal to the sentimental adolescent female who under an emotional spell of a revival meeting gives her heart to Christ but after the meeting allows it to make no impression on her life. While this may be perfectly legitimate statistically, I question its worth as a scientific method of investigation. To say the least, it would appear that the results would be misleading.

In this criticism, reference is made to one of the objections found in the section on methodology; namely, the uncritical use made by Starbuck of theological language in a psychological discussion. Accepting at face value experiences couched in dogmatic terms such as "sense of sin" and the testimony of sanctified persons that "nothing remains within to respond to temptation" certainly adds to the non-scientific method employed. This language might be essential for a theological discussion of conversion but for a psychological analysis it is certainly out of place.

Indeed this tendency to use at face value the uncritical language of the correspondent seems to permeate the whole study and thus serve to make many conclusions questionable. Several examples will suffice. A very obvious example is to be found when Starbuck counts aesthetic and ethical impulses at one time as factors in religion[1] and at another as substitutes for it.[2] Again it becomes the basis

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1 Ibid., p. 522, 404.
2 Ibid., p. 275.

for such undue multiplication of tables as is the case with Table IX,[1] Table XV,[2] and Table XX,[3] in which such terms as "sense of sin," "feeling of estrangement from God," "desire for better life," and "feeling of incompleteness and imperfection" are set apart as if they were clearly defined and positively known to be different.

It must be said in fairness to Starbuck that he was aware of the weakness in accepting the answers of his respondents at face value. He said:

> It sometimes occurs that definite religious awakening is not called a conversion by persons who are not accustomed to the specific terminology. On the other hand, a religious experience was called a conversion when it was specifically said by the respondent that the experience has no especial significance.[4]

However, though he was conscious of this yet he accepted the information as factual. Coe in referring to this said "his numerical tabulation of emotions, motives and the like shows nothing more than general drifts present in unknown proportions."[5]

With respect to normality and abnormality we see again the weakness of Starbuck in taking the respondent's description at face value. He says "it is not my purpose to try to discriminate between normal and abnormal religious experiences"[6] but then he immediately sets up a standard of discriminating by saying "the testimony of the respondents is our standard of judging the two classes of normal and

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1 Ibid., p. 65.
2 Ibid., p. 125.
3 Ibid., p. 250.
4 Ibid., p. 184.
5 George A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion, footnote, p. 47.
6 Edwin D. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 185.

abnormal."[1] Regardless of whether he was consciously trying to ignore or to determine normalcy and abnormalcy, he certainly dealt with the problem. Commenting on this fact, Dr. Boris Sidis in his Psychology of Suggestion said that "What Dr. Starbuck does not realize is the fact that it is not healthy, normal life that one studies in sudden religious conversion, but the phenomena of revival insanity."[2] Again, the Philadelphia Medical Journal writes, "Dr. Starbuck himself does not apparently realize the full force of his work in the domain of psychiatry, but it is especially to this aspect of it that we have been attracted." That he dealt with this question then we may assume but in so doing he simply "takes at par value, no one knows how many memory illusions and mistaken self-analyses. It surely renders the author's tables of 'motives and forces leading to conversion,' 'the relative prominence of various mental and bodily affections,' and so on, of slight numerical value."[3] Professor Stout adds, "Starbuck appears to ignore all across the psychological truism that it is just here with respect to the dynamics of the subjective life that untrained introspection is most incompetent and unreliable."[4]

However, we must not conclude that these scientific inaccuracies invalidate Starbuck's findings. In a review of Starbuck's book, Coe stressed this point when he said:

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1 Ibid., p. 164.
2 Ibid., p. 364.
3 George A. Coe, American Journal Of Religious Psychology, 1,215, February, 1904.
4 George F. Stout, Manual Of Psychology, p. 43.

> Statistical inquiry is the only way of settling the main questions which he attempts, and it must be said that the religious as well as the psychological world is under obligation for this untiring, ingenious and successful attempt to determine a part of the topography of the religious consciousness.[1]

Starbuck concluded that conversion is a normal adolescent phenomenon and James agreed when he said, "Starbuck's conclusion as to these ordinary youthful Conversions would seem to be the only sound one: Conversion is in its essence a normal adolescent phenomenon, incidental to the passage from the child's small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity."[2] However, adds Professor James,

> The Conversions which Dr. Starbuck here has in mind are, of course, mainly those of very commonplace persons, kept true to a preappointed type of instruction, appeal and example. The particular form which they affect is the result of suggestion and imitation. If they went through their growth - crises in other faiths and other countries, although the essence of the change would be the same, its accidents would be different.[3]

This emphasis which was so characteristic of the Methodist Church, the faith to which most of his respondents belonged, for example, is foreign to most Catholic lands where no such anxiety and conviction of sin is encouraged, the reason being the reliance on the sacrament as opposed to the personal acceptance of salvation.

Four explanations can be offerred according to Starbuck for conversion. They are: sociology, biology, physiology or psychology or a

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1 George A. Coe, "The Psychology Of Religion," Philosophical Review, 9:556, September, 1900.
2 William James, The Varieties Of Religious Experience, p. 199.
3 Ibid., p. 200.

combination of all. This is to say it occurs according to natural laws operative in the universe. The catastrophic nature of the conversion is simply a crisis experience which hurries it to completion. It is the same explanation which Pratt later expressed in these words "Many entire cases of conversion, therefore, and many of the details of all conversions are to be explained by familiar facts."[1] To be sure there is some truth in this explanation. That the period of youth is the most logical period for answering the call of "Follow me" was realized by Jesus when he said, "Except ye turn (be converted, A.V.) and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."[2]

Though it be entirely possible that natural laws play a large part in conversion, yet it cannot adequately explain it completely. Many people go through life and never become converted nor do they ever have the desire to do so. However, as Uren says, "If conversion works according to natural law, then this would not be so, for natural law must work universally."[3] So we see that the natural explanation is not adequate to explain Christian conversion, for Christian conversion is not universal.

It is Professor Ladd who questions Starbuck's conclusion that sexual change is the primary factor that results in conversion during adolescence. There is a difference between the curve of conversion

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1 James B. Pratt, The Religious Consciousness, p. 160.
2 Matthew 18:3.
3 Albert R. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology, p. 48.

and the curve of physiological and sexual change which makes Starbuck's conclusions of no scientific value.[1]

Finally, it must be pointed out that Starbuck uses the composite system for building up his thesis. He collects a fact from a particular phase of one person's life, a fact from another and a further fact from another. Then he blends these facts together to produce a picture that is not typical of any one person. Out of the entire number of cases studied and used in his book there is not given the complete history of one person. Perhaps in many fields of investigation this is legitimate, but in the field of conversion it results in the description of a conversional experience that has not been experienced by any individual and thus, becomes a very unscientific investigation.

Many of his conclusions have become law in this field of study. His classification of the volitional, self-surrender and spontaneous awakening types, his techniques of inquiry, his investigations in a new field of study, his brilliant application of psychological principles, the impetus he began in this field, the limits he proclaimed within the psychological investigation of this field and many others. All these conspire to make his labors in the psychology of religious conversion monumental. His study still remains the most complete and authoritative of its kind and Starbuck is still referred to as the trail blazer in this field.

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1 George T. Ladd, Philosophy of Religion, Vol. 5, p. 276.

Chapter 6

COE'S FINDINGS

A year after Starbuck published his monumental work, George Albert Coe,[1] a professor at Northwestern University, made a study of conversion and published it in a book entitled The Spiritual Life. His task was to seek "coordination between specific inner states and tendencies and specific external circumstances."[2] His premise was that "Religion is a mass of ascertainable states of consciousness which can be analyzed and described and their relationships to the laws of the mental and bodily life can be determined."[3] In this study we find he established that the characteristics of religious experience are conditioned by "natural" physiological and psychological factors, chief among which are temperament and suggestion. This fact is demonstrated with scientific proof.

