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Richard Delventhal

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir\_delventhalr@csl.edu

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THE STABILIZING POWER OF CHRISTIANITY  
IN PERSONALITY DISTURBANCES

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A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of Practical Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

Richard C. Delventhal

January 1945

Approved by

*Richard A. Jesse*  
*A. M. Rees*

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THE STABILIZING POWER OF CHRISTIANITY  
IN PERSONALITY DISTURBANCES

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THE STABILIZING POWER OF CHRISTIANITY  
IN PERSONALITY DISTURBANCES

Introduction

Christianity, or Christian theology, is not only theoretical but also highly practical. Christianity teaches the Way of Life, which means, not only the life to come, but also this life, here and now. In its fullest application to the individual, it not only prepares one for the future life in heaven, but also prepares one for a normal and more abundant life in this world.

Man might be called a creature of four dimensions<sup>1</sup>: body, life, mind, and spirit. From birth to maturity the human organism must develop on the physical, mental, social, and spiritual levels. Thus he is faced with the problem of integrating these four and developing as one whole being, and not as four separate beings. A person may develop physically and mentally, but if he fails to develop socially, he cannot take his rightful place in human society. If he fails to develop spiritually, he cannot take his place in the Kingdom of Grace.

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1. Glee: Ministerial Counseling, p.3

Unfortunately, only too often, individuals fail to develop normally, and as a result there is maladjustment in one or more respects. In this treatise we are concerned primarily with mental maladjustment or mental diseases. The art of helping these people, known as "psychiatry", is still in its infancy. The term "psychiatry" is most commonly understood in its narrower sense, namely: "a specialized branch of medicine which deals with mental disorders"<sup>1</sup>. However, the term itself literally means "Soul-healing". From this one might readily conclude that this also lies in the province of the Christian ministry. That is true.

If Christianity, therefore, is to take its proper place in our lives, it should also offer definite means of assisting in the normal development of man, as well as offer cures for maladjustment<sup>2</sup>. However, due to the "inadequacy" of the ministry, since few pastors have had any training in this highly specialized field, most pastors are at a loss how to deal directly with mental diseases<sup>3</sup>. This does not mean though that pastors completely fail in this respect, for I firmly believe, that by divine guidance and grace, the pastor in his personal ministrations to the individual, may at times unconsciously give the patient the proper spiritual medicine to heal a far deeper malady than he or the patient is conscious of. The pastor may visit a member who is sick,

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1. Anon: The Value of Psychiatry in Pastoral Work, p.1
  2. Gloc: The Use of Case Work Technique, p.17
  3. Gloc: Ministerial Counseling, p.3

simply with the idea of giving that person comfort and strength in their physical affliction, when actually the real cause of that affliction is a mental disturbance. The pastor, wholly unconscious of that condition, may at times, by the grace of God, speak the very words necessary to heal that mental disturbance, and thereby bring that individual back to complete health.

Furthermore, in spite of the fact that our ministry has not been especially trained in dealing with mental diseases, the ministry still fulfills a function in a certain inevitable degree also in this respect, by offering the whole revelation of God which is also a most excellent preventive.<sup>1</sup> The pastor, by thorough instructions in Confirmation classes, Sunday School or Bible Classes, through sermons<sup>2</sup>, through private ministrations is placing "guards" around his people and helping them to develop normally and also to prevent mental diseases eventhough he may never have that particular thought in mind.

Nevertheless, in spite of all his teaching and training, a pastor will meet with personality disturbances and mental diseases among his members<sup>2</sup>, and though he may not have had any special training in dealing with such cases, he should at least have a knowledge of the fundamental principles of psychology, so that he will be able to recognize certain symptoms of mental diseases. Since the pastor comes in contact with

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1. Gloc: The Use of Case Work Technique, p.18

2. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.127. 111.

maladjusted people under his spiritual care before the doctor, the psychiatrist, or the social worker, he, as an observer rather than a practitioner, having the confidence of his people, can be of invaluable assistance by recommending hospitalization, consultation, or treatment before the disease has progressed too far.<sup>1</sup>

If, on the other hand, a pastor has sufficient training in psychiatry, not only to recognize symptoms of mental diseases, but also to know how to proceed with the investigation of personality disturbances in cases yet normal in order to determine the fundamental causes, the question might then be asked: What Christian doctrines are therapeutic agencies or stabilizing factors in dealing with various diseases?<sup>2</sup>

#### REPRESSION

One of the most common causes of mental disturbances and maladjustments is repression. We are not to confuse this word with "suppression" or "self-control". The Christian religion surely demands of us that we "suppress" evil and wicked desires, and it stresses the necessity of exercising "self-control" in regard to our fundamental physical and mental desires and urges. Suppression and self-control are good and laudible, but repression is definitely bad and extremely harmful. Thus the term "repression" as used by

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1. Anon. The Value of Psychiatry in Pastoral Work, p.1
  2. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.111  
Gloe: Use of Case Work Technique, p.18

the psychologist has a very distinct meaning, quite different from its common connotation.<sup>1</sup>

I personally like Leslie D. Weatherhead's illustration<sup>2</sup> in explaining the true nature and process of repression:

Imagine a very deep well which is to represent the human mind. The surface of the water, or rather, objects floating on the surface of the water represent consciousness, whatever we happen to be thinking of at the time. The water immediately beneath the surface will represent the realm of the subconscious, in which is contained all knowledge or memories which can be recalled to mind by a conscious act of the will. The deeper those memories have sunk in the water, the more difficult it is to recall them. Finally there is the lowest depth of water which contains the memories of everything since our earliest childhood. No matter how hard we try, we cannot recall those memories.

Now, in the process of repression, we begin at the top of the well. The mind carries in its consciousness certain unpleasant thoughts or experiences which involve fear, or shame, or guilt. Because of their unpleasant nature, the mind unconsciously, yet very deliberately seeks to force those unpleasant thoughts or experiences into the unconscious. If this were a conscious "bottling up" it would not be repression, but we could speak of it as suppression. It is not a true repression until it has sunk into the unconscious.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Brooks: Psychology of Adolescence, p.462 f
  2. Weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p.93 f
  3. White: Psychology Of Dealing With People, p.13  
Gloe: Use of Case Work Technique, p.12,

Now let us compare that unpleasant experience or thought which was forced down into the unconscious as some form of animal matter. The time comes when putrefaction takes place, giving off a scum which floats to the surface of the water. This scum now represents some form of neurosis or psychosis, which is the outgrowth of repression. Or we might compare a repression to an infection. The fact that there is a swelling, with puss oozing out, and some accompanying pain, is sufficient evidence that something is wrong. It would do little good simply to wipe away the puss. In order to cure that infection, one must get at the very root of it and heal that; then the puss, the swelling, and the pain will automatically disappear also. So likewise, it would do little good simply to treat the outward symptoms or malady caused by the repression. One must get at the root of the matter and find out just what the repression was.

An illustration, which seemingly has become a classic example of such repression and its resulting neurosis, which I found quoted in several books,<sup>1</sup> is that of an officer of the first World War. He had a morbid fear of enclosed places, such as the dugouts in the trenches. Even when the shells and bullets were flying thick and fast he preferred being out in the open. He was told to seek the safety of a dugout. By an immense effort of will he fought down this irrational fear, but soon became ill, afflicted with in-

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1. Cattell: General Psychology, p.116  
Weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p.227 f

somnia, headaches, and stammering. His condition grew worse, and he was sent to a hospital. Dr. Rivers, one of the pioneers of abnormal psychology in England, took over the case. After much delving into the patient's memory, eventually he succeeded in bringing to light a recollection, forgotten since childhood. As a little boy he had been forbidden by his parents to go to a certain junk-dealer's place. However, one day the boy disobeyed. In order to get to the door, he had to go through a long dark passage. Just as he knocked at the door, a large dog sprang out at him, giving him a terrible fright.

Here was the initial trauma, the wound in the mind. Here was a disagreeable experience involving fear and guilt. If the boy had made a clean breast of it, and told his parents what he had done and what had happened, everything might have been well. But instead, he kept it to himself and repressed it, forcing it down into the unconscious. Years passed, he no longer thought of the incident; nevertheless it was causing him trouble in the form of a phobia, commonly known as claustrophobia. He himself could give no good reason why he was moved by such fear.

