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The Role of Christianity in Healthy Personality Development

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THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANITY IN HEALTHY
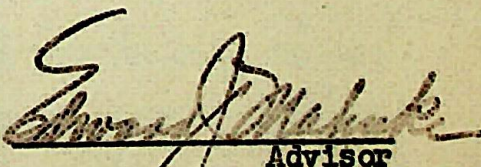
PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
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Bachelor of Divinity

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by

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June 1952

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PREFACE

The subject of personality development is one that has been much studied and discussed in recent years. Representatives of all schools of psychology are generous in offering suggestions as to how the healthy personality may be developed and maintained. Many modern psychologists, however, are non-Christians, and, as such, they endeavor to carry on their work on a non-Christian basis. Is such a thing possible?

We are ready to admit that a type of healthy personality may be developed apart from Christianity. We are ready to admit, further, that much of the work of the psychologists - even the non-Christian psychologists - has been of definite service to humanity.

But, the question is: What about Christianity and personality development? Does the Christian religion have a part to play in the development of personality? May it be said that Christianity is of definite, positive value in the establishment and maintenance of mental health? This is the problem that we hope to solve in the course of this thesis.

Needless to say, the problem which confronts us is an overwhelming one. It would be impossible for us to exhaust the entire subject. So much needs to be said. And so, we

find it necessary to confine ourselves to certain aspects of the problem.

The first part of this thesis concerns itself with the concept of personality. What is personality? How does it grow? What are the factors that enter into its organization and development? With such material serving as an appropriate background, we are ready to consider the problem itself. What is the role that Christianity plays in the development of the healthy personality? After a general overview, we direct our attention to several specific problems. And finally, we conclude the thesis with a brief consideration of the Christian personality.

The writer wishes to thank all those who so willingly shared his many problems in the development of the thesis. He wishes, especially, to acknowledge his debt of gratitude to the Rev. Edward J. Mahnke for his patient assistance as advisor, and to the reader, Dr. Alfred M. Rehwinkel, for his time and interest.

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CHAPTER I

THE ORGANIZATION OF PERSONALITY

"Personality" is a concept that defies interpretation. It would seem that there are as many definitions of this term as there are psychologists who seek to define it.

> Personality is so complicated, it has so many facets, and it changes so continually, that it is difficult for any one investigator to present a completely balanced picture. Consequently, the definitions of personality, the methods that have been evolved to study it, the analysis of the differences between persons, and the concepts that have been advanced to explain personality are sure to be tinged by the viewpoints of each separate writer or experimenter.[1]

There are those who regard personality as an attribute or quality which a person possesses to a greater or less degree. Henry Link, for instance, defines personality as "the extent to which the individual has developed habits and skills which interest and serve other people."[2] Link here agrees with those psychologists who define personality as the social stimulus value of a person. According to this definition, however, a man's personality is simply what others think of him; it is, in short, his reputation.

On the other hand, there are those psychologists who

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[1] John J. B. Morgan and George D. Lovell, _The Psychology of Abnormal People_ (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1948), p. 94.

[2] Henry C. Link, _The Rediscovery of Man_ (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), pp. 60, 61.

define personality as anything which a person is. For example, Allport gives the following definition: "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psycho-physical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment."[3]

Stolz agrees with this interpretation when he says: "Personality is that which a man as such is in the totality of impulses, attitudes, habits, abilities, and ideas."[4]

It is in the sense of these latter definitions that the term "personality" is used in this thesis. A human being does not <u>have</u> a personality; he <u>is</u> a personality.

It is not enough, however, simply to offer a definition of the term "personality." To understand the concept of personality, one must evaluate the composition of personality; one must examine the factors and elements which contribute to its organization.

As was suggested by the previous definitions of the term, personality is not a simple organization. It is extremely intricate and complex. It is the end result of many influential forces, both internal and external.

For one thing, man is partially the product of his heredity and environment. It must be admitted that both of these factors contribute to the organization of personality, although the

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[3] Gordon W. Allport, <u>Personality, A Psychological Interpretation</u> (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), p. 48.

[4] Karl R. Stolz, Pastoral Psychology (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1932), p. 26.

relative importance of each cannot be determined with exactness.[5]

Every individual is endowed, physically and mentally, with certain

native characteristics and traits, capacities and abilities, in-

stinctive tendencies and impulses.[6] To a certain degree, this na-

tive equipment determines the direction of the individual's life.

Morgan and Lovell make the following observation:

> Heredity provides the material with which an individual be-
> gins life and, by means of such a contribution, has some
> influence in the direction of that life. However, the
> initial direction can be and is modified by other influences.[7]

The extreme importance of these "other influences" is em-

phasized by Link, who says:

> . . . the whole trend of scientific psychological studies
> in recent years has been toward establishing the small in-
> fluence of heredity as compared with the powerful influence
> of development and training.[8]

Whether this statement is scientifically true or not, it is to be

noted that environment plays a strenuous role in the organization

and development of personality. It constantly exerts itself in

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[5]Florence M. Teagarden, Child Psychology for Professional
Workers (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946), p. 65. Cf. All-
port, op. cit., p. 102 f.

[6]Is it proper to speak of human instincts? In the history
of psychology, numerous attempts have been made to list the in-
stincts, but no common agreement has ever been reached. Leslie
D. Weatherhead, in his volume, Psychology and Life (New York:
The Abingdon Press, 1935), p. 72 f., mentions what he calls the
three basic instincts: Self, Sex, and Social. L. F. Schaffer,
on the other hand, in his book, The Psychology of Adjustment
(New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936), p. 23, states: "The
theory of instincts has ceased to be significant and useful in
psychology."

[7]Morgan and Lovell, op. cit., p. 11.

[8]Henry C. Link, op. cit., p. 14.

many and various forms, positively and negatively, throughout
life. It includes the geographical, social, and cultural sur-
roundings in which the individual is reared, the formal and in-
formal training which he receives, the recurring accidents and
incidents which he experiences.[9]

At this point, however, we must beware of the purely mech-
anistic attitude. Personality is more than the product of her-
edity and environment. Holman is correct in remarking that, if
heredity and environment were completely determinative of per-
sonality, we should, all of us, be nothing more than automatons.[10]

Far from being an automaton, man is a responsible being. In
the words of Fosdick: ". . . three factors enter into the build-
ing of personality: heredity, environment, and personal response."[11]

He says further: "Life consists not simply in what her-
edity and environment do to us, but in what we make out of what
they do to us."[12]

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[9]Sverre Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience (Minne-
apolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), p. 45.

[10]Charles T. Holman, Psychology and Religion for Everyday
Living (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 22.

[11]Harry Emerson Fosdick, On Being a Real Person (New York:
Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1943), p. 4.

[12]Ibid. p. 5. Cf. Carroll A. Wise, Religion in Illness
and Health (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 78, for a
similar statement: "Psychiatrists and psychoanalysts particu-
larly have been pointing out that the environment itself is not
so significant psychologically as is the person's interpretation
of that environment."

It must be remembered that man is not only a physical body; he is a living soul.[13] He is body and soul in one person. He has a mind that is endowed with intellect, emotion, and conation. These aspects of the mind, otherwise referred to as knowing, feeling, and willing, are operative in every example of human behavior.[14]

By way of illustration, consider the Christian repentance experience. "By the law is the knowledge of sin."[15] This conviction of moral failure leads to heartfelt sorrow or contrition. Such sorrow, in the life of the Christian, results in purposeful striving, with the aid of God the Holy Ghost, henceforth to amend his sinful life.

Here the three aspects of the mind readily become apparent. To acknowledge one's sinfulness is an intellectual process; to experience heartfelt sorrow is an emotional process; to strive earnestly to walk in the newness of life is a conative process. All three aspects are present here as in all other activity.

Furthermore, according to the discoveries of modern psychological research, our analysis of personality must take into account the fact that the human mind has three regions or levels: the conscious, the subconscious, and the unconscious.[16]

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[13]Gen. 2:7.

[14]Weatherhead, op. cit., p. 31.

[15]Rom. 3:20.

[16]Norborg, op. cit., p. 47.

The conscious is that which I am aware of, here and now. The subconscious is that region of the mind which lies so near the level of consciousness that impressions and memories can be reached and brought forth from it by the will. The unconscious is the extensive container of the totality of all our past, with its impressions, experiences, thoughts, and acts.[17]

Here, then, is personality - the manifestation of the life of the organism in its totality.[18] Norborg emphasizes the totality-existence of personality when he says:

> It is of the utmost importance always to remember that the human being is a totality-existence with a totality-reaction, which may be called the I-quality, that which makes me, my self of selves, my totality self . . ."[19]

So then, personality is not that which I was yesterday, nor that which I shall be tomorrow. It is the existential-I, that which I am here and now, my psychic hic et nunc.[20]

This, in brief, is a picture of the background and the organization of personality as it is understood by the writer. Perhaps more significant, and more pertinent to our discussion are the questions: How does personality develop? What are the factors that enter into personality development? Can the course of healthy personality development be charted? The answers to these questions are sought in the next chapter.

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[17] Ibid., p. 48 f.

[18] Wise, op. cit., p. 83.

[19] Norborg, op. cit., p. 50.

[20] Ibid., p. 51.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

Personality is never static. It is alive, active, aggressive. It is constantly undergoing change and development.

In spite of variations from case to case, there is one law to which there are no exceptions: <u>Every personality develops continually from the stage of infancy until death, and throughout this span it persists even though it changes</u>.[1]

The common phrase, "building a personality," is a misnomer, according to Fosdick. He says: "Personality is not so much like a structure as like a river - it continuously flows; and to be a person is to be engaged in a perpetual process of becoming."[2]

When personality development is considered, it should be evident that no one is born into the world with more than the beginnings or the active possibilities of personality.[3] We are not sure, of course, just where or when personality begins its development in a given individual. We are certain, however, that the period of early childhood is extremely important in the

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[1]Gordon W. Allport, <u>Personality, A Psychological Interpretation</u> (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), p. 102.

[2]Harry Emerson Fosdick, <u>On Being a Real Person</u> (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1943), p. 27.

[3]Karl R. Stolz, <u>Pastoral Psychology</u> (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1932), p. 27.

development of personality. Morgan and Lovell[4] remark that by the end of the second year of life certain directions and trends have been set up. "In a sense, the child is father to the man. What he experiences in childhood will help to set the framework within which he operates in adulthood."[5]

The foundations of personality are laid in early childhood. This is good psychology. Not only is it supported by psychologists and psychoanalysts, but it has the support of the Word of God itself. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."[6]

Such early childhood "training" takes place, first and foremost, in the family group, or in whatever primary group or groups the child happens to become involved. But what is meant by "training"? To be sure, there is far more involved in the training process than mere verbalizing. The child is influenced not only by what his parents, teachers, or guardians tell him. The influence of such "formal training" would, in fact, appear to be quite negligible. "The most significant influences are often the subtle ones that neither the parent nor the child recognizes."[7]

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[4]John J. B. Morgan and George D. Lovell, The Psychology of Abnormal People (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1948), p. 111.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Proverbs 22:6.

[7]Morgan and Lovell, op. cit., p. 119.

Of all persons, little children are the most suggestible. As soon as a child is born he manifests an acute sensitiveness to what might be called the psychic atmosphere in which he lives.[8] In other words, he is influenced by the mental and spiritual attitude of those about him.

> If the parents are capricious, despotic, nagging, hypocritical; if they worry and are despondent about the future, if they show no courage and strength when trouble comes, if they are habitually seeking their own pleasure, if love and truth are not the atmosphere of the home, no amount of conscious religious instruction will blot out the impression these things have made in the children's lives.[9]

This is strong language, but it serves to emphasize the fact that the mind of the child is highly impressionable.