1 See George A. Coe, "My Own Little Theater," Religion In Transition, Vergilius Ferm, editor, p. 90-125, for autobiography of his thinking.

2 George A. Coe, The Spiritual Life, p. 109.

3 Ibid., p. 5.

Coe endeavored to show the relationship of religious development to the major periods of physical and mental growth. His approach was to describe the periods of transition and to determine the special characteristics, tendencies and difficulties of each period.

He found that during childhood, thought, feeling and conduct are not such as to enable the child to understand his organic relationship to the race, to nature and to God. During adolescence, however, the individual grows into the fullness of his powers with regard to emotions, intellectual outlook and social consciousness. It is at this point that his religious life becomes "mature."

Coe studied 1784 male respondents and found the average age of conversion to be 16.4 years with three groupings or peaks of conversion centering at 12 and 13, 16 and 17, and 20 years of age. These peaks of conversion correspond roughly to three stages of physical change. It is interesting to note that this also corresponds to Starbuck's findings.[1]

These facts in no way add weight to the arguments of materialism, Coe claims, but rather the explanation is to be found in the fact that :

> The mental condition during adolescence is particularly favorable to deep religious impressions. This is the time that the child becomes competent to make a deeply personal life choice; such a choice is now easier than either before or after; this is, accordingly, the time at which a wise Church will expect to reap its chief

1 Edwin D. Starbuck, "Some Aspects Of Religious Growth," American Journal Of Psychology, 9:82, October, 1897.

harvest of members."[1]

Endeavoring to analyze the conditions that lead to conversion in the youth, Coe found that it was not possible to do so because "the soil of adolescent religiousness is an undefined sense of incompleteness."[2] However, he did find that the physical changes which occur during this period tend to open new doors of impressibility through which the divine Spirit enters more easily and fully than before.

Doubts which are found during this period of adolescence should be explored not only from the mental and spiritual nature of the youth but also from the physical basis, for "whenever theoretical doubts become an occasion for pronouncedly morbid states, such as deep worry, melancholy, needless self-condemnation, or fanaticism of any sort, diligent inquiry should be made into they physical condition."[3]

Nerve fatigue is an important point of emphasis in Coe's findings. As a result of the great character change of adolescence, there is an additionally heavy strain placed on the nervous system. When other factors such as irregular habits, private sexual vice, improper food, overcrowded school curriculum, the multiplicity of interests, the social life involving late hours, to mention only a few, are added, then the nervous system becomes overcrowded. Symptoms of such a state may be found in oversensitiveness, morbid introspection, hyperconscientiousness or increased susceptibility to temptations of appetite and of sex.

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1 George A. Coe, op. cit., p. 47.
2 Ibid., p. 62.
3 Ibid., p. 65.

It is interesting to note also that defective religious teaching frequently overstrains the nervous system of the youth. Parents and religious guides should be cautious in their approach to adolescent frustrations so as to avoid further damage to the moral-religious nature of the youth. The best approach is not only to provide guidance in the formation of an adequate philosophy of life, but also to restore the health of the distracted adolescent through rest, proper diet, and wholesome recreation.

The two most common moral struggles of youth are bad temper and sex. Ill-temper, Coe found to be simply a misapplication of a useful and necessary function and can be understood only in terms of nerve fatigue. Sex reveals much the same situation. Thus, nerve fatigue is a primary factor in the moral - religious life of the child - youth.

Next Coe assigned himself to the task of determining why some people experience a dramatic conversion while others who put themselves into the same attitude of will fail to achieve a like result.

Preparatory to plunging into this question, Coe seeks to explain conversion by citing the theories of Bain,[1] Havelock Ellis,[2] Leuba,[3] and Starbuck,[4] but he finds none of these adequate. The real cue he says is found in a suggestion of Starbuck that "much depends

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1 Alexander Bain, Emotions and Will, third edition, p. 455.
2 Havelock Ellis, Man And Woman, second edition, p. 232.
3 James H. Leuba, "Psychology of Religious Phenomena," American Journal Of Psychology, 8:340, April, 1896.
4 Edwin D. Starbuck, "A Study Of Conversion," American Journal Of Psychology, 8:282, January, 1897.

upon temperament."[1] It is here that Coe centers his interest.

Coe divided the seventy-seven persons into two groups: those who had experienced a marked transformation, and those who had not. Then he divided these groups into those who expected a remarkable transformation and those who did not. This latter group he further divided by separating the positive group into those who expected a transformation and experienced one, and those who expected a transformation but did not experience one. To compensate for those cases which overlapped, one further classification was made of those who experienced a marked transformation and were unsatisfied and those who experienced a marked transformation and were satisfied.

The point of temperament was the threshold examined by Coe. This he did by inserting certain questions (laughter and weeping, likes and dislikes, etc.,) into the questionnaire. After observing the general tone of the responses, Coe submitted the subjects to further objective observation by independent observers. Collaboration of findings then took place and it was discovered that in most cases independent judgments formed by different observers were found to agree remarkably well.

Coe found that those whose expectation of a sudden conversion was realized were controlled by feeling and characterized by either slow and intense or prompt and weak responses to situations. Those whose expectation was unrealized were controlled by the intellect and

1 Edwin D. Starbuck, "The Psychology Of Religion," American Journal Of Psychology, 9:70-124, October, 1897.

characterized by prompt and intense responses to situations.

Individuals of each group were then subjected to hypnotism in order to determine the relative degree of mental and motor automatisms. This revealed a very definite relation of suggestibility to religious transformation. Those who expected and experienced striking conversions were the ones most susceptible to social suggestion. Furthermore, he found that those who were subject to such phenomena as voices, visions, hallucinations and other types of automatism to which no religious significance was attached were predisposed to startling religious experiences. Coe concluded that "given three factors (temperament, expectation and the tendency to automatisms and passive suggestibility),[1] the fourth - the general character of one's religious experiences - can be predicted with a high degree of probability."[2]

Coe's conclusion show the popular idea that striking transformations in the affective life are reserved for those who have been great sinners, is false. Also that abrupt religious changes occur chiefly among those denominations which definitely aim for them. The reason being primarily that their whole program is geared to help produce such an experience.[3]

From the findings of Coe we should not conclude that conversion

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1 Parenthesis are my own.
2 George A. Coe, The Spiritual Life, p. 130.
3 George A. Coe, "Dynamics Of Personal Religion," Psychological Review, 6:48 , September, 1899.

is an automatic performance. What he has demonstrated is that when conversion or its equivalent takes place it may cloth e itself in certain emotional habiliments provided certain factors are present, but otherwise not.

"'Would you cast the horoscope of a human life,' says Pouillee, 'do not study the conjunction of the stars but those of the (bodily) organs.' Similarly we may now add," says Coe, "Would you understand the emotional aspects of religious experience? Do not ascribe them to the inscrutible ways of God, but to ascertainable differences in man's mental constitutions; do not theorize about divine grace, but study the hidden workings of the human mind."[1]

Professor Coe gathered different data than Starbuck secured it in a different strata of society, and yet found the average age of conversion to be the same as Starbuck, 16.4 years. Starbuck classified religious types according to will, Coe classified them according to temperament. Starbuck found that conversion and puberty were supplemental[1] while Coe found them to be coincidental.[2]

In his respondents Coe confined himself to his own students and to a strata of religious personell with whom he had personal knowledge, such as a Methodist Conference. Whenever doubtful points arose con-

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1 George A. Coe, The Spiritual Life, P. 305.
2 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology of Religion, p. 61.
3 George A. Coe, op. cit., p. 45.

cerning a respondent, he would clear them up through personal interviews either with the person concerned or with friends or associates. This intimate relation with his respondents helped him greatly in his conclusions.

The number of respondents studied was seventy-seven. Though this number seems small in comparison with Starbuck's study yet it was so intentionally. In contrast to Starbuck Coe gives complete knowledge of his respondents. He goes right down the line of the respondent's whole personal experience. By means of this thoroughness Coe comes about as close as anyone can come to a strict method of experiment related to the subject's total religious experience.

