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H. D. Mensing

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Modern Psychiatry and the Bible

A discussion of modern psychiatry and the Bible in the compass of our allotted space cannot pretend to be exhaustive, but must of necessity be a mere sketch, touching here and there the points that seem of special interest for our purpose. We shall, in fact, limit ourselves to the discussion of current technical terms and then, as we proceed, stop to examine some of the problems as they come within the sphere of our observation. The very nature of our subject-matter must preclude any dogmatic statements, except where a statement of Holy Scripture is concerned; for psychology with its many branches is not by any means an exact science, is constantly in flux, and must always remain experimental.

Psychology has been variously defined as to its purpose and aim, the definition depending to a great extent upon the school represented. It has been called "the science of mental life" (Seashore) and "the science of interrelation between mind and body" (Kretzmann). We might also call psychology the study of the interreaction of body and soul or, as behaviorists would say, the study of human behavior as the organism comes in contact with environmental *stimuli*. The essential point is that modern psychology does not deal with mind or soul as such, but rather with the whole "personality." "Today this science does not recognize as its object the soul as a distinct entity or mind as distinct from the body. Psychology deals with the organism as a whole, but with the mental aspect as its domain and point of departure." (Seashore, head of Dept. of Psych., U. of Iowa.)

Psychoanalysis, to quote the N. E. A., is "a method of studying the fundamental reasons for human behavior in terms of inward drives, or urges, and of the realities of external environmental situations." Sigmund Freud of Vienna is considered the father of psychoanalysis, and in a special sense it is to him a technique to detect the sources of bodily symptoms and mental difficulties in psychoneuroses and to direct their treatment. While Freud because of his one-sided insistence upon the all-pervading "*libido*" wrote much that is now frankly regarded as foolishness, he nevertheless furnished a great deal of material that is useful in psychic technology. In many respects his influence is still fundamental. Jung and Adler are both followers of Freud, but represent two divergent schools, their difference, however, being mostly in terminology. While present-day psychoanalysis is based upon Freud, it is far removed from many of his principles and deductions.

Psychiatry, soul-healing, is usually regarded as that branch of medicine which deals with disorders of the mind in any form,

with all types of mental reaction in response to disturbing physical and psychic influences. Naturally, it is therefore to a great extent based upon psychology and psychoanalysis, while it forms the foundation for mental hygiene whenever it is applied as a prophylactic.

In speaking of mental disorders, it is necessary to distinguish. *Mental deficiency* originates in childhood and becomes apparent through the abnormally slow intellectual development and mental retardation. According to the degree of their intelligence these patients are classed as idiots, imbeciles, and morons. In *dementia* we have the following divisions: senile dementia; arteriosclerotic dementia; and syphilitic dementia, or paresis, a general paralytic condition which terminates with complete dementia. In the *psychoses* we have the toxic psychoses, which are caused by toxic poisoning, such as alcoholism, tuberculosis, and other diseases; manic depressive insanity; and schizophrenia. These last two are usually regarded as psychogenic with unknown causes. Manic depressive insanity, as the term suggests, is characterized by a recurring change from depression to hilarity, often with periods of comparative well-being, while schizophrenia, formerly designated *dementia praecox*, is regarded as definitely progressive. The German professor Emil Kraepelin was the first to use the term manic depressive, and he did a great deal to bring some order into the chaos of the terminology. It must, however, not be assumed that there is a clear-cut division as regards the various classes; after all, every case is unique. Finally we must mention *neuroses*, which include all those mental disorders that are not classed as insanity.

What is of special importance at this point is the fact that psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, many of whom are mechanistic evolutionists and psychologists and outspoken enemies of all religion, have devised methods by which they diagnose and cure souls, and the fact that many patients, especially those suffering from various neuroses, come under the treatment of unbelieving psychiatrists, either by way of private consultation or in the course of institutional treatment.

Modern psychology, however, generally speaking, does not recognize the soul, but only the mind; it deals with the human entity, consisting of body and mind, from the mental aspect. But to us the human being is essentially body and soul, and in order to be able to think and speak intelligently of the soul, we must have some definite conception of the soul.

What, then, is the soul? All the definitions that ancient and modern thought proposes are, after all, merely working hypotheses, for the soul refuses to be X-rayed. The best we can hope for is a better understanding of the psychic reactions that ensue when

the soul comes in contact with environmental stimuli, or in other words, we can study somewhat the behavior of the soul only as, in union with the body, it makes its way through this world.

