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**PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF THE MINISTRY:  
ITS VALUE, FOUNDATION, AND APPLICATION**

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

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June 1950

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The clergy has failed in the task of satisfying modern man, in the opinion of Carl Gustav Jung,<sup>1</sup> the Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist. He maintains that an eruption of destructive forces has taken place, and that man is suffering from it in spirit; and as a result patients force the psychotherapist into the role of a priest, expecting and demanding of him that he should free them from their distress. And therefore, Jung complains, the psychotherapist must occupy himself with problems which, strictly speaking, belong to the theologian; nor can these questions be left for theology to answer, since the urgent psychic needs of suffering people must be met straightway.

As evidence of the serious pass to which the world has come, Jung points to the exodus from the German Protestant Church, stating that this apostasy "is only one of many symptoms which should make it plain to the clergy that mere admonitions to believe, or to perform acts of charity, do not give modern man what he is looking for."<sup>2</sup>

Undoubtedly there is some truth in the above statements, although it is debatable whether one can justifiably make the blanket statement that the clergy as a body has failed in its task. It is perhaps true, however, that in many cases Christian clergymen have failed to make the

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<sup>1</sup>C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., n.d.), p. 278.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 263.



proper application of Law and Gospel in their ministrations. Such application is the essence of pastoral theology--actually we might call it applied Christian psychology--and failure to make that proper application could certainly result in much suffering and distress.

One Lutheran clergyman, who has apparently perceived the significance of the problem, makes the following observations:

A minister must furnish the ideas and ideals that are food; for that reason he should know something about the soul-life of man. Psychology is the science of the soul and its behavior. Its purpose is to investigate the mind, to study the laws which regulate it; to learn more about the inter-dependence of mind and body, and to help men to a more consistent, intelligent, and consecrated living. Psychology itself has no creative power, but it will assist the pastor in his pastoral work with immortal souls. It is a practical science and should, therefore, be studied and then coupled with pastoral theology. Wherever this has been done, pastors have proved themselves better diagnosticians and physicians of souls.<sup>3</sup>

In this thesis the writer will attempt to show briefly the value of a study of psychology for the pastor, together with the Christian foundation for such a study, and to point out how such study can be applied to the pastor himself in his work.

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<sup>3</sup>G. Koehler, "The Value of Psychology in the Ministry," Journal of Theology of the American Lutheran Conference, V (August, 1940), 545.



## CHAPTER II

### THE VALUE OF A STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY FOR THE PASTOR

#### Theology's Neglect of Psychology

"Psychology is the Cinderella in theological colleges," writes Waterhouse.<sup>1</sup> In making the statement he does not mean to belittle the study of Greek and Hebrew and Church History, but he does wish to raise the study of psychology to a higher level in the curriculum than has been accorded it heretofore. In a burst of rhetoric which perhaps overstates the case to some degree, he asserts that the pastor "will not be able to minister to a mind diseased or to understand human nature the better for being a good linguist. He might, were he a psychologist."<sup>2</sup>

Waterhouse would admit, of course, that a pastor could be a shrewd judge of character without being a psychologist. But a principle which is followed in all branches of education should hold true also in this case, namely, that the practical is not sufficient without any theory or training. For instance, we do not prefer the herbalist to the medical man, or the cowman to the veterinary. Waterhouse expresses it in this way: "No man was made a better minister by knowing the theory of psychology alone, but many a man has been made far more effective by being able to bring his knowledge of psychology into relationship

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<sup>1</sup>Eric S. Waterhouse, Psychology and Pastoral Work (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, c.1940), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 13.



with his work."<sup>3</sup>

Hardman expresses a similar idea in a more complete manner:

The benefit of psychology is that it gives scientific interpretation to experience and assists materially in the equipment of those who have not yet had time to acquire experience. There is a danger, perhaps, that the stubborn fact of individuality may be forgotten in the attempt to classify all comers under a few heads; but there is none the less a considerable gain to be looked for from the psychology of temperament when that particular study has been carried further.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding the method to be followed in such a study, Waterhouse suggests that if the pastor has had no formal education in psychology, a good correspondence course is better than nothing. Since there exists a veritable jungle of modern psychological literature, he feels that it is wise to start with a standard textbook of general psychology before continuing to psychopathology--and for good reason: there are too many people in existence with a second-hand knowledge of the theories of Freud, Jung, and Adler; and such people, thinking that they are experts, may cause a lot of damage.<sup>5</sup>

Waterhouse believes, however, that it is valuable for a pastor to acquaint himself with all the major schools of psychoanalysis, particularly the three mentioned above. His advice is to read all and pin faith to none; not to adopt any system wholesale but to acknowledge the factors of importance in the study of human nature and learn therefrom

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>O. Hardman, "The Psychology of Moral Development," Psychology and the Church, edited by O. Hardman (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 163 f.

<sup>5</sup>Waterhouse, op. cit., p. 25 f.



with discrimination.<sup>6</sup> "I am certain," he says, "that the best use that the average man can make of psychology is that of utilizing to the full the insight into human nature which it affords."<sup>7</sup>

It might be well to mention very briefly a few of the basic elements of modern psychology which can be learned in a study of the major schools of psychoanalysis. Schindler<sup>8</sup> points particularly to Freud, who is generally regarded as the pioneer in this field: Freud lays great emphasis (as does his pupil, Adler) on the lasting effect of childhood experiences on the later development of personality. Funerals, certain radio programs and movies, church experiences--these all leave their mark on the growing child for good or ill. Also there is Freud's idea of transference, by which he means that certain feelings which have been created in one's relationship with one person are transferred to another person and situation. For instance, a parishioner may develop strong feelings of attachment for his pastor, as expressed in statements such as this: "He's just like a father to me." Such attachment gives evidence of the need for someone with whom one can once more experience the confidence of a child in his father; and Schindler explains the transference on the basis of the pastor's commanding position in the pulpit and his nearness to his people in days of crisis.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 253 f.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>8</sup>Carl J. Schindler, The Pastor as a Personal Counselor: A Manual of Pastoral Psychology (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1942), p. 68.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 70.



Jung's studies of personality on the basis of the hypothesis of introversion and extroversion, which he calls analytical psychology, deserve some attention. We might refer also to Alfred Adler's individual psychology with its emphasis on the inferiority and superiority complexes. Regarding Adler's system, however, it would be well to heed the word of caution voiced by Hiltner. He states that the Adlerian psychology was based on relatively superficial premises, and such sound ideas as it had were later assimilated by other groups; thus it has not been perpetuated as an influential school.<sup>10</sup>

At this point the question might arise as to what specific values lie in a study of the theories of psychology. Relton, who feels that its methods have something to teach us on the question of the religious life and our human methods of developing it, writes:

Religion in company with other branches of human knowledge and action is being rethought out in psychological terms, and we are bound to question its precise bearing upon the life of prayer and Christian experience. What can it teach us, and what is its practical application? We do not accept it as a new religion or a modern substitute for religion. Can it be used, nevertheless, as a "new weapon added to the Christian armory"? We think that it can, and that it is being offered to us as a new scientific method which deserves and will repay our careful study and use.<sup>11</sup>

Later in his essay, as he continues to develop the idea of psychology as a "new weapon added to the Christian armory," he mentions particular areas of religion wherein he believes psychology can be of service:

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<sup>10</sup>Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c. 1949), p. 100.

<sup>11</sup>H. M. Relton, "The Psychology of Prayer and Religious Experience," Psychology and the Church, edited by O. Hardman (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 112.