"The way to avoid repression, with all its power of causing disruption in the personality, is never to turn away from any set of ideas which are distasteful to it, from any shock or experience that disturbs it, from any part of the personality itself, such as the sex instinct, which may seem unclean or problematic, but to look at these things in the

face, in the clear light of conscious reason".<sup>1</sup>

The things in life which tend most to become repressed are: 1. Fears; 2. Shocks; 3. Sins.<sup>1</sup> To overcome repression is often time a difficult matter, for the simple reason that the repressed matter must be brought back to consciousness. By no act of his will can the individual recall the matter, for another power is seeking to hold it in forgetfulness, in the unconscious. Therefore it requires much skill in delving into the individual's past, until you strike upon some clue which eventually leads you to the real trouble. If it was a matter of fear, possibly having its inception in childhood, the individual will readily see the foolishness of that fear, a fear based on ignorance. On the other hand, if it is a real cause of fear, one must cause that individual to face it, and then direct him to the One who is over all, who can protect us in all situations. The pastor will find it necessary to build up that faith, so he will have a greater trust in Divine Providence, the faith which overcometh the world. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass". Ps. 37,5.

If shock is involved, then it depends on the nature of the shock. Children are sometimes frightened by loud noises because they do not understand them. If the child can be shown in later years the true nature of the noise that throws it into fear, it will soon be able to overcome that fear or dread. Or let us assume that it is a shock of bereavement

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1. Weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p.114; p.118.

which practically everyone must face sooner or later. The proper thing to do is face the matter resolutely, eliminate all self-pity which can be so harmful, and keep in mind that the loved one is in heaven. If death was due to some accident, the person must guard against resentment and bitterness directed either toward God or to those involved in the accident. Here again the pastor must strengthen the faith of the individual, both in the goodness and wisdom of God, as well as His loving care for the bereaved in the uncertain future.

If the cause of repression is some sin, the best psychology is the Scriptural injunctions "confess" and "repent". The very fact that it is repressed is an indication that the subject believes it to be an unforgiven sin, for he represses it because he feels that it was not forgiven. It may, indeed, have been unforgiven because unacknowledged. The pastor must be sure that the individual understands confession and the true meaning of repentance. First of all, if the sin was a wrong against another person, confession and full restitution must be made if at all possible. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath sught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift". Matt. 5, 23.24. The story of Zaccheas: Luke 19, 8. If the sin is against God alone, then confession must be made, either privately in prayer, or to a confessor, and forgiveness be asked.

Secondly, the individual must accept the divine forgiveness offered him. Here the Office of the Keys and Confession plays a vital role. The person must be assured that he has been restored in his relation to God even though he may have to suffer severe consequences for his sin. Then the person must be warned against becoming morbid by constantly calling to mind the sins of long ago, and letting those memories haunt him, for this would completely undo the true significance of divine forgiveness. As God has put these sins out of sight behind Him, the forgiven sinner is to leave them there.

#### ANXIETY NEUROSIS

All mental disorders are the result of the failure to integrate one's drives into a single purpose.<sup>1</sup> R. B. Cattell<sup>2</sup> defines anxiety neurosis as a "sense of dread<sup>3</sup> and depression, accompanied by sweating, tremor, sleeplessness and other physical symptoms of anxiety. Sometimes the person can assign some cause to his fears, but it generally proves to be imaginary".

Weatherhead<sup>4</sup> describes anxiety neurosis as a morbid mixture of desire and fear, caused when instinctive desire is frustrated or likely to be frustrated; when desire is pulling one way and fear is pulling the other way. The mind can be

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1. Ligon: The Psychology of Christian Personality, p.56
  2. Cattell: General Psychology, p.113
  3. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.42
  4. Weatherhead: Psychology and Life, p.219

completely disabled for the task of living; life becomes a burden, the person feels unable to face life, and this sometimes results in "nervous breakdown".

Harry Emerson Fosdick<sup>1</sup> adds an additional thought which sheds much light on the matter, for he says, that "behind every case of anxiety neurosis is a sense of guilt.... All anxiety is fear of oneself - of one's own inadequacy and inferiority, and so of one's failure. This sense of guilt is commonly morbid, it springs from an unhealthy conscience."

This mental disease not only afflicts adults but also children and young people.<sup>2</sup> Quoting E. M. Ligon<sup>3</sup> - "Students complain that they are overworked and are forced to drop out of school to take a much needed rest. The real truth of the matter is, the student has a fear of failure in school, yet he does not wish to admit it to himself, much less to others. The nervous breakdown becomes his escape mechanism, for thereby he does not have to face failure, and saves face at the same time".

Or here is another illustration mentioned by John Morgan<sup>4</sup>: "A young man with a fine position and prospects for advancement had to give up his work to go to a sanitarium for a prolonged rest. It seemed so very unfortunate, for he had planned on being married in a few weeks, and he complained bitterly at his ill-fortune. Naturally the wedding was post-

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1. Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.121

2. Brooks: The Psychology of Adolescence, p.487

3. Ligon: The Psychology of Christian Personality, p273

4. Morgan: Keeping a Sound Mind, p.273 f

poned indefinitely. After a time he was discharged from the hospital, went back to his old job and looked forward to the future with great hope of a successful business career. Since he seemed to be in such good health, the wedding date was reset. But shortly after this the man suffered another 'breakdown' and had to go to the hospital again. This time, however, a physician who understood such things took him in hand, and discovered that he had a hidden antipathy for marriage, which the patient himself did not clearly recognize, yet which dominated him. He could not express this fear outwardly and refuse to marry the girl whom he had betrothed, so he took flight in illness. What he needed more than rest and medicine was to have his attitude toward marriage straightened out."

A man may have a deep desire in his heart to become a great success in business. This desire pulls him in one direction, while at the same time he has a morbid fear of failure due to an inferiority complex. Desire and fear run in opposite directions and so instead of integrating the man, this mental conflict causes disintegration, resulting in anxiety neurosis.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, many a nervous breakdown may also result in physical symptoms such as: paralysis, stammering, dumbness, etc.<sup>1</sup>

In order to help these unfortunates, the first necessary thing is to find and uncover the true source of the neurosis.

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1. Weatherhead: Psychology and Life, p.219; 220; 221.

The sense of guilt may be due entirely to false impressions, such as perverted ideas in regard to sex or marriage. If on the other hand real sin is involved, then there is the matter of secrecy to contend with, the individual fears disclosure, and the mind is fighting that very thing, it must be kept secret at all cost. So, obviously, such an individual needs a pastor more than a doctor, a pastor who can gain the confidence of that person and get to the bottom of that disturbance, to make him face his sin. Then the pastor will assure him of forgiveness if there is true repentance for that sin. The forgiveness of sins has resolved many such a conflict with the result that the physical ailment also disappeared.<sup>1</sup>

Fosdick<sup>2</sup> gives a very clear illustration of this: "Two lovers, fully intending marriage, both students for doctorates in philosophy, decided not to marry until they had secured their degrees, but meantime to allow themselves full marital privilege. .... They rationalized the procedure so that no conscious sense of wrongdoing troubled their minds. Yet the young woman came perilously near nervous breakdown, was sent by the physician to the minister, and at last was brought reluctantly to see that nothing was the matter with her except her inability to stand clandestine living. However stoutly she might defend her course, still in the group she lived with, she would not want it known. Despite contraceptives, every faintest indication of possible pregnancy was a terror

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1. weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p.226  
2. Fosdick: On Being a Real Person, p.125 f.

to her. Deeper than her argued consent to her conduct lay the fact that it would not stand the test of publicity. Had she been made of rougher stuff, she could have sloughed off anxiety, but as it was, secretive behavior produced an intolerable strain. She was too fine-grained and sensitive a person to endure furtiveness; what had to be done on the sly was subconsciously repugnant to her. ... The cure was simple, a marriage service that did not alter the conduct but did remove its clandestine character."

I have often wondered if the Psalmist had an anxiety neurosis when he made such statements as: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long, for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me." Psalm 32, 3.4.

In order to help such afflicted persons, it is also well, that in addition to confession and forgiveness, the individual be shown a positive attitude toward life. If we are confronted with fear, let us recognize it for what it is. The soldier about to engage in his first battle, the airman ready to engage the first enemy, is faced with a very natural fear, and he should recognize it as such. It is apprehension, fear of the unknown, which can easily rule him, body and mind and make him unfit for the danger which lies ahead. Instead, he must recognize it for what it is, and let it serve him to be cautious and alert.