What is the soul? How does the Bible answer that question? The Bible does not attempt to give a definition. It describes the soul and tells of its reactions. The soul is of divine origin, of special divine creation: "And God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," Gen. 2, 7. That is not said of the beast of the field but only of man. Notice also that God breathed not His breath but "the breath of life." That precludes the pantheistic idea as though the soul were of the essence of God. Dogmaticians often use this text to prove the immortality of the soul, but to me this proof does not seem conclusive. The majority of the texts concerned merely describe the reactions of the soul. Thus, the soul sins or seeks the Lord, is sorrowful or rejoices. In short, all human thoughts and desires and all emotions are predicated of the soul, and God always holds the soul responsible: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And the soul must be saved and redeemed. God's loving care and His redeeming love is preponderantly concerned with the soul.

As to the origin of the individual soul Heerbrand states the position correctly: "*Ita semper Deus hominem ex homine, totum ex toto, etiam animam ex anima, sicut lumen de lumine accenditur, creare videtur.*" (Baier, *De Creatione*, p. 93.) Thus no one would seriously contend that every soul is a new creation nor that the creation of all souls is included in the *hexameron*. The other question which is of some importance for our consideration is: Does not the Bible in a number of places speak as though man consists of body, soul, and spirit? In answer let me quote Doctor F. Pieper: *Die Trichotomie "ist durch Schriftstellen wie Luk. 1, 46. 47 und 1 Thess. 5, 23 nicht genuegend gestuetzt."* After explaining these passages, he proceeds: "*Fuer die Dichotomie sprechen entscheidend Stellen wie Matth. 10, 28: Fuerchtet euch nicht vor denen, die den Leib toeten und die Seele nicht moegen toeten; fuerchtet euch aber vielmehr vor dem, der Leib und Seele verderben mag in die Hoelle. Hier wird der Mensch nach seinem ganzen Wesensbestand (nach seiner Totalitaet) beschrieben, und doch werden nur Leib und Seele nebeneinander genannt.*" (Christl. Dogm., I, pp. 581 f.)

Now to revert to our texts. In the light of all the texts in which the Bible mentions the soul we can say that the soul is the sum total of man minus the body, the latter being merely the house in which the soul dwells and has its being. "Has its being" is important, because for us who are in the body the soul without the body is a nonentity. For us there is no soul without the body,

and for all practical purposes, as far as we are concerned with the soul, we can deal only with the whole human being, consisting of body and soul, the human being, in which there is a continual interreaction of body and soul; yes, the soul, our life essence, our real ego, manifests itself to us only through the body, or, as William James puts it, the human being can be dealt with only as a psycho-physical organism. Chas. T. Holman in his *The Cure of Souls* has this to say: "It is to be remembered that the souls, whose healing is a deep concern of the minister of religion, are not disembodied spirits. They are men and women who live under the present conditions of temporal existence. And we shall do well to think of these men and women not as beings with separable entities of body and soul but as persons. We shall think of them in wholeness and integrity of their personality." The soul, then, is what we are. It is our very self, our personality.

This way of thinking is supported by innumerable texts in the Bible. Significant is Gen. 2, 7: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Man, the person, the whole person, the personality, is called a living soul. Gen. 12, 13 Abraham tells Sarah: "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake and my soul shall live because of thee." Abraham here of course does not distinguish between body and soul, but designates by "soul" his whole person. Lev. 4, 2: "If a soul shall sin," etc. Lev. 5, 15: "If a soul commit a trespass and sin through ignorance in the holy things of the Lord, then he shall bring for his trespass unto the Lord a ram," etc. Jonah 4, 8 Luther translates: "*Jonah wuenschte seiner Seele den Tod,*" which is literal. The English Bible: "He wished in himself to die." This way of speaking, that the human person is spoken of as the soul, is so common in the Bible that the Revised Version repeatedly simply substitutes the personal pronoun for soul, e. g., Job 9, 21: "I know not my soul" — "myself." Acts 2, 31: "His soul was not left in hell" — "He was not left in hell." We could of course dismiss all these texts by declaring that they speak figuratively (*pars pro toto*) and therefore contribute nothing to the concept of soul. But even then the reason for the employment of the figure could only be the fact that the soul is regarded as the essential and most important part of the human being. The human person consists of body and soul, and the soul in modern psychology and especially in psychoanalysis and psychiatry is identified with personality. Holman writes: "The personality is what we have in mind when we use the term *soul*." Rightly understood, we may safely use that term.

A question that we must dispose of at this time, a question

that is fundamental both in theology and psychology, is this: What is the original condition of the soul? What is its condition as we know the soul in life: is it good, is it bad, or is it neutral?

According to Freud the infant is born with the *libido*, that is, the psychic expression of the sexual sphere in its broadest conception, including all vital urges. According to him all psychic life is an outflow of the *libido* and determined by it. His pupils Jung and Adler departed rather widely from Freud, and at the present time Freud is considered merely an influence in the development of psychoanalysis. The present tendency is to regard the new-born infant as a bundle of biological urges, or drives; and only when these drives become conscious, do they develop into desires, that is, when the child emerges as a distinct ego, about the second year. Now, are these urges good or bad, or is human nature good or corrupt in sin?