To this method of interviewing both subject and mutual acquaintance for the purpose of clearing up doubtful points, Coe also added hypnotic experiment in order to determine certain facts relating to suggestibility. By means of this method and with scientific proof, he concludes that religious experiences are the result of "natural" physiological and psychological factors of which temperament is the most influential. This fact he formulated in the hypothesis that given three factors, temperament, expectation and tendency towards suggestibility, the fourth - the general character of one's religious experience - can be predicted with a high degree of probability.

Coe sought to avoid the error of Starbuck in regards to accepting uncritical answers. His method was to see that the respondent understood the meaning of the terms used before he answered the ques-

tions. He says, "as soon as the subject grasped this definition, he was requested to classify himself, and his decision was accepted as final."[1]

A particularly significant fact is brought out by Coe in his treatment of the fact that conversions occur largely within the denominations that look for them. The reason for this is due in no small part to the psychological devices used by these denominations to help induce conversion. Such are a few: a particular type or particular types of preaching and appeal; the use of music, particularly of certain kinds; intense social feeling fostered by meetings; the provision of external acts, signs or instruments - such as rising for prayers or to indicate decision, going forward, the alter, the mourner's bench - all of which evoke expression of the inner state and thinking intensifying it; and, finally, the fitting of all the conditions together so as to produce a climax or a series of climaxes.[2]

As regards the average age of conversion it must be remembered that these statistics, as in the case of Starbuck, were gathered almost entirely from people under middle age and therefore are not typical of Christians of all ages. It is true though that they show a tendency which probably is true for all age groups. One thing is sure, that this age range shows the habit of introspective analysis

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1 George A. Coe, "Dynamics of Personal Religion," Psychological Review, 6:460, September, 1899.

2 Ibid., p. 468.

to be specially characteristic of adolescence as well as is the tendency towards naive and spontaneous expression of personal facts.

It seems to me that a larger place should have been given to the changing nature of nerve fatigue pressure through different generations in producing conversion. Certainly the increased tempore of modern life has an influence in causing the age of conversion due to nerve fatigue to vary. Our city life, our over-loaded school curriculums, the enormously multiplied stimuli or sense, of motion, and of intellectual interest that fairly bombard the child in our complex civilization puts an extra-ordinary burden upon the growing nervous system of the modern child and therefore alters his conversional pattern accordingly. Likewise, I see here a real point in questioning the statement that conversion is the product of mother nature only. This added nerve fatigue combined with traditional evangelical teachings concerning sin and salvation, reason and authority, etc., all coming to bear down on an overloaded nervous system certainly indicates that the speeded up emotional crisis that results in conversion is not the product of nature but rather the result of preventable conditions. Coe's conclusions do not preclude the hypothesis that, under normal conditions the adolescent transition would be gentle and joyous rather than cataclysmic and startling.

All genuine conversions possess four characteristics according to Coe's conclusions: 1) the subject's very self seems to be profoundly changed; 2) this change seems to the subject to be brought about by influences from without bearing in upon him; 3) the sphere of the change

the attitudes which constitute one's character or mode of life; and 4) the change includes a sense of attaining to a higher life, or to an emancipation or enlargement of the self.[1]

Coe's chief contribution in this pioneering work is his clear revelation that temperament consists of more than just the emotional. In so doing he has reached a high water mark in religious psychological truth. Likewise, his insistence that, due to the plastic nature of personality, the same experience should not be required of all people is a great advancement in developing religious education. His insistence that religion deal with every type of temperament is a challenge which must be accepted by Christianity.

1 George A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion, p. 155.

Chapter 7

JAMES' FINDINGS

Professor William James continues to stand out as the individual who has had the greatest influence in popularizing psychology both as it applies to religion and as a science inits own field. It has often been said that William James wrote psychology like a novelist while his brother, Henry James, wrote novels like a psychologist. The product of a family of great learning, Professor James traveled widely and had a rich and varied education. He received an M. D. degree but never practiced medicine. He was appointed as assistnat professor of philosophy at Harvard in 1880, and in 1890, professor of psychology.

James was closely akin to the clergy in his motives and his general attitude. When asked what was his chief desire in his work, he replied, "To find a balm for the human soul."[1] This quest literally saturated his studies and expresses itself in those dealing with conversion.

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1 Otto Rex, William James, The Man And The Thinker, Century Address, University of Wisconsin Press, 1942, p. 38.

For James, conversion was not unique to religion. He wrote:

> The new birth may be away from religion into incredulity; or it may be from moral scrupulosity into freedom and license; or it may be produced by the irruption into the individual's life of some new stimulus or passion, such as love, ambition, cupidity, revenge, or patriotic devotion.[1]

Regardless of whether the conversion is religious or non-religious the pattern is the same: firmness, stability, equilibrium following a period of storm and stress and inconsistency. The approach of this crisis was either gradual or abrupt.

By conversion in religion James denotes the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities."[2] The process is explained in this way. A man's ideas, aims and objects form distinct little groups and systems relatively independent of each other. Each of these "aims" gathers about itself certain ideas as its associates. If these "aims" are different, then they may become independent of the others. As we pass from one "aim" to another these groups shift and herein is found the stuff out of which a divided self is created.

As we grow, there is a constant shift in our interests which results in a constant shift in this system of "aims" from more peripheral to more central and vice versa. The group of "aims" to which a man devotes himself is called "the habitual centre of his personal energy."

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1 William James, The Varieties Of Religious Experience, p. 178.
2 Ibid., p. 198.

Thus, James answers the question as to when does a man become converted by saying that it is when the religious ideas, previously peripheral in a man's consciousness, suddenly or gradually, become the center of his consciousness and thus become the habitual center of his energy.[1]

When you carry this process a step further and ask why "sins" that were peripheral suddenly become central or how this shift occurs in a man's mental system, James confesses that psychology is not able to answer. Psychology can give a description of what happens, but it is not capable of accounting for all the forces at work in the process.

Turning to Starbuck's conclusion concerning conversion, James says that it would seem "to be the only sound one: Conversion is in its essence a normal adolescent phenomenon, incidental to the passage from the child's small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity."[2]

However, James points out that,

> The conversions which Dr. Starbuck here has in mind are, of course, mainly those of very commonplace persons, kept true to a preappointed type of instruction, appeal, and example. The particular form which they affect is the result of suggestion and imitation. If they went through their growth-crises in other faiths and other countries, although the essence of the change would be the same (since it is one in the main so inevitable), its accidents would be different.[3]

In Catholic lands, for example, no such anxiety and conviction of sin

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1 Ibid., p. 196.
2 Ibid., p. 190.
3 Ibid., p. 200.

is usual as in sects that encourage revivals. The sacraments being more relied on in these more strictly ecclesiastical bodies, the individual's personal acceptance of salvation needs less to be accentuated and led up to. But every imitative phenomenon must once have had its original, and "I propose," says James, "that for the future we keep as close as may be to the more first hand and original forms of experience."[1]

This is precisely what Professor James does in the rest of his work. He disregards institutional religion completely and centers his attention on the individual soul in its solitariness. He charts his course in these words:

> I propose to ignore the institutional branch entirely, to say nothing of the ecclesiastical organization, to consider as little as possible the systematic theology and the ideas about the gods themselves and to confine myself as far as possible to <u>personal</u> religion pure and simple.[2]

> Religion therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men <u>in their solitude</u>, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.[3]

He sums it up by saying "The religious experience which we are studying is that which lives itself out within the private breast."[4]

Within the framework of this approach James states that "The

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1 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 501.
2 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 29.
3 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 31.
4 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 325.

essence of religious experience, the thing by which we must finally judge them, must be that element or quality in them which we can meet nowhere else."[1] This quality expresses itself in the Christian, says James, by "a state of mind known to religious men, but to no others in which the will to assert ourselves and hold our own has been displaced by a willingness to close our mouths and be as nothing in the floods and waterspouts of God."[2]

Next James assigns himself to a discussion of the nature of conversion. Of what does it consist? In discussing this he states that there are two types of conversion. He borrows Professor Starbuck's terminology to label them, namely, the volitional type and the self-surrender type.[3]

The volutional type is the result of a gradual change expressed in the building up slowly of a new set of moral and spiritual habits. The self-surrender type is when the personal will must be given up before a change takes place.