Where can an individual find more strength and courage to face the issues of life than through a firm faith and

trust in God. In the second place, to avoid such morbid anxiety and fear, he should heed the admonitions of Scriptures: "Walk honestly as in the day" Rom. 13, 12.13; "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" Eph. 5, 11. When persons lead a truly Christian life, so that their conduct can stand the light of day, then there will be no evil conscience to stir up mental conflicts.<sup>1</sup>

#### OBSESSIONAL AND COMPULSION NEUROSES

Obsessions and compulsions are found in a vast variety of forms. A person may be normal in every respect, except that he may have an obsessive dread or a compulsion to do a certain thing for which he can give no reason. I have already quoted the classic example of the soldier in the first World War afflicted with claustrophobia (cf. p.6.7). Another person may have a dread to travel a subway. He may succeed, by an immense effort of his rational will to convince himself that there is absolutely nothing to fear, and actually travel by subway, yet in forcing himself to do this he only becomes the victim of complete exhaustion and possible breakdown. Another oft quoted illustration is that of Lady Macbeth in the Shakespearean play, who suffered from a handwashing compulsion, which compelled her to go through the business of washing her hands many times during the day. The person derives no pleasure or satisfaction from such things, but they feel bound to carry them out. A rather humorous incident

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1. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.43

is related by a certain man, who observed the medical superintendent of a certain asylum, who would on no account step on the cracks between pavingstones. His subordinates were living in the hope of one day seeing him walk on a crazy-paving pathway which was to be constructed on the grounds.<sup>1</sup> Another person who may seem very companionable may have a compulsive urge to stab his companion; therefore he has a mortal fear and dread of any pointed instrument, for fear he might pick it up and commit a terrible crime. Many people today have a morbid fear of cancer and other diseases. Every obsession or compulsion is caused by some buried complex or repression.

The method of helping such individuals would take on the same form as that suggested in regard to repression. The fundamental cause must be brought back to consciousness, so that the individual can re-evaluate his fear or peculiar urges. If the repressed matter involves a sin, the person must make confession and be given the full assurance of forgiveness. Often times though, it becomes a matter of re-education in the thing which is the basis for the obsession or compulsion. There was a time when great efforts were made to make people germ conscious, and thereby induce them to be more sanitary. But this actually produced a morbid fear in some people, such as the woman who washed her hands scores of times a day, boiled almost everything in disinfectants, and even went so

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1. Cattell: General Psychology, p.113 f.

far as to wash the salad in lysol.<sup>1</sup> It is quite obvious that this woman had a perverted sense of God's creation and needed enlightenment. The thought of germs and their potential danger had been exaggerated out of all proportion. She needed the assistance of some person with a normal perspective. A pastor would be well qualified to do this, and, at the same time, give her the assurance that God's creation is not a hideous nightmare; and above all, enlighten her as to the wonderful mechanism of the human body, which is well able to cope with the germ problem, so long as the individual uses a little of the common sense that God has given them.

#### INFERIORITY COMPLEX - SUPERIORITY COMPLEX

An inferiority complex is a group of ideas, the central one of which is disbelief in oneself, in one's value to the community and in one's ability to do certain things.<sup>1</sup> It worries the person, because it militates against self-expression. In every human being there is the fundamental desire for power, self-expression, and self-realization implanted by God Himself, for that is the spark-plug of activity. It gives us ambition, it fills us with the incentive to make our lives worthwhile. Believing that we are God's stewards, entrusted with certain gifts and abilities, we want to take our place in this world and fulfill our purpose.

Therefore, when individuals are frustrated in their

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1. Weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p.230; 135.

desire for self-expression, or made to feel that they are of no importance and not wanted, or their legitimate belief in themselves and their abilities is destroyed, what is commonly termed an "inferiority complex" will result.

Here is a man, supposedly in the prime of life, who can't hold a job. When he applies for a new job, he trembles, stammers and stutters in the interview. He is turned down at one place after the other; and finally he puts his head in his hands and sobs like a child, and he doesn't know why. Yes, he is discouraged, he has been turned down many times, he has lost many a job. But why can't he take his rightful place in the world as other men? He doesn't know why. But the reason goes right back to his childhood and the development of a very serious case of inferiority. He was the last child of a large family and quite unwanted. He heard from his parents' own lips that his birth was an accident. They were not interested in his education. Other brothers and sisters were praised continually in his presence, but that coveted praise rarely or never came to him. His father told him repeatedly that there was nothing worthwhile he could do. One night he was found in the attic sobbing his heart out, and when asked what was wrong, he gave the true answer: "No one wants me". And thus he was brought up in life. No wonder the man did not believe in himself, every desire of being wanted, every desire for praise and feeling important, every desire for self-expression had been frustrated.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p. 135. 138.

The inferiority complex is usually developed in childhood.<sup>1</sup> One common cause is physical disability or deformity. Some children are born physically deformed, such as clubfoot, hairlip, conspicuous birthmarks, etc., or they may become deformed in early childhood through some accident, such as the loss of an eye, an arm, etc. These physical deformities can easily become tremendous barriers to a happy, normal life. Parents may coddle the child because of these handicaps and treat them as semi-invalids, which centers the child's attention upon its handicap and instead of overcoming it, the child capitalizes on it by obtaining the attention, love, and interest of others by means of that deformity, and thus the natural desires have been perverted and directed into a wrong channel.

The relation of children in a family toward one another is also a common cause for this complex. Children often become guilty of teasing and ridicule, especially the older ones. We all know how children idealize age; if they are a year or two older than another child, this seems very important, and they do not hesitate to give expression to it. This, of course, is very humiliating to the younger, for they too earnestly desire to be older - much older.

(I have often felt that this very thing sheds a little light on the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son. Luke 15, 11-32. When we see the attitude of the older brother, we can just picture how in earlier years he had taken a very similar

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1. Readers' Digest: Dec.1944 "How Parents Change Children into Mental Misfits" p.98

attitude toward his younger brother, and thus had created in the younger brother the desire to get away from a home which had lost its significance as a haven with a loving father where he could find shelter and food and security. It had become a symbol of oppression and frustration as represented by his elder brother. So the solution which suggested itself was to get away from that home, out into the world where he could find self-expression and self-realization.)

But the wrong attitude of parents toward their children, already referred to, is equally as dangerous, if not more so. Parents may unconsciously create the impression that the children are not wanted, as when the parents become so absorbed in their work and other things that they have no time for their children, never show an interest in what they are doing, never have time to laugh or play with them, never have a word of commendation and praise. A child should never be made to feel that it is unwanted, or that the parents were disappointed that their son was not a daughter or vice versa.<sup>1</sup> In case of adoption during infancy, or if a child is born outside of marriage, and if the child learns these facts in the wrong manner, untold harm may result.<sup>2</sup>

Still another cause of inferiority complex is undue domination by one parent or both. The child's life is regimented in consequence, and he is given no opportunity to show any initiative or self-expression. He can't even fight his own

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1. DeSchweinitz: The Art of Helping People, p. 24  
2. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p. 69



meeting strangers, shrinking from a difficult task, or of anything which may expose him to criticism. Or it may develop into far more disagreeable characteristics, such as bullying, thieving, lying, complaining and grumbling, pessimism, conceit.

The Pastor will find that this inferiority complex demonstrates itself in the lives of his adult members in many different ways, some of which sometimes may become the cause of trouble in the congregation. I know of a church member, quite wealthy, who holds a high position in business but who obviously is faced with a feeling of inferiority. He demonstrates the fundamental urge for self-realization by his too-obviously wanting to be a "big-shot". He cannot endure having his own ideas opposed. He refuses to accept a nomination to an office for fear that his opponent, whom he regards as being on a lower social and economic level than he, will be elected.

Or the pastor may learn that he himself is faced with a serious inferiority complex which is a definite hindrance in his work.

The cure of inferiority complex involves two factors: 1. self-knowledge; 2. self-adjustment.<sup>1</sup> Both steps are extremely difficult.

If the inferiority complex is completely repressed, then it requires the skill of another person to lift from the unconscious the matter which is so distasteful to the

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1. DeSchweinitz: Art of Helping People Out of Trouble,  
p.106

individual. If it has not gone that far, then the pastor may suggest to the person that he be utterly sincere with himself and spend an hour a day for as many days as necessary to review the past, starting with the earliest thing he can remember, with the thought of looking for some frustration. If the pastor can gain the complete confidence of the person, he can be of invaluable assistance by frankly discussing various incidents in the person's life, by showing him how inferiority is manifesting itself, and by suggesting possible causes.<sup>1</sup> Or members of the family may render this service, but in the kindly manner suggested by Dr. Crane, namely, to sandwich the mention of an unpleasant characteristic between two compliments.

An even better method for a true Christian is to perform the spiritual exercise of self-examination, in the presence of God scanning our thoughts and our conduct, our character and our manner of life in the light of His holy Commandments. If we have fully lived according to these Commandments then we have achieved the highest form of self-expression in complete harmony with God and man. But because of our corrupt nature, we will learn that we have failed, and the Commandments will show us just where we have failed, and thus uncovering the very cause or causes of the inferiority complex.