This new science, rightly regarded not as a rival but as the handmaid of religion, is really reminding us of long-neglected treasures in the Gospel, is throwing fresh light upon religious phenomena such as conversion, is making fruitful suggestions regarding the training of religious sentiments and the consolidation of religious attitudes.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, the science of psychology points up the effective use of the available spiritual resources at the Christian pastor's disposal. As Relton puts it, psychology "can and does remind us in the name of science that we need not remain spiritual paupers when we might become spiritual millionaires."<sup>13</sup>

Another discovery awaiting us when we examine the findings of modern psychological method in relation to the prayer-life will be the wisdom of the saints and mystics of old, who were "psychologists before their time," according to Relton.<sup>14</sup> And if we study once again the Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus from this viewpoint, we will hardly be able to avoid the conclusion that He was the greatest psychologist and psychotherapist of all time, as Galkins illustrates throughout his book.<sup>15</sup> As a matter of fact, throughout the Biblical record we could find many examples of people who were "psychologists before their time"—Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah and the other prophets, John, Peter and Paul, to mention but a few.

A study of modern psychology would also give the pastor an understanding of the psychological terms which in turn help towards an

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Raymond Galkins, How Jesus Dealt with Men (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1942).



understanding of character. That is the opinion of Hadfield and Browne, who express themselves as follows:

We hold that all who have to deal with the soul--teachers, doctors, and clergy--should take the greatest advantage of all modern knowledge in psychology. An understanding of such conceptions as "unconscious motive," "over-compensation," "repression," etc., is invaluable to a proper understanding of character.<sup>16</sup>

A word of warning would perhaps be in place with regard to the above quotation. At the risk of anticipating the material to be presented in the third chapter of this thesis, the writer would like to state his conviction that, although he regards an understanding of psychological terminology as invaluable to a proper understanding of character, such knowledge to be complete and useful for a Christian pastor must be based on the Christian doctrine of man. The doctrine of man as it has been revealed by God through Christ cannot be replaced by a doctrine of man that is the result of a psychologist's empirical investigation; but rather the Christian doctrine of man must form the basis for any empirical investigation.

We return again to the idea of psychology as a new weapon added to the Christian armory. Relton expands this thought along a slightly different channel, stating that "psychology would teach us afresh that the real enemy of the spiritual is despair, and the real quickening power is Hope informed by Love and issuing in a charitable spirit."<sup>17</sup> Hadfield and Browne seem to have a similar idea in mind which they formulate in a more concrete manner:

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<sup>16</sup>J. A. Hadfield and L. F. Browne, "The Psychology of Spiritual Healing," Psychology and the Church, op. cit., p. 202.

<sup>17</sup>Relton, op. cit., p. 119.



The strength of the Church's position in treating moral diseases by modern methods is that she is in a position to present to the patient a personal ideal by which alone the individual can be completely synthetised.<sup>18</sup>

By "modern methods" it is presumed that they mean the methods of psychology; and by "a personal ideal" it is presumed that they mean the ideal Person, namely, Jesus Christ.

To summarize the foregoing material, we quote from an essay by Matthews:

Psychology can give us considerable guidance in the subject of worship, and of the way to deal with minds distressed or burdened. It should be possible to reach a definite decision, based on scientific grounds, on some hotly disputed practices such as confession. It would be no exaggeration to say that no pastor of Christ's flock should consider himself adequately equipped for the work until he has gained some real acquaintance with the more important developments of modern psychology.<sup>19</sup>

#### Psychology's Estimate of Religion

Generally speaking, psychologists and psychiatrists attribute a positive value to religion, although it must be admitted that to many of them this positive value does not consist in the regeneration and salvation which are basic tenets of fundamental Christianity. In fact, they often use the term "religion" in its widest and most elastic sense, with no intention of a specific reference to Christianity at all. Jung, for instance, says that he attributes a positive value to all religions. In their symbolism he recognizes those figures which he has encountered in the dreams and fantasies of his patients. In their

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<sup>18</sup>Hadfield and Browne, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>19</sup>W. R. Matthews, "The Psychological Standpoint and its Limitations," Psychology and the Church, op. cit., p. 25.



moral teachings he sees efforts that are the same as or similar to those made by his patients, when, guided by their own insight or inspiration, they seek the right way of dealing with the forces of the inner life. He sees their ceremonies, rituals, initiation rites, and ascetic practices as so many techniques for bringing about a proper relation to those forces of the inner life.<sup>20</sup>

It appears then that Jung at least regards religion as a nice wholesome thing to have around for the prevention and cure of mental disease. The following is his oft-quoted statement on the subject:

Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook.<sup>21</sup>

DeSchweinitz, who presents his material from the angle of the social case worker, also speaks in the same vague and unsatisfying manner:

However religion expresses itself, it is the most vital thing in the life of the individual in whom it exists, the primary source of inspiration and anchorage, the influence that sustains and steadies him in every adjustment that he must make.<sup>22</sup>

Such statements are small comfort to the Christian pastor; he

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<sup>20</sup>C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., n.d.), p. 137.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>22</sup>Karl DeSchweinitz, The Art of Helping People out of Trouble (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., c.1924), p. 207.



would undoubtedly be more impressed by the distinctly positive note sounded by the clergyman-psychiatrist, John Rathbone Oliver, whom Menninger quotes:

I'll tell you the kind of people that I don't see in my office, as a general rule. So far as my experience goes, the people who do not seem to be assailed and poisoned by fears are those who believe and practice the Christian religion. And by the Christian religion, I don't mean a religion man-made or man-given, but the Christian religion as it was established and delivered to twelve eye-witnesses by a Person who was both God and Man. . . . I tell you that people who believe and practice the religion that centers around this Personality seem to have an antidote against fear. At any rate I never see them. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not asserting that this form of religious faith is objectively true. I'm not saying that I accept it myself. I am simply putting before you . . . a fact as clearly proven to me as any other fact of my long professional experience.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, some of the psychologists are realistic enough to point out what to them is a useless, even harmful type of religion. Menninger, for example, maintains that from the standpoint of the psychiatrist a religion which merely ministers to the unconscious cravings for self-punishment, the relief of a sense of guilt, the repudiation of unpleasant reality, or the feeling of a necessity for atonement to some unseen power by the repeating of phrases and ceremonials, cannot be regarded as anything other than a neurotic or psychotic system.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, he states that "no religion which does not take cognizance of people about us and our responsibilities to them (aside from trying to convert

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<sup>23</sup>John Rathbone Oliver, *Fear* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), as quoted by Karl A. Menninger, *The Human Mind* (3rd revised edition; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 473, footnote 43.

<sup>24</sup>Menninger, *op. cit.*, p. 466.



then to the same self-absorption which we believe) is really a religion; it is a neurosis."<sup>25</sup> Judging by the context, Hemminger is here referring to certain theosophical cults; such movements, according to Jung, are "pure Gnosticism in a Hindu dress."<sup>26</sup>

Ligon refers to a religion which inspires the destructive emotion of fear when he writes:

Religion has not always been free from fear. Indeed, some of the worst crimes for which the church is responsible are crimes of filling young lives with fear. When an evangelist draws vivid pictures of a burning hell and brings a group of young children quivering with fear to the altar, he does them irreparable damage from which they may not recover throughout life.<sup>27</sup>

It seems that Schindler is thinking of the same kind of fear-religion when he states that it is bad psychology and also bad religion to threaten children with the ominous words that God sees everything they do and is right there when they are bad.<sup>28</sup> If by these words, however, Schindler means to disparage a proper Biblical application of the Law, his observation must be severely censured. On the other hand, if he is faulting the tendency of some parents and teachers to overemphasize the role of God as an angry judge or policeman at the expense of His role as a merciful and loving Father through Christ, his criticism deserves some consideration. In any case, he would do well to explain his statement in a little more detail.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 467.

<sup>26</sup> Jung, op. cit., p. 238.

<sup>27</sup> Ernest M. Ligon, The Psychology of Christian Personality (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 225 f.

<sup>28</sup> Schindler, op. cit., p. 69.



In general it can be said that most psychologists seem to be agreed on this point at least, that religion must be of a positive and constructive nature if it is to be of any help in the integration of human personality.

#### The Pastor and Abnormal Psychology

It is very desirable that the pastor be acquainted at least to a degree with the basic principles of abnormal psychology. Such a knowledge would be especially valuable to the institutional chaplain.