For James as for Starbuck conversion consists in the self-surrender to ideal religious powers. In his own terminology he defines this type as one in which "the new centre of personal energy has been subconsciously incubated so long as to be just ready to open into flower, 'hands off' is the only word for us, it must burst forth unaided."[4]

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1 Ibid., p. 45.
2 Ibid., p. 47.
3 Ibid., p. 206.
4 Ibid., p. 210.

Professor James seeks to describe the nature of the conversion crisis. When a person is living on the ragged edge of his consciousness, beset by his sins and wants, and someone tells him to stop his worry, break with his discontent and give up his anxiety, to him such advice is absurd. His consciousness dramatizes the fact that all is not well and that what you say is simply not true.

For such a person James suggests that to rid himself of such a state of mind one of two things must happen. Either the opposite affection must overpoweringly break over him or he must become so exhausted with his struggle that he will simply give up, drop down and thus adopt a "don't care any longer" attitude. It is at this point that the emotional brain-centers strike work and he lapses into a temporary apathy. James says "there is documentary proof that this state of temporary exhaustion not infrequently forms part of the conversion crisis."[1]

In preparation for an answer to the question "Is an instantaneous conversion a miracle in which God is present as he is present in no change of heart less strikingly abrupt?", James proclaimed his conviction that Freud's discovery in 1886, of the subconscious complete with its set of memories, thoughts and feelings, was the greatest step forward in the field of psychology made during his lifetime.

The reason this was so important, James felt, was because this ultra-marginal life is capable of invading one's ordinary field of

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1 Ibid., p. 212.

consciousness without the subject knowing the source of these unaccountable impulses to act, or inhibitions of action, of obsessive ideas, or even of hallucinations of sight or hearing. We attach to the expression of these impulses the word automatism.

Whenever we are confronted with one of these phenomenon of automatism, we must first test to see if it is not an explosion into the field of ordinary consciousness, ideas contained in the subliminal regions of the mind. Now with this as a background James proceeds to explain sudden conversion as one of the upsurges of energies originating in the subliminal part of the mind into ordinary consciousness. "The difference between a sudden and a gradual convert," James says, "is not necessarily the presence of divine miracle in the case of one and of something less divine in that of the other, but rather a simple psychological peculiarity, the fact, namely, that in the recipient of the more instantaneous grace we have one of those subjects who is in possession of a large region in which mental work can go on subliminally, and from which invasive experiences, abruptly upsetting the equilibrium of the primary consciousness, may come."[1]

In discussing the fruits of this conversional crisis James points out that "Converted men as a class are indistinguishable from natural men; some natural men even excell some converted men in their fruits."[2] For James the difference between a generate and a regen-

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1 Ibid., p. 237.
2 Ibid., p. 238.

erate man is simply one of natural degree. For example, let us take a man who is 80 per cent good and a man who is 100 per cent good. The fact that the latter is 100 per cent good, for James, is no proof that he has been converted. The man who is 80 per cent good, if he has experienced the crisis described above, is converted. "No one," says James, "ignorant of doctrinal theology could guess by mere everyday inspection of the 'accidents' of the two groups of persons before him, that their substance differed as much as divine differs from human substance."[1]

It is at this point that psychology differs with Christian theology on the nature of conversion. For psychology the forces present in conversion are defined as "subconscious," and their effects are due to "incubation," or "cerebrations," and thus do not transcend the individual's personality, while Christian Theology insists the forces are the result of the direct supernatural operations of the Diety.

James does not shut the door on the possibility of divine intervention in the conversion of the individual life. He says,

> If you, being orthodox Christians, ask me, a psychologist, whether the reference of a phenomenon to a subliminal self does not exclude the notion of the direct presence of the Diety altogether, I have to say frankly that as a psychologist I do not see why it necessarily should . . . . For just as our primary wide-awake consciousness throws open our senses to the touch of things material, so it is logically conceivable that if there be high er spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychologic l con-

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1 Ibid., p. 208.

> dition of their doing so might be our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them. The hubbub of the waking life might close a door which in the dreamy subliminal might remain ajar or open.[1]

James next turns to the feelings which characterized the hour of conversion. These he claim to be (a) the sense that all is ultimately well with one, — peace and harmony, (b) the sense of perceiving truths not known before, (c) the objective change which the world often appears to undergo ("an appearance of newness beautifies every object") and (d) the ecstasy of happiness produced.

Before closing his discussion on conversion Professor James directs his thoughts to the individual who he feels will dismiss the whole subject of conversion as so much "hysteria." He proclaims that psychologically and religiously this is shallow. For the individual who passes through such an experience and takes a stand for the religious life tends to feel himself identified with it, no matter how much his religious enthusiasm declines.[2] The fact that men lapse from this experience is not the center of its value, for men lapse from every level of experience. The real value is found in the fact that, even if only for a moment, a human being is shown the highwater mark of his spiritual capacity.

CRITIQUE OF JAMES' FINDINGS

Professor G. Stanley Hall says that Professor William James

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1 Ibid., 242.
2 Cf. Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 357.

was "the most brilliant litterateur and stylist since Schopenhauser."[1] With this, none will disagree but with his findings there is more room for criticism. However, before attempting to criticize certain findings of James' let us say that his intellectual honesty, his accurate observation, his unbiased evaluation, and his intellectual humility, combine to make his study one of the greatest, if not the greatest, yet performed in the field of religious psychology.

Certainly the most obvious defect of James' study is that, though unquestionably authentic, yet the cases he used were extreme and often abnormal. Many critics have pointed out this defect clearly. Professor Pratt[2] said, "the fundamental defect of James' treatise is that it is based on exceptions." W. Bryan Thomas[3] said "James' findings have either bottomed the abyss of vicious degradation or have been morbid psychopaths in their psychological make-up." It is true that James distinguishes between certain of these cases, as for example the psychopathic Bunyan and the sick-souled Tolstoy,[4] but even this distinction is within the framework of the extreme or abnormal.

It must be said in fairness to James that he was conscious of this fact. His theory was that the exceptional or abnormal was simply the normal in bold relief. Therefore, he avoided the average and commonplace considering it uninteresting and uninstructive for study. However, a study based on such a strata of religious experience as he

1 G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence, Vol. II, p. 292.
2 James B. Pratt, The Religious Consciousness, footnote, p. 84.
3 W. Bryan Thomas, The Psychology of Conversion, p. 157.
4 William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 157.

chose certainly to use the language of Selbie "will be, to say the least, very one sided."[1]

This whole study of James' shows us that man is by nature religious and that religion belongs to his normal relations to the universe, but to study it in its abnormal form only is certainly to strip it of its common average experience in the soul of the average Christian. A study based on such extraordinary characters as Paul, Augustine, S. Francis, Luther, Bunyan, Tolstoy, and the mystics certainly would not reveal the common average religious experiences of men. Rather it tends to produce a caricature of religion.

Even in the lives of the people studied, their recorded religious experience is not typical of their daily life. It was rather the records of their moments of unusual exaltation. To be sure, such records are valuable and instructive but we must remember they are exceptional and so interpret them.

Another criticism of James' study may be found in his treatment of divine intervention. What the convert refers to as the presence of divine intervention James labels "subconscious," "incubation" or "cerebration." In this process there are "hot" places and "cold" places, he says. If you ask of psychology just how the excitement shifts in a man's mental system, and why a "hot" place in emotional interest becomes "cold", psychology has to reply that while she can describe what happens yet she cannot account for all the forces at work.

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1 William B. Selbie, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 18.