However, as we have indicated, personality development is not confined to the period of childhood. Personality continues to develop throughout life. In the words of Stolz: "Generally speaking and excepting pathological cases, so long as life endures, human personality may be enriched and enlarged."[10] The river of personality is continuously flowing. But what is the course of this river? Is it possible to chart the course of healthy personality development?

Such an attempt has been made by Erik H. Erikson, a psychologist and practicing psychoanalyst who has made anthropological field studies and has had much experience with

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[8] Leslie D. Weatherhead, *Psychology and Life* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1935), p. 179.

[9] Dorothy F. Wilson, *Child Psychology and Religious Education* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1929), p. 40.

[10] Stolz, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

children. Erikson has devised a developmental outline[11] that has the merit of indicating at one and the same time the main course of personality development and the attributes of a healthy personality.

According to Erikson,

> In each stage of child development . . . there is a central problem that has to be solved, temporarily at least, if the child is to proceed with vigor and confidence to the next stage. These problems, these conflicts of feeling and desire, are never solved in entirety. Each shift in experience and environment presents them in a new form. It is held, however, that each type of conflict appears in its purest, most unequivocal form at a particular stage of child development, and that if the problem is well solved at that time, the basis for progress to the next stage is well laid.[12]

It is to be emphasized that each of the components of the healthy personality, as described by Erikson, is present in some form from the beginning, and the struggle to maintain it continues throughout life. However, the endeavor to secure the various personality components against opposing tendencies comes to a climax at a time determined by emergence of the necessary physical and mental abilities. There are, throughout life, other challenges and other responses, but they are seldom so serious and decisive as those of the critical years.[13]

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[11]A detailed presentation of this outline is found in A Healthy Personality for Every Child, A Digest of the Fact Finding Report to the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth (Raleigh: Health Publications Institute, Inc., 1951), pp. 6-25. For the following discussion on the course of healthy personality development, indebtedness to the Fact Finding Report is gratefully acknowledged.

[12]Loc. cit., p. 6.

[13]Loc. cit., p. 7.

The component of the healthy personality that is the first to develop, and at the same time the most important, is the sense of trust.[14] The crucial time for its emergence is the first year of life. Studies indicate that the child's sense of trust is closely bound together with, and dependent upon, affectionate and loving attention. The trusting attitude develops in the child as he gradually comes to realize that those about him are dependable. On the other hand, where loving attention and kindly treatment are wanting on the part of parents and guardians, there will be found to be a corresponding lack of trust on the part of the child. When it is realized that some infants are handled roughly by their parents, that others hear loud and angry voices, and that some are really mistreated, it is not difficult to understand why some infants may feel that the world is an untrustworthy place.

Fortunately, most parents are naturally loving and affectionate toward their infants. And while parents make many mistakes as parents, their children tend to respond, not to the mistakes of inexperienced parenthood, but to the genuine love which manifests itself in the parents' attitudes.

For most infants, then, a sense of trust is readily developed. That is to say, the child manifests a greater sense of trust than of mistrust, for both elements will undoubtedly be present. Indeed, this is what determines personality health - not the complete absence of unfavorable elements, but the preponderance of the favorable over the unfavorable, as well

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[14]Loc. cit., p. 8 ff.

as the manner in which compensations are made to cope with
disabilities.

Once the sense of trust has become firmly established,[15]
the struggle for the next component of the healthy personality
begins. The child is beginning the second year of life and,
generally speaking, much of his energy for the next two years
will center around asserting that he is a human being with a
mind and a will of his own. What is at stake throughout the
struggle of these years is the child's sense of autonomy,[16]
the sense that he is an independent human being and yet one
who is able to use the help and guidance of others in im-
portant matters.

In order that the sense of autonomy, or self-reliance,
may properly manifest itself, it is important that the child
be made to realize through experience that he is a person
capable of making, and permitted to make, decisions and choices.
At the same time, he must become aware of the fact that self-
determination has its limitations, that there are certain walls
which he cannot climb, certain boundaries which he must not
transgress.

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[15]It must be understood that the sense of trust does not
become established in such a way that the trust-mistrust
problem ceases to exist. The struggle continues throughout
life. The conflict, however, manifests itself most critically
and decisively in the first year of life. The same may be said
concerning all the components of the healthy personality. The
struggle between the various attributes and their opposites
is a continuous process. But in each case, the struggle
seemingly reaches a climax during a certain crucial period of
development.

[16]Fact Finding Report, loc. cit., p. 11 ff.

The favorable outcome of the struggle for autonomy is self-control without loss of self-esteem. The unfavorable outcome is doubt and shame. It would follow, then, that the child should be dealt with in a positive manner. Instead of being made to experience constant feelings of doubt and shame, the growing child should be made to feel that he is a person of worth.

When the child reaches the age of four or five, he wants to find out what kind of a person he can be. Here the struggle for the sense of initiative[17] comes to a head. This is the period of enterprise and imagination; it is a period of intrusive, vigorous learning, learning that leads away from the child's own limitations into future possibilities.

By this age, according to Erikson, conscience begins to assert itself. And with the awakening of conscience, feelings of guilt arise. The problem to be worked out in this stage of development, accordingly, is how to will without too great a feeling of guilt. The fortunate outcome of the struggle is a sense of initiative. Failure to achieve that outcome leaves the personality overburdened by an undue sense of guilt. Such an overpowering sense of guilt restricts the development of personality. It is evident, then, that children of this age should be encouraged in their show of enterprise and imagination. For, indeed, the healthy personality is one that has lived up to its inner capacities for imagination, feeling, and performance.

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[17]Loc. cit., p. 14 ff.

The three stages thus far described are probably the most important for personality development. If the senses of trust, autonomy, and initiative have been well achieved, future progress in healthy personality development is pretty well assured. "Observations . . . seem to support psychological theory in the conclusion that personality is pretty well set by about six years of age."[18] This conclusion cannot be accepted as wholly correct, however, since some children develop into psychologically healthy adults in spite of a bad start, and since some who start well run into difficulties later.

The fourth stage of personality development, which begins somewhere around six years of age and extends over five or six years, has as its achievement the sense of industry or, perhaps better, the sense of accomplishment.[19] It is a period of calm and steady growth, a period in which preoccupation with phantasy and imagination subsides, and the child wants to be engaged in real tasks that he can carry through to completion.

The chief danger of this period is the presence of conditions that may lead to the development of a sense of inferiority and inadequacy. If the sense of initiative has not been properly developed, the child can easily become discouraged and disinterested - especially if too much is expected of him, or if he is made to feel that accomplishment is beyond his ability.

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[18]Loc. cit., p. 17.
[19]Loc. cit., p. 16 ff.

In this stage of development, children need guidance and encouragement. Sincere efforts should be made to give them the feeling of successful achievement.

With the onset of adolescence, another period of personality development begins. As is well known, adolescence is a period of storm and stress for many young people. In the words of Stolz: "Adolescence is a time of intense and even morbid emotional disturbance. An outstanding attribute of the adolescent is his emotional instability."[20]

The central problem of the period is the sense of identity.[21] The adolescent wants to know who he is and what his place in society is. He is searching for status. He wants to belong. As Stolz again says: "The dominant ambition of the adolescent is to enter the world of adults, to find himself there, and to function as an accepted adult."[22] As a natural consequence, adolescents endeavor to find comfort through similarity; they tend to form cliques for self-protection; they copy one another's dress and manners to assure themselves that they really are somebody.

The danger of this age is a feeling of perplexity; the failure to grasp the meaning of life, to fit one's self into his proper station in life. Adolescents, therefore, need to be shown that life has a meaning. It must be demonstrated that

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[20]Stolz, op. cit., p. 49.

[21]Fact Finding Report, loc. cit., p. 19 ff.

[22]Stolz, op. cit., p. 31.

each has a dominant purpose to fulfil.

The next component of the healthy personality to develop is the _sense of intimacy_.[23] Occurring in late adolescence, it involves intimacy with persons of the same sex or of the opposite sex or with one's self. The surer one becomes of himself, the more he seeks intimacy, in the form of friendship, love, and inspiration. Boys and girls late in adolescence usually have a need for a kind of fusion with the essence of other people and for a communion with their own inner resources. If the sense of intimacy cannot be achieved, the adolescent may withdraw himself into psychological isolation, and his social relations will consequently lack spontaneity and warmth. Young people have a natural desire to sense intimately the full flavor of the personality of others. This sense of intimacy should be nurtured and developed in order that the proper personal relations may be established and enjoyed.

When the individual reaches adulthood, the so-called _parental sense_[24] should manifest itself. This attribute designates somewhat the same capacity as that implied in the words, creativity or productivity. "Parental sense" means more than "parenthood." The mere desire for or possession of children does not indicate that this component of the healthy personality has developed. There are parents who have not developed the parental sense. Then, again, there are unmarried individuals

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[23] Fact Finding Report, _loc. cit._, p. 22 f.

[24] _Loc. cit._, p. 23 f.

and childless couples who have developed it to a marked degree.

The parental sense involves more than an interest in producing and caring for children of one's own. It involves a parental kind of responsibility toward the products of creative activity of other sorts. The essential element is the desire to nourish and nurture what has been produced. It is a self-less regard for others, a regard that manifests itself, not for its own sake, but for the sake of others. Giving is ranked higher than getting, and loving than being loved.

The final component of the healthy personality is the sense of integrity.[25] The universal ideals of love, courage, self-respect, faith, purity, fairness, self-discipline, and so forth, become at this stage the core of the healthy personality's integration. The individual, in Erikson's words, "becomes able to accept his individual life cycle and the people who have become significant to it as meaningful within the segment of history in which he lives."[26]

Here, then, is an outline of the course of healthy personality development. According to Erikson, the healthy personality is the one that has successfully achieved, and is successfully maintaining, a proper balance and a favorable proportion of the various attributes described above. This is personality integration. And such integration is achieved by

[25]Loc. cit., p. 24 f.

[26]Loc. cit., p. 24.

the establishment of a dominant purpose in life.[27]

It is true, personality integration may be accomplished on a low moral plane. This type of integration, however, is not found in the wholesome personality. The integration of the wholesome personality is achieved on a high moral level. According to Holman, the expression "personality integration" signifies "the achievement of that harmonious development of one's personality which makes possible a sense of ease and facility in meeting the issues of life."[28] Such integration is not in any sense complete. "The wholesome personality is constantly undergoing a process in which progressively higher integrations are achieved."[29]

It should be apparent that in this vexing, troublesome world there is no absolutely healthy-minded personality.[30] There are too many negative factors which must be taken into account. There are, for instance, the influence forces of heredity and environment with their many unwholesome effects; there is the unconscious mind with its veritable storehouse of thoughts and desires and experiences - many of them

[27]Charles T. Holman, Psychology and Religion for Everyday Living (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 60. Cf. Ernest M. Ligon, The Psychology of Christian Personality (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), p. 16.

[28]Charles T. Holman, The Religion of a Healthy Mind (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1939), p. 134.

[29]Karl R. Stolz, The Psychology of Religious Living (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1937), p. 186.

[30]Sverre Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), p. 131.

destructive; there are the instinctive tendencies and im-
pulses which often get out of control. Therefore, such ex-
pressions as "mental health," "personality integration," and
so on, are to be understood merely as relative concepts.

And while we speak of the integrated personality, it is
also necessary for us to speak of the unintegrated personality
and the disintegrated personality. As the names imply, the
unintegrated personality is the one which, for some reason or
another, has failed to develop into wholesome maturity; the
disintegrated personality is the one which, having achieved
at least a degree of integration, has for some reason lost its
cohesion and fallen apart.