Schindler describes briefly various manifestations of mental disease and classifies them roughly.<sup>29</sup> He urges the pastor to learn the ability to recognize these symptoms when mental disease is in an early stage; and when one is positive, as far as humanly possible, he should recommend professional psychiatric treatment to the family. Poehler points out, too, that since ortho-psychiatry attempts an early diagnosis of symptoms and cause leading to eventual mental disease, it can and should be of value to a Christian pastor in view of the fact that a pastor comes into contact with maladjusted people under his spiritual care before the doctor, the psychiatrist, or the social worker does. Furthermore, the pastor presumably has the complete confidence of his parishioner and can often recommend hospitalization, consultation, or treatment at a time when it may be

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 111-124, passim. For general information on abnormal psychology, the reader is referred also to the following works: Menninger, op. cit.; Jacob D. Mulder, Psychiatry for Pastors, Students, and Nurses (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939); Henry Jerome Simpson, Pastoral Care of Nervous People (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1945).



of greatest benefit. If left untreated, these mental difficulties and maladjustments, whether psychogenic or organic in origin, may lead to serious and lasting harm to the parishioner and his family.<sup>30</sup>

If a pastor should observe the beginnings of mental difficulty and maladjustment, his own personal task is to watch over the spiritual condition of that parishioner and apply the comforts of religion according to the spiritual need.<sup>31</sup> In making his suggestions for treatment, the pastor might refer to a hospital or a reliable clinic; or in special cases, to the child guidance clinics throughout the country<sup>32</sup> and to the valuable services offered by social agencies in the larger communities.<sup>33</sup>

Even when such treatment is instituted, however, the pastor still has his duties and ministrations to perform for his parishioner. The question then arises, just what should be the pastor's relationship to medicine and psychiatry?

In the first place, he ought to realize, as Calkins does, that the correlation of body and mind is one of the commonplaces of modern medicine. It is understood today that the mind has an immense influence over the body; and that bodily conditions have an effect on the state of one's mental and moral life.<sup>34</sup> Calkins continues:

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<sup>30</sup>W. Foehler, The Value of Psychiatry in Pastoral Work (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeo Co., n.d.), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>32</sup>Schindler, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>34</sup>Calkins, op. cit., p. 125.



Thus the professions of the ministry and of medicine overlap in our day. The doctor looks to the minister to give the patient the spiritual reinforcement which he needs; and the minister with a difficult case of a disordered personality consults the doctor to discover the physical cause of spiritual dislocation. The two today work hand in hand. This is in precise imitation of the method of Jesus in dealing with men.<sup>35</sup>

Galkins' allusion to the method of Jesus refers particularly to the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda;<sup>36</sup> Jesus cured the man's bodily ailment, but first He asked pointedly, "Wilt thou be made whole?" And later He admonished the man to sin no more, lest something worse happen to him. Thus in Jesus the professions of the ministry and of medicine were combined.

This happy combination of the two professions in one man is not ordinarily the case, however. The pastor and the physician or medical psychologist must be careful to remain within their own province of activity; and when the work of all of them is required in a particular case there must be understanding and cooperation, not competition. The pastor should not attempt to heal the broken mind of one of his parishioners any more than he should attempt to heal or set a broken leg.<sup>37</sup> Galkins expands his position on the matter thus:

It is a great mistake for those who seek by moral means to bring about the cure of suffering souls to work independently of medical science. There is a considerable amount of unwise amateur psychotherapy in our day that never achieves any permanent results. The first thing that a wise spiritual counselor

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>36</sup>John 5:1-16.

<sup>37</sup>Foehler, op. cit., p. 2.



will do if he seeks to treat a diseased personality, is to have the patient consult a competent physician to see if there be underlying physical causes for his mental and moral disease. Conversely, it must be admitted that medical science, or a purely secular psychiatry, often fails of itself to bring about the cure of a disordered life. A deeper remedy is needed. This the wisest practitioners themselves are ready to admit.<sup>38</sup>

If such a spirit of cooperation is evidenced by all concerned, there will be little basis for the great concern of some psychiatrists that the minister might usurp their function. It should be remembered that the psychiatrist is engaged in the treatment of morbid mental life, while the minister is largely engaged in preventive work. It is the minister's task to undergird mental life with such strong motives and supports that it will be better able to withstand the wear and tear of the daily struggle. If he can sense anxiety before it begins to attack the personality structure, if he can find release for resentment and new tasks for those in danger of frustration, he should be able to cooperate and not to compete with the psychiatrist.<sup>39</sup>

At this point a word of caution to the pastor is in place. He may wish to send a parishioner to a medical psychologist; but he should not be content to make use of any and every such practitioner—only those men whose methods and outlook he can trust. Waterhouse claims that he has seen "too much harm done by rabid Freudians and men whose outlook is grossly materialistic to wish to send a patient to any adviser he may chance upon."<sup>40</sup> Hiltner recalls that during the twenties

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<sup>38</sup>Calkins, *op. cit.*, p. 126 f.

<sup>39</sup>Schindler, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup>Hiltner, *op. cit.*, p. 99.



when the greatest enemy of psychoanalysis was a faddish public interest in a badly distorted Freudianism, there was also quite a number of "psychoanalysis free of charge" and "psychoanalysis in two lessons" quacks, from whom we are still by no means free.<sup>41</sup>

It is probably reassuring to the pastor to note that psychologists and clergymen alike have recognized the great advantage that a minister of religion with some training in psychotherapy has over the mere strict adherent of scientific psychotherapy. Jung feels that the latter's attitude is liable to be wholly impersonal, that is, concerned with the care of a case rather than the cure of a soul.<sup>42</sup> Hadfield and Browne point to the phenomena of religious conversion, wherein it is frequently found that not only is the character changed, but also old neurotic and hysterical diseases disappear. To be able to command such a revolution of love in the soul would be the most direct and effective treatment for those diseases now laboriously treated by psychotherapy. The spiritual ideal has a greater power of harmonization, since it is after all the ultimate ideal; the psychotherapist as such is not primarily concerned with ultimate ideals, but only with the cure of the patient's morbid condition.<sup>43</sup>

The Christian pastor has the resources within his reach of commanding such a revolution of love in the soul. He can show the love of Christ which restores the troubled person to his proper relation

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<sup>41</sup>Kiltner, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>42</sup>Jung, op. cit., pp. 255-262, passim.

<sup>43</sup>Hadfield and Browne, op. cit., p. 199.



to God. And that proper relation to God is after all the final solution to the human problem.

### Summary

The words of advice from a psychologist to a pastor which Henninger sets down seem to be a fitting summary of the findings of this chapter:

Were I a minister, first of all I should acquaint myself with what is known scientifically about the human personality. You may read this with a complete conviction that there is much more to it than we know; you may retain steadfastly your faith that there is something divine about the human being and that his faith in God is an essential part of him. Many scientists would not agree with you, but that does not matter. You could still legitimately learn what the scientists do believe about human beings and very likely you would be able to accept all of it. . . . And, while you are not a psychiatrist, there is nothing to prevent your using some of the same methods, providing you do not confuse the role of minister with the role of doctor. Presumably you are dealing with healthy—that is to say, relatively well-adjusted—people. If their maladjustment is considerable, it is not your duty to treat them; it does not correspond with either legal or religious concepts for you to do so; and it is dangerous to do so before an adequate diagnosis of the exact nature of their difficulties has been made.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup>Henninger, *op. cit.*, p. 462.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION FOR THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY

##### The Faulty Foundation of Modern Psychology

We realize more the value of a knowledge of modern psychiatry when we realize that unchristian and anti-Biblical approaches to problems of maladjustment are daily made in schools, free clinics, magazines, periodicals, and daily newspapers throughout the country. In these faulty approaches to psychopathology, the teaching of the Bible is not only disregarded but also very often definitely opposed and contradicted. Only too often people with acute moral problems weighing on the remnants of a Christian conscience are urged to lower the threshold of that conscience to allow for adjustment on a sub-human level. And such things are done in the name of modern science. Only too often the psychiatric interview with an agnostic is substituted for the protestant confessional. "Deliberate spiritual suicide is recommended as a substitute for repentance and mechanistic philosophy inculcated at the expense of a saving knowledge of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

H. D. Mensing<sup>2</sup> points out too that modern mental hygiene departs from Biblical teaching in its basic premises. This is especially evident from the fact that the modern psychology tends to disclaim personal

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<sup>1</sup>W. Poehler, The Value of Psychiatry in Pastoral Work (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeo Co., n.d.), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>H. D. Mensing, "Mental Hygiene and the Bible," Concordia Theological Monthly, IX (August, 1938), 59<sup>th</sup>.



responsibility for sin and trouble in the world; in fact, it would like to cancel the concept of sin altogether, and place the blame for the world's woes at the door of what we may refer to in general as personal and social maladjustment.