> All we know is that there are dead feelings, dead ideas, and cold beliefs, and there are hot and live ones; and when one grows hot and alive within us, everything has to re-crystallise about it.[1]

In other words James says that psychology cannot answer the question concerning the presence of God in religious experience. In this, of course, he is agnostic. Theology finds the source in divine intervention from outside the personality. Psychology declares that it does not transcend the individual's personality.[2] If there is any presence of God in a religious experience, then James concludes that the presence must be relegated to the dreamy subliminal.[3]

James' makes effective use of case reports for illustrative purposes but fails to analyse them so as to determine the uniqueness of the Christian experience. As a matter of fact he does not even distinguish between a Christian and a mere moral conversion. Norborg emphasizes this point when he says James failed to recognise "the indispensable and fundamental place of the Holy Scripture in those experiences as their _conditio sine qua non_."[4] A few examples from his case studies will illustrate this point:[5]

1. S. H. Hadley: "Dear Jesus, can you help me? Never with mortal tongue can I describe that moment."

Analysis: Here conversion is the result of Christo-centric prayer, after hearing twenty-five to thirty Christians testify as to

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1 William James, _op. cit._, p. 167.
2 _Ibid._, p. 511.
3 _Ibid._, p. 515.
4 Sverre Norborg, _Varieties Of Christian Experience_, p. 181.
5 _Ibid._, p. 181.

the subjective-objective message of salvation in Christ.

2. David Brainerd: His testimony ends: "I wondered that all the world did not see and comply with this way of salvation, entirely by the righteousness of Christ."

Analysis: A clear me-experience, motivated by an extra-subjective entity called, "the righteousness of Christ," without which no conversion and assurance would have taken place.

3. Henry Alline: ". . . opening it without any premeditation, I cast my eyes on the 38th Psalm, which was the first time I ever saw the word of God; it took hold of me with such power that it seemed to go through my whole soul . . . ."

Analysis: A conversion experience of the ME-experience type created by the 38th Psalm. Here is a dialogue type experience, God-me, on the basis of the 38th Psalm. The whole of which was a conscious experience.

These cases illustrate that there is a certain uniqueness to the Christian conversion caused by a word, a message, an acquaintence. They testify to the influence of this world, a factor which James totally omits.

In our critique of Starbuck we noted his tendency to so generalize about conversion as to make his conclusions rather vague, all-inclusive bits of composite religious experience. James avoided this by clearly stating his limits.

> I propose to ignore the institutional branch entirely, to say say nothing of the ecclesiastical organization, to consider as little as possible the systematic theology and

> the ideas about the gods themselves and to confine myself as far as possible to personal religion pure and simple.[1] Religion therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the devine.[2] The religious experience which we are studying is that which lives itself out within the private breast.[3]

Thus, the field is narrowed down to "personal religion."

By this limitation, Professor James was able to concentrate on the individual mind and its reaction. In this process scarcely any element of consciousness, however unusual and undefined, has escaped his notice and appreciation. So penetrating are some of hi revelations that we wonder who has revealed to this scientific searcher the inner recesses of our own minds facts which until now we have kept hidden even from our ownselves, revelations which now he brings forth into consciousness.

Let us note a word of caution at this point as regards this genius' penetrating eye into the hidden places of our minds. There is every possibility that his findings will be over-emphasized. So fascinated are we by these hidden places now revealed that we fail to realize that these oddities do not form a large part nor play a significant role in our every day working character. While it takes a genius to reveal this outer periphery to us, we need to use only a bit of common sense to realize that the central experiences of our conscious life are of even greater significance.

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1 William James, op. cit., p. 29.
2 Ibid., p. 31.
3 Ibid., p. 336.

Professor James' method was to plunge into the center of hidden recesses, to extract a particular idea, clothe it in rather general terms and then illustrate it with a striking case. The natural result was some brilliant lines concerning the religious experience but few lines concerning the minute scientific scrutiny of particulars. We have therefore a record of the religious insights of a master in sympathetic interpretation of human life but not of a scientific investigation of particular instances of religious experience. This work therefore, is only a beginning. While it has shocked us into a proper attention to the religious experience it has also left us with a need for a more careful and fundamental analysis of this experience.[1]

We might add here, that Professor James H. Leuba, we feel, has gone about as far in this psychological method of study as it is now possible to go.[2]

Professor James' words were particularly well chosen to show shades and gradations, fringes and indefinite margins of meaning which are so essential to religion.

His criticism of Starbuck's method of introspection seems to us to be shallow since he accepted his findings and built upon them in his own study.

We must question James' statement "I argue against the notion

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1 Ezra B. Crooks, "Professor James And The Psychology Of Religion," The Monist, 25:128, January, 1915.

2 James H. Leuba, The Psychological Origin And Nature Of Religion (London: Constable And Company, Ltd., 1921). 86 pp.

that the worth of a thing can be decided by its origin."[1] Even if this is true, its argument is not psychological but rather that of a philosophical value judgment and as such should be relegated to the realm of philosophy.

In conclusion it must be noted that the real importance of this epoch making study of Professor James' is that it lifted the eyes of men beyond the contemplation of the dogmatic and external in religious conversion to the unique mental state associated with it. It showed that there is a religious experience "sui generis," which has a right to be heard in its own right.[2] Because of this fact alone this study stands forth as a most remarkable contribution to this subject and shows its author as a true genius.

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1 William James, op. cit., p.

2 Robert P. Brooks, "William James," Dictionary of American Biography, 9:687. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937).

PART FOUR

VALUES AND LIMITATIONS

Chapter 8

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The limitations discussed in this chapter are based largely on the tentative and provisional generalizations outlined by the psychologists herein studied. This is stated as a reminder that this new science of religious psychology is not yet capable of making absolute and dogmatic pronouncements concerning its subject matter. The psychologists cannot claim to have given final proof to the problems connected with this phenomenon of conversion, though it has given valuable suggestions about the lines along which a solution may be found.

These limitations are herein discussed not to depreciate the valuable work studied in this thesis but rather to clearly sound a word of warning against any possibility of this half-century old science claiming to have solved all the problems it has raised.

A- LIMITATION DUE TO THE DIVERGENCE OF THE TERMINOLOGY: It must be noted that one of the limitations of this study is to be found in the divergence of terminology used by those who psychologically investigated conversion. Professor Stolz tried to explain this when he

said it was due largely to the fact that "the materials . . . are subtle and elusive and, therefore, difficult to collect, examine, understand, and classify."[1] Moreover, we might add, it is due to the fact that psychology, as an experimentally grounded science, is still a relatively young field. This confusion of terminology is quite evident in this study of the psychology of conversion. We will illustrate this by a discussion of two points dealt with by the investigators though interpreted differently in their terminology.

The first concerns the idea of conversion itself. As conversion is dealt with by Starbuck, it covers the experience preceding, accompanying and following the/sudden change of character involved.[2] For James, however, the importance of conversion lies in the fact that it shows the human being "even for a short time,"[3] the high water mark of his spiritual capacity. Thus, it is easy to see that the same term and experience is expressed differently by each.

The second is concerned more with the language itself. When Starbuck, for instance, is referring to the forces below the threshold of consciousness that conflict with one another and bring about the period of storms and stress," he uses the language "two selves." When James refers to the same forces he uses the language "groups of ideas." Again, Starbuck when referring to what Augustine would simply

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1 Karl A. Stolz, The Psychology of Religious Living, p. 150.
2 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology of Religion, p. 21.
3 William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 257.

call "will" calls it "spontaneous awakening." James when referring to apparently the same thing, calls it "emotional excitement." Again, James refers to the crucial experience in conversion, the central pivotal, or turning point as "the corner turned within" while Starbuck uses the ambiguous word "feeling" when referring to the same experience. Finally, Starbuck says "Conversion is the identification of the self with the new world, with what it feels to be the divine will."[1] When James, on the other hand, is referring to the same experience by reducing it to "its lowest admissible terms." he avails himself of Leuba's term "faith state"[2] which, as he points out, has a minimum of intellectual content.