We know that man through the fall of our first parents has lost the concreated righteousness, and henceforth "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," John 3, 6. Cp. Eph. 2, 1; Rom. 8, 7. "*Deinde Verbum Dei testatur hominis naturalis non renati intellectum, cor et voluntatem in rebus divinis prorsus non modo a Deo aversa, verum etiam adversus Deum ad omne malum conversa et penitus depravata esse. Item hominem non tantum infirmum, imbecillem, ineptum et ad bonum emortuum, verum etiam per peccatum originis adeo miserabiliter perversum, veneno peccati infectum et corruptum esse, ut ex ingenio et natura sua totus sit malus, Deo rebellis et inimicus et ad omnia ea, quae Deus odit, nimium sit potens, vivus, efficax.*" (Form. Conc., Sol. Decl. II, 2.) This was also the Augustinian position, and we know what Luther and Erasmus Rotterdamus had to say, and we know Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism as it is maintained by the great majority of Christian teachers today. This Pelagianism has definitely influenced psychology and the psychiatrists of today. Since John Locke, in the seventeenth century, philosophy and the later developed psychology have held that the new-born babe is as a white sheet of paper on which experience would write its record. In the latter part of the past century this view was changed, especially through the influence of William James, 1842—1910. He taught that the new-born babe is by no means a passive plastic being, but, on the contrary, an exceedingly active being, driven by a multitude of inner urges, which react instinctively in characteristic ways to the stimuli of the physical and social environment. And now what about the moral quality of this biological inheritance? Holman in his *The Cure of the Soul* writes: "In itself, we have to say, it—human nature—is neither good nor bad; it is neither moral nor immoral; it is amoral. For goodness and badness are

social concepts; they define behavior in social situations. The morally good conduct is the socially approvable conduct; the morally bad conduct is the socially disapprovable conduct." (Pp. 8. 9.) Thus, in general, psychology regards sin as a social conflict, the concept of which is therefore always in flux, being normated for the time being by social customs, folk-ways, and the like. Quite definite is John G. Mackenzie of Paton College, Nottingham, when in *Souls in the Making* he states: "Human nature as such is neither depraved nor sinful; a sinful nature is not transmitted; hereditary sin is a contradiction in terms. Sin is acquired." The viciousness of the principle that sin is merely a changing social concept becomes especially apparent when psychiatry undertakes to cure anxiety psychoses by lowering and adjusting the conscience threshold of the patient. But of that more anon.

When later Mackenzie makes the statement: "Instincts are not sinful; it is the desire to enjoy their pleasure irrespective of the effects on our character or on the lives of others or of the obligation to God which is sinful," and when Hobhouse declares: "Desire is impulse directed toward an anticipated end," we are face to face with a fact in human nature that requires careful distinction, namely, as between human nature as such and original sin by which the human nature is totally depraved. The Lutheran Confessions not only reject the error of the Pelagians, but also that of the Manichaeans, who would make original sin part of the essence of the human soul. (Cp. Form. of Conc., *De Peccato Originis*, Epitom. and Sol. Decl.) Thus it is correct to say that the "natural impulses or urges or drives" are not sinful by themselves, that is, in so far as they are essential to the human nature, but that they are sinful accidentally, because they are on account of the inherited depravity inclined toward everything that is evil, which inclination we designate *concupiscentia*. Cf. Pieper, *Christl. Dogm.*, I, 656 f.

We know, then, that the human nature is depraved and that the soul comes into the world depraved, completely depraved. John 3, 6; Eph. 2, 3; 1 Cor. 2, 14; Eph. 2, 1. The human being comes into the world soul-sick, and only from that angle can we consider the soul. We may perfectly agree that the new-born babe is a bundle of biological urges, but these urges are not neutral, though natural. In this world we meet only the depraved nature of man at work or "behaving," and even the best Christian has his Old Adam. Yes, Christ and St. Paul were good psychologists. (Rom. 7, 14 ff.)

Psychologists, however, and we also, are in practise dealing with the soul not metaphysically but as a living soul that lives only in the body, in this world, as a person or personality. As such it is

either sick or healthy, miserable or happy, or, in terms of psychoanalysis, it is either maladjusted to its physical, social, and cosmic environment, or it is well adjusted and thus a unified, perfectly integrated personality. We know that the soul is ushered into the world already maladjusted to God and is therefore sick. But how will the soul fare, what will be its behavior, when it comes in contact with all the various environmental stimuli?