A discussion of this sort could easily lead us into a
consideration of the entire realm of abnormal psychology, with
its distinctions of the psychotic, the psychoneurotic, and the
psychopathic personalities. This field is so tremendous, how-
ever, that we must satisfy ourselves with a simple classifi-
cation offered by Morgan and Lovell:

> In the first place, there are those who have some
> recognizable mental disease, called a psychosis. In
> milder form such conditions may be disguised under
> such terms as nervousness, run-down conditions, over-
> work, fatigue, and the like.
> Then there are those individuals who have some
> sort of internal disequilibrium. They may maintain
> a grasp of social situations, get along fairly well
> professionally, and may even seem relatively normal
> to their associates; but they recognize the need for
> help. Common symptoms of such inner conditions are
> morbid fears, scruples, irresistable impulses to do
> queer acts, persistent disturbing thoughts, doubts
> and confusions.
> Then there are the malcontents who express their
> dissatisfaction with themselves and with life in
> general by inferiority complexes, jealousy, excessive

suspiciousness, obnoxious aggressiveness, or by their fanatical devotion to some political or religious movement.[31]

This classification is by no means exhaustive, nor indeed is it all-inclusive. There are very many individuals who cannot properly be included in the above classification. They are neither psychotic, nor psychoneurotic, nor yet psychopathic. They are normal individuals living normal lives. At this point, however, two things ought to be borne in mind. In the first place, the normal individual is not essentially different from the abnormal. The difference is not one of kind, but rather one of degree.[32] And the second thing to be remembered is that normality is not equal to perfection. The normal person is not perfect.

Therefore, it is not surprising to note that all people are beset by a variety of emotional entanglements. All people, to a greater or less degree, suffer some personality disturbances and deficiencies. Personality irregularities and immaturities include

> . . . disloyalty to duty, day-dreaming which precludes purposive activity, oversensitiveness to slights, extreme defensiveness, groundless suspiciousness of associates and superiors, ill health without organic basis, over-tendency to accidents and errors, inconsistency manifested in double-mindedness or hypocrisy, intolerance of the convictions of others, irrational fears, marital incompatibility, parental fixations for children of the same or opposite sex, infatuations which can end only in frustration or disgrace,

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[31] Morgan and Lovell, op. cit., p. 35 f.

[32] Carroll A. Wise, Religion in Illness and Health (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 27.

contemplated suicide, self-satisfaction with a low level of ethical achievement, doctrinal confusion, bereavement, and refusal to do battle for the right when due occasion arises.[33]

What is the cause of it all? What is the source of these many and various personality disturbances and irregularities? Psychologically speaking, the cause may be found, wholly or partially, in early childhood. Perhaps the individual, as a child, was pampered with debilitating tenderness, and so has become a self-centered personality. Or perhaps he was a dominated child, and thus has grown up without a will of his own. It may be that the child was neglected, or that he was emotionally overstimulated, and therefore has failed to develop a wholesome and capable personality.[34]

However, the causes of personality disintegration need not be sought and found only in childhood. The source of emotional disturbances may be found in any period of life. It may be a traumatic experience suffered either in childhood or later life. The cause may be a failure to resolve some inner tension or conflict. According to Morgan:

> . . . the most important causes of mental disintegration come from the attempt to deceive oneself or from a failure to make a straightforward adjustment when some internal conflict is discovered.[35]

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[33]Stolz, The Psychology of Religious Living, p. 324.

[34]Stolz, Pastoral Psychology, p. 41 f.

[35]John J. B. Morgan, Keeping a Sound Mind (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 24.

But have we yet found the answer? Has the true source
and cause of personality disintegration been adequately ex-
plained? The answer to this problem is to be found, not in
textbooks on psychology, but in the Bible. The basic cause
of personality disintegration is to be attributed, not to
any psychological concept of fixation or complex, but to the
Biblical concept of SIN.

The Biblical concept of sin is so important to our
subject, that we feel constrained to devote a complete chapter
to its consideration.

CHAPTER III

PERSONALITY AND THE FACT OF SIN

In our consideration of personality we must take into account the fact of sin. In many, if not most, of the books dealing with psychology and personality the fact of sin is conspicuously absent. In the opinion of the writer, a study of personality and personality development would not be complete - indeed, it could not correctly be undertaken - if the reality and the power of sin were overlooked or even minimized.

Thus far in our discussion we have avoided the doctrine of sin, but only because we have been reserving it for the present section.

What is sin? According to Stump:

Sin is not a stage in man's necessary development toward perfection (evolution), nor a defect due to finiteness or incompleteness in the unfolding of the good (pantheism). It is not a physical thing, the result of our sensuous nature (Plato), nor mere ignorance (Socrates), nor a lack of adjustment to environment. But it is the antithesis to the good, the negation of God's will. It is the selfish elevation of the human will into the normative place of the divine.[1]

The Apostle John defines sin as "the transgression of the law."[2] Every departure from the rule of the divine Law is sin, no matter whether it consists in a state or a condition,

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[1] Joseph Stump, The Christian Life (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p. 44.

[2] 1 John 3:4.

or in actual deeds. On the basis of the Bible, we may describe sin, negatively, as a lack of conformity with the divine will; and positively, as actual opposition to the divine will.[3]

Sin is a destructive force in the world. It affects both the organization and the development of personality. When the fact of sin is taken into consideration, the importance of heredity as an influence factor in the organization of personality becomes immediately apparent.

All men are born sinners (original sin). The corruption of human nature is an inherited condition. This observation is thoroughly realistic; it is thoroughly Biblical. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"[4] Jesus upholds this statement of Jeremiah when He says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh . . ."[5] And the Apostle Paul emphatically agrees: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."[6]

In accordance with such passages, the Lutheran Confessions declare:

> . . . original sin is not 'properly' the nature, substance, or essence of man, that is, man's body or soul, which even now, since the Fall, are and remain the creation and creatures of God in us, but . . . it is

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[3]John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 210 f.

[4]Jer. 17:9.

[5]John 3:6.

[6]Rom. 7:18.

something in the nature, body, and soul of man, and
in all his powers, namely, a horrible, deep, inex-
pressible corruption of the same, so that man is
destitute of the righteousness wherein he was origi-
nally created, and in spiritual things is dead to good
and perverted to all evil . . . now, since the Fall,
man inherits an inborn wicked disposition and inward
impurity of heart, evil lust and propensity.[7]

Despite the clear teaching of Scripture on the doctrine

of original sin, there are many who are outspoken in their

denial of the utter depravity of human nature. The following

is a typical attitude:

> . . . the conception of childhood's total depravity,
> or at any rate of its original sin, has had an honored
> place in theological thought since the time of St.
> Augustine . . .
> The science of evolution and the better under-
> standing of the nature of the early stories of Genesis
> have delivered man's thought of childhood from this
> pernicious doctrine. As F. R. Tennant has pointed out:
> "The term 'sin,' and its derivatives, can surely only
> be applied to the issues of the will . . . We conclude,
> then, that in its earliest period the child's life is
> wholly innocent of actual sin or inborn sinfulness."[8]

Fortunately, there are those psychologists who, on the

basis of their observations, are constrained to uphold the

Scripture doctrine of original sin. Thus Link: "The doc-

trine of original sin, and the conquest of the natural man,

so important in religion, is profoundly true from a psycho-

logical point of view."[9]

And Holman, speaking of man's capacity for wickedness,

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[7]The Formula of Concord. Thorough Declaration. I. Of
Original Sin. Triglot Concordia, (St. Louis: Concordia Pub-
lishing House, 1921), pp. 859, 863.

[8]Dorothy F. Wilson, Child Psychology and Religious
Education (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.,
1929), p. 21 f.

[9]Henry C. Link, The Return to Religion (New York: The
Macmillan Company, 1936), p. 105.

pertinently remarks:

> "Original sin" the makers of our creeds called this
> capacity for wickedness. The psychologists find the
> source of these evil propensities in our inherited
> animal impulses and passions. In any case, these
> tendencies to lust, cruelty, hate, greed and fury,
> are deep within us, part of our nature over which
> is spread a too thin veneer of decency.[10]

We may even look to the work of Freud to find psycho-
logical corroboration of the Biblical doctrine of original
sin. In the words of Jung:

> . . . psychology has profited greatly from Freud's
> pioneer work; it has learned that human nature has
> also a black side, and that not man alone possesses
> this side, but his works, his institutions, and his
> convictions as well.[11]

It is interesting to note that Jung credits Freud with dis-
covering a condition in human nature which has always been
taught in Scripture!

The destructive power of sin manifests itself in man's
environment as well as in his heredity. It affects man's
geographic and climatic environment. God said to Adam:

> Because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy
> wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I com-
> manded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it:
> cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt
> thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also
> and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou
> shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy
> face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the

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[10]Charles T. Holman, Psychology and Religion for Every-
day Living (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 52.

[11]C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated
by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace
and Company, 1933), p. 47.

ground; for out it wast thou taken: for dust thou
art, and unto dust shalt thou return.[12]

So also does sin exert a destructive influence on man's
social and cultural environment. This social and cultural
environment is composed of people - sinful people - with
sinful habits, customs, attitudes, and activities. Thus,
the indivudual's upbringing is not as wholesome as it should
be; the many incidents and accidents which he experiences
throughout life are often disruptive of personality.

The aspects of the human mind, which we have mentioned
previously, are likewise adversely affected by sin. Man's
intellect is no longer as clear and powerful as it would have
been without the Fall; his feelings are vitiated; and his
will is perverted and enfeebled.[13]

To this must be added the fact that man's Unconscious
has become a vast storehouse filled with many sinful, and
thus negative and even harmful, thoughts and desires, habits
and experiences.

Man's drives and urges, his impulses and sentiments are
also conditioned by the demoralizing power of sin. And thus,
the whole personality is affected.

By this time it should be evident that just as sin ex-
erts a disintegrating influence on the organization of per-
sonality, so also does it affect in a perverse manner the

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[12]Gen. 3:17-19.

[13]Stump, op. cit., p. 45.

development of personality. A brief review of Eriksen's developmental outline[14] will serve to illustrate our contention.

Because of sin, the individual's sense of trust is misdirected. It is turned inward instead of upward; it is self-centered instead of God-centered. Because of sin, the sense of autonomy is perverted, and thus becomes a defiant independence, rebellious, disrespectful, and disobedient to parents and superiors. Because of the power of sin, the sense of initiative and accomplishment attach themselves to unwholesome projects and activities. The adolescent's urge to identity and intimacy easily loses its wholesome flavor, and corrupts itself in the midst of evil companionships and associations. The parental sense is weakened, and in some cases, destroyed altogether. And finally, the sense of integrity - in the absolute sense - remains an unapproachable goal.

Sin thus becomes the great disorganizer of personality. Its effects are far reaching. ". . . by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . ."[15] "So death passed upon all men" - and not only death, but with it all the misery and woe, all of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual disturbances of the human personality.

Thus far we have been speaking only about a generality

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[14]Cf. p. 10 ff.

[15]Rom. 5:12.

called SIN. Its destructive power cannot and must not be minimized. But there is not only sin. There are also sins. Because of man's sinfulness, he falls into actual sins, as soon as he is old enough to act. Jesus says: ". . . out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies . . ."[16] Original sin is the source; actual sins are the stream which flows from it. Original sin is the disease which afflicts our human nature; actual sins are the manifestations and the symptoms of the disease.[17]

From the Bible it is evident that God does not only attack sin. He attacks definite sins: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, thefts, covetousness, deceit, evil eye, pride, foolishness, sexual perversion, extortion, and the like.[18]

The commission of all or any of these sins - in deed or word or thought - is disruptive of personality integration. As previously stated, sin has been defined as "the transgression of the law."[19] As this physical world is subject to certain natural, physical laws, so also, in the moral and

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[16]Matt. 15:19.

[17]Stump, op. cit., p. 46.

[18]Cf. Gal. 5:19-21; Mark 7:21,22; 1 Cor. 6:9,10.