To illustrate the rather smug attitude displayed by some of the modern psychologists, Mensing quotes Professor Haydon of Chicago University, who delivered himself before the First International Congress for Mental Hygiene at Washington, D.C., in part as follows:

. . . It is true that the menacing metaphysical bases of evil no longer trouble thinking men. Cosmic devils and malignant demons have vanished before the brilliance of the sun of science. . . . It is a great gain, however, that evil is now reduced to comprehensible categories of natural and social. The first consists of those phases of the natural environment not yet subjected to human control; the second, much more important and the source of most of the unhappiness of men, may be described simply as personal and social maladjustment. . . . The interest of the religious scientist lies in indicating that the achievement of the social values is not to be sought in any mysterious, extrascientific source but only by the discovery of a method of eliminating these thwarting maladjustments. The successful solution of the problem will demand a synthesis of the wisdom of social sciences, a collaboration of specialists in the use of scientific method in every area of social facts.<sup>3</sup>

The not so learned professor just quoted diagnoses the world's woes as social maladjustment and prescribes the cure as social science. His words exemplify the idolatrous philosophy of autonomous self-determination. A far cry indeed from the Christian diagnosis, i. e., the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

On the other side of the philosophical arena stands Freud, who must be classed as definitely mechanistic and deterministic. Indeed,

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 598 f.



in his Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis, he says quite baldly: "It seems that our entire psychical activity is bent upon procuring pleasure and avoiding pain, that is automatically regulated by the PLEASURE-PRINCIPLE."<sup>4</sup> The influence of Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian philosophy is quite obvious. Freudian psychology must be condemned also for its undue emphasis on the filth of the unconscious, not so much because of the theory itself as because of its unfortunate effect on some of his zealous and short-sighted adherents. Jung, one of Freud's most outspoken critics, complains of it; he states that Freud has taken the utmost pains to discourage people from seeking anything behind the dirt, darkness, and evil of the psychic hinterland—and his warning has brought about the very thing that he wished to prevent: it has awakened in many people an admiration for all this filth.<sup>5</sup>

It is only fair to note, however, that some psychologists have recognized the impasse in which they find themselves, notably Burnham, who confesses to the hopelessness of the situation, although he fails tantalizingly to discover the true remedy. He admits that we seem helpless before the moral problems of society and that the moral character of the individual seems to be as fatally arrested as the intellectual development. Then he mentions a few of the unsatisfying solutions that have been suggested—eugenics, endocrine balance, op-

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<sup>4</sup>Quoted by L. W. Grensted, Psychology and God (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1930), p. 23. The italics and capitals in this quotation are Freud's own.

<sup>5</sup>C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., n.d.), p. 240 f.



timmm diet, right training, etc. And he even mentions that the success of religious conversion has been cited to show character transformations of a revolutionary fashion. But for all of these solutions, including the latter, Burnham seems to take an attitude of skepticism, if not despair.<sup>6</sup>

Into this discordant babble of autonomous self-determination, mechanistic determinism, and pessimistic despair, Ligon sounds a positive note of reassurance by which he seems to bid the blind psychologists to re-examine and re-evaluate their own findings:

It is no accident that the advance of psychology has everywhere shown the validity of Jesus' teachings. Hypotheses which have been opposed to Jesus' teachings have regularly been discarded when further evidence was obtained.<sup>7</sup>

Ligon later upholds Jesus' contention that there is only one way in which to build strong personality which will stand against strong trials, and that is "through obedience to his teachings. The progress thus far made by psychology can find no flaw in this contention."<sup>8</sup> With reference to the last quotation, one would perhaps like to hear the author's explanation of the phrase, "through obedience to his teachings." If he means to say that one can build strong Christian personality simply by a heroic attempt to keep God's Law, we are inclined to shake the head slightly, since Christian theology teaches the impossibility of salvation of any kind through the Law.

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<sup>6</sup>William H. Burnham, Wholesome Personality (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1932), p. 485 f.

<sup>7</sup>Ernest M. Ligon, The Psychology of Christian Personality (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 188.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 359.



But if by "obedience" he means trust in Christ as the Savior and as motivation for Christian life, we can subscribe to his statement whole-heartedly.

In the same vein, Menninger quotes Edward Glover, whom he calls one of the leading British psychoanalysts:

It is indeed remarkable how frequently the researches of the psychoanalysts into the deepest recesses of the mind confirm the conjectures of some of the world's deepest religious thinkers. Psychoanalysts have pursued the problem of conscience beyond the frontier of consciousness, and the further they go the nearer they come to the concept not only of original sin but of godlike perfection.<sup>9</sup>

The proper starting point for any study of psychology is the Christian doctrine of man. As has been mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, the doctrine of man as it has been revealed by God through Christ can not be replaced by a doctrine of man that is the result of a psychologist's empirical investigation; but rather the Christian doctrine of man must form the basis for any empirical investigation.<sup>10</sup>

#### Personal Responsibility

The fact of personal responsibility for sin and trouble must be maintained at all costs against any pseudo-psychology. There is a marked tendency in modern man to place the blame for his difficulties on repressions, glands, bringing-up, society, environment, mother, father, or the government. Nor is that tendency a

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<sup>9</sup>Edward Glover, The Dangers of Being Human (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936), as quoted by Karl A. Menninger, The Human Mind (3rd revised edition; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 474, footnote 44.

<sup>10</sup>Supra, p. 8.



new development in human nature; one is strangely reminded of the first man, who blamed God, his wife, and the serpent, for a conscious act of disobedience which he performed personally while in full possession of all his faculties.

In his book on social case work, DeSchweinitz seems to be guilty of this characteristic human habit of "buck-passing" when he gives the following explanation for a man who is in trouble:

It may be because he is prevented from using the powers with which he has been endowed. He is bound by habits, emotions, fears, prejudices, superstitions. He is thwarted by those with whom he is intimately associated in work or in pleasure, even by his friends, by the members of his family.<sup>11</sup>

It is significant that the passive voice is used throughout the quotation. DeSchweinitz has presented a philosophy which is at best comfortable, at worst deadening and unchristian.

Hardman has noted this propensity to shirk personal responsibility, for he deplors the strong tendency to restrict the area hitherto covered by the term "sin." He feels that there is a grave danger "lest actual sinners shall be encouraged to confound the psychological with the ethical, and to excuse themselves lightly for sin which is really sinful."<sup>12</sup> He adds that there is often an original element of shirking which is the cause of all the trouble in the formation of complexes; and it should be said to the credit of some physicians who most fully appreciate the value of psychoanaly-

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<sup>11</sup>Karl DeSchweinitz, The Art of Helping People out of Trouble (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., c.1924), p. 22.

<sup>12</sup>O. Hardman, "The Psychology of Moral Development," Psychology and the Church, edited by O. Hardman (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 138.



sis that they also realize and declare the truth that it stands for the recognition of a wider individual responsibility, rather than for any tendency to limit the power of the personality.<sup>13</sup> It is encouraging to see that many who have the proper understanding of psychoanalysis do not wish to excuse sin on the basis of certain psychological theories.