The environment of the soul is usually divided into physical, social, and cosmic; that is to say, the personality must properly adjust itself to the physical and social world and to God. In this environment, according to Freud, the soul acts and reacts, or behaves, and then adjusts itself for better or for worse; it reacts "instinctively" to environmental stimuli. But even psychology must admit that the human babe possesses instinct plus, for the instinctive equipment of the animal is rigidly determined, as, *e. g.*, the behavior of bees or ants is rigidly determined by their instinct, while the instincts of the human babe are very modifiable and are being continually modified by learning and experience; every human being weaves individual patterns of behavior. Every human babe has instinct plus, and that plus is the ability to learn, or intelligence.

The human being, then, to adjust itself happily and thus to become an integrated personality, must bring the natural urges and drives under the control of intelligence and conscience. But what is conscience? Whence does it derive its force and influence?

According to most psychologists, conscience is a product of so-called folkways, or social customs, as they are evolved by certain groups, customs which assume great authority for the respective group. A few examples will make clear what is meant. The Christian, when he enters his house of worship, removes his hat, the Jew puts it on, and the Moslem prostrates himself; or the Jew and the Seventh-day Adventist celebrate Saturday and others Sunday; or, again, Lutherans preach and sing in their churches, while Quakers sit in silence. Thus the human race is divided into innumerable groups with peculiar folkways. Now, it is true, as psychoanalysis points out, the conflict in the standards of conduct that are set up by the groups forms a large area of moral and psychic conflict, and when "proper unification is not achieved, if there is no satisfactory adjustment," grave psychic consequences must follow. Imagine a person to be a Lutheran pastor, a politician, and a club man and trying to live according to the code of all three groups; or think of a young girl who has been reared in a Lutheran home, according to Christian principles, who at the university joins a liberal, free-thinking sorority and then tries to maintain the standard of the home and of the sorority at the same time. If such

persons tried to follow the code of each group, a guilty conscience, moral disintegration, personality difficulties of all kinds, soul sickness, and anxiety neurosis would be the result.

But it is at this point, where conscience enters, that psychology, which is not normated by God's Word, goes hopelessly wrong. In 1841 Emerson could say: "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it." (*Self-Reliance*.) To modern psychology moral codes are the product of social experimentation and social discovery, the standards set by the folkways of various groups. "Whence, then, do these terms *good* or *bad* arise? They are social terms . . . ; fundamentally they describe the forms of behavior approved or disapproved by the group. . . . That which is defined as good or bad is strictly relative to the group, the time, and the place. . . . The only absolute thing that can be said about morals is that they are relative . . . and they are the product of social experience. . . . In order to maintain his standing in his group, a man must, to a large degree at least, conform. It is out of this social pressure that the sense of 'oughtness' emerges. Here we have the genesis of conscience." (Holman.) G. B. Smith, Chicago University, writes: "If we recognize the fact that conscience, like any other human capacity, is a matter of growth and education (by social experience), we shall be saved from much perplexity." That, then, is the usual concept of conscience as it is employed in modern psychoanalysis and psychiatry. It stands to reason that, with such an elastic conception of right and wrong and of conscience, no end of confusion and mental conflict must arise, and a psychiatry that employs such concepts in the cure of souls, in resolving mental conflicts, in adjusting personalities, can only set a poor, anxious soul hopelessly adrift. What a fundamental difference when we place in juxtaposition with these vague concepts the clear and concise concepts of right and wrong and of conscience as laid down in Holy Scripture! Anything that conflicts with the revealed will of God is wrong, and anything that conforms with "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind [cosmic environment]; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself [social environment]" is right and good, and conscience is a safe and reliable guide only in so far as it is normated and instructed by the Word of God.

Psychoanalysis makes a great deal of the "unconscious." The term has been used from Leibnitz (died 1716) down to James and the present day. In *Mind*, October, 1922, the problem is stated thus: "Whether past impressions, ideas, or experiences, or tendencies arising from the instinctive dispositions which have not entered

into consciousness as desire are dynamic." To state it simpler: Can we be motivated and affected by tendencies, emotions, and experiences whose real nature is hidden from our consciousness? The answer ought to be in the affirmative. Weatherhead, an English psychiatrist, illustrates the "unconscious" by a tank upon which the intelligence plays. The surface of the water holds that which is conscious to the mind, more or less. About six inches below the surface begins the "subconscious," that of which we are still dimly conscious, while at the bottom is the "unconscious." The controversy about the "unconscious" is by no means closed, and there is no limit to opinions.

Psychology attempts to divide souls or personalities into classes or types. In doing so, we must bear in mind that every individual is unique, that no two souls are alike. The reaction of every individual is always peculiar to himself and has his own curve of development. Yet we may recognize definite types, such as sanguine, melancholic, phlegmatic, and choleric. Since Jung and Hinkle psychology speaks of introverts and extraverts. The introvert is preoccupied with his own thoughts and emotions, is shy, moody, self-conscious, and is occupied more with principles than with affairs, and likes to theorize. The extravert goes out into the world of affairs and occupies himself with facts. He is dominated by the external, objective world, adapts himself easily, and is practical. These types, however, are not clear-cut. They overlap and merge into one another more or less. Dr. Hinkle has devised many subdivisions.