Secondly, fully understanding the true meaning of the stewardship of life, we must take stock of the gifts and

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1. DeSchweinitz: Art of Helping People, p.110

abilities that God has given us, and thereby become convinced that God has not left us destitute. Rather are we to recognize that the fault lies with us; we were afraid to use the gifts, afraid of ourselves, afraid of failure.

In case the inferiority is due to some physical deformity, we may cite the Scripture that says, "All things work together for good to them that love God" Rom. 8, 28. We may prove this by citing outstanding examples of how others have overcome similar handicaps and have actually achieved greatness because of their handicaps. Or we can teach proper and useful compensation. The young lady lacking physical beauty can compensate for this by developing a beautiful character, which has greater value and is more lasting, besides bringing about the desired result of popularity.

An important step in self-adjustment is to acquire a proper sense of values. Here the pastor with his knowledge of Scriptural estimates of values, can be very helpful. One person may have a feeling of inferiority in the presence of another because he is poor, the other rich. He accentuates the contrasts rather than the similarities. Actually the poor person may be far more fortunate than the rich. The poor person may have a happy family, while the rich man has a home torn asunder by strife and discord; the poor man may know "the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Ps. 32, 2) while the rich man is without God and without hope. Thus in measuring the true values of life,

the poor man may be seen to be far superior to the rich and with no cause whatever for a feeling of inferiority.

Finally, every person must learn to say with St. Paul: "I have learned that in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4,11 and I Tim. 6,5). We must recognize the fact that God has not endowed every person with the same talents or abilities, nor in the same proportion. Therefore, if a person has no talents of the mind, but must make his existence as a humble toiler, he can still be great in the sight of God by being faithful in that humble position. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 6,20 and I Pet. 4,10). We must learn to think of ourselves as God thinks of us. That one person is constantly dressed in the latest clothes, drives a beautiful car, and has a high salaried position, does not mean that God looks with greater favor upon him than upon the man who must wear threadbare suits, must ride the street-cars, and receives a meager wage. God looks at the heart. Thus the humblest Christian can be great in God's sight. Matt. 5, 3-8. The pastor's function is to point this out, not only in his sermons, but also in private consultations.

We also speak of a superiority complex. This term may be somewhat misleading, for this complex is nothing more than over-compensation for an inferiority complex.<sup>1</sup> The pastor must try to convey this realization to the person who

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1. Weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p.151 f  
Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.97 f.

is trying this poor method of adjustment. Thus a person may try to give the impression of being superior to others, but it is simply a means of hiding some inferiority. The speaker who has nothing to say becomes bombastic. Or a person may become a perfectionist for the same reason<sup>1</sup>: he becomes very proud of his fine, uncompromising principles. He doesn't go to church because he says that he can find too much fault with it and that it isn't good enough for him. His perfectionist idealism unfits him for life, because he is afraid of being contaminated by the world. Such a person must not only be made to realize the absurdity of his attitude in view of his own corrupt nature, and be made to see that, in spite of all the evil in the world, there is still much good, and above all, much opportunity to do good. He must also be shown that his superior attitude is due to his own feeling of inferiority, that the attitude is harmful socially and spiritually, and that it is useless, besides, in achieving the end desired.

#### COMPENSATORY MECHANISM

Any attempt to overcome a handicap, deficiency, fear, or inferiority of body or mind is described with the term "compensatory mechanism". Some forms are good and laudible, others are definitely bad and vicious. We shall consider each of these individually.

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1. Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.244

Rationalization: This is the well-known procedure in which a person does something with one motive and says that he does it for another.<sup>1</sup> This is a very vicious form of "adjustment" because it is essentially a self-deception. A simple illustration is that of the little boy who met a strange dog in the street and ran home as fast as his legs could carry him. When his mother asked him whether he was frightened, he answered: "No mother, I just wanted to see how fast I could run". The real reason was unpleasant and humiliating to his mind, so he quickly substituted another reason to explain his actions. This is called rationalization<sup>2</sup>.

It shows its true evil nature in the spiritual field, namely, in the spirit of self-righteousness. We commit a sin and immediately we are on the defensive, not only toward others but even toward our own conscience. We seek to justify the evil remark we made, or the action in question. Condemnation is humiliating and unpleasant, so the mind seeks a different way out. "That which we call sin in others is experiment for us. Where others lie, we are clever; where others cheat, we are shrewd and canny, where others are bad-tempered, we are righteously indignant; judging others, we would call their conduct selfish; judging ourselves, we call it practical".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cattell: General Psychology, p.493

2. White: Psychology of Dealing With People, p.12,13  
Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.57

3. Fossdick: On Being A Real Person, p.138

Much spiritual indifference is due to this rationalization, for there is no true conviction of sin. Instead of permitting our conscience to do its full work of so condemning and frightening us that we flee to the throne of grace for mercy and forgiveness, taking refuge in the love of our Savior and His atoning blood, we quickly hush the voice of our conscience by justifying our conduct. This might be called a conscious or subconscious rationalization. In order to bring about a true state of repentance, the pastor may have to act in the capacity of the prophet Nathan who went to King David and caused him unwittingly to condemn himself, whereupon Nathan said: "Thou art the man" (2 Sam.12,1.14).<sup>1</sup>

In case repression has taken place, and the individual uses rationalization, then it is of an unconscious nature.<sup>2</sup> Weatherhead<sup>3</sup> gives a very clear illustration of this: A certain young man who was a Sunday School teacher came forth with the amazing announcement that he had become an atheist. When asked why, he said it was simply because he had been convinced of it after thorough study. The man was quite sincere about it, he honestly thought that was the real reason. He also demonstrated this by discussing the matter in a very learned manner. But after a few talks with a psychologist a seemingly unrelated incident was brought to light which proved to be the true reason for his so-called atheism. The

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1. White: Psychology Of Dealing With People, p.12.13  
Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.57
  2. Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.183
  3. Weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p.41

girl to whom he was engaged had eloped with a fellow Sunday-School teacher. The matter was very distasteful and humiliating, his mind would not permit him to vent his anger and hatred upon the transgressors, for that might become a public scandal involving him in even greater humiliation. But the fact that both men were closely associated in religious work, caused him to divert that anger and resentment against God.

A pastor begins to wonder, when he hears something like this, whether perhaps there were similar cases in the history of his congregation, not necessarily involving Sunday-school teachers turning into atheists, but members quitting the church, saying that they seriously objected to certain practices or conditions in the church, when actually, the true reason may have been an unpleasant experience with another church-member. The cure seems obvious, though by no means easy, namely to dig out the reason, perhaps repressed, which brought about the rationalization.<sup>1</sup>

Conversion: Funk & Wagnalls Practical Standard Dictionary defines conversion as "the process by which a repressed pathogenic idea is transformed into a hysterical symptom connected with the pain got rid of by repression". R. B. Cattell<sup>2</sup> says: "conversion was employed by Freud to describe the substitution of physical for mental symptoms in conversion hysteria. He came to believe that one kind of emotional

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1. White: Psychology Of Dealing With People, p.13  
2. Cattell: General Psychology, p.493



difficult to pronounce certain letters, especially the "R". But instead of permitting that handicap to become a barrier and a possible cause of serious inferiority complex, he was determined to overcome it, and did so by placing pebbles in his mouth and trying to shout down the breakers along the sea-shore, by reciting while running up hill, by delivering many lines in one breath, by speaking before a mirror, and other methods. Thus he not only overcame his handicap, but his weakness became his strength, he became a great orator. We could mention modern examples, such as a number of nationally known athletes, or the examples of former President Theodore Roosevelt, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. These are types of direct compensation, and they are laudatory,<sup>1</sup> though they cannot always be employed. There is a danger of trying to overcome a defect, for in doing so the person may devote all his energy to that pursuit, neglecting more important things, and losing the proper perspective of life.<sup>2</sup>

Indirect compensation is putting forth an intense struggle to excel in some trait because one is lacking in another.<sup>3</sup> It should never be done with the feeling that the individual may have chosen a poor substitute. As long as an individual has the feeling that the substitute trait never can measure up to the desirability of the trait in which he is handicapped, then no matter how much success he may have,

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1. Gloc: The Use of Case Work Technique, p.13

2. Morgan: Keeping A Sound Mind, p.243 f.

3. White: Psychology of Dealing With People, p.15

he does not enjoy true satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

We may also speak of unconscious compensations which are not desirable. When the handicap is not of a serious nature, or if it concerns some character trait, the individual may fail to achieve a proper evaluation, and in overrating it, seek to conceal it when there is no need for it. A person may doubt his own honesty, and when a theft has occurred in which that person may seem to be implicated, he protests his innocence in such an excessive manner that people begin to question his honesty. Such an unconscious compensation will seldom eliminate the emotional dissatisfaction. Thus the pastor can be of real assistance to such a person in giving him the proper evaluation of his deficiency, causing him to face it squarely and meet it with a direct or an indirect compensation.<sup>1</sup>

Sublimation<sup>2</sup> is another compensatory mechanism of an acceptable nature. Fosdick<sup>3</sup> defines sublimation as "the resolution of conflict by transforming the lower and less desired emotion into driving power for a higher end. So the sexual urge, denied normal expression, is by some transmuted unconsciously into artistic creativity or social service." A spinster who is denied normal satisfaction of the instinctive urge for family and children, and who finds an outlet

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1. Morgan: Keeping A Sound Mind, p.245; p.246 f
  2. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.62
  3. Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.71

for her affection by fussing over a cat, could hardly be regarded as having achieved a true sublimation. If on the other hand that urge should cause her to look after children, it would be of definite value to her own personality and to the community. St. Louis has a rather outstanding example of that in a bachelor whose fundamental desire for home and children has found its sublimation in helping under-privileged boys and thereby preventing delinquency among them. Sublimation is the opposite of perversion.