[19]1 John 3:4.

spiritual realm, is the world subject to the Moral Law of God. And just as it is destructive of human life to defy physical law, so also is it destructive of personality life to disobey the Moral Law.

It is precisely here - in the fact of sin, both original and actual - that the source of all our guilt and shame, our fears and anxieties, our depressions, our uncontrolled passions, our excesses, and so forth, is to be found. Norborg expresses it in a classic manner:

> A realistic analysis of human neuroses and psychoses will open your theological or materialistic or idealistic eyes to the reality of sin, especially to the ruining influence that the sins of one person may have upon other persons' lives. [20]

It is evident that the damage to man's personality caused by sin must be remedied. Man must be radically renewed in the very center of his being, that eventually he may be renewed in every part. All this means simply that he must be saved from the _guilt_ and from the _power_ of sin. [21]

Wherein lies the answer to this problem? Where is the remedy to be found? It is the writer's conviction that the remedy - the true and lasting remedy - is to be found in the Christian religion, and in the Christian religion alone.

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[20] Sverre Norborg, _Varieties of Christian Experience_ (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), p. 59.

[21] Stump, _op. cit._, p. 55.

PART II

CHRISTIANITY AND PERSONALITY

CHAPTER IV

THE EFFICACY OF CHRISTIANITY

There is a widespread criticism that Christianity makes souls morbid and unhealthy. Indeed, there are many who seem to think that Christianity and healthy-mindedness are contradictory concepts. However, according to Norborg, if such a criticism were to have any bearing on Christianity,

> . . . it would have to show that there is a necessary connection between Christian experience and the breakdown of every healthy-minded person that tries Christianity and that all Christians belong to the psychopathic class of human lives.[1]

Such a connection cannot be demonstrated. On the contrary, any scientific, unbiased psychologist will have to admit that among Christians there are many personalities of a decidedly healthy type.

What, then, is the cause of this hostile attitude toward the Christian religion? It is due, undoubtedly, to a misunderstanding, to a failure to apprehend the true meaning of the Christian faith. It hardly seems necessary to point out that not all church groups are accurate representations of true Christianity. There are the perfectionists, for instance, with their insistence upon the possibility of attaining a state of sinlessness in this life. Again, there

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[1] Sverre Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), p. 120.

are the Puritanic groups with their morbid legalism. But in the words of Norborg: "True Christianity is neither a psychopathological Puritanicalism nor a "sinless" humanism. It is a message of _salvation_."[2]

Properly taught and applied, Christianity does not make personalities morbid and unhealthy. On the contrary, true Christianity has a positive, wholesome effect on personality development.

For one thing, Christianity is realistic. It acknowledges the reality of sin. Furthermore, it deals with sin in a radical manner. It goes to the root of the trouble.[3] The Christian religion does not endeavor to evade the reality of sin, nor does it attempt to minimize its seriousness. It faces the reality of sin; it actually delivers man from the power and the dominion of sin. Christianity can cope with the reality of sin in such a positive, victorious manner because it is based upon a greater, stronger reality - the reality of God's saving grace in Christ!

Since Christianity is basically the message of God's grace in Christ, it follows that it is powerful. Here again it must be emphasized that we are speaking of _true_ Christianity.

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[2]_Ibid._ p. 137.

[3]While Christianity is realistic and radical in that it acknowledges and copes with the reality of sin, it must be pointed out that Christianity is not fanatic. That is, it does not believe that every personality disorder is sin in the sense of personal guilt. Cf. Norborg, _op. cit._, p.111.

In some cases, Christianity has become a mere formalistic ritual. The form of Christianity is retained, but the power thereof is denied.[4] Wise speaks of the danger of substituting the form for the reality, and of developing a purely symbolic tradition. He says: "To the extent that this occurs, religion is powerless to create new integrations within the personality . . ."[5]

True Christianity is efficacious. Its message - the Gospel of Jesus Christ - is living and dynamic. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," says Paul, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."[6] The source of Christianity is the Word of God itself, and

> . . . the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and
> sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to
> the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the
> joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts
> and intents of the heart.[7]

Christianity is not irresistibly efficacious, however. That is to say, the message of salvation can be, and often is, resisted. And so, we do not ascribe any magical power to Christianity. The message of salvation is not a magic formula; it is the power of God. As the power of God, it is effective unto salvation. Yet it can be resisted. It has the

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[4]2 Tim. 3:5.

[5]Carroll A. Wise, Religion in Illness and Health (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 174.

[6]Rom. 1:16.

[7]Heb. 4:12.

power to break down the hardest of hearts, and yet, through the hardness of the heart, it can be resisted and rejected. The Bible warns against the hardening of the heart when it says: "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart . . ."[8] "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near . . ."[9]

A discussion of the efficacy of Christianity necessarily includes a consideration of the Christian conversion experience. Conversion, properly understood, is an experience that is common to all Christians and, at the same time, peculiar to them.

There is much misunderstanding regarding Christian conversion. It is thought by many that Christian conversion is essentially the same as moral conversion. However, the Christian conversion experience is not identical with a mere "change of mind" or with a mere "moral improvement of life." A man may improve his life outwardly, and yet be unconverted. Essentially, conversion is "the bestowal of faith in the divine promise of salvation for Christ's sake upon a sinner who from the divine Law has learned to know and lament his sins."[10]

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[8]Ps. 95:7,8.

[9]Is. 55:6.

[10]John Theodore Mueller, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 336 f.

Strictly speaking, therefore, conversion is a turning from unbelief to belief. It involves a spiritual rebirth, or regeneration, as Jesus Himself indicates when He says:

> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.[11]

In Christian conversion there is one absolutely decisive element which dare not be overlooked, namely, the hearing of the Word of God."[12] ". . . faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."[13] It is through the Word of God that the Holy Ghost operates, working faith in the heart of man, creating in him a new spiritual life.

It is to be understood that conversion is not a _substantial change_, that is, it is not the creation of a new essence of the soul, or the creation of new qualities in man.[14] "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."[15] Through conversion, man, who was once dead in trespasses and sins, has become spiritually alive;[16] he is, indeed, a new creature.

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[11] John 3:5,6.

[12] Norborg, _op. cit._, p. 176.

[13] Rom. 10:17.

[14] Mueller, _op. cit._, p. 339.

[15] 2 Cor. 5:17.

[16] Eph. 2:1,5.

As we have indicated, he has not lost his personal identity, nor has he undergone any change in the substance of his humanity. But he is a new and different man in the sense that he is a new and different kind of man.[17]

Psychologically speaking, conversion involves a re-centering of the personality and redirecting of interests. Consider the case of the Apostle Paul. Before his conversion he was Saul, the zealous persecutor. After his conversion he was Paul, the zealous missionary-apostle. Before his conversion he sought out the Christians to destroy them. After his conversion he sought out the non-Christians to save them.

The transforming power of the Christian conversion experience cannot be denied. In the words of Weatherhead: "There is no advice from a psychologist which has a dynamic comparable with that energy which is released in personality by what is called the conversion of a soul."[18] And in the words of Bonnell: "There is nothing so transforming for an individual as a first-hand experience of Christ."[19]

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[17]Joseph Stump, The Christian Life (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 102.

[18]Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology and Life (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1935), p. 133.

[19]John Sutherland Bonnell, Pastoral Psychiatry (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1938), p. 179.

The transforming power of conversion, wrought by the Holy Spirit, is manifest in all the activities of the mind.[20] The intellect of the believer is enlightened. He sees what formerly he was unable to see; he understands what to him was formerly foolishness. The sensibilities of the believer are also radically changed. What he once loved he now hates, and what he once hated he now loves. A striking and decisive change has also taken place in the will. Formerly his will was opposed to the will of God. But now he freely wills what God wills; and, in the measure in which the old evil nature, which still clings to him, does not prevent him, he actually does what God's Law commands.[21]

Not only does the power of conversion manifest itself in the activities of the mind, but it exerts an effective influence on all the aspects of personality. For the conversion experience is a totality-experience. The power of Christianity affects the whole person.

Having considered the efficacy of the Christian religion, let us now turn our attention to the value of Christianity in personality development.

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[20]We distinguish a three-fold mental activity: knowing, feeling, and willing. Cf. p. 6.

[21]Stump, op. cit., p. 100 ff.

CHAPTER V

THE VALUE OF CHRISTIANITY IN HEALTHY
PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Psychologists are realizing more and more the importance
of religion in healthy personality development. Of course,
as Weatherhead remarks, there are still those - most of them
lay psychotherapists - who appear to have dismissed religion as

> . . . a mere refuge of weak, silly, and rather senti-
> mental souls, a kind of dope which the strong-minded
> will eschew, a useful device in treating hysteria,
> but of no greater value.[1]

Nevertheless, those psychologists who have a scientific and
a realistic attitude admit the importance of religion in the
establishment of mental health. Jung observes: "A religious
attitude is an element in psychic life whose importance can
hardly be overrated."[2] And again, in greater detail, he
states:

> During the past thirty years, people from all over
> the civilized countries of the earth have consulted
> me. I have treated many hundreds of patients, the
> larger number being Protestants, a smaller number
> Jews, and not more than five or six believing Catho-
> lics. 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.

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[1]Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology and Life (New York:
The Abingdon Press, 1935), p. 7.

[2]C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, trans-
lated by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt,
Brace and Company, 1933), p. 77.

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.[3]

H. J. Schou, M. D., President of Dianabund Clinic, lect-
urer at the University of Copenhagen, has this to say:

One dares say that psychiatric authorities maintain that
religion, which means a true and sound communion with
God, is not only not dangerous psychologically speaking,
but directly preserving.[4]

And Dr. William Brown, Wilde Reader in Mental Philosophy
at Oxford, and Psychotherapist to King's College Hospital,
London, says: "I have become more convinced than ever that
religion is the most important thing in life, and that it is
essential to mental health."[5]

All of these quotations recognize the value of <u>religion</u>
in healthy personality development. In reality there is but
one religion. The only true religion is the God-inspired re-
ligion of the Bible - Christianity. However, it would not be
realistic for us to claim that only the Christian religion is
of value in the establishment and maintenance of mental health.
It is a demonstrable fact that also the non-Biblical religions
of this world have something of value to contribute toward
personality integration. But this is the point that we wish

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[3] <u>Ibid</u>. p. 264.

[4] Quoted by Sverre Norborg, <u>Varieties of Christian Ex-</u>
<u>perience</u> (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937),
p. 255.

[5] Quoted by Weatherhead, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 9.

to emphasize: if there is value to be found in the man-made philosophies and religions of this life, how much greater value is to be found in the Christian religion which, as we have indicated in the previous chapter, is the wisdom of God and the power of God!

Referring specifically to the Christian religion, Dr. J. A. Hadfield, a psychotherapist of renown, has said:

> Speaking as a student of psychotherapy, who, as such, has no concern with theology, I am convinced that the Christian religion is one of the most valuable and potent influences that we possess for producing that harmony and peace of mind and that confidence of soul which is needed to bring health and power to a large number of nervous patients . . . I have attempted to cure nervous patients with suggestions of quietness and confidence, but without success until I have linked these suggestions on to that faith in the power of God which is the substance of the Christian's confidence and hope. Then the patient has become strong.[6]

It cannot be denied that the Christian religion is of definite positive value in the establishment and maintenance of mental health. And the reason for this is not difficult to find. On the one hand, Christianity aids in the establishment of those positive factors which lead to personality integration, while, on the other hand, it helps to overcome those negative factors which might easily result in personality disintegration.

Among the findings of the Seminar on Religion and Health of the National Christian Mission held at Washington, D. C.,

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[6]Quoted by Charles T. Holman, Psychology and Religion for Everyday Living (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 101.