When psychoanalysis speaks of moral and spiritual conflict, it is always thought of as endopsychic, not as a conflict between man and his environment but rather within his ego, between tendencies and urges and desires within his soul, be those urges and tendencies conscious or subconscious; their number is legion, and their variation knows no limit. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 105, says: "Whatever form the conflict presents to the conscious mind, the conflict itself is always between tendencies, with their resulting desires, whose ends, or goals, or motives are inconsistent with each other. It is not so much a conflict of ideas as a conflict of tendencies whose end-actions are incompatible with one another." Simple examples of such conflict are: love of God and Mammon, the desire to have standing in a Christian group and in a worldly group at the same time, the desire to be faithful to one's wife and the desire for philandering, etc. Different moral and ethical standards always create such conflicts, and because we as Christians still have our Old Adam, every temptation creates for us an endopsychic conflict, of which we have a classical description by St. Paul, Rom. 7, 14 ff.

When the soul, the person, the personality, comes in contact with the environmental stimuli, conflicts arise in the soul. If these conflicts are not properly met and resolved, maladjustment results, either in the cosmic or social area or, what is more likely, in both areas, as in practise they are always interwoven. The cosmic area covers the relation of man to God and the social area his relation to his neighbor, as that relation is defined by the two tables of the Law. The point is that through an unresolved conflict a traumatic condition of the soul, or mind, or personality, results and that this wound of the personality must be healed, or all manner of trouble will result, such as a split personality, a guilty conscience, all manner of neuroses, and often insanity. To avoid such an outcome, the patient, according to psychiatry, must be brought to a happy self-realization, to a happy and harmonious adjustment to God and man, in the religious and the social sphere, or, in other words, his conscience must be set right. "In the majority of cases where physical symptoms are present and where anxiety attacks are frequent there has been a compromise solution of a conflict, a repressed conscience. In anxiety cases a moral conflict will be found as a causative factor. A healthy conscience means a healthy self-criticism, and that is probably the most vital process in keeping the growing personality free from moral and neurotic disturbances." (Mackenzie.) Steckel makes the bald statement: "An anxiety neurosis is the disease of a bad conscience." We know that a guilty conscience and the weight of unforgiven sin, even when that sin has passed into the unconscious, is a fertile source of soul-sickness, for a guilty conscience is the most agonizing mental anguish, Ps. 32, 3. 4. Ps. 19, 12: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." Buechner: "*Suenden, deren sich der Mensch nicht mehr bewusst ist.*"

Another fertile cause for soul conflict is the injustice in the world and the horrific experiences and the suffering that a Christian must often endure. If a person's philosophy of life, his *Weltanschauung*, his faith, is not equal to such a shock, maladjustment with God must be the consequence; loss of faith and trust in God, revolt against God, bitterness of heart against God and man, and often neurosis and insanity are the result. Here we might also mention the clash between the Biblical and the so-called modern scientific world-view. Imagine, for example, a child that has been reared in a Christian home and school and has never heard of such a thing as evolution and all that is connected with it—imagine the mental and moral shock that child receives when in high school or college it is told that all it learned from father and mother and pastor concerning creation is, according to high authority, all foolishness; imagine the agony of soul. And the danger is ag-

gravated when the person comes home and, in order to maintain his standing with parents and church, begins to lead a double life and becomes a hypocrite in his own eyes. Here again we have all the elements that must lead to terrible trouble for the soul if that conflict is not properly resolved and satisfactorily adjusted; loss of faith, a soul adrift, neurosis, and insanity may follow. Thus and in innumerable other situations throughout life is the soul-life and the mental well-being of the human personality threatened, and a "happy self-realization" is made impossible.

How does the soul, the mind, meet the various threats to self-realization? Psychoanalysis holds that human beings always act and behave in a characteristic way when they face their conflicts, that they always practise some sort of evasion, but always behave according to a certain definite pattern. These behavior patterns are symptoms, so to speak, of the disease. Prof. Harry A. Overstreet has written a whole book on the thesis that all human behavior may be understood and interpreted in terms of two basic attitudes which persons assume toward life: facing toward reality and facing toward unreality. To face toward reality, to understand and accept the facts, and on the basis of this knowledge honestly to make one's life adjustments is, according to him, basic to psychological health, while to evade reality, to face toward unreality because reality is unpleasant and undesired, is the way to psychic ill health, is a psychopathic pattern. He points out that the mind has a curious trick whereby, when the facts refuse its strong desires and wishes, it tends to build into pseudofacts these strong, unrealized wishes. It builds for itself an unreal world. If the facts, squarely faced, would mean a guilty conscience, shame, discomfort, or defeat, it is easier to adjust the facts to the image of one's desires than to adjust the desires to the facts. Thus one can be victorious, maintain one's self-respect, have one's desires fulfilled, and keep one's conscience seemingly at ease without paying the high cost in reconstruction of attitude and habit which the situation really demands. Instead of dealing honestly and frankly with the undesired situation, effecting whatever reconstructions are necessary in his own personality, a person will dodge and squirm and will attempt to bluff both himself and others into the belief that the facts are not really what they seem, that he did not fail, that he is not to blame. He deals with the situation by wish-thinking rather than fact-thinking. He is trying to realize himself by evasional methods; but success can be achieved only by facing the facts.