#### PROJECTION

Projection may also be regarded as another form of compensatory mechanism. Cattell<sup>1</sup> defines it as "the process whereby some undesirable drive in the individual's own unconsciousness is considered by him to come from something outside himself. If he cannot accept his own aggression, he projects it, saying it is other people who are aggressive."<sup>2</sup>

Projection<sup>3</sup> may be looked upon as a vicious habit of accusing others of the faults and sins we are most tempted to ourselves. The bully thinks the world is full of bullies; the immoral person thinks everyone is indecent; the liar says all men are liars; the ill-tempered parent blames the children for his or her bad temper, thus projecting the cause of the sin to some outside influence. This can become very serious,

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1. Cattell: General Psychology, p.493

2. Brooks: Psychology Of Adolescence, p.473

Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.56

White: Psychology Of Dealing With People, p.13

3. Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.139 f.

as in the paranoiac who sees in others threats of violence that justify his own violent desires.

Here we are dealing with an evil conscience which is not ready to take the blame, and fundamentally it is the same principle exhibited by Adam and Eve when God confronted them with their sin. Adam was not ready to take the blame, but shifted the blame upon Eve, and she in turn shifted it upon the serpent. We readily see how harmful this is to the spiritual welfare of the individual. Such persons must be shown the necessity of true confession of their sins to God; that they must admit their sins and faults and deal with them directly, instead of seeking refuge in the unsatisfactory device of looking for a scape-goat.<sup>1</sup>

#### IDEAS OF REFERENCE<sup>2</sup> OR PERSECUTION COMPLEX

We shall begin this with an illustration<sup>3</sup>: A Well dressed young man is going around telling practically everyone a rather peculiar and somewhat exciting story. He is accusing the Masonic Lodge of trying to put him out of the way. And he claims it all started when he declined to become a member, and now they were out to get him or force him to become a member, lest he expose them. He said he had noticed some man following him and watching every move he made. At first, he claims, it only amused him, but later

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1. Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.142  
Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.57
  2. Brooks: The Psychology Of Adolescence, p.483
  3. Morgan: Keeping A Sound Mind, p.223 f.

it began to annoy him. Then he accused them of not only following him, but of deliberately trying to hit him with their cars while driving along the street. Later on they sought to poison him, so that he did not dare eat out in restaurants anymore. They were always slipping poison into his coffee when he was not watching. The first sip he took of his coffee when the waiter brought it tasted good, but a few moments later it tasted differently, so he would not drink it. Since he no longer ate out, he accused them of trying to poison the fresh fruits and vegetables he bought at stores, so that finally he had to resort to eating only canned goods.

The story of this young man contains certain facts, but the interpretation of those facts is utterly false. The young man did contemplate joining the lodge at one time, but finding certain objectionable features, declined to do so. He probably did see a man, or a number of people on the street walking in the same direction as he and perhaps for quite some distance. He may very likely have had a number of near accidents while driving. While eating in restaurants, the coffee may very well have tasted differently at times, yet his interpretation of these facts is so obviously false. How did he develop the delusions of this persecution complex?

Two things underlie a persecution complex; a conceited personality and a failure in life. The person may try to cover up that conceit by posing as a very modest person, or disguising it as ambition or virtue. However, a little closer

examination will soon brush away the camouflage. The failure may be one of many different varieties, such as, professional, economic, social, in love affairs, etc.

What can be done to help such individuals?<sup>1</sup> When it has become as deeply rooted as in the illustration, then there isn't much that can be done, for such a person is ready to be taken to some institution. If a pastor wishes to be of assistance, that assistance must be forthcoming before that stage has been reached, namely in its earliest development of egocentricity or conceitedness, and the tendency to blame others for our difficulties. The effort must be made to bring the person to a more accurate conception of himself, to more reasonable demands on his own abilities, and to greater contentment with himself as God has made him. The effort must also be made to help him adjust to the ideas presented to him by the delusion.<sup>2</sup>

There are many passages in Scripture which deal with conceit and with patience and charity towards others as to their motives. The following passages may be used to help the person understand his relation to God and his attitude toward others. "Be not highminded etc." (I Tim. 6,17). "God resisteth the proud etc." (James 4, 6). "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God" (I Pet. 5,6).

The person must be shown the true Christian spirit of brotherly love. Instead of being always ready to judge and

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1. Morgan: Keeping A Sound Mind, p.229

2. Morgan: The Psychology of Abnormal People, p.533 f,  
p.180 ff

condemn others (Matt. 7, 1-5), he must learn the meaning of St. Paul's injunction: "Be kindly affectioned one toward another, in brotherly love preferring one another" (Rom.12,10). It is necessary to point out very clearly that love will demonstrate itself toward others in thought, word, and deed. The pastor may go so far as to suggest that the person perform some unselfish act, or he may prescribe a definite program to exercise the idea of unselfishness.

We have already spoken of the matter of trying to shift the blame to others, and the necessity for one to face his own mistakes and failures.

#### GUILT COMPLEXES

Nothing leads to despair as effectively as a feeling of guilt, that one has committed a terrible sin for which there is no forgiveness.<sup>1</sup> Naturally we think of Judas Iscariot who reached the pit of despair in a very short time and followed the rather common tendency of committing suicide. In some cases it may be an irrational, morbid fear of having committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. In other cases it may go back to some concrete act and fear based on misinformation.

John Morgan<sup>2</sup> relates the following incident: "A very intelligent and successful business man consulted his physician to discover whether he was losing his mental balance. ... After a complete examination and being found perfectly healthy the man exclaimed: "In spite of your reassurance I am still

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1. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.117

2. Morgan: Keeping A Sound Mind, p.345

mortally afraid of insanity. If I am all right why do I have this awful dread of it? Can't you help me get rid of the fear". .. After a thorough study it was learned that this fear of insanity was a symbol of a feeling of guilt which he had carried with him from his boyhood. He had been told that if he manipulated certain parts of his body he would lose his mind. Having done this, he was filled with a dread of the consequences. But after the matter was properly explained by the physician that no such consequences result from such things, his depression and suicidal impulses vanished."

The guilt complex may also be due to an overstimulated conscience.<sup>1</sup> Conscience, as we all know is a wonderful thing, and absolutely necessary for our spiritual health, as well as physical well-being. However the conscience can also go too far and dominate a person. Let us assume that a person committed a grievous sin, and conscience fulfilled its function by compelling the individual to self-examination, confession, and restitution. His conscience, however, does not stop, but continues its harassing, nagging and tormenting, so that the person is faced with despair, ruining his entire life.

This is definitely in the province of the Christian pastor, to dissipate that remorse through the Gospel of forgiveness. Such people must learn to forgive themselves, which actually means, to accept the forgiveness offered

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1. Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.146 f.

them by the Savior. This does not mean that every such case can be cured, for undoubtedly there will be many persons who like Judas will despair of God's mercy; in spite of all assurances, they will not believe that there is full and free forgiveness for their sin, and will finally end it all in suicide.

### REFORMATORY NEUROSES

This might also be classed as a compensatory mechanism<sup>1</sup> by which to disguise a defect or sin of which the individual himself is guilty. As the name suggests, a reformatory neurosis is the tendency to reform others, and is a compensation in this that it makes that person feel nobler<sup>2</sup> by engaging in this business of uplifting others; and thereby he also detracts attention from his own defect. Thus the best temperance reformer is the converted drunkard. A man may appear fanatical in his efforts to reform the world in such a matter as playing baseball on a Sunday. He makes it sound as though the salvation of the world depended upon the elimination of Sunday baseball. He preaches against it and spends money in propaganda against it, and takes every occasion to speak about it. A person may lack moral stamina, he is ashamed of his sinfulness and is anxious that others will not detect it, and so he goes around trying to reform

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1. Morgan: Keeping A Sound Mind, p.251  
Ligon: The Psychology of Christian Personality, p.305
  2. White: Psychology of Dealing With People, p.7

others of that very trait. Or it may show itself in this that the liar is very likely to be particularly sensitive to being deceived by some one else. The conceited person despises and denounces the conceit of others, while the gossip will bitterly resent any gossip about himself.