The neurotic patient is a fitting illustration of the point. His neurosis, whatever form it takes, means to him a loss of freedom and happiness; and this is enough to prove to him that it is something that has come upon him against his will. Miller points out that it is only as the neurotic is brought to recognize the parts of his experience and the dynamics of his life with which he has lost contact, that he comes to realize that his problem lies within his own personality.<sup>14</sup> Moral responsibility attaches to such cases also to seek the right means of cure, and to exercise self-control even while they are still suffering. Hadfield expresses a sane and straightforward opinion on the matter:

Whilst the pervert cannot control his psychological impulses, he can frequently control the expression of these impulses in outward conduct. There are hundreds of homosexuals or exhibitionists who have never given way to their impulses in perverted acts. To that extent, therefore, the pervert may be held responsible.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>H. Crichton Miller, The New Psychology and the Teacher, p. 236, as quoted ibid., p. 139.

<sup>15</sup>Hadfield, Psychology and Morals, p. 50, as quoted ibid.



## Sinful Human Nature

Christians are aware that the sinful condition of man, his broken relation with God, is the underlying cause of the difficulties and troubles of mankind. Calkins becomes very specific as he draws a definite line from sin to disease; he maintains as something which is more and more coming to be recognized as a pathological fact "that a sense of sin in one form or another sometimes does underlie disease, and that to cure the disease all that is necessary is to remove the malady of the spirit."<sup>16</sup> Medical science is discovering that many kinds of physical illness have no physical cause at all. Thus Calkins is prompted to say that there is a guilt-complex somewhere in which fear is alive, and this produces the paralysis of some bodily function. The root of the trouble lies in some disharmony between soul and body. The result is a complex or a neurosis, which is the failure on the part of the patient to adapt himself to the difficult business of living. And every day people are being healed after uncovering the cause of their sickness deep in their spiritual being.<sup>17</sup>

Calkins finds illustration for his point in the story of Christ healing the paralytic who was let down through the roof.<sup>18</sup> Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," before He said, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." It must be

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<sup>16</sup>Raymond Calkins, How Jesus Dealt with Men (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c. 1942), p. 82.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Mark 2:1-12.



admitted that it is rather speculative to assume that the paralysis in this case was of a functional rather than an organic nature, since the Scriptural account gives no warrant for such an interpretation. Perhaps a better example of the connection between sin and disease is the one referred to previously in this paper concerning the impotent man whom Jesus healed at the pool of Bethesda.<sup>19</sup> After the cure Jesus admonished the man to sin no more, lest something worse happen to him.

When we designate the sinful nature of man as the underlying cause of evil in the world, we must be careful to retain that distinct cause and effect relationship which exists between human nature and evil in the world. The danger of a turnabout is ever present, that is, making evil in the world the cause and sinful human nature the effect, with the net result of a shirking of personal responsibility for our actions. In other words, it must be remembered that evil deeds are simply an expression of a wrong inner attitude. Jesus expressed this very thought thus: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. . . . Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."<sup>20</sup> Ligon, too, recognizes this cause and effect relationship and shows how it operates in the case of anger and murder:

Laws against killing have existed for many centuries. Yet killing has continued. It remained for Jesus to show that

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<sup>19</sup>John 5:1-16, Supra, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup>Matthew 15:11, 19.



the way to stop killing is not in pointing out and presenting its evils, but to place the emphasis upon the emotions which produce it. Killing is the result of anger and hate. If we are to prevent it, we must prevent them. Perhaps Jesus would paraphrase a statement here and say, "He who looks upon his brother in anger and desires to kill him has committed murder already in his heart."<sup>21</sup>

"Conflict" is a term which psychologists like to use to cover a multitude of sins; actually it can make sense only when explained in the light of the Christian teaching of sinful human nature as the underlying cause of evil in the world. Ligon describes three kinds of conflicts: first, the conflict between various forces within the individual; secondly, the conflict between the individual and society; and thirdly, the larger conflicts which we call economic and political warfare. But these three conflicts are essentially one—and that is inner conflict, for it is within the individual that we find the behavior mechanisms which are fundamental in the interactions between individuals.<sup>22</sup>

On the basis of these conclusions, the fallacy of trying to build character by controlling external acts becomes evident. Ligon declares that Jesus always urged the futility of such legislation. Murder is only a symptom of a certain type of personality reaction. It is the personality which needs curing. Children are told that they must learn to control their tempers; more specifically stated, this is to say that certain forms of external behavior must not be exhibited. The outgrowth of this sort of training, if it is successful, is the

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<sup>21</sup>Ligon, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 77.



suave, smooth individual who can smile to one's face and hate him at the same time. It may be socially acceptable, but it can hardly be called strong personality, and certainly not Christianity.<sup>23</sup> Of course, this is not to say that murder is permissible, but it does mean that mere external laws alone have no power to change inner attitude and character—this can only be done by the love of Christ, as will be pointed out later. Stated in theological terms, this means that the Law has no power to convert or sanctify—such work can only be performed by the Gospel.

It appears that Hadfield and Browne would agree with these ideas, for when they speak of the correct treatment of a person with neurotic symptoms, they insist that such treatment is wholly inadequate if it deals only with the symptoms and not with the moral cause at the root of the disease. They continue:

We should have been wanting in our duty as physicians if we had cured the symptoms by suggestion or otherwise, without curing the cause—namely, the self-display or the shrinking from responsibility. For any doctor to concentrate upon the healing of the physical symptom and leave the moral cause untouched is unscientific; yet he may excuse himself on the ground that he is concerned merely to cure the physical ailment. It is unscientific in the doctor, it is inexcusable in the priest or spiritual healer, whose functions are particularly concerned with the moral regeneration of the patient.<sup>24</sup>

The same writers cite the example of the man with a so-called nervous headache. He may really be suffering from a latent craving

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 262 f.

<sup>24</sup>J. A. Hadfield and L. F. Browne, "The Psychology of Spiritual Healing," Psychology and the Church, op. cit., p. 196.



to escape responsibility, although he may be quite unaware of this cause of his headache. In fact, he may make a determined effort to meet his responsibilities. In such cases investigation brings to light these moral failings which lie at the root of the physical disorder.<sup>25</sup>

Jung has an interesting comment on the advisability of treating the underlying cause rather than the symptoms. We can not assume, however, that his statement issues from the framework of Christian principles. His position is as follows:

Medicine has until recently gone on the supposition that illness should be treated and cured by itself; yet voices are now heard which declare this view to be wrong, and demand the treatment of the sick person, and not of the illness. The same demand is forced upon us in the treatment of psychic suffering. More and more we turn our attention from the visible disease and direct it upon the man as a whole. We have come to understand that psychic suffering is not a definitely localized, sharply delimited phenomenon, but rather the symptom of a wrong attitude assumed by the total personality.<sup>26</sup>

#### Regeneration

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," said Jesus to Nicodemus. And Nicodemus expresses his own bewilderment and perplexity, as well as that of modern secular science, when he asks the question, "How can a man be born when he is old?"<sup>27</sup> Medical science points to the difficulty of repairing old tissues.

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<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 222 f.

<sup>27</sup>John 3:3,4.



Psychological science says that the groundwork of a man's character cannot be changed after he is thirty years old; he may execute little repairs, but by the time he is thirty he has built his house and he must be content to live in it.<sup>28</sup>

Christians, however, believe that to be a wrong assumption; as evidence of the miracles of conversion and character-changing which the Christian Gospel can effect, they can point to St. Paul, Augustine, and a host of others through the ages. They can point to the apostles, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, the woman of Samaria, Zacchaeus, Mary Magdalene, to mention but a few of the adults that Jesus transformed during His ministry.

Admittedly such changes are not easy to effect. As stated above, psychology has never been very optimistic about the possibility; only the pseudo-psychologists claim to be able to do it in a minimum number of easy lessons.