Thus we have the two basic attitudes which are assumed in the face of threatened self-realization: one that faces the facts of life honestly and bravely and one which evades the facts because they happen to be disagreeable and painful. All the harmless

day-dreaming, castle-building, and wish-thinking belongs to this latter category, which becomes dangerous as soon as it gets to be pathological. Face the facts. That is basic also for a sound and healthy Christianity. But of that later.

Since soul-life, "behavior," is held at all times to be influenced by repressed desires, wishes, and drives, let us hark back once more to what psychologists call repression. As is so often the case when new terms are employed, the term *repression* has undoubtedly often been misunderstood, misapplied, and abused. Since psychoanalysts claimed that repression was dangerous, people jumped to the conclusion that therefore every one should freely and without bridle "express" himself and give all desires free rein. But it is not likely that even the most rabid extremist would advocate such a preposterous course. Weatherhead, the English psychiatrist, for example, also makes the statement that all repression is dangerous, but he is very careful and very emphatic to point out that the true opposite of repression is not expression, not license, but control and that repression is dangerous because it removes the desire, the urge, or the traumatic condition of the soul which is repressed into the unconscious from the intelligent control of the subject. Thus it is held that any unfulfilled wish, urge, or drive, any soul conflict, any sin or feeling of guilt, that is repressed into the unconscious without first being properly and adequately resolved, nevertheless keeps on working in the soul of the subject, not normally, but abnormally, as a sinister, disintegrating influence, causing all kinds of pathological conditions, which, however, are beyond control because the subject is no longer conscious of the cause for the abnormal behavior. But repression is practised because it is one of the easy ways out of a disagreeable position and situation; it is easier and more agreeable, for example, to forget a sin than to face it, acknowledge it, and repent and thus to heal the wounded conscience by the assurance of divine forgiveness.

Now we are ready to consider evasion as such or the so-called defense mechanism. The fact is that many, when they are up against a disagreeable situation, do not face the facts; they face not toward reality but toward unreality. And that is true in the social area as well as in the religious area, and the evasion is always according to some definite behavior pattern, and the recognition of that pattern must be an essential help for the understanding of people and for advising them properly. But here again it becomes apparent that modern psychology has given us very little that is really new, for evasion and the so-called defense mechanism is most admirably illustrated by innumerable examples in the Bible.

Evasions and flights into unreality are quite characteristic of normal people, that is, we all indulge in them; but in their exag-

gerated form they are the characteristic of an abnormal personality, of a sick soul, a perverted nature, an insane mind.

"Rationalizing" is a common form of evasion. What is meant by the term? Rationalizing is a process of the mind by which an individual substitutes a desired and desirable, a fictitious but for him a perfectly good reason for the real reason of his behavior. It is not lying, strictly speaking, for that is conscious. Rationalizing is being done instinctively and unconsciously. It is an unconscious dishonesty. The individual thinks he is giving the real reason, and he does not realize that he is giving a desired reason instead of the real reason. He seeks unconsciously to bluff others, and in doing so, he bluffs himself. Dr. Bernard Hart writes: "The mechanism of rationalization is most evident, perhaps, in the sphere of moral conduct, where we tend to ascribe our conduct to a conscious application of certain general religious or ethical principles. The majority of such actions are the result of habit, obedience to the traditions of our class, or similar causes, and are carried out instinctively and immediately. The general principle is only produced subsequently, when we are challenged to explain our conduct." (*The Psychology of Insanity*, pp. 65 f. Cambridge U. Press.) Rationalizing affects our whole life, for it is concerned with all the motives of our actions, good actions and evil actions, and its study affords a remarkable insight into the utter depravity of the human nature. Cp. Is. 64, 6. King Saul indulged in a characteristic bit of rationalization when he said: "The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord, thy God," 1 Sam. 15, 15.

"Compensation" is another trick of the mind. In the field of biology, nature will automatically compensate itself. A blind person, for example, develops a more sensitive touch, or a physically weak child will compensate itself by excelling in its studies. Examples are all about us.