This limitation, therefore arises, not because there is a difference of opinion on the object of reference for indeed it would appear that both writers mean the same thing, rather it is because they can't agree on what to call it. As a result there is a limitation placed upon this new science which requires a more careful co-ordination presented in a more exact and unified language so that its findings may be of uniformed and permanent value.

B- LIMITATIONS DUE TO LACK OF APOLOGETIC VALUE. Psychology is limited to its own field of investigation even within its investigation of conversion. It has no apologetic value. It is not for psychology to confirm or deny theological assertions. The psychologist

1 Edwin D. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 182.
2 William James, op. cit., p. 247.

is not trained in theology. Professor Pratt spoke a truism when he said, "I cannot help thinking that it would ultimately lead to great disappointment, if not to positive scepticism, if we should sanguinely expect, as I fear many cultured religious people have been led to expect, that the psychological study of religion can demonstrate any of the truths of theology."[1]

By the very nature of psychology as a science, it is bound to restrict itself to a limited area of fact in order to explain it. As regards the total picture of conversion, psychology can take note only of the human, psychical side. Thus, the presence of God as such cannot become an object of scientific inquiry. The findings of psychology then - like those of all other sciences - may be looked upon as true so far as they go but restricted to the particular area of interest involved. As regards conversion their findings must be supplemented by philosophical and theological investigations. The psychologist is only a partial workman. He works with states of mind which are described to him, with the behavior which he can observe, and with the stimuli which can be directly studied. If the theologian asserts that in certain instances there has been an additional stimulus or effect from the supernatural, the psychologist can but acquiesce.[2] Hence, while the mechanism of psychologist may be granted for its own particular purposes, theology may still claim the right to consider the same fact s under their divine aspect, so far as this

1 James, B. Pratt, The Religious Consciousness, p. 40.
2 Edwin S. Conklin, The Psychology of Religious Adjustment, p. 10.

lies open to them.[1]

In order for psychology and theology to work harmoniously in their respective fields there must, however, be a common agreement of recognition acknowledged by both. Theology must agree to amend or cancel altogether whatsoever there may be in the dogmas of the past that is flatly and decisively contradicted by any new facts that psychology may reveal. Thus, theology must irrevocably abandon all pretension to possess, in the Bible, in the creeds of the Church, in the teachings of Jesus, or anywhere else, truth that can be called "infallible" or "final," and is not subject to revision. This freedom from the "infallible" or "final" must come as a result of Christ's challenge "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."[2]

Psychology, on the other hand, must agree to recognize the limitations that are inherent in any specialized scientific point of view, and therefore grant the possibility that other points of view and other explanations of the same phenomena are possible and legitimate. Psychology may demand instant and respectful obedience when speaking in the name of the facts, but theology cannot be expected to accept without criticism the philosophical theories and unconscious assumptions with which the facts of psychology are entangled. Or in the words of Dr. Horton:

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1 Ernest J. Price, "The Limitation of the Psychology of Religion," Hibbert Journal, 22:675, July, 1924.
2 John 8:32.

> Psychology must admit that (like all the sciences) it is more competent from the practical than from the theoretical point of view; and must grant theology's right, when seeking to build a general theory of life upon the findings of psychology, to view these findings through corrective lenses designed to compensate for the specific type of myopic squint from which psychology suffers.[1]

It must be noted though that while psychology does not have direct apologetic value, yet it will greatly influence the religious apologetics of the future. This influence will be found in that it throws much light on the best means of producing in men and women that religious awakening which is the first step in the process. It has much to say of the relation of group or crowd psychology to the psychology of the individual and of the various conditions and influences which prepare the way for the experience known as conversion. It helps us to distinguish between the healthy and the morbid in such experiences, and in the parts played by subconscious and conscious influences in the process. It enables us to estimate the power of suggestion and the respective values of the will, the emotions, and the reason in building up the religious life. All these things combine to make it mandatory that the theologian not only recognise but give a place of importance to the scientist in his treatment of religious apologetics.

C. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY DUE TO CHANGE: The works of Starbuck, Coe and James herein studied may well be sound as regards the

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1 Walter M. Horton, A Psychological Approach To Religion, p. 26.

cases they studied but it must be noted that the nearly fifty years which have elapsed could well have changed many of their conclusions. If a similar study were made today the conclusions might differ radically. Factors which no doubt would influence any present day study would include the following: The great migration from the rural sections to the cities which have involved great chages in living standards; the widespread role of present religious education which seeks to keep the newborn child within the spiritual peace of the church so that a tremendous emotional upheaval will not be necessary; the revival, so prominent at the time of these studies, now has declined in influence and effectiveness until it accounts for only a small portion of religious converts; the age of scientific criticism which has sufficiently seeped its way down into the mind of the common people until there is a decided change as regards the teaching of the Bible andother religious conceptions; theology itself has changed decidedly too in that doctrines such as eternal damnation, personality of the devil, total depravity and similar theories are seldom if ever heard in modern preaching.

Some fifteen years ago Professor Clark[1] conscious of the possibility of such factors as listed above causing a change in the findings of these pioneers, decided to perform a similar study to determine this factor. His findings differed quite noticeably. We shall mention only a few to illustrate this point. Coe, in his examination of seventy-

1 Elmer T. Clark, The Psychology Of Religious Awakening, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929). 170 pp.

seven persons found that twenty had exhibited hallucinations and motor automatisms.[1] Clark found so few among his respondents who exhibited hallucinations and motor automatisms that he concluded they were almost non-existent.[2] In comparison with Starbuck's findings on emotionalism, Clark found that in every case emotionalism was declining. He concluded that "emotion immediately preceding religious awakening has been much reduced during the last generation."[3] Therefore, it is necessary to point out the limitation placed upon these earlier studies as a result of the factors peculiar to the generation in which they were made.

D- LIMITATION OF THE NON-CONVERTED PSYCHOLOGIST: As we have noted earlier the question as to the necessity of a religious experience on the part of the investigator of religious phenomenon was raised at the Geneva Congress of 1910. Professor Höffding of the University of Copenhagen contended that a religious experience was a prerequisite for religious psychological investigators. However, others disagreed. Some of the comments follow:

> In replying to M. Roebat, who, almost like myself, refuses to admit that a psychologist deprived of religious sense can study religious phenomena to advantage, M. Bernard Leroy, l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, declared that one need not be religious to speak scientifically about religion, any more than he need be mad in order to discuss mental pathology . . . It is no more necessary to be a psychiatrist in order to talk about psychiatry, than it is to be a charlatan in order to talk

1 George A. Coe, The Spiritual Life, p. 123.
2 Elmer T. Clark, op. cit., p. 130.
3 Ibid., p. 140.

about charlatanry.[1]

Professor Pratt[2] expressed it somewhat differently when he said the psychologist who is a total stranger to religious sentiments can know as much about religion as a blind man knows about colours, or a non-musical person about music. Yet, it seems to me that a person can be completely incapable of understanding certain things because of his failure to possess certain mental traits similar and in all such possible subjects it seems to me that in the realm of religious conversion this is more likely to be true.

To be sure a psychological investigator of conversion must use two methods to gather his data - namely, observation of others and self-examination. However, when it comes to formulating his conclusions by necessity the investigator must call upon introspection.[3] If the investigator has not experienced a religious conversion himself he is at a decided disadvantage in trying to psychologize concerning the religious experience of someone else.[4] As Dr. Coe put it "the religious consciousness of the investigator himself is his primary instrument of research."[5] If he does not possess this instrument his study is limited accordingly.

The reason this point is emphasized in regards to this study is because neither Dr. Starbuck nor Dr. James ever admitted a religious

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1 L. Michaelangelo Billia, "On The Problem And Methods Of The Psychology Of Religion," The Monist, 20:18, January, 1910.
2 James B. Pratt, The Religious Consciousness, footnote, p. 55.
3 William James, Principles of Psychology, Vol. 1, p. 186.
4 Albert H. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology, p. 270.
5 George A. Coe, "Methods Of Studying Religion," The Methodist Review, 82:542, July, 1901.

conversional experience and therefore fall subject to the criticism offerred herein.