February 2-9, 1941, the following is worthy of note:

> A major responsibility of the church in the field
> of health lies in the promotion of those mental and
> spiritual attitudes which make for health - attitudes
> of faith, hope, love, self-respect, social interest
> and neighborly service . . . On the other hand, the
> churches should help men to overcome those attitudes
> which make for ill-health - fear, distrust, cynicism,
> hate, selfishness . . .[7]

In discussing the mature personality, Allport lists
the following three requirements for the attainment of the
cultivated, wholesome personality: <u>extension of the self</u>,
<u>self-objectification, and a unifying philosophy of life</u>.[8]
A brief consideration of these "requirements" will serve
to demonstrate the role of Christianity in healthy person-
ality development.

By the expression, "<u>extension of the self</u>," Allport
means the overcoming of infantile egocentricity; the de-
velopment of the capacity to lose oneself in the pursuit
of objectives, <u>not</u> primarily referred to the self. He says:

> Unless directed outward toward socialized and culturally
> compatible ends, unless absorbed in causes and goals
> that outshine self-seeking and vanity, any life seems
> dwarfed and immature.[9]

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[7]Quoted by Charles T. Holman, <u>Getting Down to Cases</u>
(New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 9.

[8]Gordon W. Allport, <u>Personality, A Psychological
Interpretation</u> (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937),
p. 213 ff.

[9]Ibid. p. 213.

Holman expresses the same opinion: "Becoming mature
. . . means, in the first place, growing out of infantile
self-centeredness."[10] He says further:

> The normal process of growth to maturity . . .
> is precisely this expansion of the self to in-
> clude not only one's own individual interests
> but also the interests and concerns of other
> people.[11]

Christianity, the religion of love, teaches this very
thing. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind . . . Thou shalt
love thy neighbor as thyself."[12] Speaking of Christian love,
the Apostle Paul has this to say: "Charity . . . seeketh not
her own."[13] And in another place he admonishes: "Look not
every man on his own things, but every man also on the things
of others."[14] Does not Jesus also refer to this extension of
the self when He says: "He that findeth his life shall lose
it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it"?[15]
The Christian life is a life that is emerging from self-
seeking vanity and self-centeredness; it is a life in Christ. The

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[10]Holman, _Psychology and Religion for Everyday Living_,
p. 34.

[11]_Ibid._ p. 35.

[12]Matt. 22:37, 39.

[13]1 Cor. 13:5.

[14]Phil. 2:4.

[15]Matt. 10:39.

Christian is not his own, for he has been bought with a price.[16] Christ "died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."[17]

The Christian religion does not merely agree with the psychological principle of self-expansion. It holds the key, and it has the power whereby such self-expansion may be achieved.

> Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.[18]

The second requirement for maturity in personality, according to Allport, is self-objectification. By this term he means

> . . . that peculiar detachment of the mature person when he surveys his own pretensions in relation to his abilities, his present objectives in relation to possible objectives for himself, his own equipment in comparison with the equipment of others, and his opinion of himself in relation to the opinion others hold of him.[19]

This objective attitude requires self-honesty. In the words of Holman: "We must face ourselves honestly. Without such knowledge of ourselves there is no possibility of redirecting

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[16]1 Cor. 6:19,20.

[17]2 Cor. 5:15.

[18]1 John 4:10,11.

[19]Allport, op. cit., p. 214.

our lives in wholesome and worthwhile ways."[20]

To live without self-deception is truly a prerequisite for the establishment of mental health. Especially is this true in the moral sphere. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."[21] It is essential for us to realize that before God "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."[22]

The problem of self-honesty versus self-deception is well illustrated in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican:

> Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote himself upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.[23]

The publican manifested real insight. He had cultivated, or was at least in the process of cultivating, the objective attitude. The Pharisee, on the other hand, thinking himself to be something when he was really nothing, was deceiving

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[20]Charles T. Holman, The Religion of a Healthy Mind, (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1939), p. 75.

[21]1 John 1:8.

[22]Is. 64:6.

[23]Luke 18:10-13.

himself.[24] And so, Jesus concludes His parable with the words:

> I tell you, this man (the publican) went down to his
> house justified rather than the other; for every one
> that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that
> humbleth himself shall be exalted.[25]

The third condition for the optimum development of personality is a unifying philosophy of life.[26] Psychologists are agreed on the importance of this factor. For instance, Stolz has this to say:

> The majority of persons suffering from curable mental
> disorders stand in need of an adequate philosophy of
> life, of life-giving convictions which will sustain
> them in their hour of perplexity.[27]

The Christian religion affords such an adequate philosophy of life. One need only look to the life of Christ in the days of His flesh to see how it manifested a divine, unifying purpose. At one time He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."[28] At another time He said: ". . . the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."[29] And at still another time: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[30]

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[24] Gal. 6:3.

[25] Luke 18:14.

[26] Allport, op. cit., p. 225 ff.

[27] Karl R. Stolz, The Psychology of Religious Living
(Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1937), p. 335.

[28] John 4:34.

[29] Luke 19:10.

[30] Matt. 20:28.

The Christian life is a life with a purpose, a dominant, unifying purpose. In the words of the Apostle Paul: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."[31] The Christian's meat is also to do the will of the Father in heaven. And what is that will? It is this that we hallow His name, and that His kingdom come. The Christian's philosophy of life is more than a philosophy or an attitude. It is the confidence of faith, that faith which appropriates the merits of Christ, and thus saves eternally.[32]

From the foregoing it should readily be admitted that Christianity is both a prophylactic and therapeutic agent in the establishment and maintenance of mental health. Regardless of the age of life or the stage of personality development, the Christian religion has something of value to offer.

The importance of Christian training in early childhood cannot be stressed enough. Moses emphasized it:

> And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.[33]

Paul likewise admonished: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your

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[31] Phil. 1:21.

[32] John 3:16; Eph. 2:8.

[33] Deut. 6:6,7.

children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."[34]

The individual needs security, not freedom from peril, but a sense of permanence in the presence of peril.[35] In the midst of an insecure, loveless, untrustworthy world, the Christian religion offers real security. It proclaims a God who loved the world so much that He spared not His own Son,[36] a God who is absolutely faithful and trustworthy.

If such a sense of security and trust is established in early childhood, then a solid foundation has been laid for the achievement of the mature personality. Bonnell says in this connection:

> No parent has the right to deprive his children of the stabilizing and strengthening influences which religion can exert in the life of even a very little child. In the years during which the foundations of character are being laid it is of tremendous importance that children should be brought into contact with the uplifting and inspiring influence of the personality of Jesus Christ.[37]

And thus the Christian religion continues to exert a positive influence throughout life. It will be recalled that the age of adolescence is a period of storm and stress.[38] The

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[34]Eph. 6:4.

[35]Albert Edward Day; Jesus and Human Personality (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1934), p. 80.

[36]Rom. 8:32.

[37]John Sutherland Bonnell; Pastoral Psychiatry (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1938), p. 169.

[38]Cf. p. 16.

young person is seeking to find himself, to recognize his place in society and in the world. Here the Christian religion has a stabilizing effect upon the individual by providing him with a unifying philosophy of life and a positive faith. Christianity assures the adolescent that he is a person of worth, a child of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

With the onset of adulthood, new problems must be faced. The individual is confronted with new and strange responsibilities - marital responsibility, parental responsibility, financial responsibility, and so forth. One's sense of security and trust might easily waver during this period. And so it remains for Christianity to offer the necessary strength and reassurance. The Christian religion stresses the importance and the sanctity of marriage, parenthood, the family, and personal responsibility. And here, as in all other matters, it does not only provide the proper instruction, but it has the power to effect that which it recommends.

The period of old age is not by any means devoid of difficulties. In the words of Wise:

> Our society is predominantly organized for youth and the values of age are held at a discount. This means that for the aging person there are two problems: adapting himself to the changes taking place within, and finding a new status for himself in a society which makes this increasingly difficult as the years lengthen.[39]

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[39]Carroll A. Wise, Religion in Illness and Health (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 51.

He goes on to say that the contribution of religion during this age may be made at two points:

> First, in the declining years of life, beginning with the involutional period, healthy religious attitudes and beliefs, involving goals and values that reach out beyond the individual himself, may be of great value in effecting an integration of personality and giving a sense of security and worth. In the second place, the church as such has a definite responsibility in the creation of a culture in which youth and age can work cooperatively on common problems, each making its unique contribution.[40]

The Christian religion fulfils these requirements, and more. It offers through Christ Jesus the blessed hope and the comforting assurance of everlasting life. "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."[41]

There should be no doubt in our minds that the Christian religion is a vital, dynamic force in the development of the wholesome personality. However, in order that our presentation may be more complete, let us consider the effectiveness of Christianity in dealing with certain specific personality problems.

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[40]Ibid.

[41]Heb. 13:14.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROBLEM OF GUILT

Regarding the problem of guilt, psychologists commonly use such expressions as "guilt-complex," "guilt-feeling," or "sense of guilt." Such expressions are justifiable if they are properly understood. All too often, however, psychologists speak of guilt-feelings while, at the same time, they deny the reality and the seriousness of guilt. It is important to note that guilt is not only a feeling; it is a fact. All men are guilty of sin. Not only do they bear the guilt of Adam's transgression,[1] but they are guilty also of those actual sins which they commit in thought, word, and deed.[2] All men are sinners, and thus the whole world is guilty before God.[3] This guilt incurs the wrath of God, and it entails eternal punishment.[4] If man is to stand uncondemned in the presence of the holy God, the guilt of his sin must be removed. And it can be removed only through the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus.[5] It bears repeating that guilt is not merely a feeling, but a fact.

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[1] Rom. 5:18.

[2] James 2:10.

[3] Rom. 3:19.

[4] Rom. 5:12.

[5] 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 1:7.

However, for our present purposes, we are more concerned with a consideration of those specific guilt-feelings which arise as a result of the conviction of sin and of moral failure. It is a psychological fact that such guilt-feelings are especially disruptive of the personality. Norborg remarks: "Modern psychiatry of the ethical type holds that guilt is a fact of sinister influence in human life, very often tragically destroying the human mind."[6] Indeed, it has been demonstrated again and again that feelings of guilt can cause such inner tension and turmoil that even bodily functions are disturbed and frequently serious organic illness results.[7]

A discussion of this sort must necessarily include a consideration of the conscience, for it is the activity of the conscience that produces the sense of guilt. The degree of the sense of guilt is determined by the extent to which the conscience actively asserts itself.

According to Koehler,

> Conscience is that personal sense or feeling which agrees and consents to some rule regarded as authoritative and divine. It obligates and urges the individual to conform to this rule, it approves, "excuses," when he does, but "accuses," holds him guilty and condemns him when he fails to do so.[8]

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[6]Sverre Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), p. 234.

[7]Charles T. Holman, Psychology and Religion for Everyday Living (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 155.

[8]Edward Koehler, A Summary of Christian Doctrine (River Forest: Koehler Publishing Company, 1939), p. 48 f.

Conscience is a dynamic factor in the organization and development of personality. Its influence cannot very well be ignored. In the words of Wise: "Conscience is a function of the personality that is essential to growth and self-realization."[9] However, conscience is a very mischievous function of personal life. It is very liable to err, to become warped in its development either in the direction of hypersensitiveness or of callousness. And since the sense of guilt is determined by the functioning of conscience, it follows that as the conscience is uninformed and misdirected, so also will the sense of guilt be proportionately distorted. Holman remarks:

> . . . one may suffer a deep sense of guilt about an insignificant trifle but feel no sense of guilt about matters of terrible consequence. Our sense of guilt is related to those standards of conduct, those ideals of behavior, which we have accepted as authoritative.[10]

The voice of conscience must always be obeyed. Whether the conscience is informed or uninformed, enlightened or warped, its voice must be heeded; it must be given the right of way. It goes without saying, of course, that a person should strive to act under the impulse of an enlightened conscience, and the source of such enlightenment is, and always will be, the infallible Word of God. It is obvious also that a person should heed the voice of his conscience and thus keep

[9]Carroll A. Wise, Religion in Illness and Health (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 164.