The same thing takes place in the social and moral sphere. Take, for example, a person that is living in a certain sin and who knows it and whose conscience bothers him. Instead of squarely and honestly facing the fact of his sin, he tries to find a salve for his conscience and evades the issue by compensating himself in another direction, by showing a superb morality, a high moral standard concerning some other sin. While indulging in his pet sin, he has a very highly attuned conscience concerning some other moral issue which does not personally concern him; or his compensation might take the form of a fervent and laudable zeal in some form of church-work, by which he endeavors to fool himself and others, of which deceit he, however, is completely unconscious. Thus a person may be cruel and ruthless in his daily business,

toward his workers and competitors, ruin their life and their living, without compunction, while at home he is the loving father and the most considerate husband and in his church the most meticulous member. "This sort of thing is by no means rare. He is evading some major ethical requirement and compensating therefore by excessive concern about some small matter. By this sort of activity he will keep out of focus of attention matters which ought to be for him of greatest concern, matters which ought, truly, to trouble his conscience." (Holman, *Cure of Souls*, p. 164.)

Pathologically, morally and mentally, the consequences of evasion by compensation are always serious. Morally such a person is like the Pharisee swallowing camels and straining at gnats, devouring widows' houses and for a pretense making long prayers, Matt. 23, 14, personally unaware of his real condition. A person thus compensating himself can never come to a knowledge of his true self; he may admit some faults, but he has so many compensations that in his own mind they far out-weigh all his faults, and yet he has never a really good conscience, which at the least provocation might throw him into a trough of despair. Having fooled himself, he does not know the cause of his depression and anxiety; he cannot find the way of true repentance; he will sink ever deeper into the trough of depression; and if he gets no help from a competent adviser, he will probably develop a case of chronic melancholia, in which he imagines that he has committed the unpardonable sin and suicide seems to be the only way out. Or a person may get into the habit of overcompensating himself to such an extent that he no longer lives in reality but purely in imagination, and pernicious and persistent illusions may follow. The ancient philosopher was right when he insisted: "Know thyself," and wise was the psalmist when he prayed: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting," Ps. 139, 23, 24.

Another method of evasion is the device known as "shifting the blame." It is well known and very common. Adam invented it: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Adam is not rationalizing; he readily admits the blame. But it is not his blame; he places it on the woman and on God Himself. Some have become so accustomed to shifting the blame that it has become with them a chronic ailment, a vice, a part of their very soul-life. They do not rationalize their failures, be they moral or social, but it is always "the woman whom Thou gavest to be with me." Admitting their failure, they are never to blame; somebody else or some untoward circumstance is to blame. And if they cannot find any one

else, they will surely put the blame on God Himself. It is an easy way to evade social and moral failure, but it is a refusal to face the facts and to assume responsibility; it is facing toward unreality. The danger of this method of evasion, especially when it becomes a habit, an exaggerated and pathological habit, is obvious. Such a person, when a social failure is being evaded, will never make the proper social adjustment, will always be out of harmony with his environment, will always blame some one for his failures and troubles, and will always carry a chip on his shoulder. Such people are dangerous. When a moral failure is being evaded, the danger is even greater; for a person using this method to evade a moral lapse can never be convicted of his guilt, will never come to repentance, and will never find forgiveness and a good conscience. He is miserable and unhappy; somebody is to blame, is abusing him, and because he persists in facing toward unreality, he begins to live in unreality, and from there it is only one step into delusion of persecution. Somebody hates him, is working against him, is thwarting him, is persecuting him, the typical symptoms of paranoia.

"Ignoring the fault" is another common device of evasion. A person practising this method will attempt simply to ignore and to forget the guilt that attaches to his personal failure. But moral dereliction will not be ignored, and to drown a guilty conscience is to ravage the soul and personality, and the drowned conscience will always come to life as its own avenging angel. Such as try to salve their conscience by ignoring the guilt will always be anxious to secure special attention and regard from people, hoping that thus their failure, their guilt, will not be noticed; or they may develop a sense of excessive self-importance and braggadocio; or in a desperate effort to draw attention away from their failure, to measure up to the standard of their own conscience, they may develop symptoms of neurasthenia and hysteria, moodiness, excitability, overactivity, self-assertiveness, and they are on the way to a manic-depressive state.

Now the question arises: How can these people, who are suffering from inner conflicts, who are socially or religiously mal-adjusted, and who are trying to save their conscience, their self-respect, and the regard of their fellow-men by evasion,—how can these be advised and helped? Those psychiatrists who lack Christian principles use the expedient of "lowering the conscience threshold." They say that it has been the misfortune of many people to be reared in families or churches in which the standards were impossibly high and unreasonable for modern conditions and that therefore the only way to release from a sense of failure and guilt is to lessen the unreasonable demands, and they point out

that normal behavior is average behavior and that the average man, after all, has not such a high moral standard. Why not, therefore, live on a lower moral standard and be happy, for at this lower level you can still have the approbation of contemporary society. Significant is what Dr. Karl M. Bowman, chief medical officer of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital and assistant professor of Psychiatry in Harvard Medical School, has to say. "The religious leader tries to build up higher and higher ideals and then to persuade the individual to live up to them; whereas the psychiatrist tries to pull down the individual's ideals to a level at which he will find it easy to adjust." (Address before Rel. Ed. Ass. at the Phillips Brooks House, Harvard U., May, 1929.)