It is certainly true, for instance, that it is practically impossible to change a character that does not feel the need of being changed. The preacher will preach in vain to a self-satisfied individual, who is certain that he is thoroughly Christian and is in no need of further teaching. Ligon says that this, unfortunately, is the condition of most of us. Repentance is out of date and has been replaced by an increased ability for rationalization. One can ask almost any man to account for his behavior, and he will be able to offer plenty of excuses and reasons for it.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Galkins, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>29</sup>Ligon, *op. cit.*, p. 365.



Ligon refers also to regeneration, or rebirth, and equates it with the term used by some psychologists, "reconditioning." He claims that regeneration is fundamentally the method of psychoanalysis, which finds it necessary to trace back in the mind of the patient the beginnings of those motives which now rule his thinking. If this childhood source can be shown to be false, and a new one substituted for it, personality can be changed.<sup>30</sup> But whether regeneration in the Christian sense is fundamentally the method of psychoanalysis is a proposition of very doubtful character. It is true that also in the Christian sense regeneration involves a complete change of former motives and attitudes, and the substitution of a completely new and different outlook. But this new outlook must be the motivation of the love of Christ as it is communicated to man in His redemptive work. Such a powerful basis of true character and healthful personality is hardly to be found in the annals of modern psychoanalysis.

Ligon does recognize, however, that psychology can not by any means make the same lofty claims that Christianity can make. Psychology has long recognized that fear and anger are the two greatest enemies of strong personality, but it has not suggested a workable way out. Psychology has recognized the value of faith and love in human personality, but it has not had the resources from which to provide that faith and to inspire that love. Jesus has given a philosophy of God and man which requires the sort of faith that

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 367.



psychology finds healthy and which has been the very source of the power of science. It gives a basis for a type of love which overcomes lust and inspires a man to the highest achievement of which he is capable. Ligon concludes: "Let those who think that psychology can cure all of our mental ills without religion reflect upon these facts. Religion is indispensable to human happiness."<sup>31</sup>

### Sanctification

The psychological term which probably corresponds most closely to the Christian idea of sanctification is "sublimation." This has been defined by some psychologists as "a steady redirection of instinctive desire, in the sense that powers which are incited to make direct response in the most obvious line of their activity are exercised instead in some less obvious but associated path."<sup>32</sup> Hardman believes that here is an ideal long known and practised by Christianity which the new psychology has rediscovered for itself and emphasized under the name of "sublimation."<sup>33</sup> It is true that in its ministry of love and guidance, the Christian Church diverts desire from injurious and forbidden ways into paths of usefulness, honor, and true satisfaction. The dynamic for this sublimation is the Christian Gospel, and the result is the Christian life of sanctification.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>32</sup>Hardman, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.



No doubt the average psychologist does not invest the concept of sublimation with any Christian content. For this reason Relton distrusts the scientific use of the term, probably with good reason. He discloses his misgivings with a tinge of sarcasm in the following words:

Thus the magic word of the future, which is to define our life's task and produce the scientific "Utopia" in place of the nebulous "Kingdom of Heaven", is the word Sublimation, which is defined as "the utilization of the energy of libido freed by removing the repressions and the lifting of infantile tendencies and desires into higher purposes and directions suitable for the individual at his present status." The religion of the future has, then, we assume, for its central task not the regeneration and sanctification of men through Divine agency and supernatural Grace, but rather the remaking of man by himself. Ignorance of the "battle of the tendencies" within him and lack of knowledge of how to utilize these forces to the best ends alone prevents today the advent of the Superman. Psychoanalysis in all seriousness proposes to dispel our ignorance and increase our knowledge in this direction.<sup>34</sup>

The basic thought to be remembered in any discussion of sanctification, or growth in Christian life, is that such growth can never be motivated by an external law; it can only spring from the proper inner attitude, that is, from the right set of the heart and will. And it is interesting to note that this growth feeds on itself; that is, it is a psychological as well as a theological principle that the greater the development of Christian life, the greater the capacity for further development. Hardman attempts to explain the psychological mechanics of this process. He points out that by deciding in favor of a particular sentiment on any occasion of con-

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<sup>34</sup>H. M. Relton, "The Psychology of Prayer and Religious Experience," Psychology and the Church, op. cit., p. 77.



flict, the self modifies its own character accordingly. It now possesses a will that is strengthened in favor of the accepted sentiment; an improvement in conduct will result, since the will expresses the purpose or direction of the life. And since each sentiment stands in a dynamic, influential relation to the whole character, the sentiment's power of spreading itself will increase in direct proportion to the frequency that its biddings are performed.<sup>35</sup>

Ligon sums up these conclusions on Christian behavior, placing his emphasis particularly on strong character:

If we develop strong character, our behavior will be ethical; but it does not follow that if our behavior is ethical, we have strong character. Far too many Christians are good, not because they are thoroughly inspired by justice and mercy and faith, but because they are afraid to be bad.<sup>36</sup>

It should be clear that the would-be social reformers, who attempt to change society without changing the inner attitudes of its individual members, have set themselves a hopeless task. They imagine that they can replace Christian character with a world in which Christian character is not needed.<sup>37</sup>

#### Summary

A proper study of psychology must be based on a Christian foundation, specifically, on the Christian doctrine of man. Much of the New Psychology is built on a foundation of sand, since it departs

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<sup>35</sup>Hardman, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

<sup>36</sup>Ligon, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.



basically from Biblical premises, especially the principles of personal responsibility for evil and sinful human nature as the underlying cause of evil. Regeneration and sanctification can be accomplished only by means of the dynamic of the Gospel of Christ, which re-establishes the God-man relationship and thus supplies the proper motivation for Christian living. As Luther aptly puts it in his discussion on baptism in The Large Catechism: "Here, then, we must not estimate the person according to the works, but the works according to the person, from whom they must derive their nobility."

It is significant that Jesus said nothing about work of man, in the context of the Eucharist and confession. It is interesting to note, too, that many of the Eucharistic confessions are comparatively so in language, as they did in the case of St. Peter, at the time of Christ's death in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus said his words and set out all the rest of the Eucharistic worship in a matter of an hour. It was a wonderful gesture which drew nothing but a rebuke from Jesus. Peter, in the palace of the high priest, Peter was overcome by fear and denied any acquaintance with the Lord, despite his familiarity with the high priest's words and actions. That performance brought a glance of loving regard from Jesus, and the latter there was nothing for it but to go out and weep bitterly.

There is perhaps the very heart of the two confessions. Psychology has now to realize that man is never entirely free from fear.



## CHAPTER IV

### GENERAL APPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY

#### TO THE PASTOR IN HIS WORK

##### Fear and Anger

If the psychologist were asked to name the two major sins from his point of view, he would probably name fear and anger. It can be demonstrated that they form the basis for most of our unhappiness, for they are impossible to integrate into a healthy personality.<sup>1</sup> It is significant that Jesus said so much about each of them, in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere. It is interesting to note, too, that very often these two destructive emotions run concurrently or in sequence, as they did in the case of Simon Peter. At the time of Jesus' capture in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant in a sudden fit of anger. It was a useless gesture which drew nothing but a rebuke from Jesus. Later, in the palace of the high priest, Peter was overcome by fear and denied any acquaintance with the Lord, supporting his fearfulness with vociferous oaths and curses. That performance brought a glance of loving reproach from Jesus, and for Peter there was nothing for it but to go out and weep bitterly.