[10]Charles T. Holman, The Religion of a Healthy Mind (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1939), p. 22.

his conscience free from blame. This is the healthy thing to do. "It is absolutely proved that the right thing to do is always the healthy thing to do."[11]

To disregard the voice of conscience is always a sin.[12] Not only is such disregard sinful, but it is also psychologically harmful. To act contrary to the dictates of conscience may set up a conscience distress which, in a person with any self-respect, might become tragically disintegrating to the personality.[13] Nothing is so destructive of mental health as the torture inflicted by an outraged conscience. An overwhelming sense of guilt, if not removed, may easily lead to despair and even, as in the case of Judas, to suicide.

What, then, is the remedy for such an overpowering, over-burdening sense of guilt? How may the tormenting pangs of conscience be relieved? Some psychiatrists try to alleviate the sense of guilt by telling their patients to forget about it, or by suggesting that they are the victims of a hyper-sensitive conscience and that they have set too high standards for themselves.[14]

However, since guilt is a tragic fact, this is obviously

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[11]Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology and Life (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1935), p. 112.

[12]Koehler, op. cit., p. 49.

[13]Weatherhead, op. cit., p. 113.

[14]Holman, Psychology and Religion for Everyday Living, p. 163.

not the answer. The sense of guilt cannot be mitigated simply by "forgetting about it," nor can it be relieved by any pseudo-psychological suggestions. The sense of guilt must be dealt with realistically and radically. The guilt must be removed, not forgotten or evaded.

Where is the remedy to be found? The real and true remedy is to be found in Christian confession and in the Christian doctrine of forgiveness.

> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.[15]

It is a psychological fact that catharsis is a helpful activity. It provides emotional release.[16] However, Christian confession is more than psychological catharsis. It is a contrite, purposeful unburdening of the soul to God, against whom all sins are committed, and whose majesty is thereby offended. As David cries out in his great penitential psalm: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest."[17]

Why is there in man an urge to confess? Bonnell answers:

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[15] 1 John 1:8,9.

[16] Carl R. Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), p. 171.

[17] Psalm 51:4.

Unquestionably it is due to the conscience - that inner monitor which speaks on behalf of the higher self and of God, and rebukes us for our wrong-doing. An awakened conscience can inflict torment upon the individual who refuses to confess.[18]

The reason a person's peace of mind is so easily disturbed is that he so often refuses to acknowledge and confess his sin, and to receive the forgiveness which God freely offers for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ. Again Bonnell declares:

> I know few errors more damaging to mental and physical well-being than a prolonged refusal to seek the relief and healing that is found in confession and forgiveness.[19]

The panic that arises from sin that is unconfessed and unforgiven is seen from the words of David:

> 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, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.[20]

The relief that comes from confession and from the assurance of forgiveness is also seen from the words of David when he continues: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."[21]

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[18] John Sutherland Bonnell, Pastoral Psychiatry (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1938), p. 186.

[19] Ibid. p. 180.

[20] Psalm 32:3,4.

[21] Psalm 32:5.

It should be evident that if a person is to find re-
lief through confession, his confession must be honest and
complete.[22] All too often, confession is separated from
penitence and is regarded merely as an escape from sin
without deep and true sorrow for it, and determination to
have done with it. "Confession by itself does not make a
sin less, nor expunge it from God's record . . ."[23] In
the words of Stolz:

> No confession is a true confession unless it is made
> by one overwhelmed by the consciousness of sin and
> guilt, by one truly penitent and broken-hearted and
> sincerely desirous of restoring severed relations with
> God and man.[24]

To whom should the confession be made? Since all sins
are offenses against the holy God, it follows that confes-
sion must be made to Him.[25] But the question is: Should
the confession be made directly to God alone, or should it
be made to some person who may be regarded as a representa-
tive of God? It depends, of course, upon the person making
the confession. There are many people who can find complete
relief and gain the full assurance of forgiveness through
direct, private confession to God. There are many others,

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[22]McIlyar Hamilton Lichliter, The Healing of Souls
(New York: The Abingdon Press, 1931), p. 57.

[23]Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology in Service of the
Soul (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p. 97.

[24]Karl R. Stolz, Pastoral Psychology (Nashville: Cokes-
bury Press, 1932), p. 205.

[25]If a person has offended or grieved one of his
fellowmen, he should be willing also to make confession to him.

however, who do not find satisfaction in such secret con-
fession. Such people would be best helped by having a wit-
ness to this transaction between the soul and God.[26] One
woman has written in a letter:

> I gladly recognize that there are happy souls who have
> lived in the consciousness of God's presence all their
> lives. For these it is easy, when they occasionally
> displease Him, to return at once, tell Him they are
> sorry, and claim His forgiveness. But others, of whom
> I am one, have had His face hidden from us by the clouds
> of our own sin. In this state no amount of praying seems
> of any use, because we cannot realize that God is there
> to hear . . .[27]

One is reminded of the words of the ancient mariner:

> I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
> But or e'er a prayer had gusht,
> A wicked whisper came, and made
> My heart as dry as dust.[28]

It would seem to be in order here to mention the confes-
sional - the act or practice of confessing to a priest or
pastor. The Roman Catholic Church makes such a practice ob-
ligatory; the Protestant Church does not. Is there any bene-
fit to be derived from the confessional as practised in the
Roman Church? Undoubtedly many people find genuine relief
from the Roman confessional. At the same time, however, it
must be said that the Roman confessional has many disadvantages.

Dr. E. Boyd Barrett, a Roman Catholic, once a priest
but now a practising psychiatrist, says that he

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[26]Bonnell, op. cit., p. 69.

[27]Quoted in Weatherhead, Psychology in Service of the
Soul, p. 95.

[28]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Rime of the Ancient
Mariner, 11. 244-247.

> . . . is inclined to dissent from the view that (Roman
> Catholic) confession, as a general rule, affords a
> healthy mode of self-revelation such as psychologists
> desiderate. It is too fragmentary, too artificial and
> too coercive in character to be a health-giving mode
> of release.

Indeed, he says that he

> . . . has been consulted, outside confession, by many
> Catholics whose analyses disclosed the fact that their
> mental health had suffered as a consequence of confession.[29]

To be of real therapeutic value, the confessional must not
be a compulsory act but a spontaneous act, one that arises
from an inner urge for confession and forgiveness. The con-
fession itself must not be a mere routine recital of short-
comings and failures; it must be a sincere, honest outpouring
of a contrite heart to God.

Such a confession, whether made directly to God in private,
or to the confessor, is definitely cleansing in effect and
therapeutic in value. Christian confession is of such posi-
tive value because it comprehends "that most amazing of all
psychotherapeutic agencies, the doctrine of forgiveness."[30]

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose
sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord im-
puteth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."[31]

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[29]Quoted in Holman, _The Religion of a Healthy Mind_, p. 113.

[30]Weatherhead, _Psychology and Life_, p. 120.

[31]Psalm 32:1,2.

This is the central doctrine of the Christian religion, that
God forgives all sins for Jesus' sake. ". . . though your
sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though
they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."[32] "As far
as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our trans-
gressions from us."[33]

It remains for us simply to accept God's forgiveness in
Christ. And it is precisely at this point that many persons
fail to appropriate the healing effects of confession and
forgiveness. They refuse to accept the forgiveness that God
freely offers, or, having claimed the forgiveness of God, they
are unwilling to forgive themselves. This refusal to forgive
oneself results in real mental suffering. It is a Scriptural
fact that when God forgives, He forgets. In the words of the
prophet: ". . . Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."[34]
And God Himself tells us: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out
thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember
thy sins."[35] We are to do the same with those sins which God
has forgiven. Having truly repented of our sins, we are to
put them behind our backs and remember them no more. We are
to have done with them. Our slate is clean, and we should
endeavor to keep it that way.

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[32]Isaiah 1:8.

[33].Psalm 103:12.

[34]Isaiah 38:17.

[35]Isaiah 43:25.

God is love. His love is manifested in the forgiveness of sin for Jesus' sake. However, this love is not easy-going indulgence, and forgiveness and reconciliation do not imply unconcern about evil. Not only does God say to us, "Thy sins be forgiven thee,"[36] but He also says, "Go, and sin no more."[37]

This is the story of repentance: contrition, faith, and the earnest desire, with the help of God the Holy Spirit, henceforth to amend our sinful lives. This is the key to abundant living. This is the way to eternal life.

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[36] Matt. 9:2.

[37] John 8:11.

CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROBLEM OF FEAR

Fear is an emotion that is common to man. When function-
ing properly, it has a certain value. It helps the individual
to make an adequate adjustment to changing environment. How-
ever, when the fear persists after it has served its purpose,
when it outlives its usefulness, or when its intensity is all
out of proportion to the fear-provoking stimulus, it loses its
value, and becomes destructive and disintegrating to the per-
sonality. In the words of Bonnell:

> . . . fear has a constructive as well as a destructive
> function. Appropriate fear of reality may well be
> normal and constructive. Inappropriate anxiety is
> always abnormal and destructive.[1]

Fear manifests itself in many and various forms. It may
express itself as an irrational fear caused by a repressed
experience in which fear played a part, an experience now for-
gotten and in the unconscious. This manifestation of fear
is called a _phobia_.[2] When the fear becomes extended, as a
continual state of undue anxiety, it may be regarded as _worry_.[3]
When the fear becomes so intense, is all out of proportion to

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[1] John Sutherland Bonnell, _Pastoral Psychiatry_ (New York:
Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1938), p. 82.

[2] Leslie D. Weatherhead, _Psychology and Life_ (New York:
The Abingdon Press, 1935), p. 227.

[3] Karl R. Stolz, _Pastoral Psychology_ (Nashville: Cokes-
bury Press, 1932), p. 147.

circumstances, and is not directed toward any one object or situation, it shades into anxiety.[4]

Professor J. A. Hadfield makes the following distinction:

Natural fears are fears directed to objects really dangerous to life. Anxieties are fears without an object, and are usually due to fear of a threatening impulse within. They are unrecognized fears of ourselves. Phobias are fears attached to objects not in themselves dangerous. They are projected fears of ourselves. This is true of all phobias - they are all fears of ourselves, fears of some impulse in ourselves, fears of "unconscious desires." The greatest fear of civilized man is himself. The difference between a normal fear and an abnormal fear (or phobia) can easily be recognized. The normal fear leads to biological efficiency, whereas the abnormal fear leads to inefficiency.[5]

What are the causes of fear? The basic cause of fear is the fact of sin and its consequent guilt. It is an undeniable fact that guilt produces fear. As soon as our first parents committed their first sin, their hearts were filled with fear.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.[6]

Fear is universal because man's guilt is universal. However, this is not to say that every fear is the direct

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[4]John J. B. Morgan and George D. Lovell, The Psychology of Abnormal People (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1948), p. 397.

[5]Quoted by Bonnell, op. cit., p. 84.

[6]Gen. 3:8-10.

result of a specific sin or a specific sense of guilt. Many fears, of course, are directly traceable to a specific guilt-feeling. Such "guilty fears" are dangerous indeed. Says Fosdick:

> Nowhere is the danger of secrecy and of morbid imagination more evident than in the realm of guilty fears. All schools of psychiatry agree that behind every "anxiety neurosis" is a sense of guilt.[7]

And Morgan claims that the fear arising from the feeling of guilt is one of the most intense and persistent forms of fear that man can experience.[8]

But, as we have said, not every fear is a "guilty fear" in the sense that it is the direct result of a specific sin. Fear has other causes. Sometimes fears are caused by repressed traumatic experiences suffered usually, but not necessarily, in childhood. Sometimes fears are the result of a conditioning process. They develop in much the same way that habits develop. Fears are frequently transmitted from one person to another, for instance, from parent to child. It will be remembered that the mind of a child is highly suggestible. The fear-attitudes of parents may easily be transmitted to their children.