D- LIMITATION AS REGARDS THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS: We have seen that psychology has taken conversion to be an adolescent phenomenon, conditioned by training, environment, physical development, and social influences. It has pointed out that conversion is a perfectly natural phenomenon present not only in religion but also in all other departments of human life. It has emphasized that conversion is usually a process of the unification of a fractured self, and involves the subconscious factors of the mental life. But it has failed completely to adequately treat the religious consciousness. When we ask the question, concerning that which makes a religious conversion religious we find a very unsatisfactory answer. Therefore, we must conclude that the factors which psychology has emphasized in religious conversion though actually present yet are not the basic factors in a religious conversion. The question as to what makes a religious experience religious is left unanswered by the psychologist and results in a natural limitation for a thorough study of this experience.

E- LIMITATION DUE TO UNUSUAL AND ABNORMAL: In any general discussion of limitations it must be emphasized that by and large the general conclusions of the psychologist herein discussed with regards to religious conversion are based on the unusual and abnormal. For a discussion of this fact the reader is referred to Section Three dealing with the Critique of James' Findings. We simply add here that persons who have seen no visions, heard no voices, and enjoyed no

superlative, ecstatic trances have been neglected. So obvious is this that Uhrn says "We are justified in saying that their normal religious life is as yet a comparatively untrodden field."[1]

C- LIMITATION PLACED BY THE RESPONDENT: It must be recalled that any psychological investigator into the religious experience of an individual is limited by the information the individual desires to give him. It is impossible for the investigator to get inside the individuals mind and roam at leisure into the investigation of his religious experience. Therefore he must depend upon the individual's description of what is in his own mind. Reference is made to the limitations of introspection as discussed in Section Three of this thesis for further discussion of this point. We recall here only two things: first, records prepared of religious experiences are often not prepared to satisfy psychological curiosity; and second, it is almost impossible to describe completely an unusual internal state.

This section is not an endeavor to list all the limitating factors noted as a result of this study but simply an endeavor to point out the most obvious and important ones for special treatment.

In discussion of these limitations we are reminded of "Woodbine Willie" in his poem on the limitations of "The Psychologist."

He takes the saints to pieces,
And labels all the parts,
He tabulates the secrets
Of loyal loving hearts.

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1 Albert R. Uhrn, op. cit., p. 271.

He probes their selfish passion,
And shows exactly why
The Martyr goes out singing
To suffer and to die.

The Beatific Vision,
That brings them to thier knees,
He seemingly reduces
To infant phantasies.

The Freudian Unconscious
Quite easily explains
The splendour of their sorrows,
The pageant of their pains.

The manifold temptations,
Wherewith the flesh can vex
The saintly soul, are samples
Of Oedipus complex.

The subtle sex perversion,
His eagle glance can tell,
That makes their joyous heaven
The horror of their hell.

His reasoning is perfect,
His proofs as plain as paint,
He has but one small weakness,
He cannot make a saint.

——— Studdert-Kennedy

Chapter 9

VALUES OF STUDY

The values discussed in this final chapter are the fruits of the psychological labors of Starbuck, Coe and James. When balanced against the limitations of the preceding chapter they overwhelmingly testify to the value of such studies. However, we need to emphasize again, that such values do not call for a worshiping of the new idol of psychology as a final authority in the field of religion. Professor Coe plants our feet on firmer ground when he reminds us that psychology

> . . . may be expected, of course, to modify to some extent our religious practices and our theological notions, but it is not likely to fill with great success the role of prophet, or of pope, or even of business manager.[1]

We discuss in this chapter only the major values of this study conscious that our list is not complete. It should be used only as a measuring rod for the extraction of more valuable conclusions to be extracted through further study of this subject.

A- OF VALUE T- THE RELIGIOUS WORKER: There is value in this

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1 George A. Coe, The Psychology Of Religion, preface, p. xv.

study in that it shows us how the psychological investigation of religious conversion can be an aide to the religious worker. This study has assigned itself to the child-mind, the youth-mind and the mature-mind and has worked out an organized and proportioned method based upon definite knowledge of the material to be wrought upon, the ends to be attained, and the means and instruments for attaining them. It has shown the way to discriminate between normal and morbid states of religious feeling, revealed the intimate interrelations between the spiritual and the psysical life, observed the temperamental and other differences between individuals. In so doing it has afforded much practical help to the religious worker. With this help the religious worker no longer has to proceed by a trial and error method or a hit or miss process, rather the pastor, the preacher and the religious educationist may proceed scientifically to cultivate the religious life in himself and in others.

That this is valuable goes without saying. If the religious worker is unable to guide in the beginning of a Christian life he cannot hope to accomplish much success in his work. However, if he can supplement his thorough knowledge of the Scriptural teachings concerning conversion with insight into human nature his task of leading others to Christ becomes a glorious privilege made easier. This has been expressed by Dr. Fosdick as follows:

> The minister of today, trying to practice the cure of souls, who does not avail himself of contemporary psychology's invaluable contribution is neglecting an indispensable resource for effectiveness in his work. To know how character is formed, deformed, and reformed is

basic in all endeavors at spiritual helpfulness to individuals.[1]

Not only is the psychological approach to conversion helpful to the religious worker in dealing with personality but it is also an assert in interpreting Biblical truths. Professor Browne has suggested that "a great many things may be theologically true which are not psychologically true. We may express and explain the experience in terms of doctrine, and in doing so we may have the truth; nevertheless, the doctrine is not a fact of consciousness, but a theory about the fact."[2] There still remains the necessity of applying the great religious truth to human nature and tying it in with human personality. Psychology is certain an ally in this process. Conversion may be a theological formula but only as its individuating characteristics are psychologically observed in human personality does it become a living, vital fact of consciousness.

The psychological approach to conversion is of value to the religious worker not only to enable him to more effectively deal with others in helping interpret the truth, but also in helping others to increase the power of appreciating things spiritual. As a scientific study of the flowers, the rocks, the stars increases appreciation of them so the scientific study of conversion ought to strengthen the faith of the religious worker for he sees the reality of religion for

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1 Federal Council Pamphlet
2 Frank C. Browne, Studies In Christianity, p. 100.

life, and is convinced above all else that man is a "religious being" and that he has religious needs that must be met. These and other factors combine to make the psychological study of conversion of great value to the religious worker.

B- OF VALUE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: From the study of the psychology of conversion we can see clearly how it is of great value for purposes of Christian Education. The time has arrived when we dare not trust our children to a doctor in whom we have not confidence in his knowledge of anatomy and physiology. The time is fast approaching when we dare not trust our children to a teacher who does not know psychology. As a result of such studies as this we are beginning to realize that a religious teacher cannot stand between man and God, unless he knows something of the laws of spiritual evolution, of the present status of life, the direction in which it is going and the means by which it can attain its end. Starbuck expressed this fact when he said the work of religious psychology is to see "that the soul be no longer left to drift aimlessly and to select chance objects for its expression, or remain without an object."[1]

Starbuck, Coe and James all clearly showed that the child brought up under the influence of the Christian home and Christian education was most likely to experience a rather quiet, unobtrusive conversion at an early age. The psycholanalyst and the geneticist have combined to show us that the main reason for this, as James said, is to be found in the

1 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 9.

subconscious. Our present consciousness is largely the product of our early concepts and beliefs, the desires we cherished, the ideals which grew in the background of our minds. Out of the past the present is born even though the past be never recalled to full consciousness. This has been clearly demonstrated in this study.

How important such information is for planning religious education! How necessary it is to be grounded in the psychological approach to religion! Psychology, with its insight into human nature, offers to the church a vast storehouse of information useful in her attempts to produce Christlike personality. Let us take a typical example: the factor of individual differences in Christian conversion as is so clearly pointed out by Starbuck, Coe and James.