Fear is perhaps the more basic of the two emotions. Psychologists have come to realize that man is never entirely free from fear,

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<sup>1</sup>Ernest M. Ligon, The Psychology of Christian Personality (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 16.



at least not for long. Courage is praised as an outstanding virtue, while fear is made an object of contempt. And since fear is ever present, convention continually demands of a person that he deny or conceal it. Schindler believes that especially in times of stress "fear lies very close to the surface, and the counselor will not go wrong to suspect its presence in practically every situation with which he has to deal."<sup>2</sup>

It would be well to remember that fear is not far from every pastor, either, and is probably the cause of many a ministerial nervous breakdown. Ligon's advice is to approach fears with an objective attitude and trim out intelligently those which have no basis at all. Faith in God is necessary, since fear will disappear as a result of a sense of confident dependence. Each day one should do the tasks for that day, with no fear for the future. The fearful elements should be tackled directly, and each victory will inspire confidence for the next.<sup>3</sup> It appears that such advice can be followed through completely only by a Christian.

Regarding anger and its effect on personality, there seems to be a lot of truth in the saying, "The measure of a man is the size of the thing it takes to get his goat." It appears that babies can be made angry only by restraint of some of their movements, for instance, holding their heads quite still or pinning their arms to their sides. No other cause of anger in the infant new-born is observable. And in

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<sup>2</sup>Carl J. Schindler, The Pastor as a Personal Counselor: A Manual of Pastoral Psychology (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1942), p. 252.

<sup>3</sup>Ligon, op. cit., p. 252.



observing adult behavior, one finds many an irritating situation which looks suspiciously like that same infantile philosophy, "I want what I want when I want it."<sup>4</sup> So often anger is simply the result of blocked behavior.

Nor are ministers, human as they are, immune to such reactions. One of their greatest annoyances is lack of enthusiasm in the congregation as demonstrated in their unwillingness to back large programs. Another source of irritation are those who buy fine automobiles and attend the theater, but give almost nothing to the church. Other thorns in the pastor's flesh are those who continually criticize; those who tell the preacher what he may or may not preach about; and those who quit the church because they do not like the preacher. In so many of these cases, the cause of the pastor's anger is in being held back from some projected plan of action—blocked behavior.<sup>5</sup>

Ligon quotes the sage advice which an old preacher once gave to a young theological student, pointing out that Jesus dealt with such difficulties in the same way:

"You will find in every congregation some man, usually wealthy and a high official in your church, who will throw cold water on all your plans and hold back the church on every occasion. You must not hate that man. You must love and understand him if you are to be a great minister."<sup>6</sup>

Ministers, of all people, are very prone to excuse their behavior in such cases by means of the shibboleth, "righteous indignation." This watchword has been used to describe many a shameful display of

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 281.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 282.



temper. It is Ligon's opinion that righteous indignation can be demonstrated in a display of love and service that effectively rebukes.<sup>7</sup> As an example he cites Jesus at the Last Supper. The disciples were arguing loud and long about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Certainly there was cause for Jesus to become angry, and violently so—three years with Jesus Christ, and that petty argument was the extent of the disciples' understanding of the Gospel! But Jesus' righteous indignation took the form of a most humble and loving service: He girded Himself with a towel and washed their feet. No doubt no group of men was ever more completely ashamed and rebuked than those disciples.

#### The Qualities of a Pastor

The first and foremost quality which must be found in every Christian pastor is a strong faith in the power of God. God and Christ and the Holy Spirit must be at work in the pastor, for only to the degree that this has happened can one hope to become a helper of one's fellow men.<sup>8</sup> In general, there must be spirituality and moral uprightness in a man who would usefully discharge such an office, sound common-sense and practical wisdom, a good knowledge of psychology and of ethics, much earnestness, zeal, and patience, unbounded faith and a supernatural gift of intuition and analysis, sustained and strengthened by an intensive prayer-life.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.. p. 267.

<sup>8</sup>Raymond Calkins, How Jesus Dealt with Men: (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1942), p. 19.



Galkins believes that the supremely attractive thing in any man is simple holiness. Much is made of the drawing power of beauty, fascination, intellect, wit—in a word, personality. Yet none of these things can quite compare with the drawing power of a life of goodness, disinterestedness, and love. To be only religious is not enough. There are some who are animated by the sincerest motives, who are ruled by the tenderest conscience; and yet their religion is not a magnet in the heart. They do not have in them the beauty of holiness, which was the supreme drawing power of Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

Thus it follows that a Christian ministry will be successful to the degree to which it is modeled after the ministry of Christ. If a minister judges men by His standards and deals with them in His spirit, he has not only proved himself a good interpreter of human nature, but he has also taken that essential step which leads from theory to practice.<sup>10</sup>

A zeal for souls is indispensable in a Christian pastor. Walther states a profound psychological principle when he says that a lazy and indifferent minister, who serves in his office because it is one way of making a living, is worse than a minister who is manifestly ungodly. When a minister is so sleepy, so void of all earnestness and zeal for the kingdom of God and the salvation of souls, the inevitable effect is that the poor souls of his parishioners become infected by him, and finally the entire congregation is lulled into spiritual sleep. On the other hand, when a minister leads a manifestly

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>10</sup>Schindler, op. cit., p. 148.



ungodly life, the good souls in his congregation will not follow but will turn away from him with loathing.<sup>11</sup>

The pastor must be as intensely interested in the welfare of the souls entrusted to his care as the artist is interested in his creation. Watson describes this pastoral attitude in a graphic manner:

The pastor does not delay over the appearance and circumstances of a man any more than Christ did; like his Master he pierces to the spiritual part, the real man. He is always impressed, and sometimes quite overwhelmed, by the value of the immortal soul—this soul, still plastic and unfired, for which he can do so much or so little. He trembles for it when he sees the destroyer hovering over it like a hawk poised in mid-air, and would fain have it gathered beneath Christ's wing. He tends and waters it, like a tender vine, noting every green leaf and anxiously searching for the promise of autumn. He works on it with all kinds of tools, fashioning and shaping it, as he has opportunity, after the likeness of Christ.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps all the qualities of a Christian pastor can be summed up in the two words, love and sympathy. This includes being sensitive to the needs of others; and quite apart from any sense of duty or ethical standards, such an attitude is essential to mental health. Most mental disease is fundamentally self-centeredness. The man whose interest is in others is not very susceptible to mental disease.<sup>13</sup>

Love, sympathy, interest in the needs of others—that is the compassion that moved Jesus when He saw the multitudes. And it must not

<sup>11</sup>W. H. T. Dau, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel: Thirty-Nine Evening Lectures by Dr. C. F. W. Walther, reproduced from the German edition of 1897 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), p. 307.

<sup>12</sup>John Watson (Ian Maclaren), The Cure of Souls (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1896), p. 215.

<sup>13</sup>Ligon, op. cit., p. 71. In this discussion of love and sympathy, it must be remembered that the motivating force must be the love of Christ, as described in Chapter III of this thesis.



be a kind of pseudo-sentimentalism, which is soft, enervating, and conducive to cowardice and self-pity; but it must be constructive, it must make the sufferer forget himself and face his duty with resoluteness.

Nor is this a generalized love of men in the mass, as is common to the philanthropic suburbanite. This is no abstract statement of intention, but an individualized act of devotion that is focused on a concrete case of personal need. That is exactly how Jesus operated throughout His ministry.

At the same time, this love must be comprehensive; it must embrace all sorts and conditions of men; it must include Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, Simon the Pharisee and Zacchaeus the publican. Watson seems to have such a comprehensive love in mind in the following description of a pastor's day:

Before evening he has been a father, a mother, a husband, a wife, a child, a friend; he has been young, middle-aged, old, lifted up, cast down, a sinner, a saint, all sorts and conditions of life. This is not flexibility--the tact of a man suiting himself to circumstances, but within his soul neutral and detached,--it is sympathy, the common feeling of the Body of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

#### The Pastor as Counselor

There are some sad misunderstandings among clergymen regarding the pastor's work as a counselor; these false notions seem to spring primarily from a misapprehension of the true nature of the Christian Gospel. Calkins, for example, quotes Kirsopp Lake with approval as follows:

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<sup>14</sup>Watson, op. cit., p. 226 f.