Here it should be added that there are also certain conditions and factors which tend to increase the intensity and

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[7]Harry Emerson Fosdick, On Being a Real Person (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1943), p. 121.

[8]John J. B. Morgan, Keeping a Sound Mind (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 79.

the destructive power of fear. The strongest of these factors, according to Morgan, is ignorance.

> Our forefathers were afraid of thunder storms because they did not know what caused them or how they operated. They thought that the gods were fighting with each other and that thunder was caused by Thor's hammer. We have built devices to protect ourselves from lightning, our casualties from that source are few, and we are no longer afraid. Thousands of other fears of natural events, such as eclipses, meteors, comets, cyclones, diseases, volcanoes, and the like, have been eliminated or have been lessened in their intensity, through understanding.[9]

The fact should also be taken into account that man is a rational being. As a rational being, he has the capacity to remember the past, and to perceive the possibilities of the future. Thus, in man fear often becomes worry, because he is prone to live in the past and to dread the fearful possibilities of the future.

> This power to look before and after is the expression of man's self-consciousness of his ability to identify himself under all the changes of the past, present, and future . . . Thus worry is the shadow cast by man's moral and intellectual greatness and, as Pascal says, "the grandeur of man is also his misery."[10]

Why is it that the grandeur of man must also be his misery? Why is it that people of today are so oppressed by fear, worry, and anxiety? According to Link, one of the causes of fear and worry in our day is an increase of leisure time. He says:

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[9] Ibid. p. 65 f.

[10] Elwood Worcester, Samuel McComb and Isador Coriat, Religion and Medicine (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1908), p. 278.

At the bottom of most fears, both mild and severe,
will be found an overactive mind due to an under-
active body; too much energy churning the higher brain
centers in vicious circles, not enough energy driving
the arms and legs and hands in useful work or play.[11]

How may we master our fears? How may our fears be over-
come? Psychologists tell us that the best way to master fear
is to discover what it is that caused the fear and to meet
that situation adequately.[12] This is not always easy to do
because fears are so often disguised. And even if the true
source of the fear is discovered, how can the situation be
dealt with adequately?

Here again the Christian religion proves itself to be
of definite therapeutic value. It creates those positive at-
titudes which tend to prevent fear, or, if fear is already
present, help to overcome it. Two such attitudes are es-
pecially worthy of note: faith and love.

Concerning the positive value of faith, Fosdick writes:

Faith and fear are true opposites - the more of one,
the less of the other. Faith is not simply a theoreti-
cal belief but is a powerful emotion of confidence and
trust.[13]

Everyone manifests some sort of a trust in something. Some
put their trust in material wealth, others in physical strength,
still others in national might. And many more such objects of
trust could be mentioned. But experience has proven again and

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[11]Henry C. Link, The Rediscovery of Man, (New York:
The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 102.

[12]Morgan, op. cit., p. 65.

[13]Fosdick, op. cit., p. 131.

again that trust in such unreliable objects is sorely dis-
appointed.   Trust, to be of positive, lasting value, must
have as its object something, or someone, that is absolutely
changeless and reliable in a changing, unreliable world.   The
Bible presents that Someone to us. "It is better to trust in
the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust
in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."[14]   The Christ-
ian religion proclaims an ever-loving, eternal, all-wise, al-
mighty God who is absolutely dependable and trustworthy.
Firm confidence in such a God must necessarily break the power
of fear.   In the words of Lichliter:

> If . . . one who suffers from any form of anxiety
> can be brought to have a childlike trust in the good-
> ness of God, an effective competing motivation is
> brought to bear upon the disabling fear.[15]

At this point, it will be highly instructive for us
to consider the account of Christ's stilling the storm on
the sea.

> And when they had sent away the multitude, they took
> him even as he was in the ship. And there were also
> with him other little ships. And there arose a great
> storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so
> that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part
> of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him,
> and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we
> perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said
> unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased.
> and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why

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[14] Psalm 118:8,9.

[15] McIlyar Hamilton Lichliter, The Healing of Souls
(New York: The Abingdon Press, 1931), p. 111.

are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?[16]

From the words which Jesus spoke, it is apparent that the reason the disciples were afraid was that they were lacking in faith. However, there is more to the story than this. Two points especially deserve our attention.[17] There is nothing in the story to indicate that merely because Jesus was physically in the boat the disciples had nothing to fear. They should not have been afraid even if Jesus had not been in the boat. As disciples of Jesus they were always in the care of their heavenly Father, and that whether Jesus was physically present with them or not.

The other point is that the disciples had nothing to fear even if they perished in the waves. We have no promise that disaster shall never strike us simply because we belong to Jesus. It may be God's will that we perish; but we should then die with the mighty assurance that what God ordains is always good. We should die in confidence and not in fear.

This then is the confidence of the Christian religion:

> God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.[18]

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[16]Mark 4:36-40.

[17]The following interpretive material is based on R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 202.

[18]Psalm 46:1-3.

The Christian's confidence is such that it causes him to ex-
claim: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!"[19] Fear
must vanish in the presence of such confident faith.

The second positive attitude that is of value in pre-
venting and overcoming fear is love. When the love of God is
shed abroad in a person's heart, there is no room for fear.
In the words of the Apostle John: ". . . perfect love casteth
out fear . . ."[20]

Neither is there room nor time for fear when a person is
actively engaged in loving service to his fellowmen. Holman
declares:

> The reason so many of us are obsessed by fears is that
> we are so much concerned about ourselves. If we can
> turn our thoughts and direct our energies outward from
> ourselves and toward the achievement of the well-being
> of others and the good of all the race, we shall find
> ourselves marvelously delivered from these debilitating
> and disintegrating fears and anxieties.[21]

Before we leave the problem of fear, it might be worth-
while for us to consider briefly two of the more common fears,
and see how the Christian religion helps to overcome them.

One is the fear of poverty. It would seem that all of us
are concerned about our physical needs. And indeed, we should
plan for the meeting of those needs. But if we think about
them with corroding anxiety, with fear and dread, we not only

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[19]Job 13:15.

[20]1 John 4:18.

[21]Charles T. Holman, _The Religion of a Healthy Mind_
New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1939), p. 51.

unnecessarily increase the emotional load we carry, but we render ourselves ineffective even in dealing with these circumstances as they arise.[22]

Jesus has the answer for such anxious fears and worries:

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? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? . . . 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.[23]

The other common fear that we wish to consider is the fear of death. Psychologists have written much about this fear, and they have offered much advice as to how this fear might be overcome. But for all their helpful suggestions, they are simply not convincing.

The Christian religion alone has the answer to this fear. Only the Christian religion regards death as a victory. Only the Christian religion can instill in man's heart the confidence to exclaim: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of

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[22]Charles T. Holman, Psychology and Religion for Everyday Living, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 78.

[23]Matt. 6:25-30,34.

the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."[24]

The Christian religion can overcome the fear of death because Christ Jesus has conquered death, and He has left with us His promise:

> Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.[25]

Where the Christian religion has been truly appropriated, and where Christian faith, trust, love, and hope are truly manifest, there fear has lost its power. And there can it truly be said: "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."[26]

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[24]Psalm 23:4.

[25]John 14:1-3.

[26]Psalm 34:4.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROBLEM OF INFERIORITY

Weatherhead gives the following definition of an inferiority 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 abilities in this or that
> direction, with a strong charge or feeling of helpless-
> ness and fear at the heart of the complex, which drives
> one from this or that situation, makes one dislike going
> into the company of others, fear meeting a stranger,
> shrink from attempting the difficult, or anything that
> may be criticized, and so on.[1]

Strictly speaking, the inferiority complex is a pathological
mental disorder. Comparatively few people, therefore, can be
said to be suffering from an inferiority complex. However,
a sense of deficiency is present with many people. This con-
dition usually is not dynamic enough to disorganize the per-
sonality, but it can be most vexatious.[2] Holman remarks:

> What most of us have to struggle with at some time in
> our lives, and some of us most of the time, is a sense
> of inadequacy, unworthiness, and inferiority. Perhaps
> it would not be too much to say that everybody has had
> to struggle to overcome some feelings of inferiority,
> and it is a very painful experience indeed.[3]

To be sure, there are handicapped individuals in this
world. For that matter, all of us have our capabilities

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[1]Leslie D. Weatherhead, _Psychology and Life_ (New York:
The Abingdon Press, 1935), p. 135.

[2]Karl R. Stolz, _Pastoral Psychology_ (Nashville: Cokes-
bury Press, 1932), p. 131.

[3]Charles T. Holman, _Psychology and Religion for Every-
day Living_ (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 104 f.

and our limitations. But, as Morgan[4] points out, our actual
capabilities and limitations are not nearly as important as
the attitude we take toward them. For it is this attitude
which determines what we will do about it. The handicapped
individual may give in to helplessness, and use his inadequacy
to gain pity. Or he may become bitter and resentful and de-
velop into a most unhappy and perhaps even dangerous person.
Or he may face his handicap as a challenge and achieve his
greatest success at the point of his greatest deficiency.[5]

Here it must be pointed out that _feelings_ of inferiority
are not necessarily related to _actual_ inferiority. Many feel-
ings of inadequacy are based on imaginary deficiencies. And,
as Morgan says:

> . . . it often happens that an inferiority based on an
> imaginary handicap becomes a much more vital problem
> than would be the case were the handicap a real one.
> If we know the cause of a feeling we can deal directly
> with that cause and effect an improvement. When the
> cause is unknown the problem becomes much more baffling
> and requires much more insight.[6]

The source of any feeling of inferiority is in personal
comparisons. In the words of Stolz:

> Disadvantageous comparisons of the individual with others
> lie at the root of his self-disparagement. The apparent
> superior advantages of others are erected into a standard

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[4]John J. B. Morgan, _Keeping a Sound Mind_ (New York: The
Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 242 f.

[5]Holman, _op. cit._, p. 107.

[6]Morgan, _op. cit._, p. 258 f.

by which a person measures himself to his own humiliation.[7]
And Bonnell declares:

> A person often suffers from feelings of self-depreciation,
> inferiority, and the like, and all of these are in com-
> parison with other people. Either a person abases himself
> or exalts himself always in comparison with somebody else.
> He.fails to measure himself by God's standards . . . God
> rates a person according to the measure in which you
> utilize the powers that He has given you - not according
> to what you are or will be, but by what you might be.[8]

Why is it that man makes such undue comparisons? It is
due to the inveterate pride of his heart. This pride is the
radical cause of all his vain comparisons with all their con-
sequent feelings of inferiority.

> For if a man think himself to be something, when he is
> nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove
> his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in him-
> self alone, and not in another.[9]

Psychologically speaking, there are a great many condi-
tions which may cause a sense of inferiority to develop.
These conditions are often found in childhood. For one thing,
feelings of inferiority may develop as a result of a wrong
attitude of parents toward their children. Parents often pro-
ject into the minds of their children ideals and ambitions
which are utterly out of keeping with the aptitudes and abil-
ities of the children themselves.[10] Or the parents may

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[7]Stolz, op. cit., p. 133.

[8]John Sutherland Bonnell, Pastoral Psychiatry (New York:
Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1938), p. 128 f.

[9]Gal. 6:3,4.