The words of Jesus in Matt. 7, 3-5 are very appropriate here: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye: and behold, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye: and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye".

However, when the trouble is deep seated, we must speak of it as a neurosis or, specifically, reformatory paranoia.<sup>1</sup> In such cases the individual cannot give the true reason for his tendency, for no doubt, he will speak of his high ideals, when actually there is a deep-lying sin which has been repressed. In such a case his reformatory tendency may not necessarily be related to his own sin, but he may choose any "minor" sin and then magnify it out of all proportions as though it were the root of all evil. Thus the treatment for repression must be employed and the individual confronted with the true reason or cause for this tendency to bring him back to normalcy. Help in achieving an objective atti-

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1. Ligon: The Psychology of Christian Personality, p.305

tude toward self must be given, plus help in dealing with the sins thus acknowledged--confession, prayer for forgiveness, acceptance of forgiveness, prayer for strength to put aside repetition of the sin, and Word and Sacrament to provide the necessary faith and to confer the needed grace and blessing.

### ESCAPE MECHANISM

This is a tremendously large field, and takes on an amazing variety of forms, from the common lie to forms of insanity. A class in school may be notified that on a certain day there is to be an examination, and on that day several students are absent and later excuse themselves because of illness. Let us suppose that in one case at least it was not a deliberate lie. The idea of the examination was extremely distasteful, and the student knew that if he or she was sick they would not have to take it. A slight pain, with no significance whatever, was perhaps unconsciously exaggerated out of all proportions, so that the student actually spent the time in bed. Thus also if we are faced with an unpleasant and very disagreeable task, a headache may give us such pain that the task is left undone. While on the other hand, if we had something pleasant and desirable in prospect, the headache would trouble us very little. Thus illness can easily become an escape mechanism.

Neurasthenia may be classed as an escape mechanism.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Schindler: The Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.103

The person is afflicted with a vague fear, he seems to be worrying about his health, but actually he is afraid of life, and illness makes it unnecessary for that individual to face life,<sup>1</sup> it is therefore the perfect escape mechanism. The cure for such as these is not rest to recuperate from illness, but rather a definite schedule of work, and re-education in the fundamental attitudes toward life.<sup>2</sup>

Hysteria is also a flight from some conflict. Hysteria takes on many forms, but the central factor is the adoption of symptoms of some disease, thereby disguising the real conflict. Under hysteria we may even include such a mild thing as forgetting. Even in ordinary circumstances our memories can play queer tricks on us. The business man with two appointments will very likely forget about the unpleasant one.<sup>3</sup> The little boy who is instructed to perform a little task does not do it. If he were honest and told the parent that he didn't want to do it, he would very likely be punished, but if he says: "I forgot" he thereby gets by with it. If continued, this forgetting can become quite real; the mind has found a good escape mechanism. Fainting spells may be an escape mechanism. Due to various associations in regard to blood, a person may faint at the sight of blood. He actually runs away from an emotional strain by going into a form of sleep.

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1. DeSchweinitz: The Art of Helping People, p.171 f.
  2. Ligon: The Psychology of Christian Personality, p.272  
White: Psychology of Dealing With People, p.14
  3. Schindler: The Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.59

Leslie D. Weatherhead<sup>1</sup> tells the story of a soldier in the First World War, who in one of the forward drives of the Allies came to the German trenches and found three enemy soldiers, all of whom he killed with his bayonet. When other soldiers came up, they praised him for his heroic action. But later on the man was afflicted with dumbness, the true cause of which was finally discovered by some psychiatrist. What had actually happened was this: when the soldier came to the German trench he found these three enemy soldiers, but all three were wounded and defenseless. And, according to international law, it was a serious crime to kill a wounded enemy soldier. He knew this, yet in the heat of battle, he acted rashly. No sooner was the act committed, though, than his conscience went to work. Finally the matter was repressed. But the unconscious mind sought an escape mechanism, suggesting that since he was the only one who knew the truth, the truth must never be revealed. He realized though that he might talk in his sleep and thus reveal the horrible secret, so dumbness became a perfect escape mechanism. Such cases of course usually call for the skill of a psychiatrist. But here again we see that sin is involved, and that the Christian ministry has the cure, namely divine forgiveness, if the repressed matter can be lifted from the unconscious.

A person who has experienced severe disappointments,

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1. Weatherhead: Psychology And Life, p.221 f.

business failure, worry over business, deep sorrow in bereavement, may seek to escape from these realities in drunkenness.<sup>1</sup> Dope or narcotics may also be employed as an escape mechanism from the realities of life.<sup>2</sup> But in all such cases the individual must be taught to face life. The Christian ministry surely has much to offer such individuals, to give them a healthy outlook on life. Those afflicted with fear must be made to realize that the method of escape they employ is no escape whatever. Furthermore, they must learn to trust in the power of God to help them, and they must learn to have faith in prayer. If disappointment or sorrow is the cause of seeking a method of escape, the pastor can show that God can bring good out of evil, blessings out of tribulation, that God's ways are always best. So the ministry of comfort and consolation must be employed. If alcohol is employed because of disagreeable home and family conditions the proper adjustments must be made, and a Christian home established.

I might mention a case of escape mechanism that took the form of insanity. <sup>1.3</sup> "A young girl used to build imaginary pictures of what her future life would be like. She had visions of ideal love affairs, more or less platonic in nature but mixed slightly with eroticism. She would spend a large part of her evenings fitting herself out in fancy

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1. Gloc: The Use of Case Work Technique, p.14; p.13  
DeSchweinitz: The Art of Helping People, p.122
  2. White: Psychology Of Dealing With People, p.13
  3. Anon.: Value of Psychiatry in Pastoral Work, p.8

lingerie and parading before the other girls in the boarding school where she attended. All the time that she was doing this she imagined what her future husband would exclaim concerning her beauty. Her dream never came true. She married at the age of seventeen, and after a week of married life learned that her husband was nothing like the prince charming of her dreams. She however neither sought to readjust her thinking to reality, nor did she separate from her husband until she had spent seven years of such married life. About the time of her separation, her father met with serious financial losses, and in order to help the family finances, she arranged a cold-blooded marriage with a man twenty years her senior. But husband number two was everything but her prince charming, in fact he never had a word to say about her beauty, no matter how much she primped and dressed. Finally she sought escape from this unpleasant situation by reverting into her world of phantasy where everything was lovely and ideal. She was taken away to an institution where she continued to live in that world of dreams for some time. But gradually recovery began to take place, and she was given an insight into her true condition that caused her insanity. Now she was determined to face reality and even make a success of her marriage. She actually made readjustments, even though, at the same time, that world of dreams and phantasy still appealed to her.

## FRUSTRATIONS

Frustration, which is also called "thwarting" by some psychologists, describes the act of preventing or blocking some instinctive impulse to find expression.<sup>1</sup> A child has many inborn tendencies to mental, emotional, and physical activities. Unfortunately some individuals have taken the attitude that frustration in a child is always harmful, that a child's impulses and desires should never be curbed, lest there be dire consequences, such as destroying the child's initiative and leadership, or that it will sow the seeds of mental maladjustment. As a result the following scene has been repeated in many a school.

"A boy of twelve, uncontrolled at home, was the source of much trouble in school. He was irrepressible, insubordinate, and a general nuisance of the spoiled, smart-Aleck type. He was punished in a mild way, permissible in the school. The boy's mother, seemingly an intelligent woman from a good home, took the teacher and principal to task, and insisted that under no circumstances should her son be punished, for that would prevent his developing leadership".

When a little child is frustrated in giving expression to some urge, the usual reaction is pugnacity and anger.<sup>2</sup> Outbursts of anger are most frequent in children between one and two years of age.<sup>3</sup> However, frustration is one of the most fundamental experiences in character formation.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.462
  2. Cattell: General Psychology, p.204
  3. Ligon: Psychology of Christian Personality, p.254

It is true that certain frustrations can be harmful and may cause personality disturbances; at the same time, certain frustrations are unavoidable. A child's own in-born nature contains elements which are antagonistic to each other, as for instance, the impulse to explore may be frustrated by the child's fear; or those natural impulses may be frustrated by natural obstacles. Frustration is necessary often times because the child must fit into society, and therefore must acquire certain behavior patterns which are acceptable to society. As Christians we have a far higher reason for frustration: the child must learn to live according to the law of God.