Such an expedient to adjust one's life and to resolve soul conflict is vicious, because we know that the moral standard is not set by social sanction, but by the unchanging Word of God, and to "lower the conscience threshold" in order to ease the conscience is trying to cure the effects of one sin by a greater sin. It can therefore only aggravate the conflict. The more desperately a person tries by this method to calm the wounded conscience, the more it will be wounded, and the devastating conflict keeps on raging in his soul, and dire consequences must be the final result.

All psychiatrists, however, agree that the first step, and an essential step, in the cure of souls, in the resolution of conflict, in the reorganization and readjustment of personality, so that a person may achieve a happy and satisfactory self-realization, is a resolute facing of the facts, a proper self-knowledge, whether that happens to be in the social or the religious area. The point is made that, as long as there is not a facing of facts by the patient, a cure is impossible, and that is not only reasonable, but Scriptural. We know that an honest knowledge of sin is the first requisite for the cure of sin-sick souls. Cp. Ps. 32, 3—5; 1 John 1, 8. 9. We also know that "by the Law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. 3, 20. In this connection psychiatrists stress the importance of inducing a patient "to talk it out," of leading him freely to reveal himself, to confess. They have devised an elaborate system for analyzing a person, for exploring his unconscious and subconscious, for dragging out all the skeletons long forgotten, his thoughts and motives, and his reactions to all possible situations of life, all for the purpose that the patient might see himself as he really is; and the Bible has all along stressed the importance and the salutary effect of confession. There is no doubt that the mere confession concerning an inner conflict will ease the nervous tension, will relieve the mind, and will, so to speak, create a time of grace, during which the degenerating process is halted and time and opportunity is given to effect a cure by means of the Gospel; for after all is said and

done, the Law and the Gospel, properly taught and applied, are the only remedy for a sin-sick soul and also the most effective agency in mental hygiene. A sinner that has experienced the effects of the Law and the Gospel will be willing and able to reorganize his soul-life on a God-pleasing plane, and that is what psychologists call "sublimation." "The essence of sublimation, broadly conceived, is the raising of the moral plane upon which the energies of our native tendencies are expended." (McDougall.)

Baltimore, Md.

H. D. MENSING

Johann Gerhard als lutherischer Kirchenlehrer

Geboren 17. Oktober 1582; gestorben 17. August 1637

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Am 17. August 1637 starb zu Jena ein lutherischer Theolog, den man den „gelehrtesten und berühmtesten altprotestantischen Dogmatiker“ (so Realenzyklopädie) oder auch den „Erztheologen“, den „unbestritten größten Vertreter der älteren lutherischen Dogmatik“ genannt hat.

Ob diese epitheta ornantia wirklich voll und ganz verdient sind, darüber läßt sich streiten; immerhin beweisen sie, wie hoch man Gerhard je und je in älterer und neuerer Zeit eingeschätzt hat. Eins ist gewiß: Gerhard gehört mit Luther und Chemnitz in eine Rubrik als einer der drei Fundamentaltheologen der Reformation; und wir unterschreiben gern und ganz, was D. E. Gerfen im *Pastor's Monthly* über ihn schreibt: "There are three stars shining most brilliantly in the firmament of Lutheran theology, viz., Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz, and Johann Gerhard" (Vol. VIII, No. 5), obwohl wir vielleicht ein Fragezeichen zu der weiteren Bemerkung setzen möchten: "It can truly be said: If Johann Gerhard had not come, orthodox systematic Lutheran theology would not have attained its highest degree of development." Ein solches "sweeping statement" läßt doch wohl außer acht, daß schon mit Luther und dem Konfessionsbuch so ziemlich alles gegeben war, was die lutherische Systematik dem Studentenkreis bieten konnte, wenn auch spätere Dogmatiker, ihnen voran Gerhard, in *Detail* fortschrittlich und verdienstvoll weitergearbeitet haben. Allerdings ist ihre „Scholastik“ der guten Sache der christlichen Lehre nicht immer zum Segen gewesen; denn sie hat Lektüre oft in Formen geschmiedet, die ihr eher hinderlich als dienlich gewesen sind. Immerhin bleibt das hohe Verdienst Gerhards zu Recht bestehen, und wir tun wohl daran, daß wir uns diesen edlen Christenmenschen und hervorragenden Theologen dreihundert Jahre nach seinem Tode einmal wieder etwas genauer vergewärtigen.