[10]Harry Emerson Fosdick, On Being a Real Person (New York:
Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1943), p. 54.

manifest partiality and favoritism to one child. The child in disfavor naturally assumes that there must be something wrong with himself.[11] Again, feelings of inferiority may develop in a child as a result of unfortunate comparisons with his brothers and sisters. Children are often led to make such comparisons because of the thoughtless remarks of parents and outsiders.[12] Another element in modern life which gives birth to and nourishes feelings of inferiority is the competitive system in school, business, and industry.[13] And so it is that feelings of inferiority develop with all their debilitating effects and consequences.

If and when a sense of inferiority does develop, the ego strives to cope with it in its own way. The person who feels inferior is disposed to resort to the use of protective measures in an attempt to conceal or disguise his attitude.[14] Sometimes an effort is made to elevate the depressed ego by ridiculing or belittling the competent. Not infrequently other people or what is called bad luck or fate are blamed for one's incompetencies.[15] Sometimes the smoke-screen method is used, by which the individual endeavors to hide his

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[11] Morgan, op. cit., p. 259.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid. p. 260.

[14] Stolz, op. cit., p. 138.

[15] Ibid. p. 139.

inferiority-feeling by asserting his superiority. At other times the sour-grapes method is used, by which a person declares that the competencies of others are not worthwhile attaining anyway.[16] Fantasy is another method used by the ego to disguise a sense of inferiority.[17] By this method the individual imagines himself to be something other than his true self. Related to this is the creation of what Horney calls the idealized image.[18] This is an unrealistic mental picture of what the individual believes himself to be, or of what at the time he feels he can or ought to be. In contrast to authentic ideals, the idealized image has a static quality. It is not a goal toward whose attainment he strives, but a fixed idea which he worships.[19] Again, in order to defend itself against a sense of inadequacy, the ego may take refuge in the use of excuses and rationalizations.

Obviously, these various methods are totally inadequate to cope with the problem of inferiority. They are simply defenses which the ego constructs in an effort to disguise the feeling of inadequacy. At best, they can create but a false sense of efficiency and worth. They are easily shattered,

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[16]Fosdick, op. cit., p. 62.

[17]Ibid. p. 63.

[18]Karen Horney, Our Inner Conflicts, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1945), p. 96.

[19]Ibid. p. 98.

and when that happens, the last state of the individual is
worse than the first.

The problem of inferiority, like all other personality
problems, must be dealt with in a radical, realistic manner.
And here again, the Christian religion proves itself to be
of real therapeutic value. For the Christian religion copes
with the problem of inferiority at its source. It dispels
the pride of man's heart, and replaces it with true humility.
Christian conversion and daily repentance are humbling ex-
periences - not humiliating, but humbling. To come before
the presence of the holy God is to strip oneself of all pride
and arrogance and, in true humility, to say: "God, be merci-
ful to me, a sinner!"[20] This is truly a humbling experience,
one which does not drive to despair, but which exalts to the
heavens. The words of Bonnell are pertinent in this connection:

> . . . when one has humbled himself before God he does
> not need any longer to be abased in the presence of
> his fellow-men. He no longer needs to carry a false
> front. He is honest with himself and his fellow-men
> because he has been honest with God. He becomes a
> perfectly normal man untroubled by either pride or
> abasement, conceit or inferiority.[21]

In his book, Psychology and Morals (p. 78), Dr. J. A.
Hadfield says: "There are three principles of psychological

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[20]Luke 18:13.

[21]Bonnell, op. cit., p. 129.

and moral health: Know thyself; accept thyself; be thyself."[22]
If this three-fold admonition is followed, all feelings of
inferiority will necessarily vanish.

Know thyself. This involves self-realization. The in-
dividual must face himself honestly. He must learn to recog-
nize his limitations as well as his capabilities. He must
realize that he is a personality to whom God has entrusted,
not all, but certain gifts.

> Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same
> Spirit. And there are differences of administrations,
> but the same Lord. And there are diversities of oper-
> ations, but it is the same God which worketh all in
> all.[23]

Accept thyself. That is, the individual is not to think
of himself more highly than he ought to think.[24] He is not to
make undue and vain comparisons with other people, but, as
we have indicated, he is to measure himself by God's standards.
Such self-acceptance is not self-resignation. It simply means
that he will accept himself as he is, with the abilities and
the capacities that God has given to him. He will not be en-
vious of, nor will he proudly arrogate to himself those ca-
pacities which God has given to another.

Be thyself. This is not to say that a person is to be-
come smug and complacent; nor is he to make a display of

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[22] Quoted by Holman, op. cit., p. 109.

[23] 1 Cor. 12:4-6.

[24] Rom. 12:3.

himself to gain either the attention or the sympathy of others. Rather, to be oneself means to make the most of oneself, to make full use of one's abilities for the glory of God and for the good of one's fellowmen. As Weatherhead says: "God asks from us all that we should discover all the resources of our personality, mobilize them into activity, and dedicate them to His service."[25]

The Christian religion helps a man to know himself, to accept himself, and to be himself. It teaches a man to say in true humility and gratitude:

> . . . by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.[26]

Christianity teaches a man to recognize his capacities and to use them faithfully, for "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."[27] And finally, the Christian religion teaches a man to say in humble confidence: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."[28]

Such an attitude is humility, but not inferiority; it is self-respect, but not self-conceit. Such an attitude is the only way to efficient living.

25Weatherhead, op. cit., p. 172.

261 Cor. 15:10.

271 Cor. 4:2.

28Phil. 4:13.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHRISTIAN PERSONALITY

In our discussion of the role of Christianity in healthy personality development, it has occasionally been necessary for us to make specific references to the personality life of the Christian. However, more should yet be said concerning the Christian personality.

For one thing, the Christian is still a sinner; his personality is a sinful personality. His inherited sinful nature has not been lost through his conversion. The Christian carries his "Old Adam" with him through life. Since, however, a new spiritual life has been created in him through regeneration, the Christian is one who is waging a constant battle. His sinful flesh is in constant conflict with his new spiritual life.[1] The Apostle Paul describes this conflict in classic terms: ". . . the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."[2] And then, almost in desperation, he cries out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[3]

For another thing, it should be noted that the elements and factors which go into the making of the Christian personality are the same as those that go into the making of

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[1] Matt. 26:41.

[2] Rom. 7:19.

[3] Rom. 7:24.

the non-Christian personality, for all personalities are
human personalities. Norborg presents the matter most re-
alistically when he says:

> . . . Christians are ordinary men and women, not mi-
> raculous "saints." They have a heredity, often a
> heavy one, to carry. To some, heredity brings sur-
> prising blessings, undeserved and inexplicable. To
> others it brings "ghosts" and deep despair. To all
> it means a fact and a challenge. Furthermore, all
> Christians have an environment to consider. This
> means a long row of problems of adjustment. Some
> have met this adjustment in a happy, positive way;
> to others it has brought mental difficulties of
> various kinds, even making them afraid of men and,
> what is worse, afraid of themselves.
> This uncertainty in one's attitude toward life
> may have been fostered by an ill-directed "upbring-
> ing," whether it be sentimentalism, "pious" shel-
> tering, puritanical imprisonment of the young, bud-
> ding life, or other forms of brutality. Modern per-
> sonality analysis has shown us how many thousands of
> lives have gone on the rocks precisely on account of
> an unhealthy childhood and adolescence.
> These complications become staggering if they
> are complicated by mental afflictions and wounds
> caused by accidents (physical and mental) or incidents
> (wrongs done by morbid, evil, or ignorant people). We
> have, all along, maintained that in respect to these
> problems, Christian believers are nothing more or less
> than an average cross section of mankind. This fact
> will explain the need for a realistic understanding
> and analysis of whatever negative traits and distinct
> ailments one may discover in Christian lives.[4]

Since the Christian's flesh is sinful flesh, and since
the Christian personality is organized around those elements
and factors common to all personalities, it follows that the
Christian is subject to all those weaknesses and frailties
that flesh is heir to. This certainly applies not only to

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[4]Sverre Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience
(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), p. 267 f.

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the physical life of the Christian, but to his psychic life
as well. It must be realized that the Christian conversion
experience does not automatically bring about a condition of
healthy-mindedness, for Christian faith is not identical to
mental health.

Still, the fact must be admitted that Christians are
new creatures in Christ. They have within themselves a new
spiritual life, bestowed upon them through regeneration.
It is precisely the possession of this new spiritual life
which distinguishes the Christian personality from the ordi-
nary personality.

Is it possible, then, to describe the Christian person-
ality? In the writer's opinion, such a description has been
given by Christ in His Sermon on the Mount:

> Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the king-
> dom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they
> shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they
> shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do
> hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall
> be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall
> obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they
> shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they
> shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they
> which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs
> is the kingdom of heaven.[5]

It is interesting to note that in His Sermon on the Mount,
Jesus also desiderates all those positive factors that make for
healthy personality development: love, trust, sincerity, pur-
ity, humility, and so on.

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[5]Matt. 5:3-10.

Besides all this, the Christian has the life of Christ to serve as his pattern for living. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . .," says the Apostle Paul,[6] and Peter reminds us that Christ has left us an example, that we should follow in His steps.[7]

From what we have already said, it is evident that the Christian will not attain perfect Christ-mindedness in this world. Because of the constant antagonism between the old nature and the new, the Christian will not in this life reach the goal of perfection. In the words of Oliver:

> The Christian life is a falling down, and getting up again, asking for and obtaining God's forgiveness and the strength to do better; going on again and perhaps falling down again also, but still picking yourself up, still going on.[8]

The Christian will constantly strive for the goal.

> Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.[9]

Here, of course, we have been speaking of the spiritual growth of the Christian, and, indeed, this spiritual growth, or sanctification, is not identical with personality development.

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[6]Phil. 2:5.

[7]1 Pet. 2:21.

[8]John Rathbone Oliver, _Pastoral Psychiatry and Mental Health_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 196.

[9]Phil. 3:12-14.

Still, there is an undeniable, though incomprehensible, relation existing between the spiritual life and the mental life of the Christian. It would seem, however, to be a one-way relationship, for while the spiritual life of the Christian is not necessarily affected by a diseased mental life, a diseased mental life can, in many cases, be helped and even cured, through the positive growth of the spiritual life.

In his personality development, as well as in his spiritual growth, the man of God is privileged to make use of one of the most uplifting and therapeutic agents known to man: Christian prayer.

Lichliter says:

> . . . prayer is as much today as yesterday an open gateway to mental and spiritual health. Prayer, like confession, is catharsis. It is a self-emptying process by which the mind discharges its burden of unrest. The habit of "talking it out and talking it over" with God, the determination to dig down into one's motives, to face bravely the memories that sting and burn, to bring all that is hidden in one's heart out into the light by this outpouring of prayer, is to find both peace and comfort.[10]

And Fosdick quotes Dr. Alexis Carrel as saying:

> As a physician, I have seen men, after all other therapy had failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer. It is the only power in the world that seems to overcome the so-called "laws of nature"; the occasions on which prayer has dramatically done this have been termed "miracles." But a constant, quieter miracle takes place hourly in the hearts of men and women who have discovered that

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[10] McIlyar Hamilton Lichliter, *The Healing of Souls* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1939), p. 64.

prayer supplies them with a steady flow of sustaining power in their daily lives.[11]

To this must be added the fact that the Christian is permitted - rather, encouraged - to draw upon the divine resources that are offered in the Word and Sacraments. Who, indeed, is able to say just how much therapeutic power is comprehended in the means of grace? To be sure, the Word and Sacraments are strengthening of the Christian's spiritual life, and, undoubtedly, they are of positive value in the healthy development of the Christian personality. For the power of God is there - dynamic and vitalizing - working wonders in the heart and mind and spirit of man. That power is active, and will continue to be active, in the children of God, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."[12]

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[11]Harry Emerson Fosdick, On Being a Real Person (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1943), p. 217 f.

[12]Eph. 4:13.

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