Frustration therefore may result in either good or bad character traits.<sup>1</sup> If a little child is frustrated in giving expression to its impulse and exhibits anger, demonstrating that with loud crying, and by that crying getting what it wants, it can soon develop a very disagreeable trait which practically everyone has witnessed. If not curbed in time, that trait can be carried into adult life when persons fly into a rage or pout if they don't get their own way.

A child is by nature self-centered; everything exists for the child. But if there is no frustration, that will quickly develop into selfishness.

Frustration reacts differently in individuals. Some people become very sensitive, they are easily hurt, which would also constitute an inferiority complex. Others are

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1. Gloc: The Use of Case Work Technique, p. 12

the very opposite, they are tough-minded and keep their poise even under great misfortunes. Some it causes to place the blame for failure upon others or their environment, some it causes to be hard-losers, while some frustrations actually result in a repression, leaving the individual with a sense of guilt.

The method of dealing with people in this respect will depend upon the character of the person involved and the cause for the mental or emotional disturbance. The wise pastor will know when to apply Law or Gospel, censure or comfort in such cases.

### INTROVERSION<sup>1</sup>

When direct expression of strong impulses and desires are frustrated, the person may secure their realization through an indirect expression. Such a person is then called an "introvert". We distinguish between two extremes, the "extravert" and the "introvert", both of which are unhealthy. The extreme extravert is little affected by sorrow or fear, he is tough-minded, his typical technique in facing life is to blow on his hands and tackle any kind of a job. Meditation is something quite foreign to him, and consequently religion has no appeal or value for him. He is quite insensitive to criticism, and does not have time for self-criticism.

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1. Brooks: The Psychology of Adolescence, p468 f  
Fosdick: On Being A Real Person, p.85 f  
Cattell: General Psychology, p.279

The introvert, on the other hand, goes to the other extreme. He is keenly conscious of his inner life and ideas and imagination, very sensitive to criticism,<sup>1</sup> and is given to brooding, introspection, self-analysis, and self-criticism. His is a subjective world.

In between these two extremes are the majority of people with no clear line of demarcation, for the normal person tends toward both, but not going to the extreme.

The introvert manifests himself as such by being shy, sensitive, rather unsociable, deliberate, and thoughtful. He hides his emotions and carries on beneath a non-committal outward mien an intense inner life. The introvert carries in his consciousness the reverberations of all the jarring incidents and conflicts of the day. Suicides, divorce, and drunkenness are more frequent among introverts. Alcohol bequeaths to the introvert the luxury of being an extravert; thus it becomes an escape mechanism.

If a person's surroundings are unsatisfactory, they become irksome. This may lead to one of two responses: first the normal response: he may put forth hard, persistent effort to improve those conditions; or he may spend much time in day-dreaming<sup>2</sup> imagining himself amid highly satisfying conditions, thereby enjoying imaginary conditions rather than making attempts to produce reality.

Introversion manifests itself in different forms. The introvert boy, because he is weak, puny, physically shrinking

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1. White: Psychology of Dealing With People, p. 10

2. Schindler: The Pastor As personal Counselor, p. 53

and afraid, little noticed by others, imagines himself the "conquering hero"<sup>1</sup> - the star athlete on the football team, or of the baseball team, but only in his world of dreams, for he is never seen on the gridiron or on the baseball-diamond. Sometimes when a person feels badly treated, he imagines himself the "suffering hero", or the martyr. In his world of dreams, he sees himself being persecuted and suffering many things unjustly, but in the end, the individuals who are guilty of this treatment realize their mistake, are much ashamed, and they acclaim him as the hero, to receive the honor which he alone previously knew was due him. Pouting, self-pity, refusal to play or eat, and other similar responses are often due to this form of maladjustment. Trying to help the introvert is not an easy matter, especially since we so often are dealing with children and therefore must have the complete cooperation of parents, brothers, and sisters, school teachers, and others. It is not a question of morals, but rather a healthy view of life. Our bodies were created for physical labor, for action and accomplishments. Introversion might be called a form of laziness, and therefore the person must be trained to carry out a definite schedule of constructive activities, and those who associate with that person must be unstinting in their praise and encouragement, thereby rebuilding that person's confidence in himself, and making him realize that there is greater joy and satisfaction in actual accomplish-

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1. White: Psychology of Dealing With People, p.11

ments, than in dreams.

The pastor can be of invaluable assistance to his adult members by carefully selecting some minor office or duty in the congregation that does not contain too much responsibility and does not expose the individual to criticism. However, the pastor must keep himself in the background, eventhough he finds it necessary to do a little steering, and must always be ready to praise the person. Eventually that person may be ready for a bigger job with more responsibility. Thus the individual must learn to realize that there is a world outside of himself, that there is greater happiness in expending oneself for the world, than waiting for the world to expend itself upon him. Our Christian religion is constantly emphasizing this point, namely the true meaning of love as it demonstrates itself in acts of true unselfishness.

The boy or girl who is seclusive, shy, sensitive, and easily embarrassed, who has no bosom friend or confidant, who prefers to be alone, is in danger of developing schizophrenia, or dementia praecox. The adolescent who is highly sensitive and introspective, who shows any sudden change in personality accompanied by inability to do any work, and at the same time is unable to give any account of his difficulty, is apt to have the beginnings of this disorder.<sup>1</sup>

If we restrict ourselves only to what is known as the "simple type" of schizophrenia, such persons are character-

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1. Brooks: The Psychology of Adolescence, p.483 f.

ized by loss of interest, gradual development of an apathetic state, often with peculiar behavior, but without expression of delusions or hallucinations. The general advice is that such cases be handled only by persons especially trained in treating mental diseases.<sup>1</sup>

Schizophrenia is essentially a young peoples' psychosis, usually beginning between puberty and late adolescence, between the ages of 15 to 30, increasing in frequency between the ages of 20 to 30. Schizophrenia or dementia praecox means a splitting of personality, so that the individual does not do the thing that is appropriate. At a funeral, when others are weeping, he may be laughing. Then when the occasion may call for joy and laughter, he may be weeping.<sup>2</sup>

Here is the case history of how a pastor dealt successfully with such a case. The patient was a young woman, 18 years old, a member of his congregation. The girl was highly gifted, and for a time quite active in young people 's activities and in the congregation. But then she began to show symptoms of withdrawal, together with religious delusions, bordering on hallucinations. Her former immaculate appearance disappeared and was replaced by slovenliness with no interest in family activities. At first the pastor found it impossible to engage her in conversation, and finally in desperation he asked her whether she was a Christian, to which she replied "With the help of God". Thereafter every

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1. Brooks: The Psychology of Adolescence, p.483 f.

2. Schindler: Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.112 f.

Anon.: Value of Psychiatry in Pastoral Work, p.4

question was answered in the same manner, whether it was appropriate or not. She developed an anxiety neurosis, which dealt with a despair of being saved, or of the imminence of judgment day.

Discussing the case with the family doctor, the pastor outlined the pietistic background of the family. Seemingly this pietism had become revolting to the young woman, though outwardly she complied with it, for her Christian character and training would not permit her to show open revolt. This mental conflict degenerated into extreme introversion, which soon took its awful toll. The doctor diagnosed it correctly as dementia praecox and advised immediate hospitalization. However the pastor suggested a method of home treatment, with full agreement of the doctor, there was prescribed a strict routine of activities, including church attendance and duties at home which smacked of pietism. The pastor frequently visited the girl, thereby adding weight to the family influence of seeing to it that the routine was strictly observed. Gradually there was an improvement and it finally resulted in complete recovery with no relapse.<sup>1</sup>

#### FEARS AND PHOBIAS

When speaking of fear, it must be understood that we do not have reference to what might be called "natural fear", namely, when we recognize a real danger, that fear will then

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1. The Value of Psychiatry in Pastoral Work, p.5,6

cause us to run away, or to stop suddenly, or cry out, or whatever the situation may demand. This is a divinely implanted emotion for our preservation. Thus, when we now speak of fear, we mean a morbid fear. Natural fear will cause the explorer to light a fire and keep a loaded gun in readiness, while he gets restful sleep during the night. Morbid fear would keep him awake all night. We have already discussed various phases of fears and phobias under such headings as: Anxiety Neurosis, Obsessions and Compulsions, Inferiority Complex, etc. We might, however, discuss some phases which have not been mentioned, and which may be far more common.

Nothing has caused more misery in this world than morbid fear. To show how fear can disintegrate an individual, we need but one little illustration:<sup>1</sup> A person meets a bear in the woods, and at the sight of it, the individual simultaneously wishes to yell, climb a tree, run away, throw a stone, grab a club, etc. All these impulses seek expression at the same time and get jammed in the process, resulting in a state of complete discoordination.