The temptation of the clergy is to concern themselves too much with the preaching of faith and the practice of good works, to study too little the necessities of those whose souls are crying out for help.<sup>15</sup>

But what, after all, are "the necessities of those whose souls are crying out for help" if not Christian faith and the practice of good works? As we have tried to point out in the third chapter of this thesis, the love of Christ is the only dynamic in the world that can build up mental health and wholesome personality, when properly applied to the necessities of those whose souls are crying out for help. In the quotation above, Lake shows himself guilty of compartmentalizing faith and its application to need, since he considers it completely apart from the needy soul instead of as the only effective remedy for the sick soul. He places himself in the ridiculous position of a fisherman who knows the stream, the habitat, and the habits of the fish—and then attempts to catch one of those wily creatures with his bare hands, without benefit of line or bait.

On the other hand, there are probably a large number of ministers who are expert theologians, who can speak the words of Holy Writ with ready eloquence. But they know so little about the people whom they would win for the Kingdom of God. It has been said that some brethren devote a lifetime to learning the message, but take no special pains to learn to know the people to whom their message is to be directed.<sup>16</sup> To carry out the analogy of the fisherman, such brethren can be compared to the angler whose equipment is correct to the last feathered hook,

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<sup>15</sup>Kirsopp Lake, The Stewardship of Faith (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons), p. 144, as quoted by Calkins, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>16</sup>Harold E. Berger, "Know Them Among Whom Ye Labor," Today, V (March, 1950), 12.



whose rods, reels, lines, and leaders are the best that money can buy— but who, like Simple Simon, does his fishing in his mother's pail.

Thus the pastor as counselor must be an expert in the field of human relationships on the basis of his understanding of the Christian religion. He must give people the help which will enable them to live with themselves, with others, and with God. He must realize that if a person fails in any one of these three relationships, he will encounter difficulties in the other two. To understand the Christian religion and to know how its content can be applied to individual cases of unwholesome relationships, constitute the professional skill of the pastor.<sup>17</sup> And this is not a science, but an art. There is no special method; each man must find his own, according to his own personality and aptitudes.

To this end the pastor must cultivate his insight, his perception of the deeper things in men, his knowledge of human nature. That kind of wisdom and insight constituted the skill and strategy of Jesus in dealing with men; He "needed not that any should testify of men; for He knew what was in man."<sup>18</sup> Pastors often fall short of their possible effectiveness because of their short-sightedness and lack of knowledge and wisdom in their dealing with men; and many who need help are misunderstood and alienated by a man who should be in the most favorable position to give assistance.<sup>19</sup>

Jung refers to the attitude by which the counselor can establish

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<sup>17</sup>Schindler, op. cit., p. 142 f.

<sup>18</sup>John 2:25.

<sup>19</sup>Calkins, op. cit., p. 27 f.



rapport with him who seeks help as "an attitude of unprejudiced objectivity."<sup>20</sup> By this he does not mean a purely intellectual and detached attitude of mind, but a kind of deep respect for facts and events and for the person who suffers from them—a respect for the secret of a human life. The truly religious person has such an attitude; he knows that God has brought all sorts of strange and inconceivable things to pass, and he therefore senses in everything the unseen presence of the divine will. Furthermore, this attitude of unprejudiced objectivity means that the counselor will not let himself be repelled by illness and corruption. This is not to say that he must never pass judgement on people whom he wishes to help; but it does mean that he must be able to accept such people as they are. And to do that, the pastor must first of all see and accept himself as he is.<sup>21</sup>

Most authorities in the field of counseling are agreed that in order to get the confidence of the person seeking help, it is necessary that the counselor never register shock at any confession that might be made to him. Thus Schindler warns that "the pastor must guard against the cardinal sin of the counselor: to appear shocked or show strong disapproval."<sup>22</sup> Rollo May believes that "if the counselor is shocked or offended, he forfeits his right at that moment to be a counselor—for such a reaction is a sign that his own ego has insin-

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<sup>20</sup>C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., n.d.), p. 270.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 270 f.

<sup>22</sup>Schindler, op. cit., p. 143.



uated itself into the picture."<sup>23</sup> Waterhouse makes a similar comment.<sup>24</sup>

DeSchweinitz agrees, stating his views thus:

He who would receive the confession of another man must see honesty in the thief without being blind to his thievery. He must feel neither surprise nor horror at any revelation that may be made to him, no matter how unusual. It is not enough to be silent and to refrain from expressing these emotions. They must not even exist. . . . It is the capacity to hear the worst or the best in human nature and to accept it neither as worst nor as best, but as life, which is the supreme test of him who would become the confidant of his fellows.<sup>25</sup>

The counseling interview must always be leisurely, never hurried. The pastor should never put on pressure to force a confession from his parishioner. Another common mistake of the inexperienced counselor is the attempt to impose his own will upon that of his client. It must be remembered that people can be helped only if they want to be helped; therefore the pastor must resist that impulse to force his help upon the counselee, or to offer help at an inopportune time.

Sound Christian insight is especially important at a time of illness. Anyone who has observed sick people knows that even a minor ailment can release a wave of panic. If the pastor makes light of the illness or belittles the patient's fear, the patient will naturally be ashamed to admit that he is frightened, and the fear will be driven deeper underground. The pastor must convey to the patient a feeling that he understands his fears and does not look upon him as a coward.

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<sup>23</sup>Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1939), p. 144.

<sup>24</sup>Eric S. Waterhouse, Psychology and Pastoral Work (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, c.1940), p. 274.

<sup>25</sup>Karl DeSchweinitz, The Art of Helping People out of Trouble (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., c.1924), p. 62.



If this understanding has been reached, the way is prepared for a prayer in which patient and minister commit themselves to the gracious care of God, who holds the lives of all men in the hollow of His hand.<sup>26</sup>

One of the most satisfying duties of a pastor in his counseling work is that of applying the comfort of the Gospel to one who is in despair. Luther argues that if a friend shares his brother's sin, the brother is obligated, in turn, to share his friend's comfort.<sup>27</sup> Staupitz once offered these words of comfort to Luther, and the latter never forgot them:

"Aha! you want to be a painted sinner and, accordingly, expect to have in Christ a painted Savior. You will have to get used to the belief that Christ is a real Savior and you a real sinner. For God is neither jesting nor dealing in imaginary affairs, but He was greatly and most assuredly in earnest when He sent His own Son, into the world and sacrificed Him for our sakes. . . . For God's sake, then, turn your ears hither, brother, and hear me cheerfully singing--me, your brother, who at this time is not afflicted with the despondency and melancholy that is oppressing you and therefore is strong in faith, so that you, who are weak and harried and harassed by the devil, can lean on him for support until you have regained your old strength. . . . It is Christ that absolves you from this and all your sins, and I am a partaker of your sin by helping you to bear up under it."<sup>28</sup>

#### Summary

The implication is clear, from the points briefly outlined in this chapter, that a Christian pastor bears a tremendous responsibility. He had best recognize frankly the fact that his sphere of influence is much larger than he imagines. If he is especially neurotic in

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<sup>26</sup>Schindler, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>27</sup>Lau, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 107.



tendency, everyone about him will be exposed to the infectious neurosis. But if he is positive and courageous, he will be like a purifying sun that disinfects and heals everyone upon whom it shines.<sup>29</sup> Jung's advice to the therapist is in place also for the pastor: "Be the man through whom you wish to influence others."<sup>30</sup>

Fritz expresses sound theology and psychology in the following words, which outline the Christian pastor's duty briefly and concisely:

It is a Christian pastor's duty, by means of (the Law and) the Gospel, to free not only himself, but also those whom God has entrusted to his care, from the evils of the sinful heart, which make men miserable in soul and body, by faith in Jesus, the Savior, through whom God is gracious unto us, to cultivate the right attitude toward God, and thus to have a happy Christian disposition and a cheerful Christian outlook upon life.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>May, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>30</sup>Jung, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>31</sup>John H. C. Fritz, Pastoral Theology (2nd revised edition; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), p. 187.



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