Many psychologist have emphasized this point in their studies. W. Bryan Thomas said, "Whatever else is true, it may be said with assurance that there is no such thing as a uniform Christian conversion."[1] "So prominent is the personal equation," said Clark, "that it may be said that there are as many types of religious awakening as there are religious individuals."[2] Conversion for each person is a unique experience, based upon the totality of his hereditary and environmental experiences as they exist in his conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious mind. Or to use the words of Norborg: "Modern psychology knows that there are no two conversions that are absolutely alike."[3]

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1 William B. Thomas, The Psychology Of Conversion, p. 55.
2 Elmer T. Clark, The Psychology Of Religious Awakening, p. 84.
3 Sverre Norborg, The Varieties Of Christian Experience, p. 198.

In the light of this revelation our religious education can be planned so as to avoid the danger previously common among the religious worker of making his experience a standard by which to judge and guide the experience of others. We now know, thanks to these pioneers, that it is just simply unscientific, untrue and unhealthy in the light of modern psychology to demand that all people 'come to the Lord' by the same road and through the same experience. Psychology in revealing this fact to us, has served as an impetus in balancing our religious educational program so that we can anticipate the stages of religious growth and lead the individual wisely and safely from one stage to another. As Heisey says, this knowledge "will aid him to meet doubt, hesitation, and objection in a wise manner. It will add to his zeal knowledge, for neither zeal without knowledge nor knowledge without zeal will suffice."[1]

However, one point must be made clear. To emphasize the value of psychology in religious education is not to forsake the Gospel and turn to psychology for salvation. Rather upon closer observation we find that the psychological approach is the religious approach. We need only to turn to the Gospel to see that this was the method of Jesus, the Master Psychologist, who saw in each individual a distinct personality. One cannot imagine Jesus using the same approach with the Rich Young Ruler that He did with the Samaritan woman at the well. He saw clearly the differences in their personalities and their needs

1 Paul H. Heisey, A Psychological Study Of Religion, p. 332.

and dealt with them accordingly. It never crossed His mind to force a Damascus road experience upon the children He called to Himself. Why then should we? We use the words of an outstanding religious educator to emphasize this point:

> Each case is a separate clinical problem. As the physician studies each patient independently, so does a teacher who is an agent of the Great Physician.
>
> This was Christ's method. He never gave exactly the same advice or prescribed exactly the same remedies. But though the means differed the end was always the same — the achievement of soundness and wholeness in a perfectly balanced and Christ-illumined personality.[1]

How much more the "balanced and Christ-illumined personality" is possible when we apply the findings of psychology concerning human personality to our Christian Educational methods.

C- OF VALUE IN KNOWING CERTAIN CONVERSIONS: This study of the psychology of conversion has shown us the necessity of a proper understanding of the factors involved in conversion as a prerequisite to obtaining such an experience. The notion was widely prevalent for many years and still exist to some extent, that conversion was primarily an emotional experience. This resulted in the rather haphazard playing with people's emotions by so-called religious leaders, especially the evangelist.

Dr. Davenport has made a study of some of the serious consequences of the wrong emotional emphasis of the evangelist. He has pointed out that in certain sections of our country "religious emotional-

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1 Austen De Blois and Donald R. Gorham, Christian Religious Education: Principles and Practice, p. 185.

ism generated by revivals has been accompanied by social disorder in the form of feuds and lynchings."[1] The great revival movement in Kentucky from 1882 to 1905 was the period of the greatest number of crimes in that area. Neurotic disorders are known to result from a faulty emphasis in evangelism.

The psychological study of conversion has served to emphasize that if more conversions are to be forthcoming without resulting in such reactions as listed above, than the approach on the part of religious leaders has got to be more that of Christ's. "Wilt thou be made whole?" This is characteristic of His method. This is in contrast to the voluntarists who described conversion as a matter of the surrender of the will,[2] or the revivalist who thought it was entirely in the emotional life.

Psychology has shown us that personality is not to be understood by the "dissection" method.[3] Just as personality is more than any of its parts so Christian conversion is more than the change of any part of the personality. It is a total experience. It is the whole mind; knowing, willing, and feeling. As Hughes said, "Man's whole nature is involved in the experience of conversion."[4] Thomas has summed it up by saying, "Conversion . . . must be nothing less than the whole man functioning the whole time in reaction to the whole

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1 Frank M. Davenport, Primitive Traits In Religious Revivals, p. 305.

2 Sverre Norborg, The Varieties Of Christian Experience, p. 195.

3 Thomas H. Hughes, The New Psychology And Religious Experience, p. 223.

4 Ibid., p. 46.

of reality.[1]

It was these pioneers who broke ground for the erection of a clear understanding of this fact. It is their work which show us that real value for the purpose of securing more conversions is to be gained by a clear understanding of the factors involved in the conversional process.

D. OF VALUE AS AN ALLY TO RELIGION: We hasten to add a word before closing this discussion of the values of this study. To be sure there are those in the religious field who will have nothing to do with modern psychology. They feel it is the enemy of religion. Likewise, and probably moreso, there are those in the field of psychology who have no respect for religion. But it must be emphasized as Starbuck, Coe and James have emphasized, that these two fields are related and mutually dependent. Let us use the words of Starbuck to better express this point:

> The physician who goes through the body with scalpel and microscope does a service to the living human being who rejoices in his strength and pulsing life. Psychology is to religion what the science of medicine is to health, or what the study of botany is to the appreciation of plants. The relation is the same as that of any science to its corresponding art. It is art coming to comprehend itself for its own betterment.[2]

The attempted marriage of psychology and religion spoken of by Starbuck began at a time when the theorizers concerning conversion, as well as many preachers themselves, became convinced that it was

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1 Ibid., p. 188.
2 Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology Of Religion, p. 8.

purely a matter of emotional illusion. Just at this point the psychologist appeared with irrefutable proof of the reality and value of this experience. Thus science, which had been thought to be the enemy of religion, came to its rescue.[1]

Since then there have been many psychologists who have come out boldly in behalf of the relatedness of psychology and religion. We quote a few to illustrate;[2] The world-renowned psychiatrist Krafft-Ebbing states:

> Generally speaking one must hold that true religion and **pure ethics ennoble the human spirit and direct it towards something higher, giving it consolation in distress and diminishing the danger of insanity.**

Professor Oppenheim says:

> **On the basis of my experiences as a physician I count** the lack of religious faith as one of the most deplor**able states. It seems to me that religion furnishes a** right, even if not an absolute, stronghold in the bat**tle against the forces which attack the nervous system** . . . A strong and sure faith protects (a person) from **most of the emotional agitations which the crisis of** life leads to in those who have not this stronghold.

Dr. H. J. Schou, M. D., lecturer at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark says:

> One dares say that psychiatric authorities maintain **that religion, which means a true and sound communion** with God, is not only not dangerous psychologically **speaking, but directly preserving.**

Professor Sverre Norborg, of the University of Minnesotta, says:

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1 Ezra H. Crooks, "Professor James And The Psychology Of Religion," The Monist, 28:106, January, 1918.

2 Theso quotes are from Sverre Norborg's Varieties Of Christian Experience, p. 253-256.

> Modern personality-analysis does not only sustain the truth of the statement that where one destroys a sanctuary, one will have to build a mental clinic, it even permits the conclusion that modern psychiatry regards personal faith as a blessing and a necessity in human life, keeping it healthy and helping to maintain that balance which we call harmony and peace.

There are countless numbers of such statements help us to see clearly how psychology and religion first linked by these pioneers must continue to grow more and more into a consciousness of kinship in the human personality. It was William James, among the psychologists, who first pleaded the cause of religious experiences as a natural and necessary part of human life. It has been legions of followers who have testified to its necessity.

These together with many other values unmentioned combine to show that the psychological study of conversion leaves religion not only living but also living more effectively because of new tools with which to labor and new testimonies to show the necessity of religion as an essential factor in human life.

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