The conflicts of the mind are far more serious when we are not aware of them, through repression. Dr. E. M. Ligon<sup>1</sup> gives an illustration of this, which had developed into a phobia:

A young woman had a severe phobia of running water. She was unable to explain why she was afflicted with this

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1. Ligon: Psychology of Christian Personality, p.222;223.

morbid fear. If someone was drawing water for a bath, she quickly had to go to some part of the house where she could not hear the running water. In school, when she heard the water in the drinking-fountain, she was filled with terror. Violent struggling and screaming were the ordeal of every washing administered to face or body. All this went back to an incident in her childhood. When seven years old, she had accompanied her mother and aunt on a picnic. When it was time to go home, the child had begged to stay a while longer, so the mother consented to the aunt staying with her, while she went home. But before leaving, the mother demanded strict obedience of the child to the aunt. The two then went for a walk in the woods, and contrary to instructions, the child ran ahead, and when found, she was screaming in terror for she was wedged among rocks of a small stream with a waterfall pouring down over her. Freeing the child, the aunt took her to a farm-house where the wet clothes were quickly dried. But the child expressed great alarm lest her mother learn of her disobedience, until she illicited the promise from the aunt that she would never tell. Much misery could have been avoided had the aunt related the incident to the mother, but since she was just visiting at the time and left soon after to return to her distant home, the incident was never revealed. Soon this unpleasant incident was repressed, but the out-growth was this phobia of running water.

Pastors must be careful in their instruction of the young, lest they produce a morbid fear in the hearts of the

children by a too vivid description of the torments of hell, or speaking of God's omniscience, by overstressing that God sees everything, in particular the evil that a child does, says, or thinks. In this manner, religion becomes a matter of fear, rather than of love and reverence.

From my school days I remember the terrible part fear played, namely, when someone was labeled as "yellow". I recall one young man in particular, who had the physique of an athlete. He was "yellow", and though he dared to don a football uniform, and went through the motions, he was pitiful to behold. How many a child has been afflicted with a morbid fear of the dark, which usually leaves its mark for many, many years.

When people have gone through economic insecurity, some may develop a morbid fear, and this fear is then connected with money. Unconsciously people begin to build a faith in money, it becomes the escape mechanism from fear, so they think. When some wealthy persons lose all their money they feel that life has lost its meaning, and therefore commit suicide, while others, who did not take that drastic step have discovered, after the first shock was over, that they experienced a wonderful relief. The fact that they did have money had not freed them from fear, but had only increased it, the fear of losing it, but now that it was gone, it seemed as if a heavy burden had been lifted from their shoulders.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ligon: The Psychology of Christian Personality, p.230 f

Every pastor sees this horrible fear in action in his congregation. Persons of moderate means or even the poor, show considerable liberality in giving. But then, one of these persons, let us say, becomes prosperous through promotion and rapid advancement in some company, with greatly increased income. The pastor naturally expects to see these increased blessings reflected in the church contributions, but he is usually disappointed. If he should engage that person in conversation in regard to money, he will complain of the terribly high cost of living, of not being able to get ahead, yes, of being so poor. What has happened? Has he not gained economic security to drive away fear? Economic security, yes, but he has developed a morbid fear of losing that security, of losing the money he now has.<sup>1</sup>

So the words of our Savior are very applicable to rich and poor alike: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart also be". Matt. 6,19-21.

The Christian's treasure must be his loving Savior; then money is viewed in an altogether different light. Money then becomes a means of service, a means of expressing his love. Morbid fears in regard to money simply cannot develop then.

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1. Schindler: The Pastor As Personal Counselor, p.33

A mind filled with morbid fear of disease can be a fearful plague. A slight ache will conjure in the mind visions of the most horrible afflictions.<sup>1</sup> Thus medical students, when they are studying symptoms of disease, may react very strangely. The mind suddenly becomes too active, they imagine that they are experiencing those very symptoms, and they become panicky.

When illness strikes in a family, one of the first things that a doctor must counteract because of its seriousness, is fear. And in this respect, pastors can be of tremendous assistance both to the doctor, as well as to the patient and to the other members of the family.

Since fear plays such an important part in our lives, what can pastors do to overcome it? The first necessary thing is knowledge. The individual must be confronted with what he fears, and the matter must be fully examined and evaluated.<sup>1</sup> The pastor can help to interpret the facts. Often times it is learned that that fear was so foolish, there was no foundation for it. This is true in particular where repression has taken place. A good illustration of this<sup>2</sup> is the little boy who loved to play in the water, but suddenly showed a complete change; he was now afraid of water. An innocent little remark of his pointed to the cause, for he told his mother he was afraid to go in the water lest the fish bite his feet. At first the mother could not under-

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1. DeSchweinitz: The Art of Helping People, p.79; p.90  
2. Ligon: The Psychology of Christian Personality; p.246

stand why he was afraid of the fish biting him. Then it was recalled that he had been with his daddy in a boat fishing, and a remark had been made about the fish "biting". When it was explained to him that the fish did not bite little boys but only the fish-worms put on the hook, his fear of the water quickly vanished. Thus many a person's fear may be based on misconceptions and ignorance. Jesus also instructs us in matters which are the most common cause of fear, when he said: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Matt. 6, 25.

Secondly the person must develop a sense of dependence. The child who is terrified in the dark, is quite unafraid if father or mother take hold of his hand and stay near him while he is in the dark. So fear loses its power when a person in true faith can say: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" Ps. 23; who trusts in the promise of the Savior; "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" Matt. 28, 20.

Thirdly, the person must have a dominating purpose in life, and it must be a worthy purpose, which for the Christian might well be summed up in the words of Jesus: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" Matt. 6, 33.

Fourthly, the individual must be taught to avoid worry and anxiety concerning the future, as expressed in the words of Jesus: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow

shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof". We are apprehensive about what will happen, yet most of the time, when it happens we learn that there was nothing fearful about it. So the psychologist suggests, do something about it. The public speaker may be very nervous for he is about to appear on the speaker's platform. Yet after speaking a few words he settles down and becomes calm.

Finally, the Christian pastor must suggest prayer as one of the best therapeutic agencies to drive away fear, for Scripture says: "Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you" I Pet. 5, 7.

#### INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE

In order to do efficient work, whether it be mental or physical, the mind must be free from all disturbing elements. It is true, that on the production line, where a person simply performs one operation all day long, it soon becomes a habit, so that it no longer becomes necessary to concentrate the mind on the task every moment; nevertheless, if there is something troubling that individual, it will impair his efficiency.

One of the most disabling factors, which makes concentration almost impossible, is worry. There is trouble of some kind in the family, and the man finds it difficult to concentrate on his work at the office, his mind is constantly wandering back to the subject that is troubling him. The student is worrying because he had heard some distressing

news from home; thus while he is at his desk and in the classroom, his mind is constantly wandering, spanning the distance to his home. Parents have received the distressing news that their son in the armed service is missing in action, and they find it almost impossible to get the thought out of their mind, with their imagination working overtime as to what might have happened. And thus we could quote countless illustrations of how worry is a very serious disturbing element in the mind.

The first thing one must do, is to take the issue which is causing the worry and face it squarely. Think it through on the basis of common sense, and if there is something we can do about it, decide on a definite course of action and let the rest up to God. Jesus said: "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" Matt. 6, 27. In other words, if the matter is beyond our control, we are simply wasting valuable energy in foolish worry. The Christian must demonstrate a living faith by placing complete trust and confidence in God, and casting all his care upon Him.

Another disturbing element which can destroy our efforts at concentration is the feeling of guilt. An accusing conscience can be a terrible thing. There are many examples of persons who have stolen something, but who have been so unhappy in the possession of these stolen goods that they made restitution simply to restore peace of mind.

Our Christian faith has the perfect remedy for guilt: divine forgiveness through the atoning blood of Christ. First the person must be ready to make full confession, if not to a pastor or some fellow Christian, at least to God; ready to make restitution or bear the full consequence of his sin; then ask for forgiveness. But the final step is most important; to accept the forgiveness offered, to believe that God has forgiven. If the individual does not take that final step, his conscience will not be at rest, but will continue to hound him.

Still another disturbing factor in concentration is the feeling of inferiority. In the development of an inferiority complex there is a frustration of the individual's desire for self-expression, so that he loses confidence in himself, he feels unimportant and unwanted. Life has lost purpose, he is no longer fired with a fixed determination, there is no drive or incentive to concentrate, so he lets his mind wander. To help such an individual, one would have to apply the same method as that for a specific inferiority complex.

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